



Foreword



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Both Kent and Medway are experiencing rapid change and face substantial challenges over the next 20 years. The area has a distinctive, high quality but fragile environment which needs to be protected and enhanced. However there are demands and opportunities arising from Kent and Medway's position close to London and as the 'gateway' between the UK and mainland Europe. Nationally and regionally Government is pursuing a 'step change' in housing provision. Two of the four growth areas for the South East identified in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan - Thames Gateway and Ashford - are within the Kent and Medway area.

The Kent and Medway Structure Plan provides fully for the area's contribution to new housing in the South East and maintains generous provisions for new economic development. Kent and Medway's economic performance continues to lag behind that of other parts of the South East. The need for housing to go hand in hand with business growth, job creation and a widening range and quality of employment is an essential requirement for development. The Plan emphasises the importance of these relationships to balanced and sustainable growth.

Development must not be viewed in isolation from its consequences and requirements. The results of the wide-ranging public consultation undertaken during the preparation of the Structure Plan clearly established the need for early improvements to the area's infrastructure, particularly transport, to serve existing communities and to achieve the growth envisaged. Development must be accompanied by the funding and provision of essential community facilities and services that will support it.

The Structure Plan seeks development of the highest quality with new housing, associated with high quality neighbourhood facilities and open space, contributing to the creation of attractive communities. Necessary development must be a positive force for change making the best use of land, reflecting a high quality of design and sensitivity to community needs. We place great weight on protecting our distinctive countryside and heritage, supporting the regeneration of our towns and town centres and

building on local strengths and opportunities within the economy of Kent and Medway. This Structure Plan provides robust policies on these matters.

Kent and Medway have a strong track record in providing a sound and up to date strategic planning framework for the county – this Plan maintains that. It builds on the aims of our community strategies in setting out our framework of policies and proposals for environmental protection, the major transport priorities, the scale and broad pattern of new housing and economic development.

Preparing and taking forward the Structure Plan's policies and proposals requires wide partnership and support. We would like to thank the many organisations and individuals whose valued contribution to the Structure Plan's preparation has added so much to its quality.



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Introduction

In 1998 Kent County Council and Medway Council became jointly responsible for the Structure Plan and for producing the new Kent and Medway Structure Plan covering both areas. The Structure Plan is the strategic 'arm' of the statutory development plan for Kent and Medway setting out the broad strategy for the development and use of land for new homes, jobs, transport, shopping, recreation and services. Its purpose is to balance these requirements with the need to protect Kent's environment.

Preparation of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan has been subject to two main stages of public consultation. In Spring 2002 consultation was undertaken on the pre-deposit document, 'Mapping out the Future', focusing on the key areas of policy change and choice. Consultation on the 'Deposit' draft of the Plan took place in late 2003. Following an Examination in Public in 2004 and consultations on two sets of Proposed Modifications the Plan was adopted by Kent and Medway Councils on 6th July 2006.

The Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 replaces the 1996 Kent Structure Plan. It covers the period 2001-2021 although its housing provisions relate to 2001-2016, consistent with the time horizon of RPG9 (2001). The Plan will guide more detailed local planning, the preparation of Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plans. It will also provide strategic development control guidance for Kent County Council, Medway Council and the district councils in Kent.

As a result of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 this will be the last Structure Plan for Kent. In future, statutory strategic planning for the South East region and Kent will be provided through the Regional Spatial Strategy (the 'South East Plan'). However, until this is finalised the Structure Plan remains part of the development plan for the Kent and Medway area.

The formal Structure Plan comprises the policies adopted by the two Councils, shown in bold type (and, where appropriate, associated tables), together with the Key Diagram, indicating the geographical inter-relationship of the policies, and transport network hierarchy diagrams. The accompanying text (the 'explanatory memorandum') amplifies the policies and provides the Councils' advice on how the policies should be interpreted. An index of all the policies is provided at the front of the Plan.

Throughout the Plan references to 'Kent' apply to the whole Structure Plan area unless stated to be otherwise. Specific reference is made to Medway where this needs to be distinguished.



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