

Chapter 3: Kent and Medway: Area Based Policies



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3.1 There are certain key elements of the planning and transport strategy that need to be put in place across the whole county if living standards are to be improved and the environment enhanced. These include carefully considered investment in roads including cross county routes, major improvements to the coastal rail network, provision of Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) domestic train services and tackling the issues of housing and employment on a county wide basis. There are some issues, though,

that need a different emphasis in different parts of the county and for this reason this Chapter sets out specific locational policies grouped together on the basis of 4 sub areas:

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

North Kent

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

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

3.4 The Thames Gateway initiative, begun by Kent County Council, the North Kent Districts and East London Boroughs in the 1980s, has turned the area into a priority for national and regional regeneration policy. This represents a major opportunity to improve both the image and condition of the area. There is a considerable amount of new development in place, with recent prestige projects including the Darenth Valley Hospital, Bluewater and Ingress Park in Dartford and Chatham Maritime in Medway. The

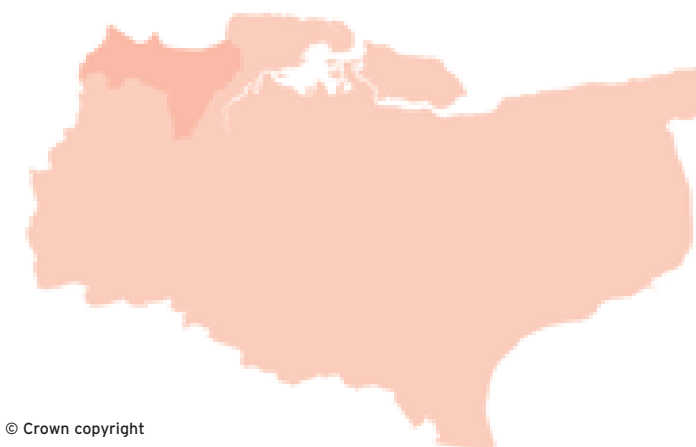
majority of development has taken place on previously used land although in certain parts of North Kent where brownfield development opportunities are more limited, some settlements, such as Sittingbourne and Iwade, have expanded through the development of strategic greenfield sites.

3.5 Substantial improvements in infrastructure have included the M2 widening and improvements to the A249. More is to come, including a second Swale crossing, completion of the CTRL and Ebbsfleet station, an enhanced public transport network ('Fastrack') and widening of the A2. These in particular will provide a major boost to the pace of development but it is also important for Kent and Medway to gain the fullest possible use of the CTRL for domestic services. Transport will continue to pose major challenges, including our dependence on the motorway system. Better use of the rivers is possible but can conflict with urban regeneration initiatives.

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

respond to a strong housing market which has good and improving access to London.

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

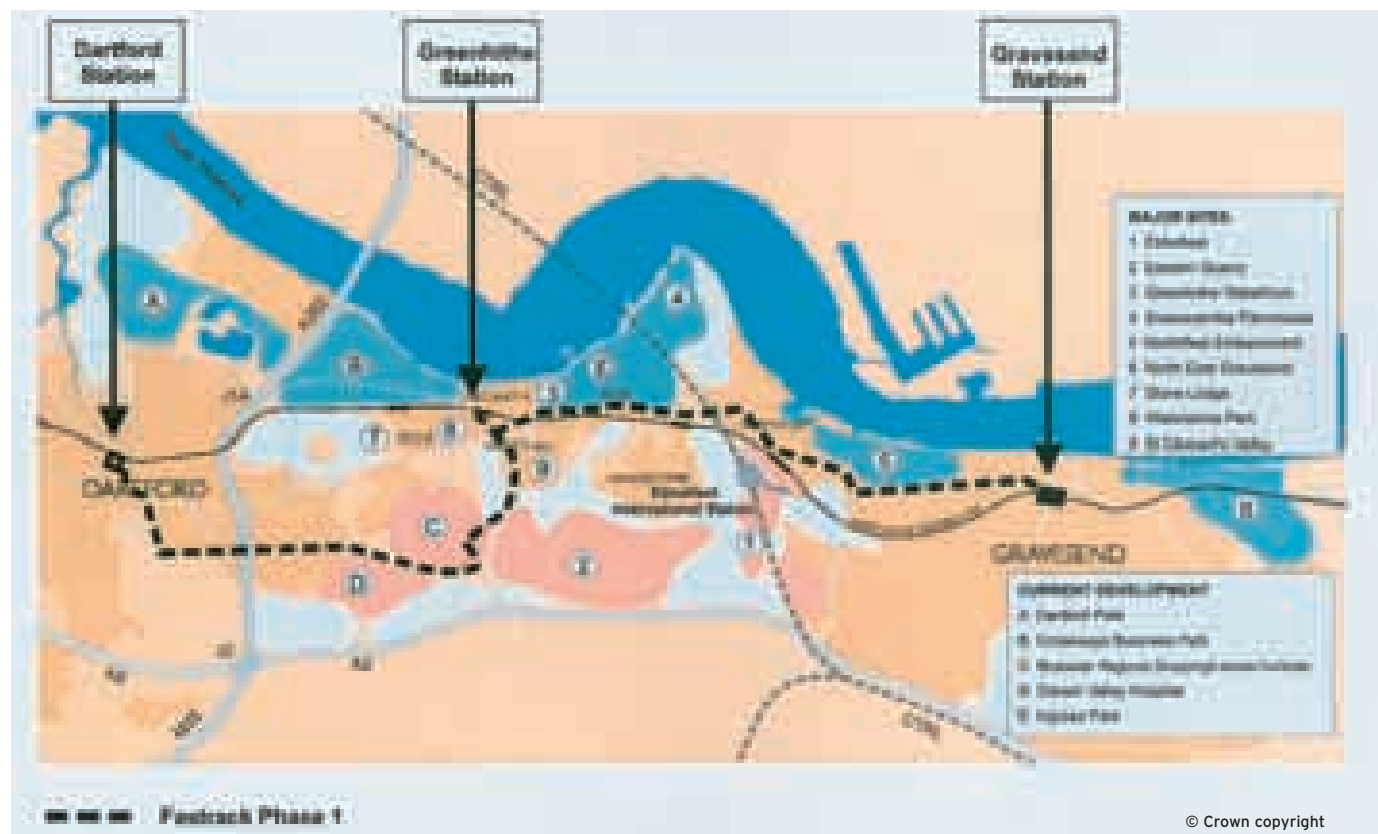


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Dartford and Gravesham

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

Kent & Medway Structure Plan

**Policy NK1: Dartford and Gravesham**

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

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

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

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

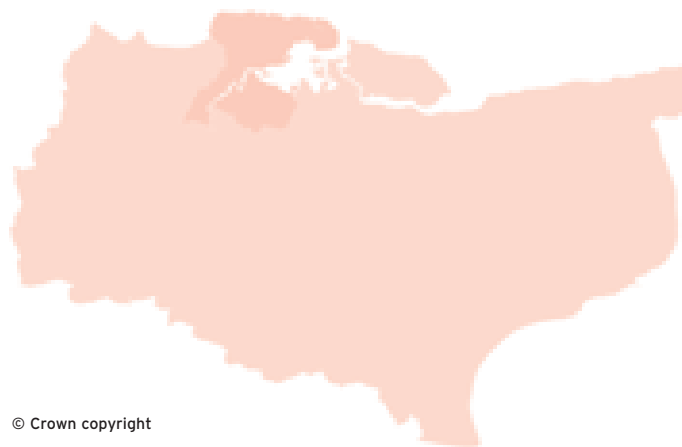
Proposals for the main Strategic Developments should contribute to enhancing the quality of the built, open and natural environment, including provision of elements of the Green Grid, and support a pattern, form and density of development that reflects accessibility to existing and planned public transport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

Strategic Developments will include those at:

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

3.10 Strategic policy seeks to ensure that regeneration benefits existing communities, particularly marginalised ones, creating job opportunities and providing new community facilities and services. This will require backing from Government and its agencies, and a comprehensive investment programme which brings together both public and private sectors. The intention is to preserve the open countryside and the Metropolitan Green Belt to the south of the A2 and to the east of Gravesend.

- (a) **Ebbsfleet Valley as the location for development of a combined domestic and international passenger station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, a new business centre, major residential development and community facilities. Development should reflect a high standard of civic design and landscaping and be integrated with new and improved transport networks including Fastrack and Crossrail;**
- (b) **Eastern Quarry for a series of linked and integrated communities with an emphasis on housing provision, together with social and community facilities and business development to be developed in accordance with a Master Plan and serviced by a new public transport network (Fastrack);**
- (c) **North Dartford, to the west of the A282 for business, housing, leisure and recreation uses;**
- (d) **Crossways Business Park, to the east of the A282, for continued mixed commercial development involving office, industrial and distribution uses;**
- (e) **Swanscombe Peninsula (East and West), within Dartford, for a new mixed use community, predominantly for housing, taking full account of the area's relationship with the River Thames, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, other physical constraints to development including ground conditions and flood risk and integrated with an enhanced public transport network;**
- (f) **Gravesend/Northfleet Riverside and North East Gravesend involving the reuse of redundant previously used land and premises.**



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Medway

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



Kent & Medway Structure Plan

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

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

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

3.15 Growth of the Higher and Further Education sectors will be promoted, including support for a full-scale university campus in Medway. The establishment of the Universities at Medway

partnership will bring 6000 additional higher education places to Medway, broadening the range of opportunities available for local people and bringing associated benefits to the economy.

Policy NK2: Medway

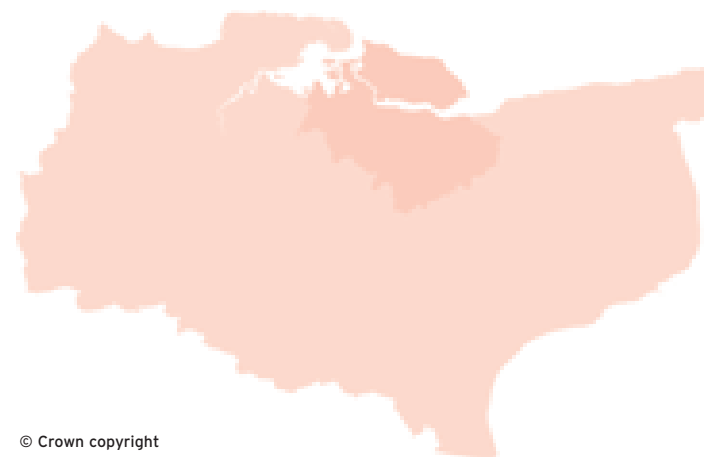
Proposals to regenerate Medway should focus upon the Medway Waterfront including central Chatham, Rochester Riverside and at Strood.

Expansion beyond the Medway urban area to meet development requirements should be concentrated at a new, mixed-use community at Chattenden/Lodge Hill.

Development for the Higher and Further Education sectors including a full-scale university campus, will be supported. Provision will be made for the technology and knowledge sectors at Rochester Airfield, Chatham Maritime and Chattenden/Lodge Hill.

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

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



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Swale

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

Policy NK3: Swale

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

- (a) opportunities for mixed business, industrial and distribution and residential development already identified at Ridham/Kemsley;
- (b) expansion of the port of Sheerness in accordance with Policy TP22;
- (c) completion of the strategic expansion of Iwade for c.1200 dwellings (including the initial phase previously allocated through the Swale Local Plan). Provision for development should ensure no infringement upon areas of wildlife importance or on high quality agricultural land and maintain separation between Iwade and Sittingbourne;
- (d) mixed-use urban expansion at North East Sittingbourne (including land currently allocated through the Swale Borough Local Plan) in conjunction with the definition and phased provision of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road from its link with the A249. Provision for development should avoid infringement upon areas of wildlife importance and minimise the call upon high

- quality agricultural land;
- (e) expansion of the Sittingbourne Research Centre as an innovation hub.

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

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





Courtesy of Pfizer Ltd

East Kent Triangle

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

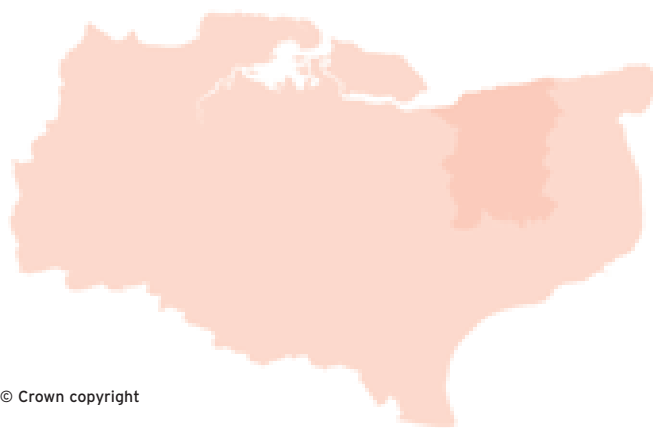
3.18 Parts of the area have persistent high levels of unemployment which reflect structural changes to the economy following job losses in the ports and former coalfield and the decline of traditional seaside tourism. There are significant disparities in average wage levels between this area and West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

3.19 A number of recent changes are helping to improve the area's overall image as well as its accessibility. Investment in East Kent has included: the expansion of the pharmaceutical industry in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough; growth in the Higher/Further Education sectors in Canterbury and Thanet; major road improvements including the £100m scheme for the Thanet Way; major retail projects in Canterbury and at Westwood in Thanet; and seafront regeneration schemes.

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

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

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



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Canterbury

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

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



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Policy EK1: Canterbury

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

Expansion of the Further and Higher Education sectors in Canterbury will be supported.

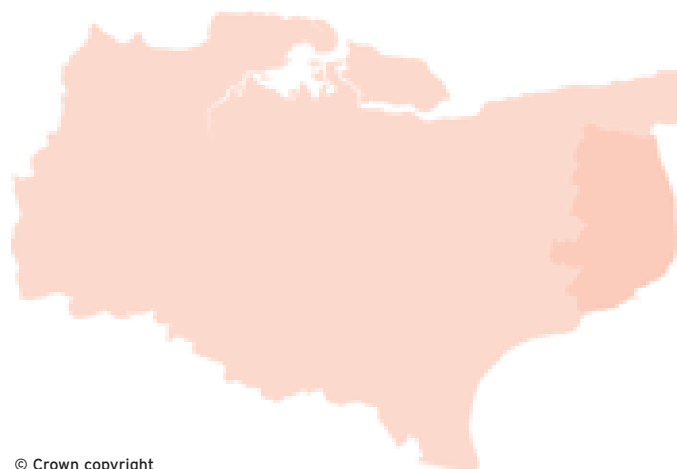
Knowledge and technology uses linked to this sector will be encouraged, initially through the identification of a site not exceeding 10 hectares.

Proposals for major cultural facilities and high quality tourism accommodation in, or with good access to, the city centre will be encouraged.

New office accommodation contributing to diversification of the economy and urban regeneration will be promoted in the city.

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

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



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Dover

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

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



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Policy EK2: Dover

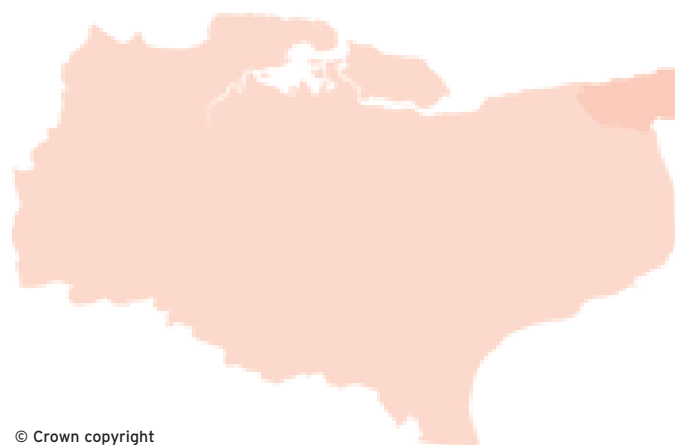
Development in Dover should strengthen and diversify its economy and promote environmental enhancement. This will include support for the innovation hub based on pharmaceuticals research and development in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough, implementation of strategic employment land at Dover (White Cliffs Business Park) and appropriate expansion and diversification of the port of Dover.

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

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

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

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



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Thanet

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

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

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**Policy EK3: Thanet**

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

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

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

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

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

Improvements to infrastructure will be required to support economic growth and improve accessibility, including East Kent Access (within the A256 and A253 corridors), rail infrastructure

and service improvements between Thanet and Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and London and an eventual direct rail link to Manston Airport.

Channel Corridor

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

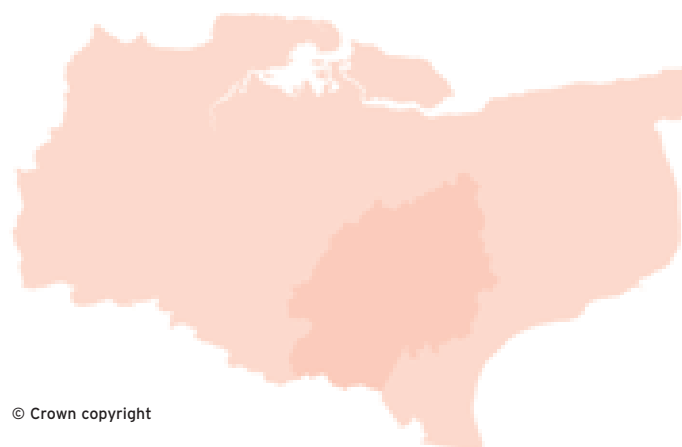
3.30 Although not widespread, social deprivation is an issue across the area. In general Shepway suffers the highest levels, particularly in the northern and central wards of Folkestone, where indicators of social exclusion include poor quality private rented housing stock. There are also deprived communities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

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

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

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

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



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Ashford

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

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

Environmental management measures will also be important to securing sustainable growth, for example design standards for new development that provide for conservation of water resources.

Kent & Medway Structure Plan



Courtesy of Eurostar (UK) Ltd

Policy CC1: Ashford

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

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

Provision will be made for up to 40 hectares of additional land for business development to meet requirements beyond 2011.

Major investment in physical infrastructure, social and community facilities, public transport enhancement, other sustainable transport

initiatives and environmental management will be required to support the growth in residential and business development proposed and the existing community. This will include:

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

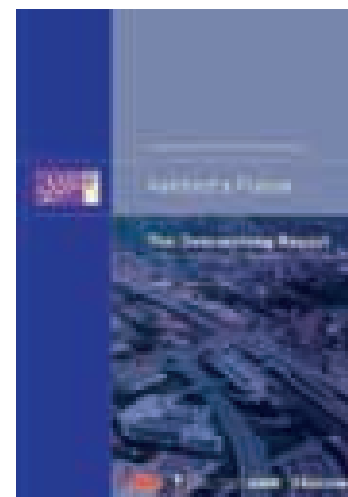
- An enhanced network of water and public greenspaces.

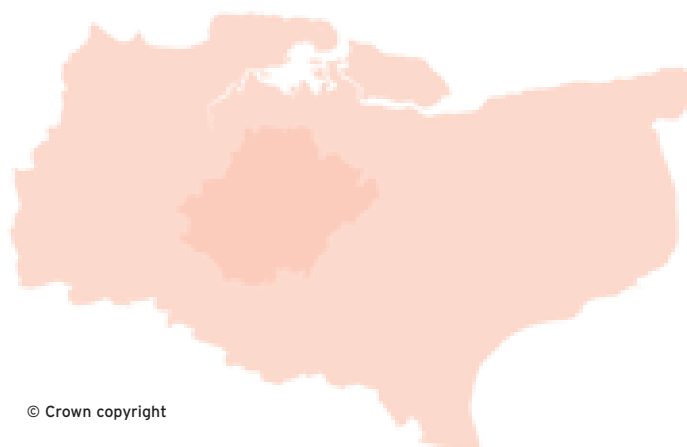
An assessment will be undertaken to examine the potential role of new transport links between the A2070 and the A28 to the south west of the town.

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

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

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





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Maidstone

3.36 The role of Maidstone as the County Town will be underpinned through major new retail, cultural and community uses. The town remains the centre for administrative, judicial, and financial services in the county and the range and quality of retailing in the town centre will be enhanced through the Fremlin Walk development. Central Maidstone has an important role to play in supporting diversification of the local economy and enhancing the quality of the area as an employment centre. Continued restraint to preclude net additional release of greenfield land for economic development in the Maidstone area remains appropriate in view of a tightening labour market and the greater restraint now applied to housing provision. However some substitution between existing and new allocations would be appropriate, in line with Policy FP1 (e) to secure a

supply of attractive land for economic development that has both good accessibility to the labour market of Maidstone and the national and strategic road network.

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



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Policy CC2: Maidstone

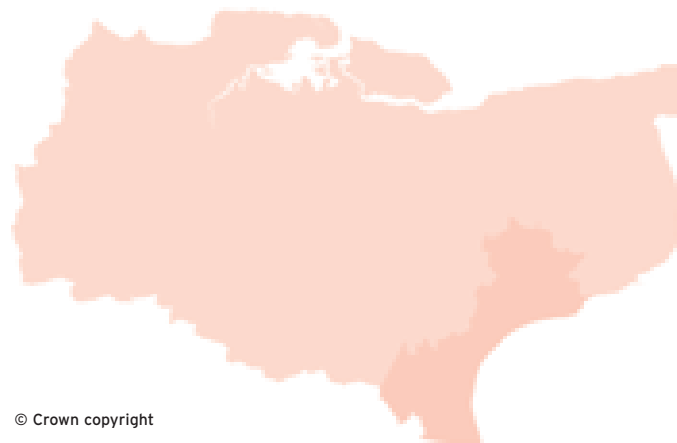
Proposals for new office and residential uses should focus on the centre of Maidstone to provide close integration between employment, housing and public transport facilities.

Proposals to enhance and broaden the town centre's retail, leisure, tourism and cultural draw will be supported. Transport improvements to support these initiatives will include the A229 Upper Stone Street contraflow and All Saints Link.

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

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

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



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Shepway

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

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



Courtesy of Shepway District Council

Policy CC3: Shepway

Proposals which assist in regenerating Folkestone, including improvement of its shopping, service and tourism functions will be supported.

Provision for mixed-use regeneration of the harbour and seafront should incorporate a major residential element and consider opportunities for alternative uses of the port.

The strategic expansion of Hawkinge should be completed on the basis identified in the Shepway Local Plan with no further major development on the Downs. Provision for up to 20 hectares of additional land for business should be identified and be well-related to the Folkestone/Hythe urban area or New Romney.

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

West Kent

3.40 West Kent (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells) is the most prosperous of the four sub areas. It is economically important for the county as whole but is also subject to long-standing restraint through the Metropolitan Green Belt and important landscape designations. The area is characterised by attractive countryside, good quality housing, low unemployment, a shortage of labour and a high dependence on commuting to work outside Kent, particularly central London.

Employment growth over the past decade has been relatively strong despite the lack of major new sites for business development. These have been largely confined to the Tonbridge and Malling area (notably Kings Hill). Despite the general economic strength of the area there are pockets of social disadvantage in settlements such as East Malling, Snodland, Edenbridge and Swanley.

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

cement industry and redundant institutional land available in the eastern part of the area provide significant opportunities for regeneration and recycling of previously used land.

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

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

Kent & Medway Structure Plan

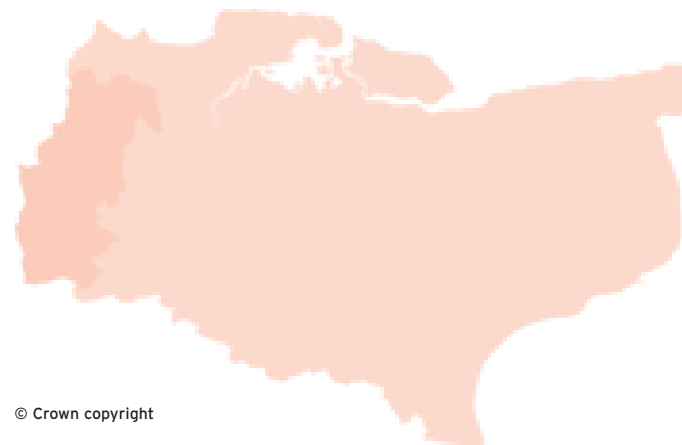
Policy WK1: West Kent

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

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



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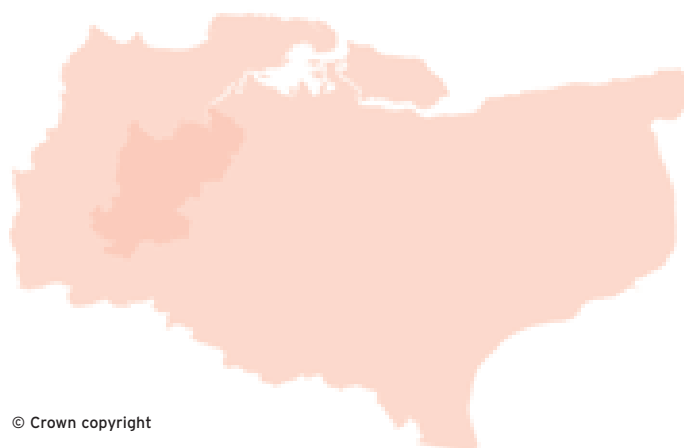
Sevenoaks

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

Policy WK2: Sevenoaks

Within Sevenoaks District the scale of new housing development reflects its location wholly within the inner Metropolitan Green Belt, the relatively small scale of the principal urban areas of Sevenoaks and Swanley and the character of their built environments.

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



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Tonbridge and Malling

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

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



the Strategic Gap between the Medway Gap urban area and Maidstone which is retained to prevent coalescence of these urban areas.

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

Policy WK3: Tonbridge and Malling

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

- **Kings Hill for continued development of a new mixed-use urban community involving phased development of a campus style business park, major residential development and associated social and community facilities. A revised mix of land use to reduce B1 employment provision and increase the housing element will be pursued;**
- **Holborough Quarry, to the north of Snodland**

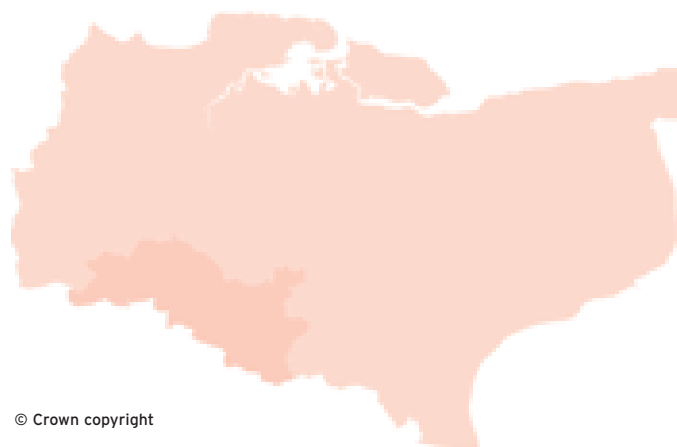
Kent & Medway Structure Plan

and west of the A228, principally for housing and associated social and community facilities;

- **Leybourne Grange, to the south of the M20 and west of the A228, for housing development and associated social and community facilities;**
- **Peters Pit, on the East Bank of the Medway, principally for housing and associated social and community facilities and subject to the provision of transport infrastructure including a new crossing of the Medway.**

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

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



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Tunbridge Wells

3.47 The prime consideration for Tunbridge Wells is the need to ensure conservation of the town's setting, its high quality built environment and to respect its location within the Metropolitan Green Belt and High Weald AONB. Within these limits the emphasis will be on maintaining business growth and prosperity within the constraints of labour supply and addressing local housing needs. There is a strategic requirement for a new general hospital at Tunbridge Wells serving a wide area of West Kent (Policy QL13). There will be a particular focus on the commercial and employment role of the town centre and on careful management and husbanding of the supply of land for business and industrial development.

Policy WK4: Tunbridge Wells

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

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