



mapping out the future



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September 2003

Kent & Medway Structure Plan: Sustainability Appraisal Summary



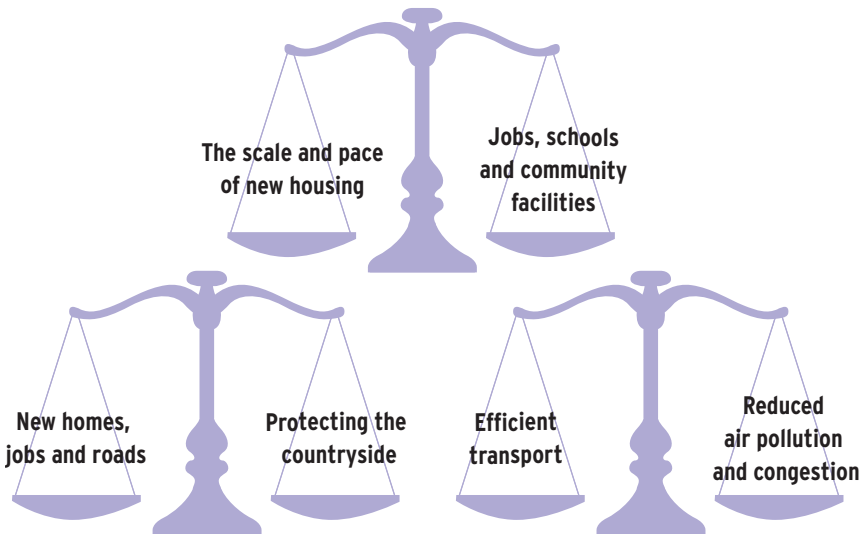
## Mapping out the future

The **Kent and Medway Structure Plan** sets out the strategic planning framework for protection of our environment, major transport priorities and the scale, pattern and broad location of new development for the next 15-20 years. It contains policies to provide the framework for how this will occur within Kent and Medway. It is important that these policies are the right ones for Kent and Medway and that they ensure development happens in a way that brings benefits to the people of Kent - both those living today and to future generations.

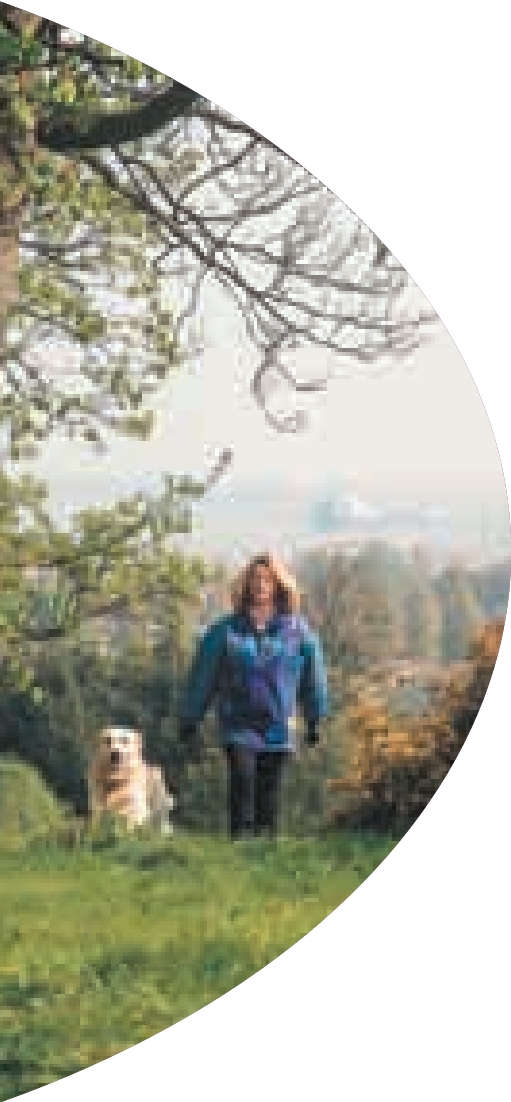
## Getting the policies right

The key challenge is to ensure that the right balance is struck across Kent and Medway to enable economic, social and environmental aspirations to be met - whilst at the same time not limiting the opportunities or choices for others.

**Ultimately it is about getting the right balance between:**



**The Sustainability Appraisal has assisted with the 'balancing act'.**



## What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

The Sustainability Appraisal is a key test of whether an acceptable balance has been struck between the policies within the Plan. Its role is to balance competing interests and ensure that the overall approach to development reflects sustainability principles. It has done so by informing and influencing all stages of preparing the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

Along the way the Sustainability Appraisal has revealed tensions between issues and policies. This has enabled the Councils to come to a view that ensures the right balance between policies has been struck, and that unavoidable adverse impacts have been adequately mitigated.

By completing a Sustainability Appraisal the Deposit Kent and Medway Structure Plan has:

- considered the social, economic, resource and environmental needs of the County;
- been informed by detailed analysis of cross cutting and potentially conflicting issues;
- adopted strong sustainability principles.

## How was the Sustainability Appraisal completed?

The Sustainability Appraisal has informed plan making from the outset and had impacts at all key stages of plan preparation. This has ensured that sustainability issues have been brought to the fore and used to guide those preparing the policies and proposals of the Plan. To achieve this a sustainability review was undertaken of:

- 'Mapping out the future', the major consultation document on policy choices and options, published in March 2002. An 'Interim' Appraisal was published at this time.
- first drafts of the individual chapters of the Plan (November 2002).
- an early draft of the Structure Plan (January 2003) involving:
  - cross referencing chapters to identify conflicts;
  - testing it against the Regional Sustainable Development Framework.

An assessment by independent experts was completed (April 2003) as a final stage of the Appraisal to review the work undertaken and



identify further opportunities to improve the Plan during the final stage of drafting.

A report of each stage of the Sustainability Appraisal was prepared to document the emerging strengths and weaknesses of the Plan. The reports also identified gaps in the information available, and made recommendations to inform the next stage in the development of the Plan.



## Key achievements of the Sustainability Appraisal

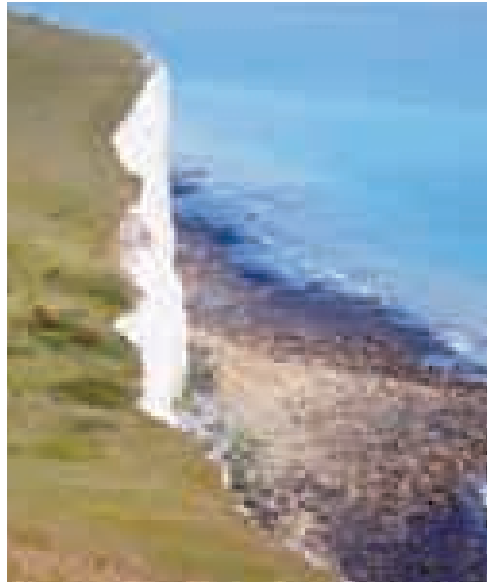
The Sustainability Appraisal has strengthened the Plan by:

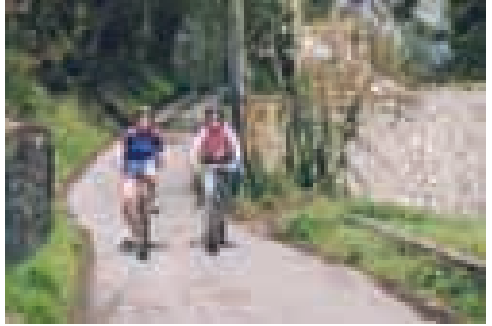
- encouraging the authors to fully embrace the concept of sustainability;
- assisting policy makers in their thinking;
- putting sustainability at the heart of the Plan;
- guiding the refinement of policies.

As a result the Deposit Plan is a more rounded and balanced document.

Key achievements of the Sustainability Appraisal include:

- Inclusion of an overarching policy on sustainable development.
- Strengthening of:
  - environmental and sustainable design policies;
  - policies for the protection and enhancement of the environment;
  - references to climate change and renewable energy;
  - policies to enable a shift in transport modes.
- Promotion of mixed use development.
- Increased emphasis on reducing the need to travel.
- Promotion of effective use of urban land.
- Fuller recognition of the needs of all sectors of the community and the provision of community infrastructure.
- Reinforcement of health, social, arts and cultural issues.
- Fuller attention to the needs of rural, urban and suburban areas.
- Promotion of integrated resource management.
- An assessment of the cumulative impacts of transport, employment and housing, to ensure a balanced approach.





# Pursuing a 'sustainable' Structure Plan

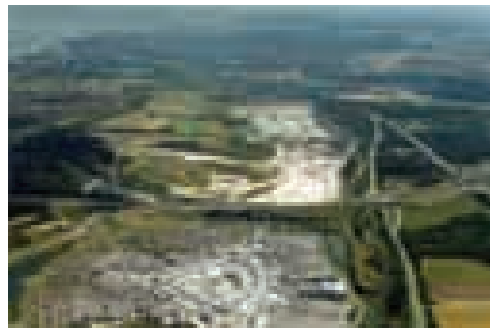
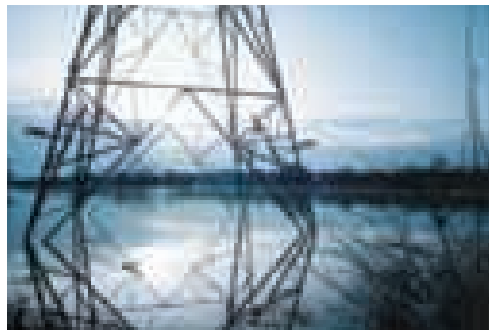
The Deposit Plan has taken on board an extensive array of sustainability issues. Consultation on the Deposit Structure Plan provides an opportunity to consider further the overall 'pitch' of the Plan on sustainability matters. The Appraisal has identified a number of questions to assist this.

Any views on these issues are welcome as part of the Deposit Plan consultation.

## Sustainability Issues - we welcome your views

- Is the individual and cumulative impact of 'housing, transport, and employment' development acceptable?
- Is the shift in transport policies, towards offering more sustainable choices, sufficient to effect substantial change?
- Are the policies sufficiently robust to avoid inappropriate differences in interpretation at the local level?
- Will the remoteness of some employment hubs increase the need to travel? How should this risk be reduced?
- Has the capacity of rural areas and settlements to absorb development been adequately tested?

- Will there be an oversupply of employment land if assumptions about future out commuting reductions do not occur?
- Is the maintenance of the Green Belt and the definition of Strategic Gaps compatible with the pursuit of sustainable settlements? Are there any locations where a more flexible approach would be appropriate?
- Is greater clarity needed on where the balance between policies should be placed? - for example, between renewable energy and environmental conservation policies?
- Is the use of some greenfield land for development at employment hubs/clusters justified? Should greater clarity be given on the appropriate scale?
- What is the appropriate role of the Bluewater regional shopping centre given its relationship with other centres and the major new residential development taking place in Kent Thameside?
- Can greater clarity be given to the relationship between the development of housing and the provision, and timing, of key infrastructure?
- Are the needs of all sections of the community met?



## How can I find out more about the Sustainability Appraisal?

We can send you a copy of the Sustainability Appraisal Report (see addresses on the back of this leaflet). This will provide you with more information about the Appraisal and further insight into:

### ■ **Context**

What is a sustainability appraisal?

### ■ **Process**

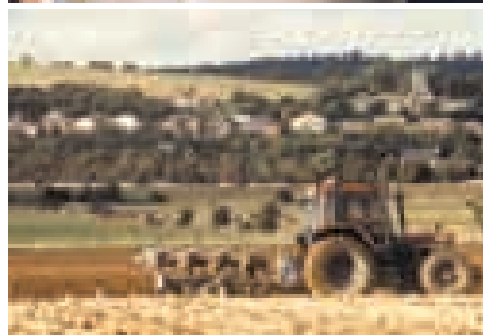
An overview of the key stages of the appraisal.

### ■ **Key findings**

A summary of the key findings and recommendations.

### ■ **Outstanding issues**

Matters for consideration as the Plan is tested and developed further as a result of consultation.



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Page 7: Bluewater and Eastern Quarry

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Page 8: Photovoltaic solar panels being installed in Dover, Dover District Council

**For further information please contact:**

**Planning and Transport Policy  
Kent County Council**

Invicta House  
County Hall  
Maidstone, Kent  
ME14 1XX  
Tel: 01622 221732  
E-mail: [kmsp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kmsp@kent.gov.uk)

**Development & Environment Directorate  
Medway Council**

Compass Centre  
Chatham Maritime  
Chatham, Kent  
ME4 4YH  
Tel: 01634 331163  
E-mail: [kmsp@medway.gov.uk](mailto:kmsp@medway.gov.uk)

**or visit our website at: [www.kmsp.org.uk](http://www.kmsp.org.uk)**

