

Chapter 7: Housing Provision and Distribution

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

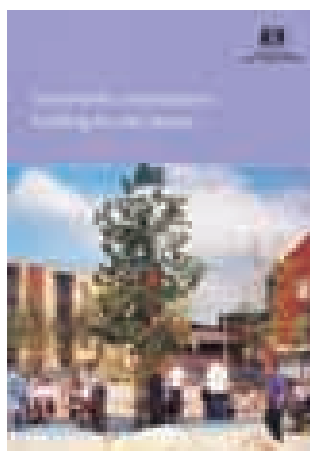
7.2 This Chapter covers the key policy issues relating to housing provision, and has strong links with Chapters 2 (Spatial Strategy), 3 (Area Policies) and 5 (Quality of Life).

Key Housing Development Issues in Kent

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

National and Regional Policy on Housing:

- There are aspirations to increase the rate of housing completions and ensure that Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) provisions are met; RPG9 suggests that the rate of regional housing provision will need to increase beyond 2006.
- The average annual rate of housing provision set out in RPG9 is 5700 dwellings per annum in Kent and Medway for the period 2001-2016. This is equivalent to a total of 85,500 dwellings.
- In '*Sustainable Communities: building for the future*' the Government has identified four major growth areas in London and the South East. Two of these, Ashford and a substantial part of Thames Gateway, lie within Kent. In these areas Government policy is to secure a substantial increase in the supply of new housing.



Public Consultation and Housing Provision

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

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

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

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

Social and Demographic Influences on the Need for Housing

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

These projections indicate that if the trends continued there would be a need for some 5,900 homes per annum in Kent and Medway to 2016 (closely comparable with the regional guidance provision) but with significant decline in the rate of growth beyond 2016. The net increase in the housing stock in Kent and Medway between 1991 and 2001 was 50,100 (5010 dwellings per annum) - significantly (-15%) below the trend projection and the rate anticipated in regional guidance (-14%).

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

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

Trend Based Population Change 2001-2021: Kent and Medway

	Total Growth	Share of Change
Natural Change (Births - Deaths)	+34,500	30%
Net Migration into Kent	+82,200	70%
Total Change	+116,700	100%

Trend Based Household Growth 2001-2021: Kent and Medway

	Household Growth	Share of Change
Trend Based Growth including trend rate of net migration	113,300	100%
Trend based growth with nil gain/loss from net migration	76,400	67%
Effect of net migration	36,900	33%

These projections do not constitute policy guidance for individual Districts - while projections of local household growth contribute to the development of housing policy they should not be slavishly converted into policy for the release of land for individual areas. A range of other factors needs to be taken into account.

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

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

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

Proposed Housing Provision and its Distribution

7.6 The strategy for housing provision and distribution provides for:

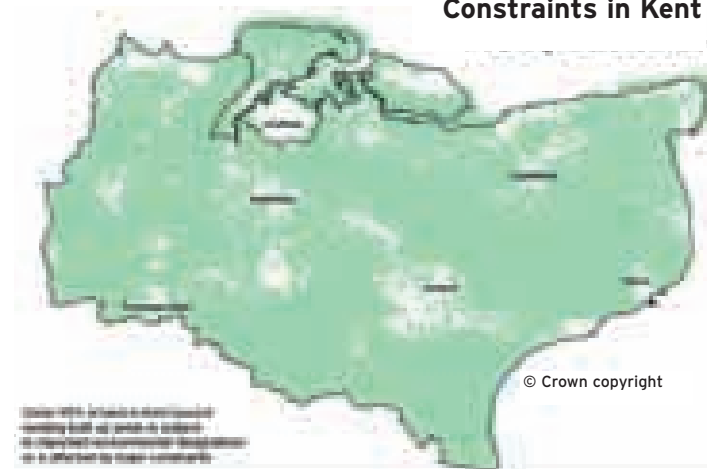
- An average annual rate of housing development of 5,760 dwellings between 2001 and 2006 in accordance with RPG9;
- A rate of development between 2006 and 2016 in accordance with RPG9. This also reflects the provision for accelerated growth at Ashford beyond 2006 in line with its planned status as a regional growth area for the South East;
- A lower average rate of housing development overall in Kent and Medway for 2016-2021 (5,300 dwellings per annum). This reflects demographic indicators which imply reducing indigenous household growth pressures but also a continuation of Ashford's regional role and a sustained but moderating emphasis on Thames Gateway;
- Total housing provisions are therefore:
 - 89,600 dwellings for the period 2001-2016
 - 116,100 dwellings for the period 2001-2021

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

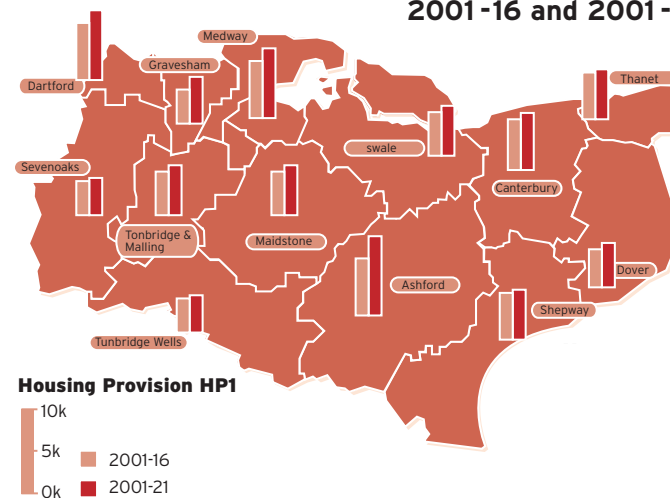
- the emphasis on regenerating and reinvesting in Kent's towns, and the concentration of development at the principal urban areas. The five major urban areas in particular (see Chapters 2 and 3), are locations which offer higher quality accessibility by public transport and serve as the main focal points for services and jobs;

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

National and Strategic Planning Constraints in Kent



Housing Provision Policy HP1 2001-16 and 2001-21



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

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

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

Policy HP1: Housing Provision and Distribution 2001-2021

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

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

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

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NOTES TO POLICY HP1

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

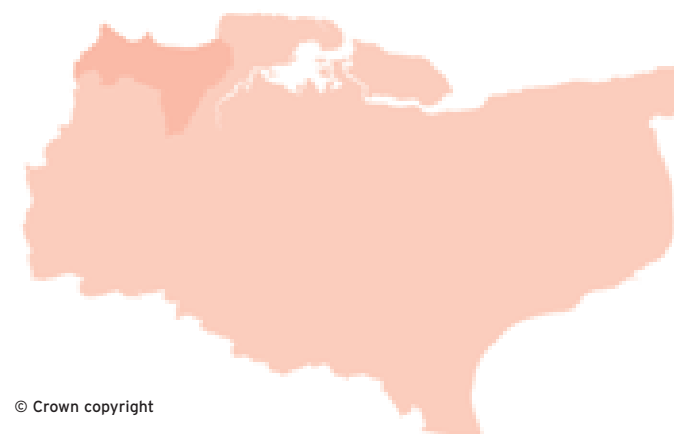
In order to secure the overall average annual rate of provision for the 2001/2016 period the quantities for the three phasing periods to 2016 are cumulative i.e. any surplus or shortfall from the early periods of the Plan are carried forward to subsequent periods. Provision for 2016-2021 is subject to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

For the purposes of implementing Policy HP1 housing provision will mean the expected net dwelling capacity of planning permissions and allocations in previously adopted or deposited development plans which were outstanding at 31st March 2001 (including dwellings then under construction) plus the planned net dwelling capacity on sites subsequently released or to be released for development through allocations in development plans and planning permissions. The assessment of the level of provision in relation to Policy HP1 will also allow for:

- (i) the expected contribution from sites below the site size threshold adopted for the identification of development plan allocations; and*
- (ii) the expected contribution from other windfall sites involving previously developed land.*

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

North Kent



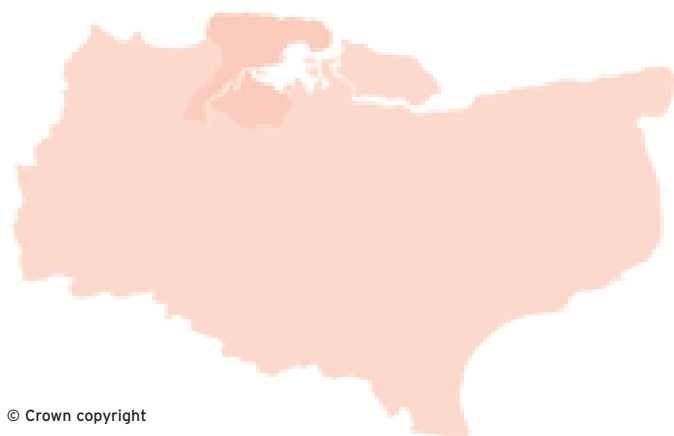
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7.12 Dartford and Gravesham

- The provision for new housing in Kent Thameside is substantially above demographic and household growth trends. It reflects the established strategic role of Kent Thameside and the particular concentration of development opportunities within the Dartford area.
- Housing provisions fully reflect the large-scale development opportunities associated with brownfield land including the mixed-use developments identified in Policy NK1. The planned capacity of these sites already takes into account higher density development associated

with good accessibility to improved public transport.

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



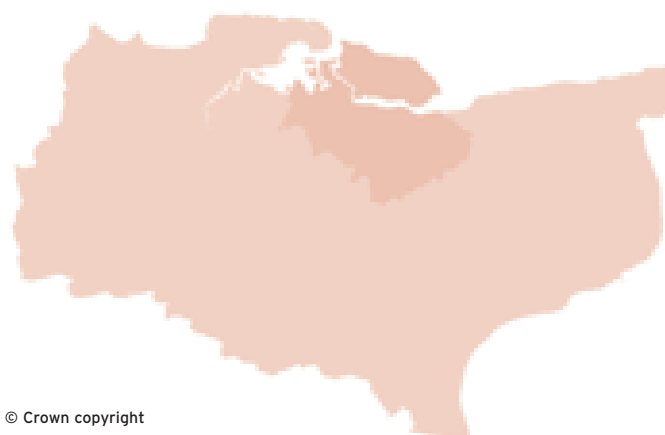
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7.13 Medway

- Housing provision in Medway is broadly in line with the housing requirements indicated by recent demographic trends. These reflect the fact that Medway has modest population gains primarily as a result of positive natural change (more births than deaths) and balanced in and out migration.
- The priority for housing development in Medway will continue to be the regeneration of key urban brownfield sites, particularly along the riverside. However these and other sites within the urban area will not be sufficient on their own to meet Medway's housing requirements. Other opportunities for development are limited by a combination of constraints. Chattenden and its immediate environment has been identified in RPG9a as having potential for development. The opportunity for a new or expanded settlement will centre upon the Defence Estate which comprises the only substantial area of previously developed

land outside the urban area of Medway which could support development of such a scale. It is expected to be released from military use shortly.

- The development of Chattenden will be phased to begin after the major urban regeneration sites are substantially completed and is anticipated to extend beyond 2016. Chattenden and the larger sites within the urban area will need to be provided with job opportunities, social and community facilities and appropriate infrastructure within a comprehensive development. Providing new jobs will also help to meet Medway's strategic objective of reducing its dependency on commuting out of the area.



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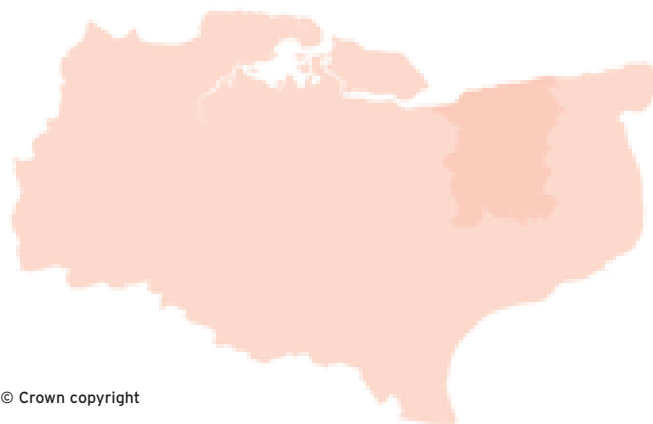
7.14 Swale

- Although much of Swale (Sittingbourne area and Sheppey) is within Thames Gateway housing supply has, to date, relied heavily on

greenfield development around Sittingbourne and parts of Sheppey (Minster).

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

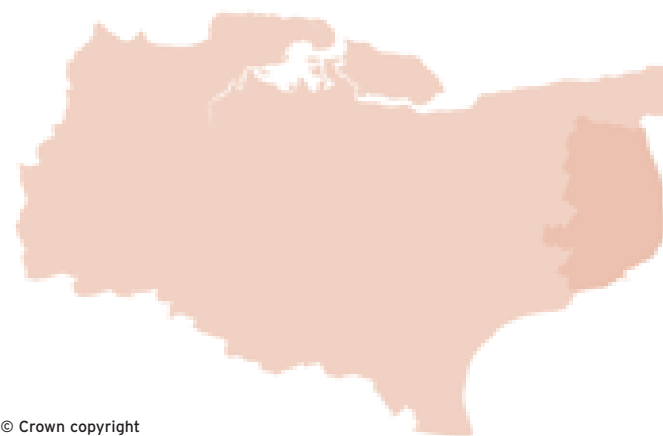
East Kent Triangle



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7.15 Canterbury

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

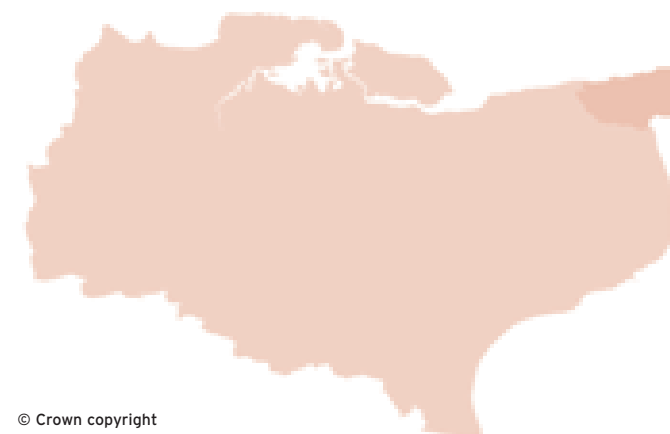


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7.16 Dover

- Housing provisions match the dwelling requirements indicated by recent demographic trends which reflect modest gains from net inward migration to the District.
- There is a continuing need for strategic expansion at Aylesham (up to 1000 dwellings) which has been recently confirmed through adoption of the Dover District Local Plan. Provision at Aylesham is intended to go some way towards offsetting, the restraint applied to the neighbouring Canterbury District. The strategy does not envisage substitution between provision at Aylesham and land release elsewhere in Dover District. Development at Aylesham is now expected to be completed over the 2006-2016 period.
- Additional housing provision to meet strategic requirements should be guided by detailed

assessments of urban capacity, particularly within the principal urban areas of Dover and Deal. It should also respect the tight strategic environmental constraints around Dover including the North Downs AONB and the need to support continuing economic and business growth to the north of Sandwich. Policy EK2 earmarks provision of some 300 dwellings beyond 2006 for these purposes.



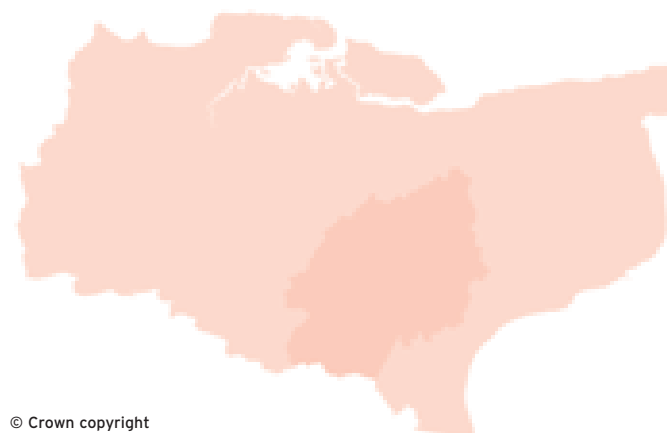
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7.17 Thanet

- Past trends indicate that about three-quarters of the housing requirement in Thanet is derived from inward migration. However a substantial increase in the housing stock in the 1990's was accompanied by poor local economic and employment performance, despite reductions in unemployment.

- Housing provision is set substantially above the household growth generated by local demographic and social changes. There are challenging requirements for urban housing capacity which are appropriate to the scale of this major urban area. There is currently a very limited contribution to housing land supply from greenfield development.
- An extension to the urban area located close to existing public transport corridors serving the town and district centres or accessible to the concentration of employment and retailing in the Westwood area will have an impact on high quality agricultural land. Policy EK3 identifies a new Strategic Development Location adjoining the Thanet urban area at Westwood. Its phasing will depend on the outcome of local assessments of urban housing capacity in Thanet. Consideration should also be given to the contribution Westwood could make to housing provision beyond 2016.
- If the local economy develops substantially and new jobs are created within the 'Central Island' area (particularly that associated with the developing role of Manston airport) then strategic policy regarding the scale of housing provision in Thanet beyond 2011 period should be reviewed by 2006.

Channel Corridor



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7.18 Ashford

- The provision for new housing in Ashford is set well above the amount indicated by existing trends and provides for an accelerating rate of net inward migration and local population growth. A close relationship between economic performance and housing provision is essential if Ashford is to achieve balanced growth in line with regional and strategic objectives.
- The housing provisions in policy HP1 are for the Borough as a whole. However the approach to the regional growth area at Ashford and the requirements of Policy SS1 mean that the great majority of housing is provided at the Ashford urban area. The Ashford's Future Study envisages that provision be made for 13,100 dwellings at the growth area between 2001 and 2016 and 18,500 between 2001 and 2021⁸.

- Continuation of rates of housing development provided for in the 1996 Structure Plan and their future acceleration in line with the conclusions of the 'Ashford's Future' Study will need major investment in infrastructure, as set out in Policy CC1. Strategic housing provision reflects a staged approach to growth beyond 2006 that supports an average rate of development of c. 1200 dwellings per annum by 2021. Growth will continue to be strongly concentrated at the Ashford urban area.
- The prospects for, and scale of, continued growth beyond 2016 will be subject to review by 2011. This should take account of the scale, form and balance of development that has taken place by then including economic performance and employment growth. Progress with the provision of the major elements of community infrastructure outlined in Policy CC1 that are essential to balanced and sustainable growth at Ashford will be another key consideration.

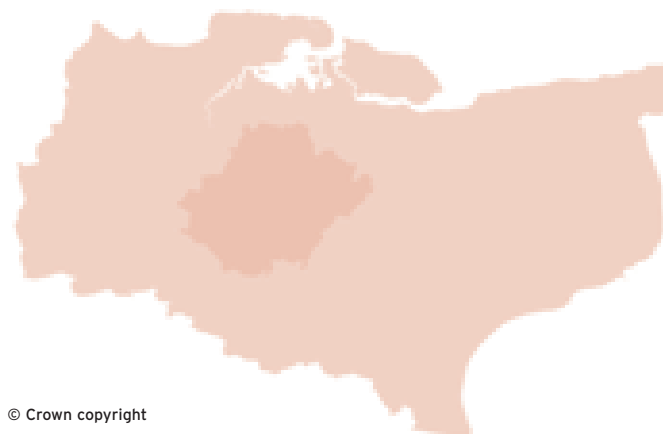
⁸ Ashford's Future: The Overarching Report. Ashford Borough Council and Partners. December 2002

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- Greenfield land currently accounts for more than 80% of identified land supply for housing. The capacity of the urban area should be investigated further in order to increase the contribution made by previously developed land and there is substantial scope to increase the efficiency with which existing development sites are used. However, further strategic scale greenfield land releases will be required beyond 2006 in locations which are close to the Ashford urban area and with good accessibility to it by a choice of transport. Detailed definition of new strategic development locations will need to take account of the provisions of this Plan to 2016 and the potential beyond if Ashford's accelerated rate of growth is to continue into the longer term.



Deposit Plan September 2003

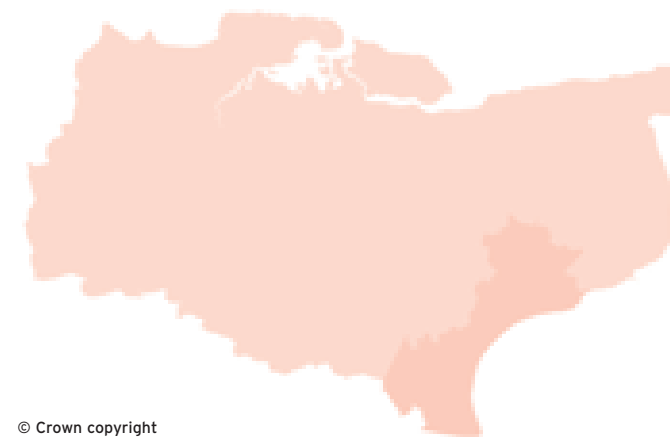


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7.19 Maidstone

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

growth and reflects a greater reliance on previously developed land.



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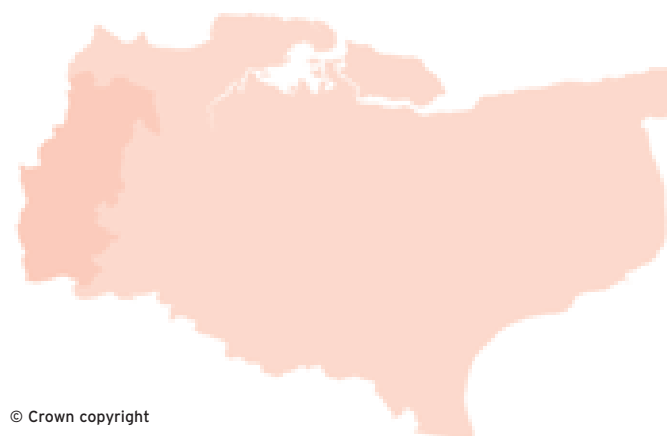
7.20 Shepway

- Housing requirements based on recent demographic trends are strongly influenced by migration into the District, which accounts for some 60% of the overall trend-based assessment of housing demand.
- This Plan does not reflect the full trend requirement but still makes provision well above the level which would accommodate household growth, generated solely by local demographic and social changes. The Plan provides for continued growth from migration, including workforce growth in which will be needed to support economic regeneration and diversification.

- The policy allows for significant use of urban development sites and relies on both urban regeneration at Folkestone/Hythe (particularly the harbour and waterfront opportunity areas) and completion of the strategic expansion of Hawkinge.

West Kent

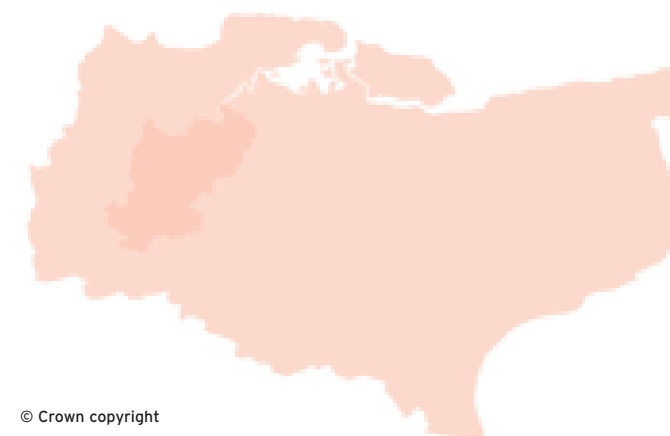
- Much of West Kent (the Districts of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells) is in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The growth of the principal towns is also limited by other major planning constraints including nationally important landscape designations (AONB). Policy WK1 allows for no structural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



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7.22 Sevenoaks

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

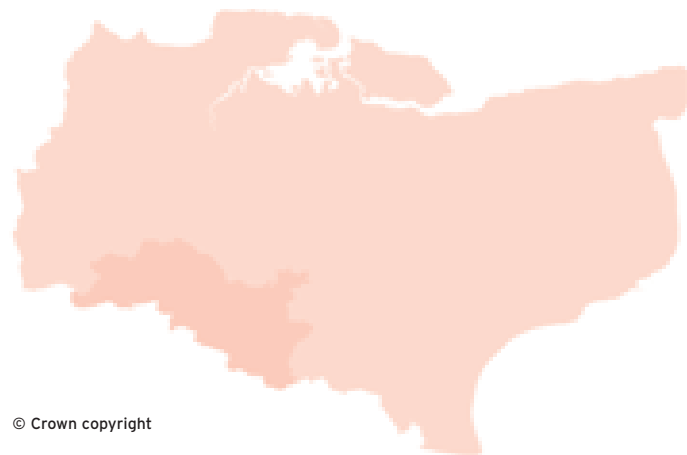


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7.23 Tonbridge and Malling

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

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7.24 Tunbridge Wells

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

The Managed Release of Housing Sites

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

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

7.26 The planning authorities will need to ensure that sufficient land comes forward to enable the average rates of development under Policy HP1 for each of its phases to be achieved whilst optimising the use of previously used land within the major/principal urban areas and at other sustainable locations before using greenfield land. Phasing will help to prevent the early release of greenfield sites prejudicing urban regeneration. It will also help to achieve the recycling target for the use of previously developed land (Policy HP3).

7.27 Strong market demand for homes in some areas may result in pressure for allocated sites to be developed rapidly during the early stages of the plan

period and for a higher than expected number of 'windfall' sites to come forward. Careful phasing of the release of land, including windfalls, will ensure that a steady supply of sites is forthcoming throughout the whole of the plan period and that targets are not exceeded. Phasing can also help ensure that, if necessary, community and physical infrastructure is improved or provided in parallel with the development of housing.

Policy HP2: Phased Provision of Housing Land

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

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

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

	Dwellings (net)++					
	2001 2006	2006 2011	2011 2016	2001 2016	2016 2021	2001 2021
ASHFORD	700	1,000	1,100	930	1,200	1,000
CANTERBURY	420	420	400	415	300	385
DARTFORD	780	800	900	825	620	775
DOVER	320	320	260	300	200	275
GRAVESHAM	280	300	300	295	220	275
MAIDSTONE	460	440	400	435	360	415
SEVENOAKS	160	160	160	160	140	155
SHEPWAY	360	300	280	315	240	295
SWALE	500	500	500	500	400	475
THANET	340	340	340	340	300	330
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	440	420	420	425	380	415
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	300	280	220	270	220	255
[KCC AREA]	5,060	5,280	5,28	5,210	4,580	5,050
MEDWAY	700	780	820	765	720	755
KENT	5,760	6,060*	6,100*	5,980*	5,300*	5,805*

++ Rounded to the nearest five

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

Increasing Reliance on Previously Developed Land

7.29 There needs to be enough land available to provide 89,600 homes in the period to 2016. At 2001 there was enough land identified (sites with planning permission and those allocated in local plans), on both previously developed and greenfield land for some 54,000 dwellings. However a significant proportion of this (c.11,000 dwellings), primarily within Thames Gateway (Dartford), represents sites which are not likely to be available until after 2011.⁹ Additional land will come from sites identified through District based urban housing capacity studies and other previously developed land which comes forward as a result of windfall planning permissions. Sites of this kind, involving previously developed land have recently been adding an average of about 1500 dwellings per annum to the housing supply. Further housing gains can also be expected as a result of increased densities from already committed sites, particularly on larger greenfield allocations.

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

⁹ A small element of this longer term (post 2011) supply in Dartford (residual part of Eastern Quarry) is likely to represent availability post 2021

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

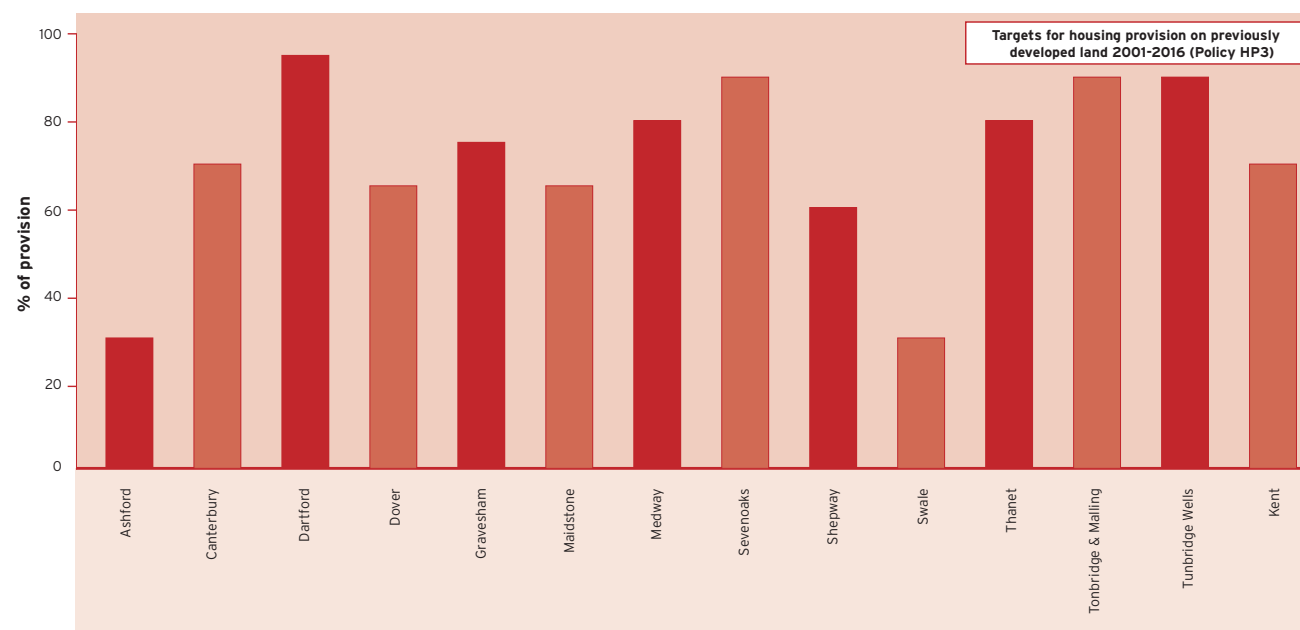
7.32 Existing strategic development locations involving both previously developed and greenfield land are largely retained and some new greenfield provision will be required on a selective basis in the medium term. New or extended strategic development locations will be needed to accommodate requirements in Medway, Swale, Ashford, Shepway and Thanet. Depending on progress in the use of previously developed land, smaller scale additions to greenfield supply may be necessary in Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone, and Tunbridge Wells in the longer term. In assessing these requirements there will be a need to take account of the indicative housing provisions for the 2016-2021 period. These should be regarded as minimum requirements for this period.

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

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

NOTE TO POLICY HP3

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



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

Priorities for the Location of New Housing Development

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

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

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

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

- the previously developed and greenfield elements of the existing committed housing land supply;
- the likely scope for increasing the housing capacity of strategic development locations and other major housing allocations (unless they have already been assessed against current objectives for better use of land);

- expectations for the future capacity of previously developed land;
- provision made in this Plan for new or extended strategic development locations involving both previously developed and greenfield land.

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

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requirements unless there is a net gain in dwellings, for example, through conversion of a property.

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

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

7.40 This Plan identifies strategic development locations which play an important part in implementing its development strategy. In the case of greenfield development their release and phasing will be depend on the prior application of the search

sequence in Policy HP4 to ensure that priority is given to the use of previously developed land. Similar considerations will apply to smaller scale greenfield land releases identified through Local Development Documents. These will need to consider the nature and impact of strategic environmental and planning constraints at the principal urban areas and the rural service centres.

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

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

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

Policy HP4: Sequential Approach to Location of New Housing Provision

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

1) The re-use of previously developed land and buildings:

a) within Kent's major/principal urban areas; followed by:

b) within Kent's rural service centres; followed by:

c) within a smaller rural settlement, as defined in Local Development Documents, with the potential for a sustainable form of development including ready access to good quality public transport;

followed by:

2) Where applicable, settlement extensions or new communities identified as strategic development locations by this Plan;

followed by:

3) An extension or extensions to:

(a) a major/principal urban area; followed by:

(b) a rural service centre; followed by:

(c) a smaller rural settlement, as defined in Local Development Documents, with the potential for a sustainable form of development including ready access to good quality public transport.

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

Policy HP5: Assessment of New Housing Land

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

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

Housing Development in the Countryside

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

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

Policy HP6: Housing Development in the Countryside

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

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

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

Housing Type and Need

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

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

7.48 Local Development Documents should meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including affordable homes and special needs housing (such as that designed for older people and those with disabilities). In order to do this they should make provision for wider housing choice and a mix of dwelling sizes, types and locations. The

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creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics should be avoided with an emphasis instead on socially mixed, balanced and inclusive communities.

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

7.50 Local housing needs assessments should be used to determine the type and size of additional housing to be provided. The assessment should take account of the composition of existing and future households, the requirements for both subsidised and market housing, and the character and condition of the existing stock. Given that the number of people aged 85+ is expected to grow by almost one third over the next 20 years and that there is a current shortage of extra care housing, the need for sheltered housing, including extra care sheltered housing, should be assessed. This assessment should

take into account the strategies of Kent and Medway Councils towards sheltered housing. District based assessments should be undertaken in a consistent manner across wider housing market areas where there are significant cross-boundary movements between districts for employment and/or housing purposes. Local Development Document policies and other site-specific guidance should set out clear guidance for house builders regarding the type of housing expected for the principal development sites.

Policy HP7: Range and Mix of Housing Provision

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

Affordable Housing

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

7.52 Not providing enough affordable housing also has adverse consequences for the local economy, new commercial development and public services

(including those provided privately such as in the social care sector). Recruiting and retaining 'key workers' is made more difficult since they are unable to find anywhere suitable to live. Insufficient affordable housing can also adversely affect the quality of life by requiring people to travel long distances to work from lower priced areas. RPG9a stresses the importance of increasing the supply of affordable housing as an essential ingredient of regeneration.

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

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

7.54 In Kent there is a great need to foster both higher levels of investment in the existing housing stock and to encourage a sense of participation in the well being of local communities. To this end a ladder of opportunity to share and participate in housing and the future of residential areas needs to be provided. Thus, where potential occupiers cannot

afford full market housing (owned or rented) there is much to commend equity sharing and other forms of intermediate housing. Kent and Medway Councils, the Housing Corporation, District housing authorities and the private sector will seek in particular to widen the opportunity for equity sharing in the County as a means of promoting a sense of community and social independence.

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

7.56 A strategic assessment of future affordable housing supply in Kent and Medway has been carried out to consider how applicable the RPG9 indicator is to Kent.¹⁰ This assessment focussed on need expected to arise during the Plan period rather than on any outstanding 'backlog' of need. It concluded that household growth implied an indicative 1600-1800 net additional affordable dwellings per annum made up of homes for rent, shared ownership developments and other forms of low cost housing. This suggests that on the basis of household growth alone some 30% of all new homes should be in the

affordable sector. This assessment does not provide district level indicators for which individual need assessments will be required but it is nonetheless indicative of the overall scale of the requirement.

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

7.58 The negotiation of cross subsidy arrangements between market price development and affordable housing will depend on the circumstances of individual sites. This will include their relationship to the existing pattern of services and facilities, accessibility to public transport and local evidence of

need. It will be important to ensure that both low cost market homes and subsidised housing for rent remain affordable in perpetuity, possibly through partnerships with registered social landlords and the use of legal agreements. The contribution made by sites to affordable housing provision should also take full account of contributions required to other infrastructure and services directly related to the development in accordance with Policies QL12 and IMP1.

Policy HP8: Affordable Housing Provision

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

Local Development Documents should:

- a) establish the proportion of strategic housing provisions identified in Policy HP1 that should be met by affordable housing on the basis of District housing needs assessments;**
- b) identify the respective contributions planned for shared equity, key worker and other forms of intermediate housing**
- c) indicate the site size thresholds that will apply to provision of affordable housing and provide indicative targets for the level and composition of the contribution required from specific sites.**

¹⁰ Needs for Affordable and Market Housing in Kent: Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research: Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge 2001

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

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

Policy HP9: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

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

Provision for Gypsy Accommodation

7.61 Regardless of their ethnic origin gypsies are distinguished by their nomadic way of life which is directly associated with their way of earning a living.¹¹ Although they make up a tiny proportion of the population local planning authorities must consider gypsies' needs for accommodation and provide for adequate sites in their development plans. In addition to the settled population, parts of Kent are host to gypsy groups seeking temporary seasonal work or passing through the area. A variety of sites may be needed including sites for settled, long-term use, temporary stopping places and transit sites. To tackle the problem of unauthorised traveller encampments Government is revising policy and funding to facilitate the provision of temporary, transit and emergency stopping places for travellers. Consideration needs to be given to providing such facilities over a wide area to provide a network of opportunities. In conjunction with Kent and Medway Councils District authorities should identify the local need for gypsy sites (both permanent and transit) in their Local Development Documents and indicate how this need is to be met.

7.62 Government guidance (Circular 1/94) advises that it will not be appropriate to make provision for gypsy sites in areas of open land where development is severely restricted e.g. AONBs, SSSIs and other protected areas. Green Belt land should not be allocated for gypsy sites in development plans. Sites on the outskirts of built up areas may be appropriate provided care is taken to avoid encroachment on

open countryside and there is consistency with agricultural and countryside policies. There are other criteria which need to be taken into account in establishing gypsy sites, for example access to schools, health care and other community facilities, and provision of mains services such as water and electricity.

Policy HP10: Provision of Permanent and Transit Gypsy Accommodation

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

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

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

¹¹ See Department of the Environment Circular 18/94 :Gypsy Sites Policy and Unauthorised Camping