

09 THE WAY FORWARD

This section outlines the next stage of work to be undertaken to realise the Plan. Critical to its success is the focus over the next six months, in particular, on advancing the GADF through the statutory consultation stages to the adoption of the Local Development Framework and linking this with the work undertaken on the Town Centre Action Plan.

Parallel to this process are three vital aspects of work:

1. The Ongoing Design Process

This will require a concerted effort to bring forward more detailed design development for the Victoria Way/New Town Way Corridor, amongst others. This will include the preparation of design briefs linked to movement and access strategies for the entire corridor.

2. The Infrastructure Development Process

This will require a range of further detailed studies around infrastructure funding, flood risk assessment and sustainability issues. Clear roles and responsibilities have been identified for the infrastructure providers, showing the implications on the GADF.

3. The Delivery Process

This will require further effort on the details of the Delivery Plan, including further refinement of the Strategic Tariff proposals and the Major Sites Charter .

09.1 THE ONGOING DESIGN PROCESS

It is essential that the ongoing design process recognises the tension between quick delivery and full testing of the masterplanning stage. A number of major development projects are currently being planned in advance of clarifying the detailed infrastructure requirements. This is of particular concern along the proposed Victoria Way/ New Town Way Corridor. These projects include the Powergen site and EP/SEEDA sites to the south of the town centre on Victoria Road; the New Town Works; and Waterbrook development plans for a waste transfer facility. Also, other areas will need to be advanced to facilitate early creation of jobs and continued housing regeneration.

The ongoing design process for the next six months should focus on the following aspects of work:

The Victoria Way/New Town Way Corridor

This corridor is critical to the success of the Plan and includes development of plans and proposals for the main road network to Stage C standards to support any community infrastructure funding and other mainstream programme bids. All key project sites along this corridor should have development briefs prepared to guide early discussions with developers and landowners. These sites include:

- The Chart Estate, including a detailed study of the Matalan junction area.
- The Cobbs Wood estate area along the alignment of the proposed bridge link to Junction 9
- The brownfield sites focusing on the Powergen site, Learning Link corridor and car park proposals to the south of the railway line.
- The Victoria Road Corridor showing other sites along the new Victoria Way.
- The South Station precinct extending from the station to the Designer Retail Outlet.
- The Klondike/New Town Works site.
- Orbital Park.
- Waterbrook, to include for a park-and-ride site; early residential development and links to Cheeseman's Green.

The Bockhanger Wood Corridor

To advance SEEDA's plans to accelerate the creation of jobs at Junction 9, it is recommended that a detailed study of this corridor extending from the Canterbury Road to the proposed neighbourhood centre be undertaken. This should be linked to the regeneration of the Bybrook Estate with the view to opening up a local public transport corridor and pedestrian/cycling link to the town centre.

The Canal District

Although this is not a priority project, it has gained the support of a number of stakeholders in Ashford. With the latest moves from the Environment Agency to consider some element of development within the floodplain, it is recommended that further work be undertaken to move the project forward.

Detailed transport proposals

Detailed proposals for localised transport improvements will be firmed up in early 2005 following further detailed traffic modelling. Costing of items scheduled in the phasing is now being undertaken as part of the cost plan exercise discussed in Section 2 above.

It is useful to highlight the approach to several key pieces of infrastructure, the further development of which we are assuming should follow the planned testing.

- 1. Junction 10A.** Further design work will be needed to the new motorway junction close to Junction 10. It seems likely that current designs will have to be changed, possibly to create one large junction, or preferably, to disconnect Junction 10 from the motorway to separate local and strategic traffic.
- 2. Sevington CTRL bridge.** In order to construct Orchard Way East from Junction 10A southwards to Waterbrook a new highway crossing of the CTRL will be required. Consideration should be given to the widening of the existing bridge to the west or using this as an interim solution.
- 3. New Town Way/ A2070 connection.** It is assumed that the existing junction would be upgraded into a large at-grade signal crossroads, and that a new route under the A2070 would also be required. It is assumed that remodelling would take place at the same time as works to Newtown Road / Hastings railway line underpass below.
- 4. New Town Road/ Hastings railway line underpass.** It is assumed that headroom would need to be eased to allow new accessible buses to use this route, by a combination of level reductions and reducing the structural depth of the existing railway bridge. The redundant railway bridge is assumed to be demolished. A greater width is needed for vehicles, and this may be possible by removing the existing footway and building a new adjacent pedestrian and cycle tunnel to the DOC centre.

5. Crowbridge Road/ Aylesford stream crossing. It is assumed that as part of future upgrading works to create New Town Way, the existing bridge would be reconstructed to widen and flatten the highway to create a standard width single carriageway (with a single footway).

6. Routes between Kingsnorth and Cheeseman's Green. It is intended to use the existing rural road from Cheeseman's Green to the Park Farm/A2070 area, with a new connection onto the A2070. However, west of the A2070, Orchard Avenue would be built as a new route between Church Hill and Magpie Hall Road.

7. Victoria Way connection to Leacon Road. It is intended to build a parallel future connection to the existing road in the later phases of development (the exact trigger point to be determined by transport modelling).

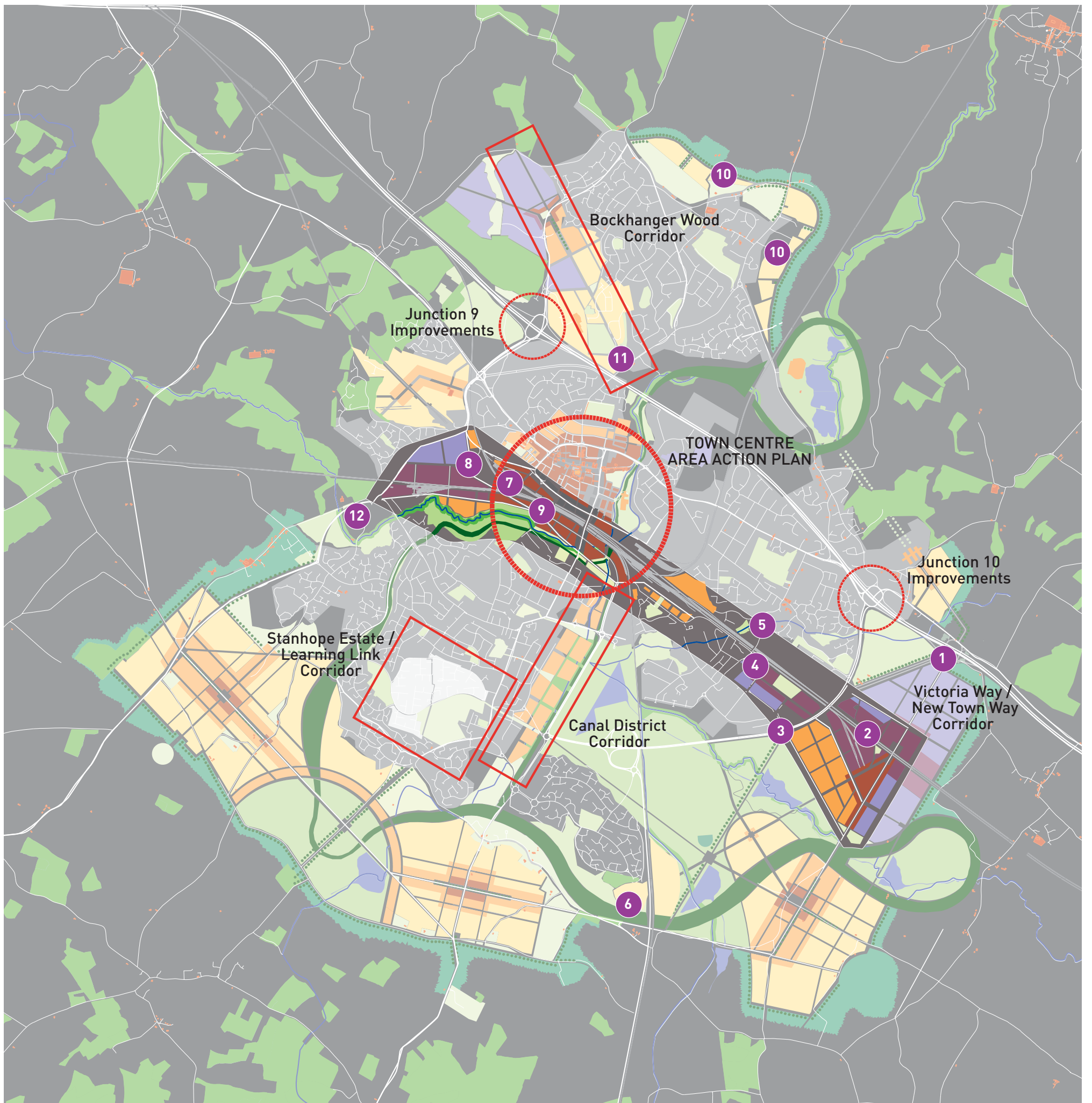
8. Bridge link to Cobbs Wood. The alignment of the bridge is intended to link directly into Brunswick Road, crossing the narrowest part of the railway line in the area. Routes through Cobbs Wood would follow existing roads.

9. Learning Link. It is assumed that parts of this link would be for pedestrians and cyclists only. However, a new vehicle route through Stanhope is preferred.

10. Kennington Circle. Kennington Circle East is a link road between the Canterbury Road and the Willesborough Road and primarily provides access to new housing at Kennington. Kennington Circle North is a strategic link road between the Canterbury Road and ultimately Junction 9 of the M20 via Trinity Road. The scheme will relieve congestion on the Canterbury Road and provide access to new housing development at Kennington. The AHTS modelling will identify flows on these roads and identify any requirement to modify the approach.

11. Bockhanger access roads. It appears that development can be served adequately with new access roads, without the need for strategic highway infrastructure. Further design development of this area is suggested.

12. New town Road / Crowbridge Road / Godinton Road / Knoll Road / Carlton Road / Brunswick Road / Brookfield Road. These are all existing roads on the proposed SMARTLINK alignment. It is assumed that SMARTLINK improvements will take the form of Bus Priority Measures, though the possibility of segregation should be further explored. This should inform the choice of Town Centre route.



Focus of early work

09.2 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure

The infrastructure proposals are being discussed with other workstreams that are working on funding and costing exercises.

Funding the transport infrastructure will be a challenge. Various sources of funding are available:

- Public – Local Transport Plan; Kent County Council; English Partnerships; ODPM (e.g. Sustainable Communities Plan)
- Private – Developers (Section 106, Tariffs); Private Finance Initiative.

Certain items of transport infrastructure lend themselves well to private funding because they are directly related to the impact of particular developments. Generally, the more strategic infrastructure items have a wider benefit and need to be more heavily subsidised by public funds. For example, Junction 10A is in the Highways Agencies' Targeted Programme of Improvements, and only about 20% of the cost is earmarked from private development contributions. However, even where infrastructure can be paid for from private funds, forward funding may be necessary from public bodies (to be reimbursed later) to get major pieces of infrastructure in place in advance of development. A tariff system is one way of administering this, but the rates to be charged and the projects they are to be allocated to are important factors to resolve. For example, office development may have a higher traffic impact than residential for the same land area, but may generate lower profits, and therefore a traffic impact related tariff may reduce the amount of employment development that comes forward. These issues are being explored in the funding workstream.

Flood Risk

The conclusion following Black and Veatch's Study undertaken for IWMS is that the overall impacts from GADF can be mitigated and that no further modelling for GADF is required.

Detailed modelling for town centre areas will need to be undertaken as part of the Town Centre Development Framework.

The approach for developing a Canal District would be to undertake flood compensation measures to re-classify development land as being outside of the flood plain.

The Environment Agency are to consider climate change impacts as part of their Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP)

Statutory Services

The impact of statutory infrastructure requires further detail from the statutory providers on detailed layout costs, phasing of strategic infrastructure and the required easement widths to feed into the master plan layouts.

Sustainability

Sustainability is key to development in Ashford and all forms of infrastructure need to be looked at with sustainable solutions in mind. At this initial stage the opportunity to lay the foundation for sustainable development is essential to Ashford's future. Again, discussion is required with the relevant authorities to ensure that sustainable policies are adopted at an early stage.

A further, more detailed, study of technologies and their possible application to Ashford is required.

The majority of the statutory infrastructure enhancements and reinforcement works need to be carried out in the first phase of the development.

All the services require easement widths and the layout has to accommodate this.

The existing high pressure and intermediate pressure gas mains are large diameter mains. As previously stated at workshops these mains are very difficult and costly to move and therefore the layout must accommodate this.

Funding Issues

Planned infrastructure investments, as currently advised by the statutory providers, are summarised, on the spreadsheet that follows, with known funding implications for GADF. Generally strategic enhancements will be funded directly through consumer tariffs for investment plans agreed with regulators. Known exceptions to this are the 25% contributions to Mid Kent's new reservoir. New secondary infrastructure and specific changes to primary infrastructure to serve new development are developer costs. This would include under grounding of overhead power lines and possibly fibre optic cabling, particularly retrofitting of existing areas. There is a need for the statutory providers to update their investment plans and strategic capacity enhancements required to accommodate final layouts and phasing.

UTILITY	REGULATOR	INVESTMENT PLAN		LICENCES	NOTES	IMPLICATIONS FOR GADF
		SHORT TERM	LONG TERM			
EDF Energy	OFFGEM	5 year plan 2005 - 2010	10 year plan 2005 - 2015	Unless revoked EDF's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked EDF need to be given 25 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on EDF before 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDF plan for and submit a 10 year business plan to OFFGEM every 10 years. This is reviewed by OFFGEM & EDF Energy every 5 years Infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer's bills. Local development (i.e. housing development) is funded by the developer 	EDF have confirmed that there will be no costs associated with the strategic reinforcement of the existing Ashford grid. Secondary infrastructure costs to serve new development areas by GADF.
Mid-Kent Water	OFWAT	5 year plan 2005 - 2010	25 year plan 2005 - 2030	Unless revoked MKW's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked MKW need to be given 10 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on MKW until 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Kent plan for 25 years but submit a 5 year business plan to OFWAT Infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer billing. Local development is funded by developer MKW also use a provision in the water act, where a developer is required to put in an oversized main to accommodate future development. Subsequent developers then reimburse the original developer 	Mid-Kent Water have requested a 25% contribution towards the construction of the reservoir as part of the strategic reinforcement to supplies. Infrastructure costs to serve new development areas by GADF.
Southern Water	OFWAT	5 year plan 2005 - 2010	10 year plan 2005 - 2015	Unless revoked SW's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked SW need to be given 10 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on SW until 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern Water usually plan for 10 years but submit a 5 year business plan to OFWAT Large infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer billing (approved by OFWAT). Local sewers and small pumping stations are funded by developer contribution 	Southern Water have confirmed that the strategic reinforcement works for the 2005-2010 will be funded by Southern Water. An outline proposal for the necessary strategic reinforcements during 2010-2015 has been submitted to OFWAT but will not be reviewed until 2009. Until confirmed there may be infrastructure costs to serve the new development areas by GADF.
Transco	OFFGEM	10 year business statement 2001 - 2010	As short term	Unless revoked Transco's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked Transco need to be given 25 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on Transco before 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transco have a gas transporter's licence from OFFGEM Infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer billing. Local development is funded by the developer 	Transco advise no strategic enhancements required. Infrastructure costs to serve new development areas by GADF.
British Telecom	OFCOM	tbc	tbc	See notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Telecom do not require a licence to operate and do not have to submit a business plan to OFCOM BT have a legal obligation, through OFCOM, to supply a service to anyone who requires it BT are funded purely on their profits from customers BT state their infrastructure is in place and expand only when required by development 	BT will provide fibre optic cabling where demand requires. Costs for retrofitting existing areas would be by GADF

Statutory Services Provides

09.3 THE DELIVERY PROCESS

If the agenda set by the Sustainable Communities Plan and this Masterplan is to be delivered, one of the key actions that needs to be taken early on in the first phase is the setting up of an appropriate delivery mechanism. This mechanism will have to help ensure the timely provision of infrastructure as well as the overall quality of the places that are created. This is essential if the masterplan is to be used to provide the certainty required by the local community, potential new residents and potential investors. Being seen to be capable of delivering high quality development, public realm and infrastructure will be crucial in changing market perceptions of the town and therefore in attracting investment and high value jobs.

It is beyond the scope of this report to recommend the details of this mechanism, however, it will have to deal with the following issues;

- Infrastructure Planning and delivery.
- Infrastructure funding and financing.
- Setting and delivering high specifications for infrastructure and public realm.
- The long term management and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm.
- Delivering and sustaining a high quality public transport system.
- Using infrastructure delivery and the ownership of key sites to help control the release of development and the quality of the development that takes place.

The Delivery Plan

- Cost plan - all key social and physical infrastructure items identified
- Phasing – infrastructure related to timing and critical paths for delivery
- Funding sources – public mainstream funding sources, service providers (e.g. customer charges for utility services, subject to regulators), private sector via landowner contributions (strategic tariff) – the residual making up the total being the gap funding that the public sector, essentially central Government needs to fund (promising start through the recent Community infrastructure Fund).
- Board agreement with Government – the clever bit – a sort of public service agreement where Govt and its agencies sign up to deliver funding and other actions to deliver key infrastructure and ‘contract’ with other agencies to deliver the total package

Draft Circular 1/97

- Pooling for a range of infrastructure now acceptable – particularly to provide strategic infrastructure in the growth areas
- Tariff must be clearly linked to specific infrastructure – in our case the costed delivery plan - and not ‘tax like’ arbitrary level of land value gain;
- Standard charges and formulae encouraged – expansion of recent approach in Ashford;
- Importance of regional policy which provides policy steer, taken alongside Sustainable Communities Plan, to support the holistic approach to providing the package of measures needed to deliver sustainable growth

The Strategic Tariff

- Status quo is not an option – collecting contributions between landowners who have different timescales and motivations is inherently complex and subject to derailment – viz SATS – no basis on which to roll out the range of infrastructure needed – apportionment on one major item (J10) is complex enough and needs regular revisiting – not realistic for a range of infrastructure which needs a more general tariff;
- Common threads - Milton Keynes – approach very similar and generated through sharing common issues in the growth areas – same problems essentially needing similar solutions
- Principle in Core Strategy – tariff as a policy issue but not the detailed calculation
- Detail in Supplementary Planning Document – can be produced in advance of adopted LDF policy (draft 1/97 suggests)
- Planning gain supplement – the Kate Barker tax on uplift in development values cannot be applied as well as the tariff – point has been made to Treasury as landowners cannot take a ‘double hit’ and retain incentive to develop land
- Complexity – brownfield/ town centre/ greenfield; residential/ commercial; timing; etc – all need working up in some detail in SPD

Ability to pay

- Landowner ability to contribute – crucial to understand capacity to pay without removing incentive to develop – the landowner cannot be a funder of the residual in the cost equation whatever that might be! The ‘residual’ is the extra gap funding, if needed, to balance the total cost package

- Turner Morum work – advise housebuilders generally and advising the Board on private sector ability to contribute to inject the realism needed in the delivery sums;
- Financing early investment remains a key issue – more important probably than the total funds needed is the timing of investment in key infrastructure;
- Banker role – public agency – such as EP; and/ or infraco providing an agreed package over the long term funded by institutional investors and secured against Govt commitment to fund certain elements and the ‘income stream’ from developer contributions
- Government commitment is the crucial element needed to make this work – in MK they are producing an agreement which will be a pilot for the PSA type model of Govt contract with delivery partners.

Major sites charter

- Speed and reliability on timetables and process – the proactive service we want to deliver assuming we can resource it
- Proactive process with early warnings – steering the developer through the ever more complex process from pre planning to completion and future maintenance/ adoption
- Two way ‘Contract’ – commitment to process needed from both sides on quality and timeliness
- Realism on resources and contributions – the local authority can only offer the best service it is resourced to do
- Delivery – as a result experience suggests better product, increased values, and as we get a clearer process in place faster timetable.

The Indicative Programme opposite is a summary of a detailed programme prepared by Turner & Townsend to support the delivery process.

	2005												2006					
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	01	02	03	04	05	06
Core Strategy, Strategic Environment Assessment and Community Statement completed	■	■	■															
Presentation to Ashford's Future Delivery Board, Ashford Borough Council			■															
Preparation of Consultation material and documentation				■														
Consultation on the Options Stage of the Local Development Framework					■	■	■	■										
Feedback and preparation of Development Plan documents									■	■	■	■						
Completion of Town Centre Development Framework	■	■	■	■	■													
Preparation of Town Centre Action Plan by ABC								■	■	■								
Consultation on Development Plan documents and Town Centre Action Plan								■	■	■								
Ongoing design work					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Transport testing			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Submission of the Core Strategy																		●

Indicative Programme

