

Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan - Presubmission Consultation Statement

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Introduction

This Statement sets out the information required under Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2008 in relation to the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan Document (ATCAAP). Regulation 27 requires that the Local Planning Authority must prepare a Statement setting out the following:

- (a) which bodies were invited to make representations pursuant to Regulation 25(1) [the Issues and Options Stage];
- (b) how those bodies were invited to make representations;
- (c) a summary of the main issues raised; and
- (d) how those main issues have been addressed in the DPD.

As the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan was commenced prior to the amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2008, this Statement also incorporates a summary of representations made under the former Regulation 27(2) in respect of the Preferred Options Report. This includes:

- (a) the number of representations made;
- (b) a summary of the main issues raised; and
- (c) how those main issues have been addressed in the DPD.

This Statement addresses both of the above issues.

Sustainability Appraisal

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Sustainability Appraisals to be carried out on Local Development Plan Documents (DPDs). In order to assess the sustainability impacts of different plan and policy options, an appraisal framework was devised, with inputs from key stakeholders. The Sustainability Report, which is appended to the ATCAAP Regulation 27 Consultation Document, provides an independent, qualitative appraisal of the ATCAAP.

The Sustainability Appraisal has been consulted on at previous stages of the ATCAAP in accordance with government guidance (Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Document, ODPM, 2005). This included a scoping report and responses received throughout the ATCAAP preparation process (see Part A and Part B below).

PART A: CONSULTATION UNDER REGULATION 25

Before preparing the ATCAAP, extensive consultation was undertaken within the framework of the LDF Core Strategy and the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF). The GADF is the first masterplan for the Borough to be prepared as part of the new planning system and is the principal supporting document for the Core Strategy.

The first major consultation event was held at Eastwell Manor between the 26 – 29 April 2004, where a selection of stakeholder groups were invited to participate in an intensive four-day workshop. The workshop sought to clarify the issues of growth and to explore and develop a preferred growth scenario, including the role of the Town Centre as the Growth Agenda evolved.

The second stage in the consultation process was the establishment of the Town Team a group of representatives to formulated a Town Charter, which sets out the primary principals and aspirations for Ashford's development.

The third part was a wider public consultation event held on the 22 May at County Square Shopping Centre in Ashford's Town Centre. Representatives of consultants, Ashford Borough Council and Ashford's Future introduced the growth challenge to members of the public, in order to capture their ideas and opinions. At this event 1500 people engaged in consultation activities, of these approximately 500 people involved directly in playing a version of the Scenario 3 game [see GADF];

A Town Centre Workshop was held in April 2005. This workshop discussed key issues facing the Town Centre and provided key stakeholders with an opportunity to input into the early stages of the Town Centre Development Framework. Key stakeholders, interest and amenity groups, Councillors and the Town Team participated.

A second Town Centre workshop was held in May 2005, this time focusing on the key public realm issues, and how to address these issues. Again key stakeholders, interest and amenity groups, Councillors and the Town Team participated facing the Town Centre.

On the basis of the above, the Authority considers that it has complied with the consultation requirements of Regulation 25.

PART B: CONSULTATION UNDER REGULATION 26

Public consultation on the The Ashford Town Centre AAP 'Preferred Options' report was carried out for a six-week period from 24th April to 5th June 2006.

• The document, including the proposals matters [in the form of a consultation letter and summary leaflet] were available for inspection during normal office hours at:

- Ashford Borough Council Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford
- The Council's Tenterden Sub-Office, 6/7 The Fairings, Tenterden
- Ashford Library, Church Road, Ashford
- Charing Library, Market Place, Charing
- Tenterden Library, 55 High Street, Tenterden*
- Wye Library, 6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye

**Since this time, the Tenterden library has closed and copies of the proposed submission documents will now be available at the Tenterden Gateway Centre, High Street, Tenterden.*

- The document and proposals matters were available on our website, www.ashford.gov.uk, together with information explaining where and when paper copies of the document were available for inspection.

- an advertisement was placed in the Kentish Express which was carried on the 20th April 2006

- copies of the document, along with the proposals matters and details of the forthcoming exhibitions, to all the bodies listed in appendix A and appendix C. We also sent a copy of the consultation letter and summary leaflet to over 250 interested stakeholders and general interest groups, saved on the LDF database.

- Further publicity of the ATCAAP 'Preferred Options' consultation was within articles in the Kent Messenger Newspaper and Ashford's Voice magazine.

We enclose a copy of the proposals matters in the form of the consultation letter in appendix D and the public advertisement appendix E.

We received 330 representations on the ATCAAP 'Preferred Options' report. A summary of the main issues raised and the way they have been addressed in the Regulation 27 Publication version of the ATCAAP appears in Appendix F.

Some representations asked for additional bodies/persons to be added to the Councils LDF database and these bodies have been added.

Appendix A - Core Stakeholders consulted at preferred options stage

Regional Planning Body

- South East England Regional Assembly
- Government Office for the South East

The Parish Councils of:

- Aldington & Bonnington
- Appledore
- Beckley
- Benenden
- Bethersden
- Biddenden
- Boughton Aluph and Eastwell
- Brabourne
- Brook
- Charing
- Chartham
- Chilham
- Cranbrook
- Dymchurch
- Egerton
- Fittenden
- Godmersham
- Great Chart with Singleton
- Hastingleigh
- Hawkinge
- High Halden
- Hothfield
- Iden
- Kenardington
- Kingsnorth
- Little Chart
- Lympe
- Mersham and Sevington
- Molash
- Newenden
- Orlestone and Stanhope
- Peasmarsh
- Petham
- Pluckley
- Rolvenden
- Ruckinge
- Sandhurst
- Shadoxhurst
- Swarden
- Stanford
- Stone

Network Rail

Natural England SE Region

Highways Agency

South East England Development Agency

County Councils

- ***Kent County Council***
- County Councillor for Ashford Rural South
- County Councillor for Ashford Rural East
- County Councillor for Tenterden
- County Councillor for Ashford Rural West
- County Councillor for Ashford South
- County Councillor for Ashford North
- ***East Sussex County Council***

Ward Members:

- Ward Member for Little Burton Farm
- Ward Member for Weald East
- Ward Member for Biddenden
- Ward Member for Isle of Oxney
- Ward Member for Charing
- Ward Member for Tenterden North
- Ward Member for Victoria Ashford
- Ward Member for North Willesborough Ashford
- Ward Member for Weald South
- Ward Member for Godinton South
- Ward Member for Stour Ashford
- Ward Member for Tenterden South
- Ward Member for Boughton Aluph and Eastwell
- Ward Member for Godinton Ashford
- Ward Member for Washford
- Ward Member for Rolvenden and Tenterden West
- Ward Member for Kennington
- Ward Member for North Willesborough Ashford
- Ward Member for St Micheals
- Ward Member for Downs North
- Ward Member for Bybrook Ashford
- Ward Member for Victoria Ashford

- Throwley
- Waltham
- Warehorne
- Wittersham
- Woodchurch
- Wye and Hinxhill

Any bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the LPA; SHA; Person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986; Sewerage undertaker; Water undertaker

- Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust
- Southern Water
- National Grid
- East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust
- British Gas Transco - South East 02
- T-mobile (UK) Limited
- Vodafone
- Hutchinson3G

- Ward Member for Weald Central
- Ward Member for Downs West
- Ward Member for Park Farm South
- Ward Member for Beaver
- Ward Member for Saxon Shore

Adjoining Local Planning Authorities

- Canterbury City Council
- Shepway District Council
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- Swale Borough Council
- Rother District Council

Other consultees

- Channel Tunnel Rail Link (UK) Limited
- CTM Architects
- Hallet & Co Solicitors
- Ashford's Future Core Delivery Team
- Kent County Council
- Kent & East Sussex Railway
- Mobile Operators Association

Appendix B - Participation carried out at preferred options consultation stage

Date	Consultation	Technique used	Targeted Consultees
May 2002	Visioning Workshops	Workshops held at the Stour Centre, giving participants the opportunity to help develop the direction of growth in Ashford and clarified the principles that should underpin growth as well as some of the major projects required i.e. infrastructure and service provision. The outputs of these workshops were fed into the development of the "Sustainable Growth Options Report"	Open to a wide range of public sector organisations and the wider community was involved through using community representatives including County, Borough and Parish Councillors, representatives from other Kent Districts, amenity, residents and tenants groups and representatives from voluntary organisations. Over 100 people attended in total
January 2002	Ashford Visioning Workshop	Visioning workshop held at Godinton House, Ashford	Involving Kent County Council and key stakeholders in order to build strategic partnerships before the launch of the community's plan and blue sky visioning workshops
October 2003	Visioning Design Workshop	This design workshop held at Eastwell Manor involved key stakeholders and all those with an interest in the town in order to build up design proposals for the Town Centre and to inform the consultants commissioned to prepare the Ashford Town Centre Development Framework. From this, 3 design options for the Town Centre were to be produced	A range of key stakeholders were involved in this event, similar to those present at the Quality of Life Workshops
February 2004	Placecheck	This exercise consisted of an extensive audit of the Town Centre and was intended to involve the wider community	Local residents groups, the Town Centre Partnership etc
March 2004	Ashford Town Centre	This workshop looked in detail at the 3 town centre	Key stakeholders, interest groups, etc,

Date	Consultation	Technique used	Targeted Consultees
	Development Framework Workshop	options put forward by the consultants and an assessment of the schemes and consideration of phasing priorities	similar to the quality of life workshops
March 2004	Public Exhibition	Consultation and public exhibition on Town Centre growth scenarios held at CentrePieceChurch, Ashford	Exhibition open to the general public and available to anyone with an interest
April 2004	Greater Ashford Development Framework Design Workshops and Public Exhibition	Results from the October 2003 design workshops fed into the Greater Ashford Development Framework, which were discussed and explored at a 4-day design workshop, held at Eastwell Manor, Ashford to develop different options. A public exhibition was held at the end of the week to display work carried out	Workshops involving stakeholders, interest and amenity groups, Councillors, Parish Councils and the Town Team, to discuss growth scenarios and the development of a Town Charter. Exhibition open to anyone with an interest
September 2004	Councillor Workshop	Workshop focusing on looking at the options for development and assessing key sites and their implications	All Council members invited
November 2004	Councillor workshop	Workshop looking at the Town Centre Masterplanning work and movement issues	All Councillors invited
January 2005	Landowner workshop	Two workshops held, one for major landowners and developers, and the other specifically for town centre landowners. The workshops provided an update to the Greater Ashford Development Framework. Consultation also covered delivery issues and the LDF timetable	Major landowners and developers, and Town Centre Landowners
February 2005	Stakeholder Meeting	Meeting on the initial public realm issues facing the town centre	Public Sector stakeholders

Date	Consultation	Technique used	Targeted Consultees
April 2005	Town Centre Workshop	Discussion around key issues facing the Town Centre and inputting into the TCDF process	Workshops involving stakeholders, interest and amenity groups, Councillors, the Town Team
May 2005	Public Realm Workshop	Workshop on the key issues facing the town centre and how to combat these issues	
May 2006	Town Centre Preferred Options Report published	Published and released for 6 week consultation	The wider public
May 2006	2 Staffed Town Centre Exhibitions – until 8pm	Staffed exhibition at Centerpiece Church in the town Centre. Staff were on hand to answer any questions and in turn encourage the public to make reps on PO report	Open to the public
May 2006	Staffed Town Centre Exhibition	Staffed exhibition held at Beaver road social club. Specially targeting residents in the Southern Expansion Quarter area to focus debate around issues such as Victoria Road	Victoria Road Residents Association, and others with an affiliation to the Victoria road area of the town

Appendix C - Consultees sent a copy of Town Centre Area Action Plan 'Preferred Options' Report not already included in Appendix A

- RPS Group
- Countryside Properties PLC
- Victoria Road Residents Association
- Cyma Architects
- Kent County Council Youth and Community
- Scott Wilson
- Ashford ACCESS
- Weald of Kent Protection Society
- Confederation of British Industry
- Carers' Support
- Brooke Smith Associates
- Victim Support
- Urban Initiatives
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Enterprise
- Crest Nicholson
- Learning and Skills Council
- Trident Building Consultancy Ltd
- Business Link Kent
- Cluttons LLP
- Eurostar
- Bar 3 Zero
- The Nyasa Partnership Limited
- Richard Griffiths Architects
- Holder Mathias Architects
- Quintain Estates and development PLC
- Ashford YMCA
- Kent and Medway Economic Board
- Clague Architects
- Home Builders Federation
- Ashford Citizens Advice Bureau
- Kent Association for the Disabled
- Alzheimers Society
- RBS
- Kennington Community Forum
- Capita Symonds Ltd
- County Square Shopping Centre
- National Car Parks Limited
- Green Party
- The Institution of Highways and Transportation
- Kent Sports Development Unit
- Hillreed Developments Ltd
- Joseph James Partnership
- UBS
- University of Kent at Canterbury
- Debenhams
- Maidstone Borough Council
- Kent County Council Education and Libraries
- Ashford Borough Council
- Transport 2000 Trust
- Kentish Express
- Learning and Skills Council
- Bockhanger Steering Group
- Ashford's Future Core Delivery Team
- Aquarius Press
- Burravoe Limited
- Tenterden and District Residents Association
- South Kent Education Business Partnership
- Clouds Cards & Gifts Ltd
- Bellway Homes
- Llewelyn Davies Yeang
- Tourism South East
- Stagecoach in East Kent and Hastings
- Mid-Kent Water Ltd
- Stanhope Estate Panel
- Central Ashford Residents Association
- Ashford Umbrella
- Allen Pyke Associates
- South Eastern Rail
- Ashford Churches Together
- Kingsford Flower & Pain
- The Individual Learning Company Limited
- CB Richard Ellis Limited
- Mecca Bingo
- Chapman Taylor
- Moat Housing
- Milton Keynes Borough Council
- Hyde Housing Association Limited
- Victoria Road Action Group
- Victoria Road Primary School
- Parklife
- DTZ Piedad Consulting Architectureand
- Southern Gas Networks
- Ashford Borough Council Chief Executive
- Ashford School
- South Eastern Railway

- The Arts Council
- Beaver Commercial
- CABE
- Kent Police
- Ashford Town centre Partnership
- Time RPS Limited
- Leslie Jones Architects
- London and Continental Stations and Property Ltd
- Ashford Tool Centre
- Norwest
- M2R Architecture
- Pronuptia Bridalwear
- Portrush Investments
- Clague Architects
- Stafford Charles and Son
- Imperial College at Wye
- Christ Church C of E High School
- Leslie Jones Architects
- Ashford Towns Bowls Club
- Lake - London and Kent Estates
- Ashford Borough Tenants Forum
- Chapman Taylor
- Woolworths Plc
- North Street Surgery
- Harrisons Chartered Surveyors
- Land Securities Ltd
- Instant Muscle
- Strutt and Parker
- Totem Architecture Ltd
- Ross Associates
- Gleeson Homes Ltd - Southern Region
- Space Syntax
- The Kent Architecture Centre
- Biscoe and Stanton
- Elwick Dental Practice
- Cash Centres Limited
- Cattell Skinner Design Partnership
- Design Practice
- Shopmobility
- Colyer Commercial
- Ashford Rural Trust
- Alan Baxter and Associates
- Givaudan
- Tony Gee & Partners
- Berkeley Homes Eastern Limited
- Dover District Council
- MKA Chartered Architects
- South Kent College
- Wheelchair Users Group
- London and Continental Railways - Eurostar
- Ashford Asian Society
- Crammer Investments
- Central Ashford Community Forum
- HSBC Bank PLC
- Victim Support
- McArtur Glen Designer Outlet
- Arrow Taxis Ltd
- Willesborough Forum
- Inkerman Group
- White Young Green
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Cross River Partnership - Lambeth Office
- Babbie Group
- Ashford Museum Committee
- Jobcentre Plus
- St Marys CE Primary School
- Babbie Group
- Brake Bros
- Ashford Tile Centre
- Topland Group
- Ashford Mediation Service
- South Willesborough - Newtown Residents Association
- Ashford Churches Together
- Newtown Community Residents Association
- John Thompson and Partners
- Ashford and District Volunteer Bureau
- DCLG
- Quintain Estates and Development
- ZED Homes
- Taylor Riley Chartered Surveyors
- Tiny Tots (Ashford) Ltd
- GTL Properties
- Taylor Riley Chartered Surveyors
- Catalyst Capital LLP
- Adscene
- Kier Property
- Walker Construction UK Limited

- Wilkinson Eyre
- Ashford School
- Bill Dunster Architects
- Royal Mail
- Evata Consulting UK Ltd
- Alsop Architects

**Appendix D - Consultation letter sent with a copy of the Town Centre Area
Action Plan**

HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Richard Alderton

Direct Line (01233) 330642
Ask for Simon Cole
Email simon.cole@ashford.gov.uk
Fax No (01233) 330682
DX 151140 Ashford (Kent) 7
Our Ref TCAAP/PO
Your Ref
Date 21st April 2006

Dear Consultee,

**ASHFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: NOTICE OF
PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OF THE ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE
AREA ACTION PLAN**

The Council has prepared a document that sets out the proposals for the development of Ashford town centre up to 2021. This document is the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) 'Preferred Options' report and will form one of the key documents of the Ashford Local Development

Framework (LDF). The Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan is the first area-specific part of the LDF to come forward for consultation and, when adopted, will become the first to make site-specific allocations. It must be consistent with the aims and policies set out in the Core Strategy and will specifically cover just Ashford Town Centre and its immediate surroundings.

Between the **24 April to 5 June 2006** we are inviting consultees to make representations on the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan 'Preferred Options' report during a six-week public consultation period. This is in accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan 'Preferred Options' report. We are encouraging everyone to comment in writing using the representation form, which is also enclosed together with a guidance note on how to make a representation. Following the consultation period and careful consideration of all comments received, we will produce a revised document, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State.

We hope that you take this opportunity to formally express your views on the proposals for Ashford town centre and look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Cole,

Head of Planning Policy

HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Richard Alderton

Direct Line (01233) 330642
 Ask for Simon Cole
 Email simon.cole@ashford.gov.uk
 Fax No (01233) 330682
 DX 151140 Ashford (Kent) 7
 Our Ref TCAAP/PO
 Your Ref
 Date 21st April 2006

Dear Consultee,

**ASHFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: NOTICE OF
 PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OF THE ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE
 AREA ACTION PLAN**

The Council has prepared a document that sets out the proposals for the development of Ashford town centre up to 2021. This document is the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) 'Preferred Options' report and will form one of the key documents of the Ashford Local Development

Framework (LDF). The Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan is the first area-specific part of the LDF to come forward for consultation and, when adopted, will become the first to make site-specific allocations. It must be consistent with the aims and policies set out in the Core Strategy and will specifically cover just Ashford Town Centre and its immediate surroundings.

Between the **24 April to 5 June 2006** we are inviting comments on the proposals contained within the 'Preferred Options' report during a six-week public consultation period. The Area Action Plan and related documents including representation forms are available free of charge, between 24 April and 5 June 2006 for inspection at the following locations:

Ashford Borough Council Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PLY. 9am-5.00pm (Monday-Thursday); 9am-4.20pm (Friday).

Ashford Borough Council Tenterden Sub Office. 67 The Fairings, Tenterden. TN30 6QX 9am-5.00pm (Monday-Thursday); 9am-4.30pm (Friday); (closed 1-2 pm)

Ashford Library, Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1QX 9.30am-6.00pm (Monday-Thursday); 9.30-7.00pm (Friday); 9.30-5.00pm (Saturday)

Charing Library, Market Place, Charing, Ashford TN27 0LR Closed (Monday and Wednesday); 9.30am-12.30pm and 2.00-5.00pm (Tuesday and Thursday); 2.00-5.00pm (Friday); 9.30am-12.30pm (Saturday).

Tenterden Library 55 High Street, Tenterden, TN30 6BD 9.00am – 5.30pm (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday); Closed (Wednesday); 9.00am – 4.00pm Saturday.

Wye Library, 6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5AF. Closed (Monday and Wednesday); 9.30 am-12.30pm (Tuesday); 2.00-6.00pm (Thursday); 9.30am-12.30pm and 2.00-6.00pm (Friday); 9.30am-12.30pm (Saturday)

It may also be viewed on the Council's web-site at: www.ashford.gov.uk

Representations relating to the document must be received in writing no later than the 5 June 2006 to Planning and Development, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL; or by email at: ashfordldf@ashford.gov.uk

We hope that you take this opportunity to formally express your views on the proposals for Ashford town centre and look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Cole

Head of Planning Policy

Appendix E - Public Advertisement in the Kentish Express

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Notice of pre-submission public
participation of the 'Ashford Town
Centre Area Action Plan –
Preferred Options Report



Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)
Regulation 28 - Town and Country Planning
(Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Ashford Borough Council has prepared a Preferred Options Report, which is the first formal stage in the production of the Town Centre Area Action Plan for the Ashford Local Development Framework. The Report sets out the Council's 'preferred options' on a series of key planning issues facing the Town Centre. The report has been published to trigger public debate on options before a 'submission version' of the Town Centre Area Action Plan is produced.

We are inviting members of the public to make representation in objection to, or in support of the pre-submission 'Preferred Options' Report. Copies are available for public inspection, free of charge, between 24th April and 5th June, during the opening hours at:

- Ashford Borough Council, The Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL.
- Ashford Library, Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1QX.
- Ashford Borough Council, Tenterden Office, the Fairings, Tenterden, TN30 6QX
- Charing Library, Market Place, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LR.
- Tenterden Library, 33 High Street, Tenterden, TN30 6BD.
- Wye Library, 6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5AF.
- On the Council website at www.ashford.gov.uk

Representations relating to the 'Preferred Options' Report can be sent:

- Via email to ashfordldf@ashford.gov.uk
- In writing to: Planning and Development Unit, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL.

We can only consider representations that are received during the six-weeks of consultation beginning on 24th April 2006 and ending at 5 p.m. on the 5th June 2006. Further information is available from the Council Website, or by emailing ashfordldf@ashford.gov.uk or telephoning (01233) 330213.

Large format and audio versions of this notice are available on request call (01233) 330229.

Appendix F - Main issues raised in consultation

Introduction Representations

Representations were received from the following organisations:

2088 - Kent County Council	2095 - John Bishop and Associates	2103 - Countryside Agency
2089 - Kent County Council	2097 - Montagu Evans	2104 - Countryside Agency
2090 - Kent County Council	2098 - Montagu Evans	2105 - Countryside Agency
2091 - Kent County Council	2099 - Montagu Evans	2142 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
2092 - Kent County Council	2100 - DTZ Consultancy and Research	2143 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
2093 - Kent County Council	2101 - CPRE	2144 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
2094 - Berkeley Strategic	2102 - CPRE	2145 - Ashford Construction Focus Group

General Support

2099, 2143, 2104 raised general support for this Chapter.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

Policy context of developing the town centre

Main Issued Raised:

2094 felt that development in the Town Centre should not be prioritised, as it impedes development of other more peripheral areas. 2100 suggests an inclusion to the statement, 'development in the town centre would be prioritised in advance of major greenfield sites on Ashford's periphery'. 2100 wants the area action plan to suggest the importance of the town centre in the growth strategy but not for it to impede development on suitable, strategic, out of centre sites as the statement is considered to be inconsistent with allocations which have been pursued through the Local Plan.

2090 wants the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, as the regional planning policy document, to be included as it highlights Ashford as a regional growth centre. 2088 wants paragraph 1.2.3 to include reference to accessibility and sustainability to support sustainable modes of travel as outlined in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

Councils Response:

2094 and 2100: These comments relate to a strategic issue it has already been addressed in the Core Strategy. Government policy guidance is clear that brownfield sites should be released in advance of greenfield sites. The RPG9 chapter of the Ashford Growth Area recognises the importance of the town centre to the spatial strategy for the town centre as a whole. If there is insufficient restraint on greenfield development during this time, then it is likely that investment would be firstly focused in those areas to the detriment of the town centre. Any departure from this approach would be inconsistent with the Core Strategy and National Government Guidance.

2090, 2088: The council recognises the importance of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan as a regional planning policy document and welcomes Ashford growth point status. However, the identification of Ashford as a growth point has already been established in the Core Strategy.

Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary

Main Issues Raised:

2095, 2097, 2145 and 2098 all object to the boundaries outlined in Figure 1. 2097, 2145 and 2098 all want to see the Designer Outlet incorporated into the Town Centre Area Action Plan. 2097 thinks the Designer Outlet Centre should be included in the Figure 1 boundary map, however, notwithstanding that, and at the very least, the Outlet centre should be identified as an edge of centre development. 2101 wants the introduction to specifically acknowledge that the Designer Outlet Centre is regularly used by residents of Ashford and should realise the value of its connectivity to the town centre.

2095 wants the whole of Riverside Business Park and adjoining Ashford school playing fields to be included in the area action plan boundary to enable comprehensive proposals for this area to come forward through the plan process.

Councils Response:

2097: The boundary of Ashford Town Centre has been well established and consistent for a number of years through the Ashford Borough Local Plan. The compact growth model, promoted through the Core Strategy, relies heavily on the town centre playing an enhanced and important development role through the promotion of substantial levels of development. Given this focus, there was a need to expand the town centre boundary to fulfil the increase in development quantum.

The Area Action Plan boundary has extended southwards from the local plan boundary to incorporate the International Station, the residential area of South Stour Avenue and further west to incorporate the former Powergen site at Gasworks Lane. The reasoning behind the expansion southwards was to take advantage of the amount of brownfield land available for redevelopment. This area remains largely undeveloped compared with areas north of the town centre. This undeveloped area has also led to the development of Victoria Way in both providing a new strategic east west link road south of the railway and to create an urban street with active frontages of high quality townscape and public realm.

2145 and 2098: The Outlet Centre is located on an out of centre location. The premise and context of the outlet centre is that it complement's the town centre retail offer, broadly selling old season's stock at discounted prices.

Altering this existing premise would shift the major retail focus, away from the current and proposed town centre area, which represents the most sustainable option. This approach would be contrary to the approach set out in the Core Strategy, and against the thrust of national planning guidance. Planning Policy Statement 6¹ encourages that town centres represent the most sustainable location, in terms of its ability to provide the primary retail offer of a town. As such, one of the key premises behind the successful delivery of the growth agenda, set out in the Core Strategy, is the emphasis placed on the town centre to be the key economic driver of the growth model. Therefore it is not considered appropriate that the Outlet Centre should be included in the expanded town centre boundary.

2095: The AAP boundary has been amended to now include the Riverside Business Park area and the adjoining school playing fields.

Public Realm

Main Issues Raised:

2142 and 2102 both want to see more detail on public realm improvements and how they are to be achieved. 2102 states there is an outstanding issue of how higher quality development will be attracted in order to increase the attractiveness of the public realm. 2089 identifies that there is no mention of built heritage and the natural environment in relation to the public realm. They suggest their inclusion would be more consistent with strategic policies for the environment. 2144 questions that the river and the train line are negative barriers and suggest that a radical solution is needed to make them into a positive.

2093 supports paragraph 2.3.7 generally as it sympathetic to the historic environment of Ashford. However, 2093 suggests replacing 'remains as it was first laid out in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' with 'is probably much as it was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries'.

Councils Response:

2142, 2102, 2089, 2144 and 2093: The Council recognises the importance of improving the town centre's overall attractiveness and realises the important role public realm will play in fulfilling this ambition. Promoting good quality design underpins the Core Strategy through Policy CS9.

The Area Action Plan represents a design led, pro-active planning approach to the promotion of quality design of development coming forward in the town centre. It incorporates a range of public realm policies contained in its Guiding Principles, Quarter policies and site specific policies and highlights those locations where public realm improvements are needed. In addition, the Area Action Plan will be complemented subsequently by a detailed Design SPD that will incorporate more detailed proposals for public realm improvements.

Open Space

Main Issues Raised:

2105 would suggest that existing open spaces should be considered within the existing historical elements of the town and to see the multi-functionality of these spaces more specifically described. 2103 wants to see the focus on the issue of open space provision that is accessible to all and should be addressed throughout the document by protecting and enhancing existing open spaces.

Councils Response:

The issue of green and blue infrastructure is dealt with elsewhere in this document in the 'green spaces and river corridor issues' section.

MiscellaneousMain Issues Raised:

2092 wants a bibliography to be included in the TCAAP as a number of documents are referred to in the economic elements of the TCAAP.

2091 wants to see the a greater emphasis on the need for a new east-west link, via Victoria Road, within the policy wording throughout the TCAAP.

Councils Response:

2092: A number of background documents exist in the preparation of the town centre area action plan and these will be listed in the submission document.

2091: This issue is dealt with in greater detail in the responses to Preferred Option 14: Victoria Way.

Preferred Option 1: Town Centre Guiding Principles

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1777 - Mrs R Arias-Dumeige	1793 - Atisreal	2083 - Kent County Council
1778 - Kent County Council	1794 - Countryside Agency	2084 - Kent County Council
1779 - Kent County Council	1795 - Countryside Agency	2085 - CPRE Kent
1780 - Kent County Council	1796 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2106 - Countryside Agency
1781 - Montagu Evans	1797 - Mr WJ Davies	2107 - Countryside Agency
1782 - Planning Potential	1961 - English Nature	2108 - Countryside Agency
1783 - Planning Potential	1970 - English Nature	2113 - CPRE Kent
1784 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1808 - Mr WJ Davies	2114 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership
1785 - White Young Green	2036 - Planning Potential	2118 - Churches Together in Ashford
1786 - Kent County Council	2039 - Kent County Council	2140 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1788 - Kent County Council	2079 - Kent County Council	2141 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1789 - South Ashford Community Forum	2080 - Kent County Council	2158 - Environment Agency
1790 - CPRE Kent	2081 - Kent County Council	

1791 - South Ashford Community Forum	2082 - Kent County Council	
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General Support

Main issues Raised:

1781, 1782, 1783, 1784, 1785, 2079, 2080, 2082, 2083, 2118, 2141, 2158: There was general support for the policy approach in this section. Many confirmed their support for an expanded town centre.

Several representations expressed support for the town centre to be a high quality, mixed use place with real character to distinguish itself from other areas. However, 2083 feels cultural opportunities/ambition should be a key driver for the vision.

2118 feels it would be helpful to have a balancing paragraph on the social objectives for the town centre to distinguish it from environmental and economic elements.

2082 and 2158 welcome the inclusion of the natural environment into the town centre. 2158 commend the proposed use of the river as a green seam linking open spaces.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

2118: The Area Action Plan includes references to social objectives as well as environmental and economic objectives.

Guiding Principles - Economy

Main Issues Raised:

2113 supports the fact that Ashford needs to achieve a step change in its economy but feels that clear targets need to be set out in order to achieve this and these targets should be monitored for progress. Links should be made with other policies to ensure that these targets are being worked towards.

1808 wants to ensure the accommodation in the town centre is of a wide range and good quality to attract all sectors of the population. Perhaps a targeted campaign in the Nord/Pas de Calais and West Flanders might encourage foreign investors into the area.

Councils Response:

2113: Through the Annual Monitoring Report, the policies set out in this Area Action Plan will be monitored as to their success. The economic indicators that will be used, as derived from the Core Strategy, are as follows::

- 'number of additional jobs created within the town centre',
- 'amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in the town centre',
- 'amount of floorspace developed for employment',
- 'loss of employment land in sqm',
- 'amount of employment land lost to residential',
- 'amount of exiting tourism facilities lost and new tourism facilities gained as a result of new development'.

1808: Ashford Borough Council has an agreement with Locate in Kent who are the Inward Investment Agency for Kent within the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) network to encourage businesses and investors from the Transmanche region to set up in Ashford. The major expansion of the commercial sectors in Ashford will help to attract substantial inward investment and enable Ashford to compete on the international market.

Guiding Principles - Environment

Main Issues Raised:

1795 would like Ashford's public spaces to link to the proposed Green/Emerald Necklace. 2106 and 2107 make reference to the lack of information about the Green and Blue Grid in the AAP policy as it would highlight the importance of open spaces. 1970 and 1961 are concerned that the status of the river corridors as a local nature reserve and site of nature conservation interest is not currently recognised in the AAP. 2140 feels that the natural aquatic environment could be complemented elsewhere in the town by the introduction of artificial aquatic systems. 1790 would also like to see clarification as to what the Emerald Necklace is and to include a policy on the treatment of the river corridor.

Councils Response:

1795, 2106, 2107, 1970, 1961, 1790 and 2140: Several objections were received relating to green and blue infrastructure. To avoid repetition, this matter is dealt with in full in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Guiding Principles - Movement

Main Issues Raised:

1778 and 1780 both raise support for the changes to the ring road. However, 1780 feels there should be greater emphasis here on providing for safe and convenient movement and accessibility in the public realm as set out in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

1778 wants to see parking within/adjacent to the ring road to be minimised in order to allow effective transformational modifications to improve the public realm.

1789, 1791 and 2085 all raise the issue of public transport provision. 1791 raised the point that public transport provision should be in place as soon as new development is in place to ensure its extensive use. 1789 wants to see less 'out of town' shopping areas to allow people without cars to shop in Ashford and to provide a more comprehensive evening public transport service to encourage an evening economy. 2085 wants to see greater emphasis on public transport provision as too much emphasis is on car-based travel and details of the arrival and departure points of Park and Ride should also be highlighted to raise public awareness.

1794 would like to see a guiding principle to encourage sustainable transport in the town centre.

Councils Response:

1778 and 1780: The changes to the ring road have now been completed.

1778: The AAP includes clear policies on reducing parking standards linked to the improvement of public transport infrastructure and services. This will allow some existing parking within the ring road to be redeveloped upon and the public realm transformation to take place.

1791 and 2085: The development of the Core Strategy was based on a strategic bus network called SMARTLINK. There is a strong reliance on the SMARTLINK network to serve the Town Centre. The provision of SMARTLINK and other public transport provision will be phased in line with the development of the town centre and the wider growth area.

1789: The Area Action Plan promotes significant new retail development in the town centre.

1794: The Council agree that sustainable transport should be a guiding principle.

Guiding Principles - Quality of Design

Main Issues Raised:

1797 and 2036 both raise the issue of maintaining good quality 'local' design to create a better perception of the town centre.

1797 raises the point that Ashford should reflect a Kent identity rather than a European one so the town has a local feel in terms of style of buildings.

2036 wants surrounding sites on the ring road to come forward early to avoid dereliction along key routes into the town centre.

2081 wants to see reference to the maintenance of future higher quality public realm in the way of funding through the strategic tariff in the long term.

Councils Response:

1797: Agreed, as a historic market town within Kent, development will need to reflect Ashford's character.

2036: A fundamental element of redeveloping and expanding the town centre is to promote a number of key routes, both vehicular and pedestrian, to create a more connected and accessible town centre for all. The redevelopment programme over the longer term up to 2021 seeks to create higher quality public realm along these key routes within the town centre to encourage their use. To achieve this, a number of key sites around the ring road have been earmarked for development in the shorter term. The County Square extension, Elwick Road redevelopment and the corner of Park Street are just some of numerous sites identified in an overhaul of redevelopment being proposed within

the town centre. The Council will seek a number of landmark buildings and comprehensive redevelopment on key sites within the town centre to soften the former character of the ring road. Public art also plays a vital role in creating higher quality public realm which is emphasised through the Ashford Public Realm Strategy and Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy. Such improvements are vital in attracting businesses, developers and residents in such numbers as to achieve the vision of a thriving, high-quality, mixed use town centre.

2081 - Reference is made to the strategic tariff, including funding of high quality public realm, in the submitted Town Centre Area Action Plan document, however, detail on the strategic tariff will be found in the forthcoming Infrastructure Contributions SPD. Funding of public realm will also come available through S106 on-site contributions which will seek to fund site specific improvements such as landscaping, habitat enhancement and public art.

Guiding Principles - Community

Main Issues Raised:

1777, 1786, 2039 feel a section on community should be added. Due to the proposed increase in housing units, what will the new profile of the community be? There needs to be a balance between the retail, business, leisure and home environment that the town centre will provide to its new and existing residents.

2114 states the vital need for an entertainment venue in or close proximity to the town centre to sustain the town centre as a living/working/leisure space.

Councils Response:

1777, 1786, 2039: One of the key visions behind a sustainable community is to create a place where people want to live, work and play. Ashford town centre will be the future focus of substantial mixed use development of retail, residential, employment, education, leisure and cultural uses. How we deliver this amount of compact development in a sustainable manner is crucial. The growth of the town centre community will be a gradual process and will seek to deliver a wide range of uses to attract all sectors of the community taking into account both existing and future residents. The encouragement of a diverse mix of uses within the town centre will help create an attractive sense of place and community. However, it is not felt to be necessary to add a specific section on Community to the AAP.

2114: Ashford town centre was recognised as the most appropriate location for strategic arts and entertainments facilities, through the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF), as it is the most central location accessible to the highest proportion of residents. This is re-emphasised through the Core Strategy, Policy CS18: Meeting the Community Needs. The submission document makes reference to the future possibility of an indoor arena in the Civic Quarter.

Lack of detail/clarity

Main Issues Raised:

1788 wants a reference to tourism development and accommodation in accordance with policies EP11 and EP12 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 to support the need for a hotel mentioned in TC10.

1779 wants to see a clearer relationship between the Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Town Centre Development Framework to make the vision for the town centre more in depth.

1796 feels more care needs to be taken when existing businesses are displaced for new development and alternative premises should be found within or near to the town centre as possible.

Councils Response:

1788: Tourism development is one of a number of key drivers behind Ashford's growth. The Kent and Medway Structure Plan highlights the importance of creating new and upgrading existing tourism facilities and mentions Ashford as a priority area for this. The Ashford Core Strategy reiterates this through Policy CS17 and endorses policies EP11 and EP12 by supporting the retention of existing tourism facilities and encouraging sustainable growth of tourism through the provision of a wide variety of new facilities. The Council promote the development of tourism facilities, in particular for a new hotel development, in locations which are accessible by a choice of modes of transport in the Area Action Plan, for example in the International Station Quarter.

1779 - The Town Centre Development Framework (TCDF) is a key background document in the production of the Town Centre Area Action Plan and the area action plan broadly endorses its content. Both the preferred options and submission Area Action Plan has evolved the TCDF's contents in detail in line with other strategies and background work.

1796 - Relocation of existing key town centre services is an important aspect of future development of the town centre. The Council will strive to ensure appropriate alternative locations are sought for existing premises to make sure key services are still accessible and remain economically viable. SEEDA has been involved on some key sites, notably the Commercial Quarter, and are assisting in the process of relocation.

Miscellaneous

Main Issues Raised:

2108 would like to see reference to the Kent Downs AONB's Management Plan 2004-2009 to clarify how the town centre will manage its urban rural fringe.

2084 feels there is a need to reinforce the principles of scale, form, texture and materials which need to be sympathetic to what is there already and what is to be conserved.

1793 raised objection to TCAAP being unclear on how the Royal Mail sites could meet the objectives of the Area Action Plan to create 'a thriving, high quality, mixed use town centre: distinctive and accessible; capable of serving the current and future needs of Ashford and its wider catchment area'. However, 1793 would like the Royal Mail sites to be discussed with the Council to establish what the various options are.

Councils Response:

2108: Reference to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan is not considered to be necessary for the Town Centre Area Action Plan as is more of a spatial issue. The town centre AAP boundary is not located within the Kent Down AONB and the treatment of the urban rural fringe is not a relevant issue for the town centre area, therefore it is not to be covered in the AAP.

2084: A detailed Town Centre Character Area Appraisal has been carried out as part of the background work to establish essential characteristics of which to build upon, including uses, building types, topography and existing morphology and what is to be conserved. This background work establishes a number of character areas within the town centre. These character areas have been broadly endorsed and built upon within the Town Centre Area Action Plan through the concept of Quarters. The Quarters approach seeks to enhance the character of the various areas of the town and build upon the hierarchy of routes

and spaces which make up these Quarters. Whether sites come forward as a comprehensive approach or on a site by site basis, all developments will need to show regard to the existing surroundings and build upon the existing character of the area. The policy approach set out for each quarter seeks to guide developments on the height, scale and massing to be achieved. Alongside the Quarters approach, the council has set out a number of site specific policies on key strategic sites which seek to build upon the quarters approach in guiding specific developments in the form of high quality public realm and in some cases seeking landmark buildings.

1793: This issue is dealt with in the site representations chapter.

Preferred Option 2: Urban Structure

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1798 - Central Ashford Community Forum	1803 - Montagu Evans	1806 - Countryside Agency
1799 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1804 - Kent County Council	1807 - Planning Potential
1800 - Mr Rodney Wolfe	1805 - CPRE Kent	2119 - Churches Together in Ashford

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

Representations 1799 and 1800 supported the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

The Town Centre Boundary

Main issues Raised:

2119 and 1807 both raised the point that figure 2 in TC2 did not match the TCAAP boundary in Figure 1.

1807 suggests the land to the west of the Southern Expansion Quarter (SEQ) which abuts Leacon Road should be included within the SEQ.

1803 would like to see the Designer Outlet Centre included in the Town Centre Area Action Plan boundaries to encourage a greater integration between the Designer Outlet Centre and the town centre.

Councils Response:

2119, 1807: The diagram in Figure 2 (TC2) was produced to spatially represent the location of the quarters and does not represent an indicative boundary map which was the purpose of Figure 1 showing the Town Centre Area Action Plan boundary in the Introduction. The Council has reworked the map in the submission AAP.

1807: The SEQ has been extended westwards now so that it abuts the Leacon Road Industrial Estate boundary.

1803: To avoid repetition, the issue of the town centre area action plan boundary and the designer outlet centre is covered in the 'Introduction' representations under the heading 'Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary'.

Design Layout of Quarters

Main Issues Raised:

1804 and 1806 both highlight the design of the quarters. 1804 wants to see additional design guidance for each quarter in addition to the land uses and building heights already mentioned. 1806 wants to see a more overarching structure to the quarters to explain the connectivity between each quarter including sustainable transport routes and links between public open spaces.

Councils Response:

The submitted AAP document is very much design led in its approach with emphasis given as to how each quarter will be linked in an overall design strategy for the town centre. The design principles are outlined in Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy.

It is the role of the site allocation documents to implement the Core Strategy design principles. The design principles in Area Action Plan takes a two tier approach. Firstly, the document looks at an urban structure based on a series of quarters. These quarters are not just guided on the existing character of the various areas but also the hierarchy of routes and spaces which connect the quarters. The design principles will take into consideration a number of factors including topography, views, listed buildings and existing morphology. The existing public realm is important when looking at the future design of the quarters. The document seeks to amalgamate the existing public realm and the routes and spaces which make up the town centre with the addition of improved public realm through a combination of landmark buildings and spatial area redevelopment to create an attractive sense of place and encourage visitors and investors alike into the area. This creates a different character and approach to development for each of the quarters giving them a distinction from one another. The second element of the design approach within the Area Action Plan looks at sites specifically within the quarters. The document outlines a number of site specific policies which looks for improvements to the public realm. These improvements can take a number of different strands, including the development of a landmark building along a key strategic route, restoration of a listed building or creating and enhancing public open spaces. Developers will be expected to show how the development will be sympathetic to the existing area in terms of building height, materials used, land uses and streetscape.

The River Corridor

Main issues Raised:

1805 would like to see the river as a separate quarter to enable a continuous approach with the river planned in its entirety. 1805 continues by saying the current approach appears to be in 'bits and pieces' .

Councils Response:

1805: Several representations have been received on green and blue infrastructure. These issues are dealt with in greater detail in the Green spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Transport Infrastructure

Main issues Raised:

1798 would like to see access routes for pedestrians towards the ring road be improved before development is carried out and far more than one bridge to link areas to the South of Ashford so bicycles and pedestrians do not have to use the same path.

1798 also highlights the need for more car parking if further residential properties are to be built in the town centre.

Councils Response:

1798: National, regional and strategic policies and guidance all seek to reduce the need to travel by car and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport. The Core Strategy, Policy CS15, seeks a 'step-change' in public transport provision if sustainable transport patterns are to be achieved. Improvements to the pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre are a crucial part of the Ashford Transport Strategy and has become an important aspect of future development of the town centre. The Ashford Transport Strategy proposes that a target of 10% of modal split should be set for cycling by 2031. The Council will also seek improved pedestrian and cycling facilities between the town centre and the remainder of the urban growth area and will negotiate with developers to fund or provide improvements where appropriate through the strategic tariff and S106 agreements. Such improvements will include schemes to improve pedestrian facilities for crossing roads, at public transport interchanges and in shopping streets. Through the AAP, the Council seeks to replace the existing pedestrian / cycleway bridge over the railway with a much better and more attractive crossing to enhance the link from the town centre core to south Ashford for both cyclists and pedestrians.

Maximum residential parking standards applicable to the town centre area are set out in the submission AAP. The Council will actively encourage reduced parking standards provided measures are put in place to ensure residents do not park on neighbouring residential areas. There is also potential for public town centre car parks to become overnight parking spaces for town centre residents. Further response to car parking standards is made on page 65.

Preferred Option 3: Commercial Quarter

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1810 - Kent County Council	1818 - Central Ashford Community Forum	2040 - Countryside Agency
1812 - English Nature	1819 - Kent Wildlife Trust	2120 - Churches Together in Ashford
1813 - Victoria Way Residents Association	1821 - Countryside Agency	2139 - Ashford Construction Focus Group

1814 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1822 - Mr WJ Davies	
1815 - CPRE Kent	1840 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	
1816 - Highways Agency	2038 - Central Ashford Community Forum	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1810, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 2040 and 2120 support the preferred option.

1813 support the proposed mix of uses and limit to height development in the town centre. 1816 supports the policies which balance the provision of homes and employment, either through the strategic co-location of development sites or through the identification of sites with the potential for mixed use.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1819, 1812, 2038 and 1821 all raised concerns on the lack of reference to the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor. 2038 wants to see the riverside to be utilised more to develop a café culture to enhance the route from the town centre to the stations.

1822, 1840 and 2139 all raise issues with the railway stations. All raise emphasis on a greater need for improvements to the station's public realm. 1822 would like the station and town centre to be brought closer together whereas 2139 would like the relationship between the Commercial quarter and the stations to be given greater consideration. 1840 would like the configuration of both stations as one to be explored further to discourage an uncoordinated approach.

1818 has raised concerns over the height of new buildings in this area and feels it is not appropriate to have high-rise development. 1818 continues by suggesting the current International House should be redeveloped to a lower height to take into account the listed buildings surrounding the station area.

Councils Response:

1819, 1812, 2038 and 1821: Several representations were received on green and blue infrastructure, this issue is dealt with in greater detail in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter. 2038: the policy for the Commercial Quarter in the submission AAP highlights the potential role of the river corridor on this site and the need for any development within the Commercial Quarter, which fronts the river

corridor, to be sympathetic to its natural environment and open up the area to create a softer frontage and improve on existing pedestrians and cyclists routes this side of the quarter. Opportunities for restaurants, cafes, etc, are included within the policy.

1818: International House is a prominent 11 storey office building in an accessible location within the town centre and to the mainline and International station. The current landowners, South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), have recently refurbished a number of vacant floors for the short term to attract new inward investment. In the longer term, the building will form part of a comprehensive mixed use redevelopment which will include a number of sites which make up the Commercial Quarter. The height of International House should not be considered as benchmark for building height in this area but given the topography and the need to accommodate significant amounts of floorspace in this Quarter, the Council considers that building heights here could be generally around 5-6 storeys but with the potential for some higher buildings of up to 10 storeys.

1822, 1840 and 2139: The domestic station approach is part of the International Station quarter to allow a more comprehensive approach to be taken. It would be desirable to mirror in some form what is proposed for International Station arrival on the domestic side of the station. The policy for the Commercial Quarter in the submission AAP states that development in the quarter should help to facilitate public realm improvements around the station forecourt. The creation of a square in front of the station would provide a more welcoming image of Ashford than the existing access road and dual carriageway. Buildings fronting Station Square will be the first image of Ashford for many and therefore must present an image in line with the ambitions of the town centre whilst remaining realistic as to what can actually be achieved bearing in mind the topography of the area, the historic nature of existing buildings and the access needed for the Hitachi train depot. One of the aspects of the redevelopment of the station area could be the realignment of Dover Place to rationalise the junction so it becomes in line with Station Road and Elwick Road creating a natural route to the station as outlined in the Town Centre Development Framework.

Preferred Option 4: Town Centre Core

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1817 - Kent County Council	1834 - Kent County Council	1846 - Mr WJ Davies
1820 - Kent County Council	1835 - Kent County Council	1848 - Mr Rodney Wolfe
1826 - Firstplan	1836 - Kent County Council	2041 - Central Ashford Community Forum
1827 - Rapleys	1837 - Central Ashford Community Forum	2042 - Westwell Parish Council
1828 - Westwell Parish Council	1839 - Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners	2044 - Kent County Council
1829 - Victoria Way Residents Association	1841 - South Ashford Community Forum	2116 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership

1830 - Central Ashford Community Forum	1842 - Countryside Agency	2121 - Churches Together in Ashford
1831 - Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners	1843 - Countryside Agency	2137 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1832 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1844 - The Development Planning Partnership	2138 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1833 - Highways Agency	1845 - Victoria Way Residents Association	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1826, 1827, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833 and 2044 support the preferred option.

1830 and 1831 both support the increase in residential provision in the town centre core. 1830 particularly supports the redevelopment of Ashdown Court and the current BT site as they are specific entrance sites to the town centre.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

Public Realm of the Town Centre

Main Issues Raised:

2121 believe TC4 needs to include a strong commitment to reshaping, renewing and redeveloping existing key buildings to improve facilities and activities available to the whole town (and Borough). 2116 continues this by suggesting all areas of public realm should be reviewed and a programme of updating these areas on a cyclical basis are put in place (there is no facility in the plan to enhance or upgrade the existing heart of the town).

1834 also highlights the need for areas to be considered as a whole and that decisions are not taken on individual buildings without assessing the implications of surrounding areas. 1817 commented on the need for the townscape of the town centre to be treated as a whole to encourage coherence between the quarters.

Councils Response:

2121, 2116, 1834, 1817: An underlying principle of redeveloping the town centre is to improve the existing public realm. The quality of improvements to the public realm will be critical in setting the context and a benchmark for the transformation of the town centre. The draft Public Realm Strategy, a key background document to the Town Centre Area Action Plan, sets out in detail the vision, design principles and detailed guidelines for all areas of Ashford Town Centre. This document will be used as a material consideration alongside the policies set out in the area action plan to enforce good quality public realm through the planning process. Any adopted strategy should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure key design and public realm improvements are being achieved.

1834 and 1817: The Council agree in principle that the public realm of the town centre should be developed comprehensively but decisions will need to be taken on individual buildings as a number of sites come forward for development at different times over the plan period.

Cultural Provision

Main Issues Raised:

1841 feels that TC4 did not take enough account of Ashford's history, culture and heritage. 1841 believes that a museum or theatre would provide a much needed balance and would make Ashford more attractive as a source of employment/training.

1845 wants to see proposals to encourage the revitalisation of the Lower High Street to be included. Encouragement of café and other street activity will link in with the proposed leisure developments to Vicarage Lane and the potential cultural uses in the Memorial Square Quarter.

Council's Response:

1841, 1845: The Council would look to provide greater cultural provision within the town centre core area to accommodate the needs of the growth in the town centre and Ashford Borough population and to enhance its existing provision. At present, there is insufficient evidence to enable a specific allocation to be made for a museum or theatre development in the town centre.

The relocation of the market to the Lower High Street will encourage footfall to this area. In addition, the allocation of the Vicarage Lane site in the AAP for redevelopment will provide an opportunity to encourage footfall towards this part of the town centre and open up the existing pedestrian routes which link Vicarage Lane and the Lower High Street.

The Council has reviewed its primary frontage policies in the Local Plan and enhanced protection in a range of locations in the town centre, however the Lower High Street is seen as playing a secondary retail role.

Green Necklace within the Town Centre Core

Main Issues Raised:

1842 would like to see the Memorial Gardens described in greater detail to include its functions, biodiversity value, etc. They also highlight that brownfield sites offer opportunity to create new open spaces.

1843 states that opportunities should be investigated to link open spaces in the town centre in context with the Green/ Emerald Necklace and the Green and Blue Grid.

2042 wants the plan to improve by the incorporation of small, green spaces similar to those in London. There is also no mention of areas for kids to play, e.g. skate board parks or adventure playgrounds.

Councils Response:

This issue is dealt with in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Miscellaneous

Main Issues raised:

1836 would like to see greater emphasis on supporting tourism development including tourist accommodation in the town centre.

1820 wants to see a mention of the proposed new 'bus hub' at Vicarage Lane/Station Road to highlight its importance as a new focal point for public transport. 2138 would like to see greater consideration given to existing car parks within Ashford as concern is they will be demolished before new car parks replace them.

1846 would like to see the Council encourage genuine local businesses e.g. bakers, greengrocers and butchers which the town centre is currently lacking.

Councils Response:

1836 - Policy CS17 in the Core Strategy highlights the importance of retaining existing tourism facilities whilst also encouraging a sustainable growth in tourism through the provision of a wide variety of new facilities. The Council will seek to locate tourism facilities that are accessible by a choice of modes of transport and will particularly be encouraged in Ashford Town Centre.

1820 - A new 'bus hub' located in the town centre would be highlighted as an important public transport interchange. An Ashford Bus Strategy is being developed which will identify the most suitable location for a new 'bus hub' that brings together urban and rural services. The AAP has been drafted with bus accessibility and potential key stops in mind but there is no requirement for a bus station or depot.

2138 - The Ashford Parking Strategy, a background document to the Action Plan, looks comprehensively at car parking provision in the town centre. It states, 'The construction of 3 strategic multi storey car parks serving the town centre, together with the existing County Square car park will serve the future mainly short stay needs of the expanding retail/leisure developments in the town'. The development of these multi storey car parks will be phased in line with the redevelopment of existing car parks for other uses. The introduction of Park and Ride will also contribute to the car parking provision of the town centre.

1846 - Business set up is very much market led and is not considered a planning matter.

Site Specific References

Main Issues Raised:

The future significance of St Mary's Church as an important landmark in the town has raised concerns by 1837 in relation to the height of future development in the town centre. 1837 suggests enhancing the church by opening up some parts of the churchyard.

1839 and 2137 both refer to the future of the Charter House site. 1839 wants to see any proposals for redevelopment in this location to carefully consider the existing properties on Park Street in relation to access for servicing and deliveries. 2137 wants to see greater consideration given to what other uses Charter House could be put to that fit in with the town centre plans. 2137 also goes onto mention Victoria Way with it being proposed as a residential led scheme, it seems to contradict the atmosphere that a busy 'by-pass' road will create.

1835 refers to West Street/Godinton Road and specifies that this site may be used in the new highway scheme and thus may not be available for development.

2041 highlights a number of sites which need further consideration. In relation to Ashdown Court, there should be consideration for redesigning the current archway over North Street on the edge of Park Street, to open up views of the town centre and make it more friendly. The Gasometer is a significant feature on the landscape - could a more innovative use be made of it? 2041 continues to say that in Holland one is used as an entertainment centre.

1848 wants to see the potential relocation of the library and Royal Mail sorting office to be in locations which are more accessible to all members of the public as they are vital facilities within the town centre.

1844 requests that the Magistrates court be taken into consideration when new development is considered within the vicinity of the existing courts facilities to ensure potential crime and vandalism is not attracted.

Councils Response:

1837: St Mary's Church is an important building within Ashford Town Centre and the Council seek to preserve the views of the Church through limiting the scale and height of new buildings. The Churchyard comprises of a number of historic, listed buildings and therefore would make it very difficult to open this area up. The Churchyard is an important quiet space within an expanding town centre and the Council would seek to retain this space as it remains today. However, opportunities do exist to open up more pedestrian routes to the churchyard. The Bullyard could become a more primary pedestrian route from Bank Street through the Churchyard. In addition, the redevelopment of the Bingo Hall on the Lower High Street could open up the area from the east. There are several references in the submission AAP to the need to protect views of the church.

1839 and 2137: Charter House has been identified for a potential mixed use development comprising mainly of residential units on upper floors with commercial and leisure facilities on lower floors. Any redevelopment along Park Street would need to retain some access to the properties backing onto Park Street to allow the continuation of servicing and delivery. 2137: Representations on Victoria Way is dealt with in responses to Preferred Option 14.

1835: The Council would only seek to allocate development on land which is likely to come forward in the plan period. Land which is not allocated but could potentially come forward for development would come through as windfall development taking into account the policy approach within the Area Action Plan. Given that the ring road redevelopment has taken place, it is unlikely this land will be needed in the foreseeable future for this purpose.

2041: Located at a key junction, the archway over North Street currently hinders any views of the town centre and St Mary's Church. Any redevelopment of this area should look at opportunities to open up this archway to enhance the north-south route and encourage better access and a more defined route. The gasometer on Gasworks Lane is still in operational use. The Council would not seek to keep this structure when it is no longer in operation.

1848: The Council would seek to relocate existing town centre facilities only to locations which would not detriment their ability to continue business as usual.

1844: The council's response to this representation is in the Site Representations chapter.

Preferred Option 5: Opportunity Sites

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1851 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1856 - Mr WJ Davies	2122 - Churches Together in Ashford
1853 - Highways Agency	1857 - Kent County Council	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1851, 1853, 2122 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

Site Specific Representations

Main Issues Raised:

1856 states that there is already a landmark building on the former Kent College site. This should not mean it is to be demolished. Demolition is a negative option to choose.

1857 makes reference to the current Ashford library site due to the Discovery Centre not going ahead. 1857 would like to see the AAP reflect that Kent County Council is actively considering an option of a reconfigured service in this location, possibly combined with a modest commercial or residential development.

Councils Response:

1856: The strategic position of the former South Kent College (SKC) site makes it a key redevelopment opportunity. The site is at an important location at the crossroads between Station Road and Elwick Road making it an important first impression of Ashford for many visitors arriving by train. The SKC building is of no great architectural or historic merit and has fallen into dereliction. The site policy in the submission AAP anticipates the demolition of the building as part of a comprehensive redevelopment of this area.

1857: Proposals have been put forward by KCC for a 'Gateway Plus' development on the existing Library site and a site policy for this is included in the submission AAP.

Preferred Option 6: Learning Campus

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1850 - Cluttons LLP	1859 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group	1862 - Highways Agency
1855 - Kent County Council	1860 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2045 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group
1858 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1861 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2123 - Churches Together in Ashford

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1850, 1858, 1859, 2045 and 2123 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1859 and 1860 both propose the site between Elwick Road and the railway as the preferred location for the Learning Campus rather than the identified Victoria Road site as parking would be an issue unless it is provided.

1862 would expect consideration to be given to the transport implications of this development throughout the process and a sustainable transport element to be incorporated into the policy.

1861 mentions the merging of 5 or 6 primary schools in the vicinity and their sites being made available for development. 1861 is questioning whether this is a good decision for a town which is likely to expand by 31,00 homes and which is looking to build the Learning Campus in the middle of the town area if the population is already in decline.

Councils Response:

1859, 1860: The Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council chose this location along Victoria Road due to site's likely availability in the short term and due to its close proximity to both train stations and other key future developments within the town centre. The Council endorse this location as the preferred choice and has since granted planning permission.

1862: As an educational facility, the development would be expected to produce a Green Travel Plan to show how they expect to tackle the issues of reducing car usage of both students and staff. As part of the planning application, the Learning Campus development has produced an a Green Travel Plan. This plan outlines a number of transport issues to be developed as part of the Learning Campus development, including:

- Good quality pedestrian links to the site and into the campus including links between the campus and the station, including the role of the subway between the site and the international station,
- Provision of high quality cycle facilities including secure cycle parking, showers and lockers,
- Provision of bus stop facilities in close proximity to the Ashford Learning Campus,
- Relationship of the Learning Campus to the wider public realm including linkages, frontage and activity and the incorporation of the proposals for Victoria Way.

The Council welcome these proposals and encourages the use of sustainable transport modes.

1861: The merging of primary schools is a decision to be taken by Kent County Council only if needs warrant the decision to do so. The Ashford Learning Campus offers vocational and academic training for 14 year olds and over and therefore should not be looked at in relation to primary school provision which is a separate issue. The population of the town centre, and the Borough as a whole, is set to increase considerably and in order to support this growth the provision of a knowledge and learning facility is needed to provide the necessary skills and training to meet the needs of the local population and economy. Its town centre location provides the most accessible location to all and will enable the facility to become part of the existing and expanding community.

Green and Blue InfrastructureMain Issues Raised:

1855 wants to see the river corridor and green spaces incorporated into this development.

Councils Response:

The issue of green and blue infrastructure is dealt with in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Preferred Option 7: Discovery Centre and Elwick Road Corridor

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1863 - Mr WJ Davies	1867 - South Ashford Community Forum	2124 - Churches Together in Ashford
1864 - Highways Agency	1868 - Victoria Way residents Association	2146 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1865 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1870 - Kent County Council	

General SupportMain Issues Raised:

1864, 1865 and 2146 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

1864, 1865 and 2146: this support is welcomed

General ObjectionsMain Issues Raised:

1868 recognises the importance of Discovery Centre but proposals for the remainder of Elwick Road are not given adequate emphasis as it is a key route between the railway stations and the town centre.

1863 feels the Discovery Centre should be open early in the morning for the thousands of commuters. 1863 also thinks the residential accommodation proposed in paragraph 4.5.8 could be affected by the 24 hour railway.

2124 and 1867 have raised concerns over key projects in the town centre since the collapse of the Discovery Centre and the lack of public and private funding. 1870 states that area action plan does not have detail on what happens when projects like the Discovery Centre do not come forward.

Councils Response:

1868 and 1863: The Discovery Centre is no longer going ahead due to funding issues. KCC are looking to redevelop the existing Ashford Library site to incorporate adult education facilities alongside existing library site facilities as a consequence of Discovery Centre not coming forward.

1868: The Elwick Road corridor is a crucial part of the town centre expansion in opening up this area of the town for development. Elwick Road is a critical link from the station and will become a key entrance to the town centre. As such a strategic brownfield opportunity, the area has its own site specific policy within the town centre core quarter.

1870, 2124 and 1867: The Council produce an Area Action Plan based on a robust evidence base and look to schemes which are both economically viable and deliverable. If schemes are consequently undeliverable for whatever reason the Council would seek an alternative, suitable scheme to come forward which would be in keeping with the area, deliver the quantum of development needed and achieve the objectives originally set out.

1863: Residential development along Elwick Road will require sufficient sound proofing methods to be put in place. Network Rail will require a 5 metre rear access to the railway from development on Elwick Road. The rear access will not only provide the required railway setback construction distance but also a potential 'sound barrier zone' where plants or other sound proof landscape can protect the development from sound pollution.

Preferred Option 8: Land between Victoria Road and Leacon Road

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1852 - Bellway Homes	1876 - Highways Agency	1883 - South Ashford Community Forum
1866 - Firstplan	1877 - Mr J Barton	2046 - Planning Potential
1869 - Kent County Council	1878 - Kent Wildlife Trust	2047 - Bellway Homes
1872 - Firstplan	1879 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group	2125 - Churches Together in Ashford
1873 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1880 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2147 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1874 - Mr R Wolfe	1881 - Planning Potential	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1852, 1866, 1873, 1874, 2125 and 2147 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1877 wants the Area Action Plan to consider the impact of development on land between Victoria Road and Leacon Road on areas just outside the AAP boundary. This is mentioned in relation to the height of any new developments which should be limited to 2 storeys as this is the height of housing adjacent to Victoria Road. 1883 raises concern that Victoria Park was not sufficiently safeguarded from encroaching development.

1879 and 1880 both consider this area to be able to enable development a little higher than the typical norm foreseen around most of the town of 4-6 storeys as it falls away to the riverside. The report fails to define what a little higher is.

1872 and 1869 both raise concerns over the Learning Link bridge. 1872 wants the Area Action Plan to provide more detailed analysis/consideration on the impact and delivery of the new link. 1869 feels the bridge is unlikely to be a 'green bridge' but more likely a lightweight structure subject to a design competition.

1876 have raised concerns on the provision of extra town centre car parking and what effect that will have on attracting car based trips into the town centre. Extra attention should be paid to achieve a careful balance between car parking and the provision of alternative sustainable transport modes.

2046 believes it is unreasonable for the Council to use its policy making powers to pass the burden of funding the public highway and provision of a multi storey car park onto landowners and developers in this area if the area is already subjected to a financial burden of difficult and expensive constraints such as contamination and flooding and would like to see clearer advice on the funding, delivery and programme for the public multi storey car park.

1881 and 2047 raise concern that Figure 5 (Southern Expansion Quarter diagram) fails to show the entirety of the described area and therefore impossible to fully ascertain what is proposed.

Councils Response:

1877 and 1883: Any redevelopment of this area will need to take into consideration the impact it will have on the surrounding areas, including existing residential properties. Development fronting Victoria Park will need to incorporate design which is sensitive to the open nature of its surroundings but may take advantage of views of the park. Development should seek to enhance the area and provide improved access from an important green space to other areas of the town centre. This has been reflected in the site policies and Southern Expansion Quarter policies in the submission AAP.

1879 and 1880: More detail on the height of development in this quarter is outlined in the submission Area Action Plan.

1872 and 1869: The Learning Link bridge is a crucial piece of infrastructure to link the town centre with development to the south. A decision has yet to be taken as to what form this bridge will take. The existing foot bridge which extends over the railway is a well used pedestrian route into the town centre. However, in its current form it does not provide the most attractive pedestrian link to the south of the town. The Council agree that detailed consideration needs to be taken on how best to improve this key link to accommodate the growth of this area and this is reflected in the AAP.

1876: To quote the Ashford's Future Car Parking Strategy, 'In order to serve an expanded town centre and to improve the economic performance of the town, but to restrain travel to and from the town by car, a number of incentives and control measures are needed. More sustainable modes of travel, such as park and ride will need to be promoted, particularly for commuters and long stay visitors to limit the increase in peak hour traffic flows. It is recognised, however, that significant levels of short stay car parking close to the town centre will still be needed to support the existing and expanding commercial centre'. Locations for 3 multi storey car

parks have been identified in the growth plans as part of an initiative called 'Park and Walk' including one at Victoria Way. By phasing in these multi storey car parks alongside the redevelopment of existing car parks around the ring road, the amount of additional traffic generated on the ring road can be limited. This issue is also dealt with in the sections on PO15 - Car Parking and PO16 - Multi Storey Car Park Provision.

2046: The funding of such strategic infrastructure will come through a number of funding streams including the 'Strategic Tariff' and on-site S106 agreements. Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy outlines how infrastructure contributions will be managed. Development on brownfield land will be encouraged by a reduction of the full tariff rate for residential development to take into account the extra financial burden of developing on brownfield land. In this particular case, Government grant funding has been secured towards the delivery of the multi storey car park to help offset the costs of the development. The detailed specifications of the on-site contributions needed is set out in the site specific policy. Further guidance will also be set out in the forthcoming Infrastructure Contributions SPD.

1881 and 2047: Figure 5 does in fact show the entire described area that is proposed for redevelopment. However, if referring to the alignment of Victoria Way, this is referred to in greater detail in the response to the Victoria Way chapter and should be read in conjunction with the Southern Expansion Quarter.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Main Issues Raised:

1878 have raised concerns over the lack of detail this area has on addressing the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor. 1878 argues that the river corridor should be given its own preferred option.

Councils Response:

This issue is dealt with in greater detail in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Preferred Option 9: Southern Expansion Quarter

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1792 - Hallett & Co. Solicitors	1891 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1899 - Countryside Agency
1854 - Kent County Council	1892 - Cluttons LLP	1900 - English Nature
1884 - Highways Agency	1893 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group	1903 - Kent County Council
1885 - Planning Potential	1894 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group	1906 - South Ashford Community Forum
1886 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group	1895 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2049 - Planning Potential
1887 - Victoria Way Residents Association	1896 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2126 - Churches Together in Ashford
1888 - Victoria Way Residents Association	1897 - South Ashford Community Forum	2148 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1889 - Firstplan	1898 - South Ashford Community Forum	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1891, 1892, 2126 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1893, 1896, 1906 and 1903 all raise issues relating to Victoria Road South. 1893 and 1896 feel Victoria Road South should have its own policy as is currently the only area not to have its own preferred option within the Southern Expansion Quarter.

1898 and 1906 want Victoria Road Primary School as a historic building to be preserved. 1903 raised concerns over the potential flooding difficulties in this quarter if land all around Victoria Road School were to be developed and would like to see reassurances that the primary school's situation would not deteriorate.

Councils Response:

1893 and 1896 - The view of the Council that this quarter should be masterplanned comprehensively at least in respect of the eastern half of the quarter. Therefore, the AAP contains a single site policy for the part of the quarter that lies east of the Learning Link.

1898 and 1906: The submission version of the AAP indicates that there are no current proposals to relocate the school but if it were to relocate, the Council would expect the retention of the school buildings and adjacent school house as part of any redevelopment there. Potential flooding difficulties will be assessed through a flood risk assessment as part of any new development in this Quarter and compliant with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy. Any potential flooding difficulties would need to be dealt with and measures put in place before development can be completed.

Design of the Quarter

Main Issues Raised:

1792 has raised concerns that if the predominant use in the Southern Expansion Quarter is to be residential with ground floor levels allocated for retail or commercial space then this could create an unattractive street scene based on other examples. 2148 has encouraged the use of bridging arrangements, say first or second floor levels, over the railway to create an element of high level pedestrian or piazza areas as public spaces and integrate the railway into a sense of place rather than the emphasis just on a pedestrian environment at street level.

Due to the strategic location of this quarter in relation to the railway stations, 1894 and 1895 raised concerns over Ashford turning into a dormitory town with the introduction of the high speed rail link and so suggested areas particularly close to the station, in particular the Southern Expansion Quarter, are ideal for quality accommodation for such small commuter households.

In relation to the quarter being in close proximity to the river corridor, 1900 highlighted that this quarter should make more reference to the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor or to the management and use of green space by incorporating into the design of this quarter.

Concerns were raised by 2049 that the Council expects schemes to come forward as part of a comprehensive approach to the area. It must be recognised that the area falls within a number of land ownerships and not all owners will be ready to proceed at the same time. The range of landowners in the locality and their differing aspirations and programmes are likely to make this difficult to achieve if consensus is required.

Councils Response:

1792: The ethos behind having commercial and retail on the ground floor is to create an attractive street frontage both day and evening. To have entirely residential development in such a strategic location along Victoria Way and so close to the town centre would make the area become less active and vibrant.

2148: Bridging arrangements over the railway would be hugely expensive and therefore undeliverable.

1894, 1895: This comment is agreed in principle. However, the Council have no control over who will buy these properties whether it will be commuters or not. Its location next to the station, however, would suggest residential properties in this area would be well suited for commuters. The aim is to provide a range of dwellings types in the town centre to attract all sectors whether commuters or local workers to prevent it becoming solely a 'commuter town'.

1900 - this issue is dealt with in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

2049 - the Council is fully aware of the problems associated with multiple ownership. The Southern Expansion Quarter will obviously see considerable change over time as the town centre expands southwards. The pace of this change will probably be dictated by the strength of the town centre economy, but it is reasonable to assume that there will be a gradual intensification of use in the area as properties and sites are sold and redeveloped at higher densities.

Transport issues within the Quarter

Main Issues Raised:

1899 would like to see more consideration made of encouraging movement by public transport and does not adequately address the need for step change in the movement of people towards sustainable modes of transport. The provision of cycling and walking facilities at the Learning Campus could have limited use if there is not a network of cycle paths across Ashford. However, the introduction of Discovery Square - the provision of a car free public open space within the Elwick Road corridor is welcomed by 1899.

1854 states that it is currently unclear as to whether Victoria Road will serve as a 'high quality public transport corridor' as the plan suggests and would be presumptuous of the Council to state this before a definite decision has been made.

1897 raised concern that pedestrian users would not feel safe with the underpass from Victoria Way towards the town and further clarification on this is needed from the Council.

Councils Response:

1899 - The Ashford Transport Strategy, a background document to the Area Action Plan, identifies that a 'step-change' is required to encourage more use of sustainable modes of travel. This will be achieved through a phasing approach with the introduction of Park and Ride sites on out of town locations, a high quality SMARTLINK bus service and improvements to the existing cycling and walking routes. All of which will contribute towards Ashford Town Centre becoming a more accessible location by sustainable modes of transport.

1854 - The upgrade of Victoria Road to a new strategic east- west route known as 'Victoria Way' is necessary to encourage traffic to move around the town centre rather than through. This will open up the two way ring road to become a more welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists and help towards the redevelopment of the Southern Expansion Quarter. It may become a high quality public transport route in due course when facilities and services have become established there.

1897- The final design of Victoria Way Corridor will need to take into consideration the requirements of all road users, including pedestrians, to ensure the route can be accessible to all.

Preferred Option 10: International Station Quarter

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1901 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	1911 - Kent Wildlife Trust	1918 - Planning Potential
1902 - Mr WJ Davies	1912 - Victoria Road Residents Action Group	1920 - DSDHA
1905 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	1913 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2127 - Churches Together in Ashford
1907 - Montagu Evans	1914 - Montagu Evans	2133 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1908 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1915 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2134 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1909 - Highways Agency	1916 - South Ashford Community Forum	2136 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1910 - English Nature	1917 - Countryside Agency	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1907, 1908, 1909, 2127 and 2133 support the preferred option.

Council's Response:

This support is welcomed.

Design of the Quarter

Main Issues Raised:

1901, 1905 and 1915 want to see the domestic and international station merged together as one entrance to become an introduction to the town. As regards to an International arrival square, 1905 wants to see access from both sides from trains, bus, by car and on foot.

1920 recommends that the site at the junction of Romney Marsh Road and Beaver Road should be developed as a landmark site. As the main gateway to the town, the immediate local arrival areas should be of the highest architectural and urban design quality and contain a diverse mix of uses to encourage movement and the development of a desirable community.

1902 wants to see the former 'Kudos' nightclub and Kent Arms building specifically mentioned in the AAP as they are part of the history of the town. 1902 also highlights that provision should be made for easy direct pedestrian, bus and cycle access from Beaver Road/Victoria Way.

1910 and 1911 want to see more reference made to address the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor. 1911 argue that the river corridor should be given its own preferred option.

1917 feels that opportunities to link the urban space in front of the International Station with others in the town centre to capitalise on the proposed Green/Emerald Necklace which runs through the quarters are missed. Specific reference should also be made to how links could be created between the new square in front of the station and other open spaces within the town centre, including the river corridor.

Councils Response:

1901, 1905 and 1915: It is unlikely the two railway stations will become merged as there are issues of security that need to be resolved and are under different train service operators. Of course, this is an issue for the operators in the main although the Council encourages linkage between the two stations and an improvement in the accessibility to both in the AAP

1920 - The Council welcome this comment and agree in principle that the area should be of high quality architectural design - this is reflected in the site policy for this area in the submission AAP.

1902 - The town centre comprises a number of important, historic buildings which the Council will seek to preserve and enhance. Specifically, the former 'Kudos' building is already a listed building and will remain as part of the Commercial Quarter rather than the International Station Quarter. In relation to easier access from Beaver Road and Victoria Way, improvements to the Beaver Road bridge and junction have been implemented and have made access to the International Station to pedestrians and cyclists from the west easier.

1910, 1911 and 1917 - This issue is dealt with under the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Inclusion of other areas within the Area Action Plan period

Main Issues Raised:

1914 and 2134 both want the Ashford Designer Outlet Centre (DOC) to be incorporated into the preferred option through future development to encourage the visitors from the DOC to visit the town centre.

1918 wants to see the potential of the land to the south of the International Station car park to be recognised as a development site pre 2021 to bring it in parallel with development around Victoria Road and Beaver Road as its redevelopment in the short term would not compromise the delivery of projects elsewhere in the town.

Councils Response:

1914 and 2134: The reason why the Designer Outlet Centre is not incorporated into the Town Centre Area Action Plan boundary is covered in the Introductions Chapter under 'Town Centre Area Action Plan Boundary'.

1918: The area south of the International Station Car Park represent a potential redevelopment opportunity in the longer term. Due to its location within the 100 year floodplain and its predominantly residential nature this area poses a more difficult area to redevelop comprehensively in the short term. There are currently more strategically placed brownfield opportunities to develop upon in advance of this area. However, the submission AAP would not prejudice redevelopment coming forward sooner if that proved viable.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1912 and 1913 want to see the Ashford Rail Staff Association club house and bowling green retained as it contributes to the leisure choices available within the town.

2136 are concerned that the International Station Quarter could become an isolated community with its own car parking, food and other leisure uses.

1916 would like to see a bus station in this quarter with information points for visitors and residents.

Councils Response:

1912 and 1913: No specific proposals to redevelop this site are included in the AAP but if the site did come forward, the Council would seek provision of a replacement facility.

2136: The International Station Quarter is intended to provide a primarily commercial redevelopment to enhance both the role of the International and domestic railway stations in addition to releasing a small amount of residential land. The Council would only seek development which is complementary to other uses found in the town centre and would not promote development which would see this quarter becoming an isolated community.

1916: The International Station may become a stop as part of the new 'strategic' SMARTLINK bus network connecting parts of the town centre to the new urban extensions. Information points for visitors and residents is important in creating a legible urban structure and guiding people from one part of the town centre to the next. There are no proposals for a bus station in the AAP as there is not a requirement for such a facility.

Preferred Option 11: Memorial Square Quarter

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1921 - Boyer Planning	1927 - Kent Wildlife Trust	1935 - Mr WJ Davies
1923 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1932 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2128 - Churches Together in Ashford

1924 - Highways Agency	1933 - Kent County Council	2135 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1925 - English Nature	1934 - Countryside Agency	2149 - Ashford Construction Focus Group

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1921, 1923, 1924, 2128 support the preferred option

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

2135, 1934 and 2149 all recognise the creation of public space linking the town centre and the stations as identified in the AAP but all raise the question of how this is going to be achieved and detail of this should be highlighted in the AAP.

1935 suggests a link to the Memorial Gardens could be attained by a long gentle foot/ cycle path bridge over Station Road towards Tannery Lane and the stations.

1927, 1925 and 1933 want to see the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor, which is recognised as a local nature reserve and local wildlife site, to be recognised within the AAP.

1932 want to see a clear strategy for the improvement of cultural development within the town to ensure that the vision of the GADF of 'culture at the heart of Ashford's growth' is realised.

Councils Response:

2135, 1934, 2149, 1927, 1925 and 1933: These issues are dealt with under the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

1935: The Council have identified a need to create a better link between Memorial Gardens and the Civic buildings at the end of Tannery Lane. A bridge linking these parts of the town would not be necessary and be very expensive. However, the Council would like to see this area be opened up to become a high quality public space. The redevelopment of the Commercial Quarter will play an important role in providing improved pedestrian and cycle routes from the station to Memorial Gardens and Station Road.

1932: Ashford Borough Council has produced a Cultural Strategy which builds upon the vision of the GADF. The Cultural Strategy supports the need for Ashford to protect and enhance its assets and deliver appropriate cultural provision as the population grows. This principle is already embedded in the Core Strategy through Policy CS18 which states, 'As Ashford grows and the demand for new or enhanced cultural and community facilities increase, the Council will require that new developments provide an increased level of sporting, recreation, cultural and

community facilities which satisfy this demand. It is the role of the Town Centre Area Action Plan, as strategically the most accessible location in the Borough, to seek both local and strategic cultural provision. Up to 2021, the Council seek to allocate around 24,000 sq.m of floorspace for education, community and cultural provision including that in the Learning Campus development.

Preferred Option 12: Residential Transition Zone (North)

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1922 - Cluttons LLP	1943 - John Bishop & associates	2129 - Churches Together in Ashford
1930 - Cluttons LLP	1944 - Boyer Planning	2132 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1931 - Kent County Council	1945 - Boyer Planning	
1939 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1949 - Cluttons LLP	
1940 - Central Ashford Community Forum	1953 - Countryside Agency	
1941 - Highways Agency	2117 - John Bishop & Associates	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1939, 2129 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1922 wants the density of Godinton Way Industrial Estate, as a prime potential town centre residential development opportunity, to be maximised.

1943, 1944 and 1945 all raise objections that the land owned by Ashford School to the west of the Riverside Business Park is not included to reflect the potential to accommodate up to 6,000 sq.m. in the period to 2021.

1941 and 2132 raise concerns over the introduction of a multi-storey car park along Mace Lane. 1941 would be concerned that the provision of parking could encourage car based trips. 2132 questions the introduction of a multi storey public car park in this area. The long uphill walk from Mace Lane will be off putting to visitors and

possibly not fully used. 2117 adds to this by supporting a multi storey car park but provided a mixed use scheme is developed with retail development as the primary use as its location is adjacent to a principal transportation route well served by public transport.

1953 would like to see opportunities for creation of open space considered in the Residential Transition Zone.

1949 wants the AAP floorspace figures for the Residential Transition Zone to be set out as 'targets' and that it may possible for these to be exceeded.

1930 and 1940 raise issues on the design approach of the Residential Transition Zone. 1930 raised objections to the suggested height restrictions as this could conflict with the need to make the best use of the land and maximising density. 1940 wants to see more emphasis on local design to give it a distinctive Kent flavour. Too many properties in this area have been bought to be redeveloped into multiple occupation and has increased the problem of parking.

1931 objects to any redevelopment on the ring road by New Street which would impede on any businesses which have to load and unload goods.

Council's Response:

1922: The potential for the residential redevelopment of the Godinton Way Industrial Estate is reflected in policy TC8 of the submission AAP. It is agreed that this site should be residential in nature and that is reflected in the policy. Given the existing constraints of the railway to the south and 2 storey residential properties to the north, redevelopment of this site would need to be sympathetic to its surroundings and density to be at an appropriate scale.

1943, 1944 and 1945: This issue is dealt with in the Site Representations chapter on page 85.

1941 and 2132: The proposal to introduce three new multi storey car parks on the periphery of the town centre was put forward to allow some existing car parks, primarily in the town centre core, to be developed upon. The concept of 'park and walk' car parks is to discourage drivers from entering the former ring road unnecessarily. The location of Mace Lane Multi-storey car park is slightly more remote from the main shopping areas of County Square and Park Mall compared with the other two multi storey car parks, therefore it is envisaged that this will be the last of the three car parks to come forward and has not be included as a site specific proposal in the AAP.

2117: The AAP does not anticipate this area coming forward for redevelopment in the short term due to the current occupancy on the site and the multiple ownerships involved. The site would be potentially suitable for some limited retail uses (reflecting its current use in part) or commercial development alongside the proposed multi storey car park.

1953: This issue is dealt with in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

1949: The Area Action Plan includes indicative floorspace figures or residential quantum for individual sites and the wider quarters. These figures are considered to be broad targets that will be refined through more detailed work when specific proposals are drawn up. Should the strength of the market exceed expectations and adequate infrastructure were to be put in place to support it, the Council would be willing, in principle, to consider allowing development in excess of these indicative figures subject to the appropriate design and amenity considerations.

1930, 1940: This area is more suitable for lower building heights compared to other quarters due to its close proximity to an existing residential area. This quarter promotes an area which sees a transition from a traditional, terraced form of 2-3 storey housing development to a higher density town centre core and building heights will need to be sympathetic to allow this transition to happen. This is reflected in the Residential Transition Quarter policy in the submission AAP. 1940: Given the existing character of the area, any redevelopment will need to be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of height, density and materials used. Residential redevelopment in this area will be assessed against existing car parking provision. If development is shown to add considerably to car parking provision then solutions will be sought to avoid this situation.

1931: Any redevelopment of this area would need to take into consideration the access needs for loading and servicing associated with existing properties.

Preferred Option 13: Managing Change and delivering sustainable, high quality design

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1787 - Hallam Land Management	1951 - Cluttons LLP	1964 - Kent County Council
1936 - Cluttons LLP	1952 - Cluttons LLP	1965 - Kent County Council
1937 - Cluttons LLP	1955 - Countryside Agency	1966 - Highways Agency
1942 - John Bishops & Associates	1957 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1968 - Planning Potential
1946 - Kent County Council	1958 - English Nature	1971 - Kent County Council
1947 - Kent County Council	1959 - Kent Wildlife Trust	2130 - Churches Together
1948 - Berkeley Strategic	1960 - Cluttons LLP	2156 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1950 - Cluttons LLP	1961 - English Nature	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1936, 1937, 1955, 1957 support the preferred option

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

Scale of development in the town centre

Main Issues Raised:

1787 is concerned that there is not sufficient capacity in the town centre to accommodate the scale of development proposed. Due to the absence of an economic development strategy, the level of anticipated development will not be achieved by 2021.

1971 and 1947 raised concern over the floorspace figures outlined in the table in Chapter 5. 1947 suggests separating the figures for retail from leisure to make it clear what is required for each. 1971 questions whether the education figure for the Southern Expansion Quarter includes or excludes the existing primary school.

1960 and 1968 feel that achieving the approval of a development brief could compromise the programme of delivery. Instead there should be a need for applications to demonstrate sensitivity of the proposals outlined in the TCAAP. 1950, however, suggests that site specific development briefs may be produced but would like to know which sites specifically.

1966 suggests that as part of the sustainability agenda, opportunities to minimise the need to travel, reliance on the private car and provision for travel by sustainable modes should be identified at the earliest design stages.

1965 would like to see the role of public art within the town centre more explicitly covered in the TCAAP.

1952 suggests the Council's targets should be based on the strength of the market and if it exceeds expectation, the Council should be willing to consider additional development within the overall 2031 figures.

Council's Response:

1787: Since Ashford was identified as a growth area, a number of studies have been carried out to assess its capacity to accommodate employment growth. The Employment background document to the Core Strategy states, 'The Core Strategy seeks to provide a commercial environment that is conducive to encouraging new and existing businesses. A general balance between a growing population and the creation of jobs locally is also sought. As the number of jobs generated is more important than the amount of floorspace, the Core Strategy sets targets for providing jobs rather than specific floorspace requirements. Major infrastructure improvements signalled in the Core Strategy will help stimulate demand for employment space including the CTRL fast service to London (commencing 2009)'. The Town Centre Area Action Plan seeks to provide a better, more intensified use of valuable town centre land. Delivering significant employment growth is a key priority for the town centre, particularly in the office sector. Other employment sectors such as retail, leisure and tourism will also make a contribution to the growth in jobs. An Economic Development Strategy for the Borough is in the process of being undertaken and this will help to address areas of support needed to help deliver for the planning

framework set out in the AAP. The Council has also sought market advice on the prospects for the delivery of the quantum of development proposed in the AAP and is reassured that, although development may be slowed initially as a result of the exceptional market conditions currently being encountered, there is no fundamental reason why this scale of development will not be realised in due course if the requisite infrastructure and promotion takes place.

1947: Retail and leisure uses are grouped together as their impacts are similar in terms of trip generation and parking and they should both be planned for in a similar way based on Government guidance in PPS6. Both retail and leisure uses contribute towards an active and vibrant town centre and are often found together in major mixed use schemes. Therefore, the submitted Area Action Plan has included a floorspace target for retail and leisure combined.

1971: The education figures for the Southern Expansion Quarter in the preferred options report does not include the existing Victoria Road primary school. All floorspace figures relate to future provision.

1960, 1968 and 1950 - The Town Centre Area Action Plan sets out a number of site specific policies within the Quarters overall policy approach. Applications will need to demonstrate sensitivity of the proposals outlined in these policies. However, on occasions it may be necessary for developments, in particular those of a large scale or being planned comprehensively, to produce development briefs or masterplans and these are referred to in the submission AAP.

1966 - The sustainable transport agenda is a strategic issue that has been tested through the Core Strategy. The compact growth model, endorsed by the Council, seeks a reduction in the overall need for people to travel. A Transport Strategy for Ashford has been produced to establish how the overall need for people to travel can be reduced and how travel by non-car modes can be increased. Public transport will be improved through the introduction of SMARTLINK, the allocation of Park and Ride facilities, and improvements to Ashford's walking and cycling network. The town centre will benefit from these improvements as traffic needing to enter the ring road will be reduced.

1965 - The Council encourages the use of public art as part of the overall public realm improvements in the town centre. It is not considered the role of the Area Action Plan to outline in explicit detail how and where public art will be placed. However, one of the guiding principles in policy TC1 of the AAP makes specific reference to the need for integration of public art, or contributions towards public art, from developments in the town centre. In addition, a Public Art Strategy is being developed which seeks to manage and deliver public art opportunities in the Borough.

1952 - The Council accept that delivery of targets will be dependant on the strength of the market. The Council's target for growth has been extensively tested through the GADF and Core Strategy process based on a number of strategic factors including funding, phasing and infrastructure requirements. Targets could be exceeded if sufficient infrastructure is in place to accommodate extra development.

Green roofs and the use of sustainable alternatives

Main Issues raised:

1959 and 1958 both want to see the implementation of green roofs. 1959 wants the policy to read: 'To meet the council's aspirations for design excellence and the sustainability agenda, development proposals need to have appropriately designed green roofs over at least 50% of the total roof area of each quarter'. 1958 is disappointed that TC13 does not explicitly refer to conserving and enhancing nature conservation interests as a part of sustainable, high-quality design including incorporating green roofs into brownfield sites.

1964 and 2130 would like to see more guidance given on how to implement more sustainable alternatives to traditional development.

1946 and 1961 want to see greater emphasis placed on the river side and green space areas of the town centre. 1946 make the point that valuable spaces between individual buildings and sites are just as important as the buildings or development itself and reference should be made to this in the TCAAP.

Council's Response:

1959, 1958, 1964, 2130: The sustainable design agenda is set out in the Core Strategy under policy CS10 which looks to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Code Level 3 over the plan period and BREEAM overall level very good with up to a 30% minimum carbon dioxide reduction. As guidance is already set out in the Core Strategy, it is not the role of the Town Centre Area Action Plan to reiterate this in detail. A Sustainable Design and Construction SPD has been prepared to guide developers on how to reach these levels.

1959 and 1958: The Council would not be so specific in the Area Action Plan to expect developers to implement green roofs as a requirement. However, the Council would encourage the use of green roofs where practical.

1946 and 1961: This issue is dealt with in the Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues chapter.

Strategic tariff

Main issues raised:

1951, 1948 and 2156 want to see the AAP more explicit about the need for all residential and employment related development within the town centre to contribute towards the strategic tariff and how this will be addressed. 1942 would like to see greater detail expressed on the issue of the strategic tariff and how it will be implemented. It fails to provide clear guidance and will result in uncertainty for developers when assessing the economic viability of potential redevelopment schemes.

Council's Response:

Although residential development is expected to pay the strategic tariff, employment and retail development is not required to pay the tariff, however, the Council will seek financial contributions, via Section 106 agreements, towards public realm improvements within the town centre. The principle of the strategic tariff is set out within the Core Strategy policy CS8 with detail outlined in the forthcoming Infrastructure Contributions SPD.

Preferred Option 14: Victoria Way

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1967 - CPRE	1983 - Countryside Agency	1995 - Firstplan
1975 - John Bishop & Associates	1984 - Planning Potential	2131 - Churches Together in Ashford
1977 - Victoria Road Residents Association	1985 - Ms M C Fernandez Hierro	2151 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1978 - Victoria Way Residents Association	1989 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2155 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1979 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	1990 - Countryside Agency	
1980 - Firstplan	1991 - Mr H C Matthews	
1981 - South Ashford Community Forum	1992 - Bellway Homes	
1982 - Highways Agency	1993 - CPRE	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 2131, 2155 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

Alignment of Victoria Way

Main Issues Raised:

1984, 2151, 1992 and 1981 all raise objection to the Victoria Way alignment. 1984 objects to that part of the proposed route between the Gasworks Land and Leacon Road. This takes a circuitous route, when a direct approach is both achievable and better able to deliver an alignment suited to the function of this route. 2151 consider it would be better to have a new road running along the river forming an outer ring road to ensure that traffic is diverted from the town centre speedily and efficiently. 1981 raised concerns whether the intention of the route to create a slow urban route would actually work and the general feeling is that the road would actually suck in more traffic mainly due to the High Speed rail link to London. 1992 suggests adding a key to the Victoria Way alignment map as it appears to be a road improvement scheme through land currently proposed for residential use.

1989 and 1995 both support the Victoria Way alignment however some of the design principles need to be amended in order to be consistent with the overall strategy of the AAP. Construction of the road as an immediate measure to a lower specification could leave the town with a road of inadequate specification.

Councils Response:

1984 and 2151- Extensive research has been carried out on the alignment of Victoria Way and a number of options were drawn up and consulted upon locally before reaching a decision of the preferred alignment. A corridor for the road and its associated public realm is included in the AAP to enable its safeguarding and encourage the delivery of the route. It is understood that there is now a general agreement that this route is both deliverable and provides the best design and traffic solution for the Southern expansion quarter and the town centre as a whole.

1981 - The upgrading of Victoria Road to a new strategic east - west route south of the town centre will see traffic being drawn away from the former ring road. The intention is to create the right balance between providing a high quality strategic route around the town centre capable of accommodating high levels of traffic whilst also providing an urban street with active frontages and a well used pedestrian and cycle route. The final design of the scheme will need to consider implementing traffic calming measures especially around the residential areas and the Learning Link to ensure Victoria Way does not become just a route dominated by car traffic.

1992 - The Victoria Way Corridor is included in the submission Area Action Plan.

1989 and 1995: The Victoria Way Corridor is a crucial piece of infrastructure in opening up the south of the town centre for redevelopment. The design of the route will need to be of high quality design and create a public realm which contributes to the vision of a urban street with a mix of residential, retail and commercial development. The route can be delivered in two phases with the initial phase focusing on the delivery of the highway link and the subsequent public realm surrounding it coming forward as development progresses

Miscellaneous**Main Issues Raised:**

1993, 1990 1983 and 1967 all encourage a preferred option outlining the details on public transport provision together with pedestrian and cycling facilities. 1967 would like further information on SMARTLINK to be given to raise more public awareness of the scheme. 1991 wants to see the provision of bus shelters and timetables along bus routes to know when and where to catch the bus from.

1985 considers a light rail/tram system as in other European towns would be suitable as an alternative to a Park and Ride bus system (chapter 6 in general)

1982 acknowledges that a traffic impact assessment has been carried out on the proposed Victoria Way route but would request that the impact of the M20 motorway junction should also be assessed.

Councils Response:

1993, 1990, 1983 and 1967: The submitted Area Action Plan includes policies on the delivery of new pedestrian and cyclist routes through the town centre and encourages the use of public transport through the location of developments at sustainable places with the wider strategic transport objectives for the Growth Area in mind, e.g SMARTLINK routes.

1967 - A proposed SMARTLINK route is shown on the key diagram in the adopted Core strategy - there is no need to repeat it in the AAP.

1991 - The new SMARTLINK bus service will incorporate a number of information points at key bus stops along the route in addition to quality timetables to encourage its use. A number of initiatives are being looked at to make bus timetabling more accessible. This is not a specific issue for the AAP.

1985 - Assessment of whether a tram system would be viable in Ashford was carried out through the Ashford SMARTLINK Report which concluded that a light tram system would not be financially viable for a town the size of Ashford.

1982 - The Highways Agency has been involved in the traffic modelling for the town centre and the wider growth area proposals which has assessed the impacts of development at Junction 9 of the motorway. No significant changes have been made to the development assumptions in the town centre since this was undertaken and so it is felt that this issue has already been satisfactorily addressed.

Preferred Option 15: Car Parking

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1956 - Mr H.C. Matthews	1994 - Ashford Town centre Partnership	2000 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership
1974 - CPRE Kent	1996 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2002 - Highways Agency
1986 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	1997 - CPRE	2003 - DSDHA
1987 - Mrs P Boorman	1999 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2004 - CPRE

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

1996 and 1997 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1986, 1994, 2003 and 2000 all raise concerns over car parking within the town centre. 1986 and 1994 wants to see more parking provision within the town centre and suggests that New Street be the first choice for a multi storey car park rather than Victoria Way as it will give County Square the extra car parking spaces needed. 1986 also suggests a multi storey behind the Bowling Centre to encourage footfall to the lower end of the town centre. 2003 endorses the need for reducing car usage,

however, any parking strategy should bear in mind the likelihood that many visitors to the International Station Quarter in particular will arrive by rail and therefore the necessity for parking serving new developments may be reduced. 2000 raises concerns over residential parking in the town centre during the day and especially the evening when multi storey car parks are not user friendly and park and ride schemes not operational. It is recommended for free parking weekdays from 6PM and all day Sundays to encourage 7 days a week shopping to compete with other towns. 1999 wants to see greater provision for disabled parking as some multi storey have vehicle height restrictions in place which are not suitable for large mobility vehicles.

2002 raises the issue that the oversupply of parking is likely to limit the effectiveness of demand management measures that are important in encouraging a reduction in travel and the use of sustainable modes of travel. Demand associated with specific development should be carefully managed such that parking provision becomes the residual output of the sustainable planning process. 2004 and 1974 want to see greater emphasis placed on sustainable modes of transport over car parking provision.

1956 - Vicarage Lane car park should become a two storey underground car park with shops and flats above which would attract people to the centre and make the environment more attractive.

1987 feels car parking should be planned for in the early stages to avoid having to find space at a later date. 1987 also raised concerns that new residents and visitors do not know where to catch the buses as there are currently a number of places to catch buses for different areas.

Council's Response:

1956, 1985, 1994, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2004 - The Ashford's Future Car Parking Strategy, a key background document to the Area Action Plan, seeks to strive a balance, on car parking provision in the town centre, between improving the economic performance of the town centre, attracting business to the town and encouraging greater use of sustainable modes of travel. Striking this balance requires a number of incentives and control measures to be put in place. As the Parking Strategy states, ' More sustainable modes of travel such as park and ride will need to be promoted, particularly for commuters and long stay visitors to limit the increase in peak hour traffic flows. It is recognised, however, that significant levels of short stay car parking close to the town centre will still be needed to support the existing and expanding commercial centre'.

1986 and 1994 - The Victoria Way location is still the Council's preferred choice for the first of the three multi-storey car parks as it will provide easy access to the extended County Square development (200m). This car park will also provide additional parking for sites in Elwick Road and Victoria Road. The New Street multi storey car park will be constructed in line with the redevelopment of Park Mall slightly later in the plan period.

1986 - A multi storey car park behind the Bowling Centre is not considered a suitable location as this would go against the Council's aim of reducing car traffic which has to enter the ring road unnecessarily. The Bowling centre and the adjoining car park are potential redevelopment opportunities within the Civic Quarter.

2003 - The Council has taken into consideration the potential increase in train travel when assessing future car parking provision.

2000 - The submission AAP sets out the appropriate parking standards for residential development in the town centre in policy TC23. This will be to a maximum of 1 space per dwelling for 1, 2 or 3 bedroom properties. However, encouragement is given to potential space sharing in public car parks and car sharing clubs.

1999 - Disabled parking provision will be provided within all town centre car parks including those still remaining within the ring road such as at County Square or Park Mall. Consideration will be given to operating 'shopmobility' from one or more of these sites.

2002, 2004 and 1974 - The submission AAP includes parking standards for office, retail and leisure developments that progressively tighten as alternative means of parking and transport come into operation. This is set out in policy TC22 of the submission AAP.

1956 - The Vicarage Lane site is covered by policy TC5 of the submission AAP. It is proposed for mixed use development including retail/leisure uses at ground level with office, community and residential units. It is expected that the majority of car parking for this site would be commuted to off site locations such as the proposed multi storey car parks or Park & Ride sites.

1987 - The allocation of car parking has been planned comprehensively and land has been allocated over the plan period. The Council are in discussions about introducing a bus hub which will see a number of bus services combined in one place with an initial preference for the domestic station.

Preferred Option 16: Multi-Storey Car park provision

Representations were received from the following organisations:

2005 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2010 - Network Rail	2152 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
2006 - John Bishop & Associates	2012 - Mr R Wolfe	2154 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
2007 - Planning Potential	2013 - CPRE	
2009 - Cluttons LLP	2014 - South Ashford Community Forum	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

2005, 2006, 2012 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

2152, 2154, 2007, 2010 and 2014 all raised concerns over the location and provision of car parking in the town centre. 2014 and 2010 want to see more information included on railway station car parking and raised concerns that residential parking in these areas could be affected. 2154 objects to Edinburgh Road car park being regarded as being poorly located as it is not difficult to access easily. 2007 objects to the expectation that an 800 space public car park must be provided on the Powergen site. The AAP provides no indication of how or why it should be delivered as part of the redevelopment by the public sector.

2009 wants the AAP to make clear that out of town development rather than town centre development should contribute to park and ride parking costs.

2152 feels not enough car parking provision is being allocated within the town centre to meet future requirements. 2013 wants to see more emphasis placed on sustainable modes of travel over multi storey car parks.

Council's Response:

2152, 2154, 2007, 2010 and 2014 - A stepped approach to parking standards in the town centre across the LDF period that takes account of market factors, the availability of other car parking opportunities and public transport alternatives is required.

2014 and 2010 - On-street parking in residential areas surrounding the stations will need to be carefully monitored to ensure these spaces are not being used by commuters. A car parking permit system for local residents already exists and the Council would seek to continue this system to give residents priority. Car parking provision for users of the railway stations is at an over supply due to the cut in Eurostar services from Ashford. In the short term, this cut will provide the extra car parking needed to cater for users of the High Speed service to London being introduced in December 2009. Future railway station car parking will need to be continually monitored in cooperation with South Eastern Trains and Eurostar. An option in the long term could be to provide a multi storey, long stay car park to the south of the station along Romney Marsh Road to replace existing surface car parks. Park and Ride also plays an important part in providing long stay car parking and could cater for some rail commuters if priced cheaper than car parking close to the station to encourage its use. In the short term, it is envisaged that the recently developed car parking spaces at Dover Place could provide the spaces needed.

2154 - Edinburgh Road car park is relatively poorly located due to its access via Park Street and Edinburgh Road. The multi storey car park's concrete facade contributes to a poor public realm along Edinburgh Road and creates a negative image of Ashford town centre. The redevelopment of the multi storey car park along with Park Mall provides a good opportunity to improve the public realm and to bring development forward to immediately front Somerset Road making the site more easily accessible. Any replacement parking provided as part of a redevelopment could be accessed more directly from Somerset Road enabling Edinburgh Road to be closed and the built footprint to be extended.

2007- The location of the first 'Park and Walk' multi storey car park on Victoria Road was chosen for a number reasons. Its location along the proposed Victoria Way gives it easy access to traffic and with the proposed new Learning Link bridge over the railway and the car park would only be 200m from the new County Square

extension and Elwick Place redevelopment (policy TC3 of the submission AAP). The need for an 800 space car park is identified in Council's Parking Strategy and is part of the wider strategy for enabling new retail and leisure development in the town centre to come forward.

2009 - Out of town centre development will contribute to the delivery of Park and Ride sites through the strategic tariff. Town Centre development, asides from residential, will not contribute via the tariff but may contribute via the proposed policy on commuted car parking payments (policy TC25 of the submission AAP).

2152 and 2013 - Car parking provision in the town centre will take on a phased approach to ensure sustainable transport alternatives are in place before car parking is reduced in the town centre. This has been reflected in the range of parking policies policies in the submission AAP.

Preferred Option 17: Parking Standards

Representations were received from the following organisations:

2011 - Cluttons LLP	2019 - Victoria Way Residents Association	2023 - Countryside Agency
2015 - Highways Agency	2020 - Ms M C Fernandez Hierro	2024 - CPRE
2016 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2021 - Kent County Council	2026 - South Ashford Community Forum

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

2015 and 2016 support the preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

2011 agrees with the policy that there should be a maximum of 1 space per 1 or 2 bedroom dwelling. However, there are no standards for larger dwellings.

2019 would like to see zero car ownership encouraged to avoid allocating parking on developments where a lower provision is likely to lead to over subscription and overflow of parking to streets and excessive use of public parking. 2026 raises fears over the amount of parking to be allocated within the town centre considering the likely increase in the town centre population. 2021 wants to see the initial focus for design of the ring road to be Elwick Road not West Street/Somerset Road in order to improve the residential transition into the town centre core. 2020 believes

the concept of park and ride will not work all the while car parks exist within the town centre. Town centre car parks should be located on the outskirts of the town centre and provision should be made for public transport to link these to the town centre.

Council's Response:

2011 - The submission AAP has included residential parking standards of 1 space per unit (policy TC23).

2019 - Car parking spaces within the town centre will be at a premium especially later within the plan period. Developing good access to public transport will play a key role in encouraging zero car or zero ownership developments into the town centre. An example of zero car development can be seen on the corner of Wellesley Road and Park Street.

2026 - The development of 2500 residential dwellings over the plan period to 2021 will inevitably see an increase in residential car parking provision. Town centre residential car parking should generally be provided either underground, in small parking courts that are overlooked by residents they serve, or on street as part of residents parking schemes. Consideration will be given to reduced car parking standards provided that the developer actively promotes them as such.

2021 - This has now been completed.

2020 - The introduction of Park and Ride will be phased in line with the redevelopment of existing town centre surface car parks and the development of the proposed multi storey car parks. The cost of using Park and Ride will need to be cheaper than parking close to the town centre to encourage its use. The significant amounts of new development means that existing car parks would soon be at capacity without the additional capacity provided by Park & Ride locations.

More guidance on sustainable transport

Main Issues Raised:

2023 and 2024 raise the issue that not enough emphasis is made on sustainable modes of travel. 2023 feels that the AAP could make more of encouraging movements by foot and cycle and that the AAP does not adequately address the need for step change with limited planned infrastructure for walking, cycling and public transport. 2024 feels more emphasis should be made on the SMARTLINK service and the exploration of public transport interchange within the town centre should occur.

Council's Response:

2023 and 2024 - The submission AAP clearly promotes sustainable means of transport in particular public transport, walking and cycling through its site specific policies and vehicle and cycle parking standards.

Preferred Options 18: The Ring Road

Representations were received from the following organisations:

2017 - Kent County Council	2027 - South Ashford Community Forum	2030 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
2018 - Countryside Agency	2028 - South Ashford Community Forum	2153 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
2022 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2029 - Highways Agency	

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

2018, 2029 and 2030 supported this preferred option.

Councils Response:

2018, 2029, 2030: this support is welcomed.

General Objection

Main Issues Raised:

2017 highlights that the AAP makes clear Station Road will be the main access road but it is not clear that there will be traffic calming measures installed which could cause greater risk to pedestrian safety. 2027 stated there was uncertainty whether the new 2-way ring road would have sufficient entrances and exits.

2022 wants to see a halt in 2-way traffic flows on the ring road until the Victoria Way route alleviates the town centre traffic away to avoid the initial slowing down of traffic along Elwick Road and the entrance to County Square.

2153 and 2028 both identify a lack of reference to the ring road linking to other modes of transport. 2028 would like to see cycleways written into the ring road plans and cycle parks to be created. 2153 would like to see reference to links by foot, road, and rail from the proposed car parks surrounding the ring road.

Council's Response:

The ring road has now gone two way. The ring road design incorporated an improvement to traffic signals along the whole stretch of the ring road which sees the pedestrian have greater priority over the car. The 'shared space' principles involve the slowing of traffic to 20 mph or less and the narrowing of carriageways so that better eye contact is established between drivers and pedestrians. However, it is not a pedestrianisation scheme and whilst vehicles will continue to use the new transformed Ring Road, they will share priority with all other road users, including cyclists. 2028: The Town Centre Area Action Plan is not looking to specifically allocate cycle parks but encourage cycle parking as part of new developments.

2153: The Area Action Plan considers key linkages and movement patterns as a fundamental element of future growth within the town centre. It considers the location of car parks to be an important element of this. The Council's initiative of 'Park and Walk' car parks founded through the Ashford Parking Strategy seeks to locate car parks on key strategic routes into the town centre to prevent vehicles entering the former ring road. In turn, this will create a more inviting environment for pedestrians and cyclists around the former ring road.

2022: Traffic modelling shows that it was not necessary to provide the Victoria Way link before the changes to the Ring Road occurred.

Preferred Option 19: Shopping Frontages

Representations were received from the following organisations:

2032 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	2033 - Montagu Evans	2150 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
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General Support

Main Issues Raised:

Representations 2032 and 2033 supported this preferred option.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

General Objection

Main Issues Raised:

2150 states the preferred option does not appear to reflect the fact that A2 uses are a more important function of an active retail street frontage than an A3 use.

Council's Response:

Disagree. It is the view of the Council that A3 uses (restaurants and cafes) promote a more regular active street frontage than A2 uses (Banks, Building Societies) and see A3 to be more complementary to A1 retail uses (shops).

Preferred Option 20 : Saved Town Centre Policies

Representations were received from the following organisations:

2034 - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

2034 supports TC10 and wishes to make no amendments

Councils Response:

2034: this support is welcomed.

Miscellaneous Representations

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1801 - Barton Willmore	2110 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2163 - South East England Regional Assembly
1809 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2111 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2164 - South East England Development Agency
1824 - Kent County Council	2112 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2165 - David Lock Associates
1963 - Kent County Council	2115 - Ashford Town Centre Partnership	2166 - Hallett & Co Solicitors
2035 - Mr J Talbot	2157 - Environment Agency	2167 - Southern Water
2037 - Mr Rodney Wolfe	2159 - Environment Agency	2168 - Mr R Airey
2096 - Kent County Council	2160 - Environment Agency	2169 - Mr Oddy
2109 - Ashford Baptist Church	2161 - Berkeley Estates London Limited	2172 - Ashford Railway Trust

General Support

Main Issues Raised:

2109, 2160 and 2165 support the document in general.

2163, 2164 and 2166 have no comment to make at this stage.

2161 expresses its interest in the future of Ashford town centre and looks forward to working with planners on the redevelopment opportunity of Charter House.

Councils Response:

This support is welcomed.

2161 - This is dealt with in the site representations chapter.

Sustainable Drainage

Main Issues Raised:

2157, 2167 and 2159 all raise the issue of sustainable drainage and water efficiency. 2159 recommends the Council does its own Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the town centre to ensure the AAP complies with its principles. 2159 also endorses the Sustainability Appraisal of the Area Action Plan which seeks development to show best practice in water efficiency, SUDS and habitat creation. 2157 wants to see more detail included in the document on the benefits of Sustainable Drainage Systems. 2167 recommends the layout of proposed development must be designed to avoid building over existing public sewers. With regard to surface water drainage, 2167 would prefer drainage to water courses.

Council's Response:

2159: As part of the GADF masterplanning process, a strategic flood risk assessment was produced in late 2005 for the whole of the Borough which identified areas at risk of flooding and informed the identification of development sites in the Core Strategy. An updating exercise has been undertaken with the EA in respect of the Town centre which informs both the SFRA, SA and the AAP in respect of site allocation and policy. At a more detailed level, assessing flood risk in the town centre will come through site specific flood risk assessments (FRA) at the planning application stage. An appropriate FRA will be required to demonstrate how flood risk from all sources of flooding to the development itself and flood risk to others will be managed and taking climate change into account.

2157: Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy states that all development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems for the disposal of surface water, in order to ensure there is no net loss of flood storage capacity or impact on water quality. As a minimum, developments should at least result in no net additional increase in runoff rates. In response to this, a Sustainable Drainage Systems SPD is to be produced to guide developers on what SUDS are most appropriate in Ashford and the potential benefits.

2167 - This comment is welcomed and the Council would seek to consult Southern Water on future town centre developments.

Business Operation**Main Issues Raised:**

2112 raised concerns over the operation of current businesses in the town over the development period. They want to know whether there is likely to be a blanket reduction on business rates to those already in the town centre or will this be those directly affected by each individual development. 2112 suggests researching whether any precedents have been set in other growth areas identified by the government.

Council's Response:

2112: This is not a matter to be dealt with in the Town Centre Area Action Plan.

Strategic Tariff**Main Issues Raised:**

1801 raised concerns that the AAP does not fully identify how the essential infrastructure will be delivered and funded, in particular junction 9 and 10 of the M20 - will development in town centre have to contribute towards this? The document would be stronger if it was to include this.

1824 and 2096 want to see reference to development contributions for infrastructure, including developments needed to deliver KCC services such as education and library services in line with policy IM1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

Council's Response:

1801, 1824 and 2096 - The principle of a strategic tariff has been identified in the Core Strategy through Policy CS8. All residential development in the town centre will pay the strategic tariff. Employment and retail proposals would not normally be required to pay the strategic tariff, however, within the town centre contributions from such proposals will be sought to help provide for the programme of major public realm improvements. An Infrastructure Contributions SPD is being developed to outline policy CS8 in greater detail. An Implementation section has been included in the submission AAP which sets out the various mechanisms and funding streams available and how they are proposed to deliver key infrastructure within the town centre. Junctions 9 & 10 of the M20 lie outside the town centre area and so are not specifically covered in the AAP.

Market Traditions

Main Issues Raised:

1809 suggests a purpose built market/plaza area in Ashford would be good to keep up the market town tradition of Ashford and also it could serve as two purposes as a quality /specialist market during the day and attract a café culture in the evenings. 2110 would like to see the current Upper High Street market relocated to the Lower High Street.

Council's Response:

1809 - the growth in the town centre population, and Ashford Borough as a whole, will see a greater demand for an increase in evening entertainment. A market already operates on the Lower High Street during shop opening hours. A purpose built market in the town centre is not something the Council would seek to allocate in the Town Centre Area Action Plan, however, an evening economy will be encouraged within the town centre. The integration of restaurants, bars and cafés into the town alongside retail outlets will help to support a broader economic base. The submission AAP highlights new areas of public realm such as Elwick Square that will be the focus for activity during the day and the evening.

2110 - The market has now moved to the Lower High Street to encourage greater footfall to this area of the town centre.

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1963 wants to see reference to the 'Accessibility Strategy for Kent 2006/07 to 2010/11' which seeks to improve access to key services by public transport.

2169 objects to the TAP because no representations made previously have been taken into account by Council.

2035 states that quality buildings are not for those who can qualify for affordable homes. If necessary, the affordable homes associated with these quality dwellings must be elsewhere if the aim is to encourage wealthy commuters into the town.

2037 suggests the car park on the south of Elwick Road be changed to a bus station to provide a proper transport interchange covering country and town buses and both the domestic and international station.

Council's Response:

1963 - The Accessibility Strategy for Kent 2006/07 to 2010/11 is a county level document which has been considered as part of the preparation work for the Core Strategy. It is not the role of the Town Centre Area Action Plan to incorporate county level policy if it has already been included in the preparation work for the Core Strategy.

2169 - The Council review all representations received through the LDF public consultation process. All LDF documents are based on a credible evidence base also taking into account representations that are made.

2035 - the aim of affordable housing is not to compromise on good quality design. The policy of 30% affordable housing will be implemented across the town centre area and therefore housing cannot afford to compromise on good design. To ensure the town centre reaches its aim of sustainable, compact growth, the majority of the delivery of 2,500 dwellings are likely to consist of flats of various sizes however, the more residential areas of the Southern Expansion Quarter and the Residential Transition Quarter will aim to provide a variety of dwellings types and sizes.

2037 - A bus station is not required in the town centre and the site on the southern side of Elwick Road is a key development site (TC3 in the submission AAP).

Site Specific Issues

Main Issues Raised:

2111 would like to suggest a re-configuration of the 2 railway station providing one entrance/exit to incorporate a bus/coach square which can provide a continual loop to feed both retail centres, encouraging some of the 3 million visitors to the Designer Outlet to use both the outlet centre and the town centre.

2115 wants to receive more information on the development along Wellesley Road of the 23 affordable homes and whether it was initially refused planning permission on the no parking allocation issue or something else.

2168 objects to Victoria Way through a sketch diagram.

2172 wants to see the S.E.R station to become the town centre railway museum.

Council's Response:

2111 - The most realistic option at this stage is that both railway stations will remain in their current position. Accessibility from the Designer Outlet Centre to the town centre is an important issue for the AAP to address and is considered in the policy for the International Station Quarter (policyTC15 in the submission AAP). A bus service already exists which links the town centre, the railway stations and the Designer Outlet in a continuous loop.

2115 - The development on Wellesley Road has since been granted planning permission after an appeal against the development providing no car parking spaces and concerns over the scale, design and materials used. It is under construction.

2168 - The Council do not agree with the outcomes of the sketch diagram.

2172 - The Area Action Plan will encourage the provision of tourist attractions within the town centre. However, it is unknown whether a railway museum is justifiable in the town centre.

Site Representations

A number of representations made reference to pieces of land which they would like to see included in the Area Action Plan.

Promoting sites which were not mentioned in Preferred Option Town Centre Area Action Plan Report	Rep. No.
Royal Mail Site	1793 (TC1)
Swanton Villas, Elwick Road	1857 (TC5)
Charter House	2161 (Misc)
Magistrates Court, Vicarage Lane	1844 (TC4)
Ashford School Playing Fields	1921 (TC11)

Royal Mail site, Tannery Lane

1793 raised objection to AAP being unclear on how the Royal Mail site could meet the objectives of the Area Action Plan to create 'a thriving, high quality, mixed use town centre: distinctive and accessible; capable of serving the current and future needs of Ashford and its wider catchment area'. However, 1793 would like the Royal Mail sites to be discussed with the Council to establish what the various options are.

Council's Response:

The Royal Mail site is included as part of the Commercial Quarter and is envisaged to be part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the Quarter. SEEDA have been working with the Royal Mail to identify a suitable site for relocation within the town.

Swanton Villas, Elwick Road

1857 promotes land adjacent to the former South Kent College (SKC) sites known as Swanton Villas. Access to the site is provided through KCC land off Church Road. 1857 would like to see this site combined with the former SKC site to be planned comprehensively.

Council's Response:

The Council welcome this site being put forward for development and it is included as part of site policy TC6 in the submission AAP alongside the former SKC site.

Charter House:

2161 would like to promote the redevelopment of Charter House and potentially expand upon the uses currently found at Charter House.

Council's Response:

The owners of Charter House have since made a planning application for a mixed use redevelopment comprising mainly of residential with office development on the first two floors. The application has permitted.

Magistrates Court

1844 welcomes the inclusion of the Magistrates Court into the area action plan for redevelopment provided a suitable, alternative location is found.

Council's Response:

This site represents a key redevelopment opportunity within an accessible location in the town centre and the Council welcome the landowners support. Recent contact has been made with the landowners but it would appear that there is no short term likelihood of relocation and hence the site has not been allocated for redevelopment in the submission AAP. However, if suitable proposals were to be submitted in due course, there is nothing in the AAP that would in principle prevent the redevelopment of the site.

Ashford School Playing Fields:

1921 would like to promote surplus playing field land in two locations:

A) Land north of Mace Lane (2.95 hectares) and

B) Land fronting Tannery Lane (0.78 hectares)

Council's Response:

Land north of Mace Lane is located within an active floodplain which makes most built development here unsuitable when tested against other alternative locations for development in the town centre. Therefore, the site is not allocated for development in the submission AAP.

Land fronting Tannery Lane could potentially provide limited development as part of the Civic Quarter. However, issues exist relating to the site's close proximity to the River Great Stour and the Green Corridor. Therefore, the Council does not feel that the site should be allocated in the AAP.

Green Spaces and River Corridor Issues

Representations were received from the following organisations:

1790 - CPRE Kent	1900 - English Nature	1970 - CPRE Kent
1795 - Countryside Agency	1910 - English Nature	2038 - Central Ashford Community Forum
1805 - CPRE Kent	1911 - Kent Wildlife Trust	2042 - Westwell Parish Council
1812 - English Nature	1925 - English Nature	2103 - Countryside Agency
1819 - Kent Wildlife Trust	1927 - Kent Wildlife Trust	2105 - Countryside Agency
1821 - Countryside Agency	1933 - Kent County Council	2106 - Countryside Agency
1842 - Countryside Agency	1934 - Countryside Agency	2107 - Countryside Agency
1843 - Countryside Agency	1946 - Kent County Council	2135 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1855 - Kent County Council	1953 - Countryside Agency	2140 - Ashford Construction Focus Group
1878 - Kent Wildlife Trust	1961 - English Nature	2149 - Ashford Construction Focus Group

General Objections

Main Issues Raised:

1819, 1812, 2038, 1821, 1946, 1961, 1910 and 1911 all raised concerns on the lack of reference to the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor. 2038 wants to see the riverside utilised more to develop a café culture to enhance the route from the town centre to the stations. 1946 make the point that valuable spaces between individual buildings and sites are just as important as the buildings or development itself and reference should be made to this in the AAP. 2103 wants to see the focus on the issue of open space provision that is accessible to all and should be addressed throughout the document by protecting and enhancing existing open spaces. 1911 argues that the river corridor should be given its own preferred option.

2105 would suggest that existing open spaces should be considered within the existing historical elements of the town and to see the multi-functionality of these spaces more specifically described.

2135, 1934 and 2149 all recognise the creation of public space linking the town centre and the stations as identified in the AAP but all raise the question of how this is going to be achieved and detail of this should be highlighted in the AAP.

Council's Response:

1819, 1812, 2038, 1821, 1946, 1961, 1910 and 1911 - The submitted Town Centre Area Action Plan makes reference to the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor in a separate section and policy (TC29 of the submission AAP). It is also referred to in one of the Guiding Principles in policy TC1 of the submission AAP.

2038 - The Council agree in principle that a number of opportunities exist in the town centre to create a café culture but feel more suitable and direct routes, other than the river corridor, exist. However, the AAP does seek to prejudice these opportunities if a need in the market exists.

1946 and 2103 - Given the nature of high density development within the town centre, the Council agree that spaces between individual buildings and sites are just as important as the buildings or development itself. This is addressed in detailed design specification and policy.

1911 - The river corridor was not given its own preferred option but is encompassed specifically in the Green Corridor policy in the submitted AAP and through various references in site specific policies and Quarters policies.

2105 - The Council agree that existing open spaces should be considered within the existing historical elements of the town centre. A fundamental guiding principle for the town centre is to reinforce its existing attractions by conserving and enhancing its historic character and ensuring that development respects and enhances the existing open spaces and the natural environment of the town centre.

2135, 1934 and 2149 - The existing public spaces play an important role in linking the railway stations to the town centre. The remodelling of the ring road to two way working and the creation of shared space, including the introduction of new public squares, will open up more areas of the town centre and provide better links to the stations. The AAP sets out the locations and main principles for improved public realm but it is expected that detailed designs for these areas will be worked up through the Public Realm strategy and encompassed in subsequent SPD.

Reference to the Green and Blue Grid

Main issues raised:

1795 and 1843 would like to see opportunities for Ashford's current public spaces to link to the proposed Green/Emerald Necklace, and also the Green and Blue Grid as highlighted by 1843. 2106 and 2107 make reference to the lack of information about the Green and Blue Grid in the Area Action Plan policy as it would highlight the importance of open spaces. 1790 would like to see clarification as to what the Emerald Necklace is and to include a policy on the treatment of the river corridor.

Council's Response:

1795, 1843, 2106 and 2107: the submitted Area action Plan makes reference to the Ashford Green and Blue Grid Strategy which has now been completed and is a background document to the submission AAP. 1790: Reference to the Emerald Necklace is already made in the Core Strategy and derives from the GADF as the green link between different strategic public open spaces across the Growth Area, largely following the river corridors.

Status of the River CorridorMain Issues Raised:

1970, 1961, 1927, 1925 and 1933 are concerned that the status of the river corridors as a local nature reserve and site of nature conservation interest is not currently recognised in the Area Action Plan.

Council's Response:

There is no requirement to reflect these designations on the Proposals map in the submitted Area Action Plan but these designations are acknowledged as relevant considerations for development in or adjacent to the river corridors.

Site-specific referencesMain issues Raised:

1842 would like to see the Memorial Gardens described in greater detail to include its functions, biodiversity value, etc within the town centre 1842 continues by highlighting the opportunities that brownfield land has to create new open spaces as well as built development and specifically mentions sites which occur along important potential links.

1855 wants to see the river corridor and green spaces incorporated into the Learning Campus development.

1900 highlighted that the Southern Expansion Quarter should make more reference to the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor or to the management and use of green space by incorporating into the design of this quarter.

1953 would like to see opportunities for creation of open space considered in the Residential Transition Zone.

1878 have raised concerns over the lack of detail the area between Victoria Road and Leacon Road has on addressing the conservation and enhancement of the river corridor. 1878 continues by suggesting that the river corridor should be given its own preferred option. 1805 sees the river as a separate quarter to enable a continuous approach with the river planned in its entirety. 1805 continues by saying the current approach appears to be in 'bits and pieces'.

Council's Response:

1842 - Memorial Gardens are considered an important asset to the town centre but there is no need to describe it in great detail in the AAP. The Council seek to open up links to Memorial Gardens to encourage greater use by connecting it up to existing and future pedestrian routes through the town centre.

1878, 1900 and 1953 - With regard to creating new public open spaces, the Council has carried out a PPG17 study which is a local assessment of existing and future needs and demand for open spaces, sports and recreational facilities. Whilst the town centre experiences a relative shortage of public open space, the amount of development proposed to be accommodated in the town centre from the Core Strategy means that the focus in the submitted AAP is more about improving access to existing open spaces, notably Victoria Park and improving the facilities available there rather than creating piecemeal new areas in the town centre area.

1855 - the Learning Campus site is not adjacent to the river corridor.

1805 - The integration of the river corridor into new development is being considered in its entirety through the development of the Ashford Green and Blue Grid Strategy. There is no need for the river corridor to constitute a 'quarter' in its own right.

Miscellaneous

Main Issues Raised:

2140 feels that the natural aquatic environment could be complemented elsewhere in the town by the introduction of artificial aquatic systems.

2042 want to see more detail on providing areas for kids to play, e.g. skate board parks or adventure playgrounds.

Council's Response:

2140 - The Council agree with this comment in principle. However it is not the role of the Area Action Plan to specifically make proposals. Artificial aquatic systems could become incorporated into the town centre through the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS). Further guidance will be provided through a SUDS supplementary planning document.

2042 - The nature of such facilities are a matter to be considered in detail through individual proposals taking account of the wishes identified by young people. New residential development will be expected to financially contribute towards the provision of play facilities through the strategic tariff and on-site contributions. Given the density of development within the town centre, on many occasions it may not be practical or deliverable to provide play facilities on site. In circumstances where the necessary play facilities cannot be provided within the development, it may be acceptable for a financial contribution by the developer through the strategic tariff to be made to provide play facilities near by or make improvements to existing play facilities. Policy TC30 of the submitted AAP deals with this issue.

