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INTRODUCTION

This Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) has a number of functions which include:

- Reviewing progress of the council's Local Plans
- Recording Consultation and Duty to Co-operate Events
- Reporting on Neighbourhood Planning
- Providing borough-wide planning statistics on housing, employment, community, environment and transport .

The Localism Act 2011 withdrew guidance on local plan monitoring, allowing councils to choose which targets, indicators and information to include in AMRs, as long as they are in line with the relevant UK and EU legislation. However, as Ashford has a recently adopted Local Plan, it is considered appropriate to monitor the targets set which to measure the effectiveness of the adopted policies. The Regulations now state that local planning authorities must publish the information direct to the public at least yearly in the interests of transparency and accountability. It also requires monitoring information to be made available online and in council offices as soon as available to the council, rather than waiting to report annually. To achieve this we separate the AMR into sections and publicise information on our website as soon as the information is available. Once all the various topic monitoring is complete, it is collated into a final report for the monitoring year.

Time period covered by this AMR

The status and progress of the policy documents mentioned in this chapter are relevant as of February 2020. For up-to-date information about the status of local planning documents, please visit <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-policy>

In the succeeding chapters of this report, the data collected refers to the monitoring year of 2018/2019, which ran from 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019 inclusive.

Local Development Scheme

The council is required to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS) in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The LDS is a project plan that sets out the timetable for the production of new or revised Development Plan Documents which will form the Council's Local Development Plan. The existing LDS sets out a planning work programme for the council over a two year period. The proposed timetable and milestones contained within the LDS are reviewed through this report.

The current LDS was adopted in March 2019 and can be viewed at:

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/local-development-scheme/>

Local Plan Policies Map

We are required to produce an adopted policies map in our Local Plan documents, showing the location of proposals in all current Adopted Development Plan Documents on an Ordnance Survey base map. Please follow the link here to view the map <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/local-plan-policies-map/>

It reflects the most up-to-date spatial plan for the borough and is continually being updated as new policies are adopted.

Statement of Community Involvement

During the monitoring year the 2013 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) applied to development proposals. The SCI sets out how the planning department intends to achieve community involvement, public participation and cooperation in all planning matters, including the preparation of local development documents, supplementary planning documents and arrangements for consultation on planning applications. As of February 2020, the Statement of Community Involvement is undergoing an update. The 2020 version is due to be adopted in March 2020.

Current adopted Development Plan Documents

The development plan for the borough sets out the strategic priorities for development. These include both land allocations and policies covering issues such as housing, employment, community, environment and heritage. These planning policies are used by the council when determining planning applications or enforcing unauthorised development.

The new local plan, the Ashford Local Plan 2030, was adopted by full Council on 21 February 2019. The Ashford Local Plan 2030 supersedes the saved policies in the Ashford Local Plan (2000), Ashford Core Strategy (2008), Ashford Town Centre Action Area Plan (2010), the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD (2010) and the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD (2012). The Local Plan 2030, alongside the background and evidence base documents, can be viewed here:

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/adopted-development-plan-documents/local-plan-to-2030/>

As of February 2020, the development plan for the borough comprises the

- Ashford Local Plan 2030 (adopted February 2019),
- the Chilmington Green AAP (2013),
- the Wye Neighbourhood Plan (2016),
- the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan (2017),
- the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan (2019),
- and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2016).

Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDS) support the DPDs. All matters covered in SPDs must relate to policies or proposals in the Development Plan but add a more detailed level of advice and guidance.

SPDs are also a material consideration when determining planning applications and provide more detailed guidance into the interpretation and/or implementation of adopted policies.

The current supplementary planning documents for the Borough are:

- Affordable Housing SPD (February 2009)
- Landscape Character SPD (April 2011)
- Residential Parking SPD (October 2010)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (April 2012)
- Sustainable Drainage SPD (October 2010)
- Residential Space and Layout SPD (October 2011) *Only external standards apply following adoption of Nationally Described Space Standards - Internal*
- Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD (July 2012)
- Dark Skies SPD (July 2014)
- Stables, Arenas and other horse related development SPD (October 2014)
- Chilmington Green Design Code SPD (2016)

Please note that the council also provides informal design guidance notes with regard to residential layouts, wheeled bins and screening containers. All can be viewed here:

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/adopteddevelopment-plan-documents/supplementary-planning-documents/>

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan

The council is committed to meeting the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community within the borough, in the same way as the housing needs of the settled community are planned for in the Local Plan 2030. Consultation closed in February 2020 on the Options Report for a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan. The consultation helps shape how potential sites for this housing need will be assessed and how we define the specific pitch need to be fulfilled. The next consultation stage, Regulation 19, will identify specific sites and policies. The next consultation will take place in the 2019/2020 monitoring year.

Neighbourhood Plans

Many of the borough's parishes are undertaking the neighbourhood planning process. There are currently three adopted (or 'made') Neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan for the borough; Pluckley, Rolvenden and Wye. Other designated neighbourhood plan areas are currently progressing through the regulation stages neighbourhood planning. As of February 2020, the status of these plans is expressed below

Area	Progress made
Aldington and Bonnington	Neighbourhood area designation made in November 2019. The plan is in its early stages.
Bethersden	A further consultation stage is required on the submission version of the plan. The parish council have resolved to carry out a fresh Housing Needs survey. Further consultation may take place in 2020.
Boughton Aluph and Eastwell	Between April and May 2019 a pre-submission plan was consulted on. It is expected that in Spring 2020 a submission version will be consulted upon.
Charing	The parish consulted on the pre-submission version of their plan in February 2020.
Egerton	In 2020, it is expected that a pre-submission version of the plan will be consulted on.
Hothfield	Neighbourhood area designation made in March 2016.
Tenterden	The plan is in its early stages after a neighbourhood area designation was made in December 2018.
Smarden	Neighbourhood area designation made in October 2019. The plan is in its early stages.

For the most up-to-date neighbourhood planning information, please visit <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans>.



ECONOMIC MONITORING 2018/2019

Summary Economic Statistics

This section of the Authority Monitoring Report covers the period from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 and contains information on yearly employment completions and performance against economic policies/ indicators set out in the Local Plan 2030 Appendix 6.

Key statistics:

- **Net employment floorspace gain of 51,111 sqm.**
- **32.6% of net employment floorspace gain is in Ashford Town Centre.**
- **Net employment floorspace under construction: 40,667 sqm.**
- **Net employment floorspace not started: 167,917 sqm.**

Employment Growth

The Ashford Borough Council Local Plan 2030 Policy SP3 (*Strategic Approach to Economic Development*) seeks to support sustainable economic development, job growth and prosperity with the stated intention to deliver 63 hectares of new employment land and a total of 11,100 jobs in the Borough between 2014 – 2030. This policy aim ensures that job creation would progress in tandem with population growth in the Borough.

Kent County Council (KCC) produce annual reports using the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), a series of data compiled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for job figures in particular locations. This data is gathered by surveying a small number of companies in an area and making assumptions about the Borough based on this data (excluding certain types of businesses, such as agriculture).

The latest report covers employment statistics in 2018, detailing the distribution of jobs across the Borough and the relative growth/decline of jobs in certain sectors.

Below are the results of the report specific to Ashford. This identifies the largest increase in the *professional, scientific and technical activities* sector (+8.3%) compared with 2017. The largest decrease in sector growth is in the *other service activities* sector of -23.1%.

Ashford	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2017 - 2018		Structure 2015		Structure 2018	
					No.	%	%	%		
Primary Industries (Agriculture/Mining/Utilities)	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,600	-200	-8.7%	3.1%	2.9%		
Manufacturing	5,000	4,800	4,800	5,000	300	5.3%	9.2%	9.1%		
Construction	2,300	2,400	3,300	3,000	-300	-7.7%	4.1%	5.4%		
Wholesale and retail trade	11,500	12,000	11,500	12,000	500	4.3%	21.2%	21.8%		
Transportation and storage	2,500	3,300	3,000	2,500	-500	-16.7%	4.6%	4.5%		
Accommodation and food service activities	3,800	3,500	3,500	3,500	0	0.0%	6.9%	6.3%		
Information and communication	1,500	1,500	1,400	1,300	-100	-9.1%	2.8%	2.3%		
Financial and insurance activities	700	600	600	700	100	8.3%	1.3%	1.2%		
Real estate activities	600	800	700	700	-100	-7.1%	1.1%	1.2%		
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,000	3,500	3,000	3,300	300	8.3%	7.4%	5.9%		
Administrative and support service activities	3,800	5,000	5,000	4,800	-300	-5.0%	6.9%	8.6%		
Public administration and defence	1,800	2,000	1,800	1,600	-100	-7.1%	3.2%	2.9%		
Education	4,300	4,300	4,300	4,000	-300	-5.9%	7.8%	7.3%		
Human health and social work activities	8,500	8,000	9,000	9,000	0	0.0%	15.6%	16.3%		
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,100	1,000	1,300	1,100	-100	-10.0%	2.1%	2.0%		
Other service activities	1,500	1,800	1,600	1,300	-400	-23.1%	2.8%	2.3%		
Total	54,400	56,000	56,300	55,100	-1,200	-2.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/8180/Business-Register-and-Employment-Survey-BRES.pdf

Residents in Employment

Using the most up-to-date ONS Nomis official labour market statistics, we are able to record growth in the number of people employed in Ashford Borough.

These statistics indicate that, in April 2018 - March 2019, there were 63,600 people employed in the borough. This represents an employment percentage of 80.4% among those aged between 16 and 64. This is higher than the Great Britain national percentage of 78.9%, but lower than the regional South East percentage (81.1%).

Over a five-year period of comparison, these statistics indicate a decrease of 100 in the number of employed individuals from 63,700 in April 2013 – March 2014. This however marks an increase of 0.1% of the population aged 16-64 in employment within the borough.

Source:

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx

Job Density

The most recent job density statistics for Ashford Borough, again using the ONS Nomis data, illustrate a positive improvement. The statistics indicate a job density of 0.97, with an average of 97 jobs per 100 residents aged 16-64. This compares with job density 5 years ago in 2013 of 0.83.

The 2018 data is significantly higher than both the regional South East density of 0.88, and the national density in Great Britain of 0.86.

Source:

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/subreports/jd_time_series/report.aspx

Business growth

Business demographic statistics released by KCC give a good indication of the business environment health in Ashford Borough, particularly looking at the business birth/death ratio.

The data specifies that in 2018 there were 775 new enterprise births, which is 55 more than the previous year (720 in 2017), equating to a birth rate of 12.2. Likewise, in 2017 there were 570 enterprise death, resulting in an enterprise death rate of 9.0. From this data, we can produce an enterprise birth to death ratio of 1.36. This is an increase from the 2018 rate of 0.99.

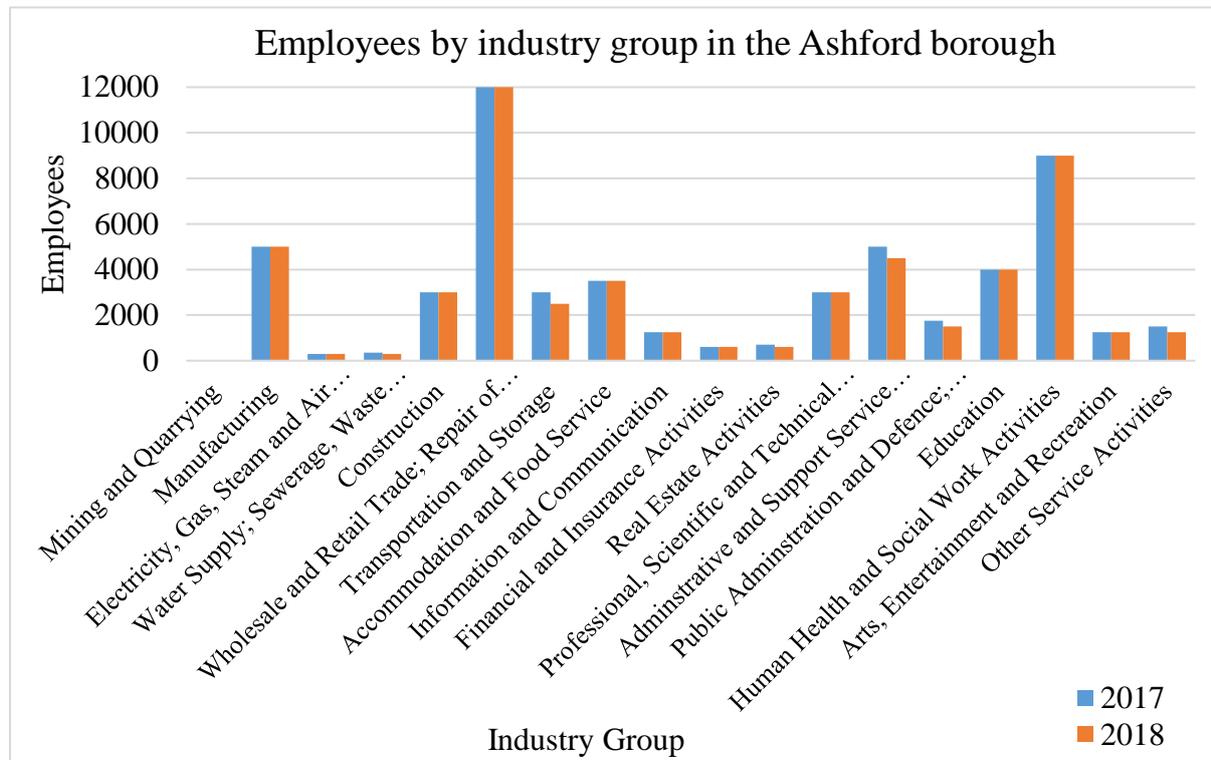
Source: https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/8179/Business-demography.pdf

Employees by Industry Group

The largest proportion of people employed in Ashford up to 2018 work in the *wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* industry. This industry has 12,000 jobs and represents 21.8% of the total jobs available in the Ashford borough. This is higher than both the regional South East (16.4%) and national percentage for Great Britain (15.2%).

The next largest industry in the borough is *human health and social work activities*. This industry has 9,000 jobs and represents 16.4% of the total. This is higher than both regional South East percentage of 12.8% and Great Britain national percentage of 13.2%.

Comparatively less well-represented industries in Ashford include: *professional, scientific and technical activities*, where the employment percentage of 5.5% falls well below the national percentage of 8.7%; *financial and insurance activities*, with a percentage of 1.1% below the national average of 3.5%; and *information and communication* where the Ashford percentage of 2.3% is just over half the national percentage of 4.2%.



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/report.aspx?#1s>

Employment Floorspace

The provision of new employment space is critical to the delivery of employment and jobs in the borough. Policy SP3 (*Strategic Approach to Economic Development*) sets out the measures that the borough will take to support job growth and economic prosperity.

Policies EMP1 (*New Employment Uses*), EMP2 (*Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises*) and EMP3 (*Extensions to Employment Premises in the Rural Area*) list the criteria for permitting development proposals which affect employment floorspace.

Ashford Borough Council (ABC) currently conducts an annual survey of employment land. Typically, employment/commercial sites with planning permission valid as of the 31st March of that monitoring year are visited. Following these visits, an assessment is made on the stage of each individual development: complete, under-construction, or not started, which are recorded in the annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA). The site visits for this report were conducted in the last quarter of the monitoring period for 2018/2019.

Floorspace completed

During the 2018/2019 monitoring year, 97 applications were completed which had an element of change in employment floorspace. This development contributed to a gross approximate

increase in floorspace of 83,905 sqm and a loss of 32,978 sqm, resulting in an overall net increase of 50,927 sqm.

The largest growth in employment floorspace is from Sui Generis¹ use, which provided approximately 21,447 sqm of employment floorspace. Of these, the largest contributors were from holiday lets and the conversion of agricultural land to use for tourism and camping/caravan use. This change of use contributed 15,805 sqm of Sui Generis employment land gain. Another 4,601 sqm of Sui Generis floorspace was from the completion of a car sales showroom and facilities.

The second largest net floorspace growth in 2018/2019 was from A1 use classes (Shops). This provided a net gain of 11,420 sqm of A1 floorspace. Following this were D1 use classes (Non-residential institutions) and B1(a) (Offices) which provided net employment gains of 6,943 sqm and 6,056 sqm, respectively.

The largest employment floorspace losses were from the D2 Category. This has a net loss of -1,808.4 sqm. This was predominately from the change of use to C3 (houses), B2 (General industrial) and B8 (Storage or distribution) uses.

Use Class	Gross gain (sqm)	Gross loss (sqm)	Net gain (sqm)
A1	13,035	1,615	+11,420
A2	376	270.8	+105.2
A3	4,538	35	+4,503
A4	0	0	0
A5	62.71	0	+62.71
B1a	7,090.5	1,034.8	+6,055.7
B1b	0	0	0
B1c	4,155	1,731.5	+2,423.5
B1 (unclassified)	110	374.7	-264.7
B2	4,445.5	3,805.7	+639.8
B8	4,078.9	847.2	+3,231.7
B1-B8	533	675	-142
C1	1,976	0	+1,976
D1	12,198	5,254.7	+6,943.3
D2	4,287.6	6,096	-1808.4
Sui Generis	21,819	372.11	+21,446.89

¹ 'Sui generis' buildings are those that do not fall within any of the four main use classes (A-D). Sui generis uses are their own specific use and planning permission is normally required for any change of use. Sui generis buildings can include some agricultural buildings, petrol filling stations and shops selling and / or displaying motor vehicles, Betting offices, Launderettes, Taxi businesses and Casinos & Amusement Centres but this is not exhaustive.

Floorspace 'under construction'

In the 2018/2019 monitoring year, monitoring identified a gross employment floorspace of 42,610 sqm under construction. (Net floorspace of 33,539 sqm). This is a decrease on the projected employment floorspace under construction during the period 2017/2018, and suggests that a large number of developments have completed during the monitoring year.

The largest single contributor to this employment floorspace under construction is the continuing expansion of the Ashford Designer Outlet Centre. This site completed construction in late Autumn 2019, which will be recorded as a completion in the next employment monitoring year 2019/2020.

Floorspace 'not started'

In the 2018/2019 monitoring year, monitoring identified a gross employment floorspace of 183,510 sqm with planning permission but has not yet commenced development. The net floorspace not started in 167,917 sqm. This is an increase on the projected employment floorspace during the period 2017/2018, and suggests a strong position in terms of future employment development.

The largest single contributor this employment floorspace not started value is the development proposed for the land on the north side of Highfield Lane in Sevington. This application, granted outline planning permission in 2017 and reserved matters applications have been approved in the 2019/2020 monitoring year. This application will contribute up to 157,616 sqm of employment floorspace.

Monitoring Indicator – Employment Floorspace

Annual increase of employment floorspace (m²) by use class

	Ashford Town Centre	Urban	Rural Settlement	Countryside
B1a	+5,531	0	+315.7	0
B1b	0	0	0	0
B1c	0	-1,359.5	+3,380	+341
B2	-3,727	0	+144	+2,647
B8	+666	0	-372.3	+2,938
B1 – B8	-211	-327	0	+396

Total of all Use Classes				
Total Gain	32,948	14,920	13,023	23,199
Total Loss	16,273	2,089.8	10,711	3,903.9
Net Total	+16,674	+12,830	+2,312	+19,295

Monitoring Indicator – Retail and Leisure Floorspace

Net annual change of Retail and Leisure floorspace (m²) by use class:

	Ashford Town Centre	Urban	Rural Settlement	Countryside
A1	+6,779	+4,888.7	-190	+62.2
A2	+339.3	0	-234.1	0
A3	+3,853.9	0	+191.5	0
A4	0	0	0	0
A5	0	+62.71	0	0
D2	+3,474	+464	-5,929.4	+182.95
Sui Generis	+111.7	+208	+826.6	+15,637

In the monitoring year 2018/2019, a net gain of 24,143 sqm of floorspace was granted permission in 108 applications. 46 of these 108 applications were completed in the monitoring year (net floorspace of 17475 sqm), leaving a net floorspace of 3,157.8 sqm under construction and 3,510.3 sqm not started.

Status of Local Plan allocations

The Local Plan policy SP3 (*Strategic Approach to Economic Development*) sets out the intention of the Local Plan to deliver 63 hectares of employment land between 2014 – 2030. This report details below the employment floorspace gain of the site allocations which have designated “B” use classes.

Site & Policy reference	Use classes and sizes proposed (sqm)	Development status	2019/2020 employment floorspace gain (sqm)	Extant permissions floorspace (sqm)
S1 – Commercial Quarter	55,000 sqm predominately B1a/B1b.	16/00554/AS 6,149 sqm Completed 2018/19	6149	0
S6 – Newtown Works	Policy states ‘substantial commercial floorspace’. Estimated at 4,000 sqm.	Application submitted November 2019.	0	0
S15 – Finberry North West	8,500 sqm of B1 – B8 uses.	No current applications	0	0
S16 – Waterbrook	17,000 sqm of B1, B2 & B8 uses.	18/00464/AS 189 sqm Sui Generis use Completed in 2018/19 16/00427/AS 4,601 sqm Sui Generis use Completed in 2018/19 11/01330/AS 4,300 sqm B1 – B8 uses Under construction in 2018/19	4,790	4,300
S20 – Eureka Park	197,000 sqm of predominately B1a & B1b	No current applications	0	0
S21 – Orbital Park	75,000 sqm of B1, B2, B8 & Sui generis	16/01667/AS 9,801 sqm Completed in 2017/18	0	0
S23 – Henwood Industrial Estate	11,000 sqm of B1, B2, B8 uses	16/01107/AS Change of use from B1/B8 to D2 Completed in 2018/19	211	0
S25 – Pickhill, Tenterden	350,000 sqm of B1 – B8 uses.	16/01411/AS 822 sqm B1 use Completed in 2017/18	0	0

Fibre to the Premise

At a local level, the availability, reliability and speed of broadband provision is now a key consideration/ concern of the business sector. Policy EMP6 (*Promotion of Fibre to the Premise*) requires most new developments to implement broadband fibre. This policy aims to utilise and enhance the existing infrastructure to encourage sustainable development.

This indicator was introduced as part of the Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2019. As this indicator was only in place at the end of the monitoring year, the monitoring information is not available.

Monitoring Indicator – Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

Percentage of new development enabling FTTP in both residential and employment development.

Target	All development in urban areas. All major development in rural areas.
2018/2019	Monitoring is not available for this monitoring year as the Local Plan and the EMP6 Policy was only adopted near the end of the monitoring year.

Shopping Frontages

Shopping frontages in the Ashford and Tenterden town centres provide a large proportion of retail units, use class “A”. The policies EMP7 (*Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage in Ashford Town Centre*) and EMP8 (*Primary shopping frontage in Tenterden Town Centre*) set out the requirements to consider planning applications in these areas for these use classes.

Monitoring Indicator – Shopping Frontages

Percentage of shop frontages in Ashford and Tenterden which are “A” use class (retail).

Target	Primary Shopping Frontages – 100%
2018/2019	Ashford: 90% Tenterden: 93%

Local and Village Centres

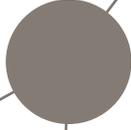
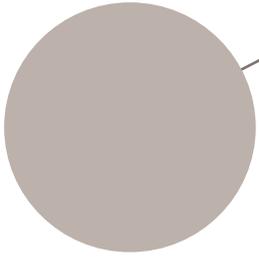
Local centres in the towns and villages play an important role in providing for local shopping needs, especially for convenience goods, and other local services. Policies SP4 (*Delivery of Retail and Leisure*) and EMP10 (*Local and Village Centres*) set out the need to promote and retain shopping and service provision within local and village centres.

6 applications in 2018/2019 completed their development, which had a change in the provision of shops and services in local and village centres. These applications contributed to an overall net change of 341.7 sqm in local village centre shops and services (“A” use class).

Monitoring Indicator – Local and Village Centres

Gains and losses of shops and services within local and village centres.

Target	No loss of shops and services.
2018/2019	2 applications had a loss of employment to residential use (both in Charing; 18/01356/AS and 17/00636/AS) Net “A” class floorspace: 128sqm loss
	1 application had a gain of employment from residential use (18/00972/AS in Tenterden). Net “A” class floorspace: 87 sqm gain
	2 applications had a loss of A class uses to B1(a) (17/00842/AS in Tenterden and 18/01689/AS in St. Michaels) Net “A” class floorspace: 255 sqm gain
	1 application had a gain of A3 class use from non “A” class use (18/01529/AS in Tenterden) Net “A” class floorspace: 127.7 sqm gain



Transport Monitoring 2018/2019

TRANSPORT MONITORING 2018/2019

This section of the Authority Monitoring Report covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and contains information on the transport performance against transport policies and indicators.

Ensuring that an effective and sustainable transport network is delivered and maintained in the borough is important in an environmental, economic and social context and is a key objective of the council.

Key statistics:

- 68% of all residential proposals complied with Policy TRA3(a)
- Two identified strategic schemes complete or nearing completion
- Increase of PRow network by 193 metres

Strategic Schemes

Monitoring Indicator – Strategic Schemes	
Implementation of strategic scheme which include:	
i. M20 Junction 10a	
2018/2019 status	Progress made – near completion
ii. Pound Lane Link Road	
2018/2019 status	No progress
iii. A28 dualling/Chart Road improvements	
2018/2019 status	No progress
iv. Former ring road junctions	
2018/2019 status	Implemented

M20 Junction 10a

The creation of junction 10a will reduce congestion and long delays in the future by creating additional capacity for vehicle movements to South Ashford. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, significant progress was made by Highways England towards the provision of the new motorway junction. The scheme's construction began in January 2018 and development of the junction progressed into March 2019. In December 2019 all sections of the junction were open to traffic. The junction is expected to be fully operational within the 2019/2020 monitoring year.

For regular project progress information, please follow the link at <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/m20-junction-10a/>.

Pound Lane Link Road

No progress was made towards the link road at Pound Lane in the monitoring year. An application for development at Court Lodge (site S3 in The Ashford Local Plan 2030) is currently being considered (application ref. 18/01882/AS).

A28 Dualling and Chart Road Improvements

Between April 2018 and March 2019 negotiations continued regarding the funding package to bring forward the dualling proposals. Subsequently the funding package is in the process of finalisation in order to commence the project. The proposal has not started and is expected to recommence in 2022-2023 when the developer of Chilmington reaches their planning obligation to providing funding to the project, once 400 homes have been occupied.

Ring Road Junction Improvements

Within the 2018/2019 monitoring year, improvements were made to the ring road. All improvements have been made and the junction is now fully operational.

Town Centre Parking

During the 2018/2019 monitoring year the number of circa 1,500 public parking spaces in the town centre remained. There were no recorded losses to short-stay or long-stay public parking during this period.

Monitoring Indicator – Town Centre Objectives**Total gains and losses of public parking spaces serving Ashford Town Centre:****i. Long-stay**

Target	Gains within plan period
2018/2019	0

ii. Short-stay

Target	Gains within plan period
2018/2019	0

Parking Standards

Policies TRA3(a) (*Parking Standards for Residential Development*) and TRA3(b) (*Parking Standards for Non Residential Development*) set out the parking standards for all development proposals. Applications for planning permission are required to meet the standards set out in the policies. In exceptional cases proposals may depart from the standards if certain criteria apply.

Monitoring Indicator – Parking Standards**i. Percentage of residential development applications meeting the standards set out in Policy TRA3(a)**

Target	100%
2018/2019	68%

Note: this percentage does not include applications which include a loss of housing, these will be assessed against Policy TRA3(b).

ii. Percentage of non-residential development applications meeting the standards set out in TRA3(b)

Target	100%
2018/2019	73%

Note: this percentage does not include applications which include a loss of employment, these will be assessed against Policy TRA3(a).

Sustainable Travel

With many new housing and business developments within about 2 miles of the town centre, we need to ensure that bus travel, cycling and walking is promoted. The aim is to provide a high quality network of routes that will encourage people use sustainable methods of transport to their place of work, school, college and into the town centre.

Reducing the need to travel by car is key, to ensure the sustainable growth of Ashford and will help to reduce congestion and pollution in the area. Active means of travel such as cycling or walking offer a pleasant recreational activity and considerable health benefits. Work commenced on a new Ashford Cycling & Walking Strategy to cover the years 2019-2029. The six main aims of the strategy are:

- To provide and improve the cycling and walking network
- To increase cycle parking around the borough
- To maintain the existing cycling and walking network
- To focusing on safer cycling
- To promote cycling and walking in the borough
- To increase opportunities for cycling and walking tourism

A draft consultation document went out to public consultation in May 2019. This can be found here: https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/8186/abctshe-users-jessicabrown-abc00102_cycling_walking_strategy_booklet_web.pdf

An update on the progress of this document will be made in the monitoring year 2019/2020.

Monitoring Indicator – Sustainable Travel	
i. Enhancements to sustainable transport methods provided from new development	
Target	Improvement of existing non-car routes
2018/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvements made resulting from approved development
ii. Enhancements to cycle and pedestrian routes and cycling parking provision from new development.	
Target	Gains of pedestrian and cycle paths No loss of PRow provision
2018/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in PRow network of 193 metres.
<i>Source: Kent County Council (KCC)</i>	

Local Road Network

Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and Transportation is the local highways authority for Ashford borough. In 2018/2019, the council received a number of applications requiring KCC Highways advice. There were objections to 13 applications. Of these, 3 applicants withdrew their applications, 3 were refused permission and 7 applications were granted permission. The 7 applications granted permission revised their plans or have conditions attached which removed the KCC Highways initial objection.

Monitoring Indicator – Local Road Network

Developments permitted against highway authority advice

Target	0%
2018/2019	0%

Source: KCC Highways



THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT MONITORING 2018/2019

This section of the Authority Monitoring Report covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 and contains information on the natural and built environment performance against environmental policies/ indicators.

Key statistics:

- **No decline in condition of SSSIs, BOAs and LWS.**
- **0 planning applications permitted against Environment Agency advice.**
- **40% of development proposals compliant with SuDs policy.**
- **8 development proposals for renewable energy generation schemes.**

Biodiversity

Ashford borough contains numerous areas designated for their landscape or ecological value. These include:

- Two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – Kent Downs and High Weald
- Three National Nature Reserves (NNR) – Hamstreet Woods, Wye and Crundale Downs, Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay
- 186 units for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- 5 Special Landscape Areas (SLA) – North Downs, High Weald, Greensand Ridge, Low Weald, Old Romney
- 68 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) of County-wide importance
- Two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – Wye and Crundale Downs and Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Ashford borough has a 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are broken down into 186 SSSI units. The SSSI units within the borough are predominately lowland and grassland environments.

The SSSI units within the borough are predominately in favourable conditions, according to Natural England assessments. Compared to the previous year, 2017/18, there has been no decline in quality of any of the SSSI units found within the Ashford Borough.

Monitoring Indicator – Biodiversity

iii. Condition of the 186 SSSI units

Target	No decline
Favourable	117 sites (63%)
Unfavourable	0
Unfavourable/Declining	5 sites (3%)
Unfavourable/No Change	2 sites (1%)
Unfavourable/Recovering	62 sites (33%)

Source: Natural England, Condition of SSSI Units

Also in the borough is 9 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). The council monitors all the BOAs that cross into the borough, even if only a small portion crosses the boundary. The BOAs are:

- East Kent Woodlands and Downs
- High Weald
- Lower Stour Wetlands
- Low Weald Woodland
- Mid Kent Downs Wood and Scarp
- Medway and Low Weald Grassland and Wetland
- Romney Marshes
- The Blean

The BOAs have been maintained by the Kent Nature Partnership in 2018/2019. The Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2019 to 2044 is currently under consultation to set the targets for the future condition of the BOAs found in the Ashford borough.

Monitoring Indicator – Biodiversity

ii. Condition of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA's)

Target	No decline
2018/2019	No decline in conditions

The borough is home to over 80 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). These are areas selected as they can protect local species and habitats. LWS and the nature reserves have been maintained by the Kent Wildlife Trust in 2018/2019.

The Kent Nature Partnership undertook a consultation of the draft Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2019 to 2044 in summer 2019. This documents aims to set the targets for the future condition of the LWS found in the Ashford borough.

Kent County Council documented an increase in the quality of management of LWS across Kent, increasing by 2% to 43%, as measured in January 2019.

Source: https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/102148/Biodiversity-statistics.pdf

Monitoring Indicator – Biodiversity

iii. Condition of Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites

Target	No target
2018/2019	No decline in conditions

River Corridors

The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership worked with various community groups during 2018/2019 to undertake projects to improve the river corridors, as well as restoring or creating over 50 ponds. A Fish pass was also installed in Buxford, to help increase fish populations and migration.

Following consultation by the Environment Agency the following sections of the River Stour have been rationalised to the River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board for their management and maintenance:

- The Great Stour from Burnt Mill to Little Chart road bridge
- Sparrows Bridge Loop, north of Wye

Source: River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board

Green Corridor

The Green Corridor is a connected network of largely green open areas that are predominantly located alongside the Great and East Stour rivers, the Aylesford Stream, and other watercourses which flow through Ashford's urban area. The Green Corridor is mainly undeveloped and includes riversides, woodlands, orchards, ponds, lakes, nature reserves, meadows, and play, leisure and recreation spaces.

All along the green corridor highly valuable habitats for wildlife are found, providing an important network for the movement of wildlife through the urban areas, between designated nature sites and out towards the countryside.

Policy ENV2 (*The Ashford Green Corridor*) sets out the criteria for development proposals within or adjoining the Green Corridor.

Monitoring Indicator – Green Corridor

i. Development permitted within Green Corridor Designation Areas

Target	Not permitted, unless policy criteria applies.
2018/2019	One application was granted permission; Brookside House, Kennington (19/00039/AS) for the change of use of a therapy clinic into a residential dwelling.

ii. Development proposals contributing to projects identified within the Green Corridor Action Plan

Target	No target.
2018/2019	No development proposals in 2018/2019 contributed to projects identified in the Green Corridor Action Plan.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Large parts of the Borough lie within two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Kent Downs AONB and the High Weald AONB. The distinctive landscapes of these AONBs play an important role in defining the overall character of the Borough.

Within the setting of the AONBs, priority will be given over other planning considerations to the conservation or enhancement of natural beauty, including landscape, wildlife and geological features. Policy ENV3b of the Local Plan 2030 sets out the criteria for applications located within AONBs.

Monitoring Indicator – AONBs

Percentage of major planning applications in the AONBs approved contrary to Policy ENV3b.

Target	0%.
2018/2019	0%, no major planning applications in the AONBs were granted.

Dark Skies

In all areas of the borough, obtrusive external lighting can result in harm to residential amenity and to the diurnal rhythms of biodiversity. Light control is therefore a key planning consideration in all development proposals. Policy ENV4 (*Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies*) and the Dark Skies SPD (2014) set out the requirements of external lighting schemes.

Monitoring Indicator – Dark Skies
Percentage of applications where external lighting levels on new developments comply with standards in policy and guidance.

Target	100%.
2018/2019	Monitoring is not available for this monitoring year as the Local Plan and specific ENV4 Policy was only adopted near the end of the monitoring year.

Protecting Important Rural Features

The borough is home to a variety of important rural features including river corridors, ancient woodland and rural lanes. Policy ENV5 (*Protecting Important Rural Features*) details that rural features, including those listed above, should be enhanced by development proposals.

Monitoring Indicator – Rural Features

- i. Loss or gain to Ancient woodland or semi-natural woodland**
- ii. Loss or gain to River corridors and tributaries**
- iii. Loss or enhancement to rural lanes and/ or PROWs**

Rural feature	Target	2018/2019
Ancient woodland or semi-natural woodland	No net loss	No net loss
River corridors and tributaries	No net loss	No net loss
Rural lanes and/ or PROWs	No net loss	PROW network net gain of 193m.

Source: Kent County Council

Flood Risk

Ashford is at particular risk from fluvial flooding. The convergence of five main rivers in Ashford, topography and geology of the borough give these rivers ‘flashy’ characteristics. This can lead to an increased risk of fluvial flooding.

Policy ENV6 (*Flood Risk*) sets out the requirements for development proposals to take steps to reduce vulnerability to flood risk.

Monitoring Indicator – Flood Risk

Percentage of planning applications granted on Flood Zones 2 or 3 against Environment Agency advice.

Target	0%.
2018/2019	0%, no planning applications were granted against Environment Agency advice.

Water resources, supply and efficiency

Water is a finite resource and household demand for water in the borough is place stress on the water network, needing careful management. The council considers it critical that adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities are in place to serve development.

Policy ENV7 (*Water Efficiency*) requires new residential development to achieve an estimated water efficiency of 110 litres per person per day. Policy ENV8 (*Water Quality, Supply and Treatment*) sets out the criteria for proposals regarding adequate water supply and connection to the sewerage system.

Monitoring Indicator – Water Resources

i. Percentage of new residential development meeting the requirements of water efficiency regulations – 110 litres per person per day.

Target	100%.
2018/2019	

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in February 2019, all major applications have conditions attached to their permission to meet the water efficiency regulations.

Of the new build minor residential developments with applications granted post-adoption of the Local Plan, 38% of applications either met the requirements of water efficiency regulations or had conditions attached to the permission to ensure compliance. For 62% of applications this was unknown.

ii. Percentage of major development proposals not providing adequate water supply and connections to wastewater treatment facilities.

Target	0%
2018/2019	0%

All major applications either have adequate water supply and connections to wastewater treatment facilities or had conditions attached to their permission to ensure this provision.

iii. Percentage of non-residential major applications meeting 40% improvement in water consumption against baseline performance.

Target	100%.
2018/2019	0%

Of non-residential major applications, 0% did not meet a 40% improvement in water consumption. However, 50% of these developments had a 20% improvement in water consumption.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)

Water supply, flood risk and water quality have all been identified as critical constraints to the sustainable growth of Ashford. Ashford's water environment needs to be managed carefully and the multi-benefits of implementing SuDs within local developments cannot be overstated.

SuDs are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. Within the Ashford Borough, the requirement for the inclusion of SuDs is for all developments, including permitted developments. These requirements are set out in Policy ENV9 (*Sustainable Drainage*).

Monitoring Indicator – SuDs

iv. Percentage of compliance of development proposals with SuDs Policy, SPD and subsequent revisions.

Target	100%.
2018/2019	40% of all development proposals were either compliant with the SuDs Policy or had conditions to submit a sustainable urban drainage scheme.

Renewable Energy

There is an increasing need to secure a more sustainable supply of energy to reduce carbon emissions and minimise the impact of climate change. This can be sought through energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources. Renewable and low carbon energy includes heating and cooling as well as the generation of electricity.

Policy ENV10 (*Renewable and Low Carbon Energy*) sets out the criteria for development proposals which generate energy from renewable and low carbon sources.

Monitoring Indicator – Energy

New development which generates energy from renewable and low carbon sources.

Target	No target.
2018/2019	8 proposals.

BREEAM

Non-residential and commercial sectors of development account for a significant proportion of carbon emissions. Policy ENV11 (*Sustainable Design and Construction – Non-residential*) sets out requirements for major non-residential to achieve BREEAM standards.

Monitoring Indicator – BREEAM

Percentage of Major non-residential development achieving BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard.

Target	100%.
2018/2019	50%

Note: the proposals which did not achieve BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard achieved ‘Good’ standards.

Air Quality

Ashford Borough generally has very good air quality. There are currently no areas within the Borough where the air quality fails to meet the required standards, and there are no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

Policy ENV12 (*Air Quality*) sets out that proposals would not be permitted if they exceed National Air Quality Objectives and all major development proposals should seek to minimise the impact on air quality.

Monitoring Indicator – Air Quality

Percentage of proposals permitted which result in National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded

Target	0%.
2018/2019	0%

Agricultural land

Grade 1 or 2 land is highly valuable agricultural land. Development is typically focused in lower grade agricultural land. One major development application was granted permission on Grade 2 land, and zero applications on Grade 1 land during this monitoring year.

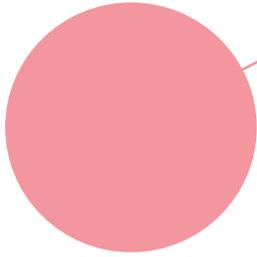
Monitoring Indicator – Agricultural Land

Amount of high grade agricultural land (Grade 1 & 2) lost to major development (ha).

Target	No target.
2018/2019	One application was granted permission on Grade 2 land; Land adjacent to William Harvey Hospital (16/01136/AS).

Source: Kent Landscape Information system (K-LIS); Natural England; Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)

Three reserved matter applications were also granted in 2018/2019 on Grade 2 land; Land at Chilmington Green (17/01170/AS; 18/01310/AS; 18/00911/AS). The outline applications for these reserved matters would have been included on previous AMR reports, so are not included in this calculation.



COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND TOURISM FACILITIES MONITORING 2018/2019

Summary Community, Leisure and Tourism Statistics

This section of the Authority Monitoring Report covers the period from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 and contains information on public Community, Leisure and Tourism facilities. These facilities have been developed through either direct provision by developers, or funded through Section 106 developer contributions collected through the planning system. The information below details completions and performance against Tourism, Community and Play/Open Space & Sports policies in the adopted Local Plan 2030.

The Section 106 Agreements Annual Progress Report should also be read alongside this report. The report is available here: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/major-new-developments/section-106-agreements/>

Undertaking recreational, sport and play activities form an important role in the quality of our lives and wellbeing. As Ashford continues to grow, a need for the provision of new facilities is required, along with the need to upgrade any existing provision. New housing developments also have a requirement to provide open space and leisure facilities to meet the needs of the local community.

Key statistics:

1. Net gain in B&B/ holiday lets of 19 units in 2018/2019
2. New Community Centre: Repton Connect
3. New Hotel Ashford Town Centre 1,976 sq.m
4. 17 new Camping / Caravan pitches

1. Tourism

Within the borough, 9% of employee jobs are from the tourism sector (BRES, 2019; KCC Strategic Commissioning – Analytics, 2019¹). This sector has benefitted from the borough's large areas of attractive countryside and range of tourism facilities.

The Local Plan Policy EMP11 (*Tourism*) seeks to retain existing tourism facilities and support new tourism facilities in appropriate and sustainable locations.

In 2018/2019 the increase in tourism facilities included a net gain of 13 holiday lets and the Travelodge hotel in Elwick Place, Ashford, which provided 60 bedrooms. An additional 17 new camping / caravan pitches have also completed development in Shadoxhurst, Aldington, Tenterden and Appledore.

¹ Ashford District profile: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles>

Monitoring Indicator – Tourism

i. Loss and gain of tourism facilities

Target	Borough wide retention and gains in urban areas.
2018/2019	No recorded Losses or Gains this year

ii. Loss and gain of hotel and B&B development

Target	Borough wide retention and gains in urban areas.	
2018/2019	Gains	14 holiday lets completed development in 2018/2019. 1 hotel (1,976 sqm) was built in 2018/2019.
	Losses	1 holiday let was converted into a dwelling in 2018/2019.

Developments granted permission or under construction

In the 2018/2019 monitoring year, tourism facilities which were granted permission or under construction included:

1. 7 holiday lets across the borough.

These holiday lets were granted permission in 2018/2019 and have either not started development or are under construction.

2. The Chapel Down Winery ‘Curious Brewery’.

The Curious Brewery was under construction at the end of the 2018/2019 monitoring year, and was completed in May 2019, so will be recorded in that monitoring year.

3. Hotel on junction of Beaver Road and Victoria Road

A 120 bedroom hotel was granted permission in 2017/2018 at the junction of Beaver Road and Victoria Road, Ashford. The application has been revised in 18/00724/AS.

2. Community

The provision of good quality community infrastructure and services designed around people and their cultural, leisure, health, learning, social and wellbeing needs is fundamental to the creation of strong, vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.

Local Plan policy COM1 (*Meeting the community’s needs*) contains details regarding the provision of community infrastructure within the borough. Policies COM3 (*Allotments*) and COM4 (*Cemetery Provision*) contains details regarding provisions of allotments and cemeteries within development proposals.

In 2018/2019, there was a net increase in floorspace of 7,642 sqm in community facilities. Key developments for this monitoring year include:

1. Repton Connect Community Centre, Repton Park
This community centre opened October 2018. The centre contains a sports hall (599 sqm floorspace), community Hall (180 sqm floorspace), meeting room, kitchen and outdoors multi-use games area (MUGA).
2. Wye Village Hall, Wye
Extensions to existing village hall of 38 sqm of floorspace, to include new small meeting room.
3. Wye School, Wye.
New MUGA and school play area (6,792.4 sqm floorspace).

Monitoring Indicator – Community

Amount of existing public leisure, cultural, school and adult education, youth, health, public service, allotments, cemetery provision and community facilities lost (unless satisfactory replacement facilities are provided) and gained as a result of new development.

Target	No target	
2018/2019	Town Centre	0 sqm
	Urban	779 sqm
	Rural	6,863 sqm

Development under construction

Included below is a list of key development projects which are under currently construction and will complete development in the following years.

Table 1 – Key developments under construction

Education	Wye School – Temporary permission for new science buildings (17/00693/AS)
Allotments and Cemetery	No change in provision. Schemes to improve provision have been funded by developer contributions.

3. Play, Open Spaces & Sports

Recreation, sport, open space and play areas can enrich the quality of our lives and contribute towards healthy living. Ashford Borough Council set out its target to deliver the recreation, sport, play and open spaces as set out in Table 2 over the period of the adopted Local Plan.

Table 2 - Total Targets for Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Space

Informal space*	33.6ha
Children’s play*	8.4ha
Strategic Parks*	5.0ha

Allotment provision*	3.4ha
Sports halls (1 badminton hall or equivalent)**	4
3G Artificial Pitch**	1
Football Pitches**	7 adult, 3 junior
Hockey 2G pitch**	1 adult
Rugby**	2 senior pitches
Cricket square and outfield**	1

*figures derived from Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD

**figures derived from Indoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy

The requirements and details regarding play and open space provision are set out in the Local Plan policy COM2 (*Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces*).

Play parks

In summer 2018, Bridgefield Park completed development. This park consists of a new play area (5,400 sqm) and informal open space (74,100 sqm).

Victory Hall Play Park, Hamstreet, also completed development and was opened in October 2018. Further details of this project is available in the Section 106 Annual Monitoring Report 2018/2019.

Open Space and sports

Mersham Sports Club completed development on a new archery range in the monitoring year 2018/2019, which was in part funded by developer contributions.

Monitoring Indicator – Play, Open Space & Sports

Amount of existing public play, open space and sports provision lost (unless satisfactory replacement facilities are provided) and gained as a result of new development.

Target	No target	
2018/2019	Town Centre	
	Urban	1 New Sports Hall 7.41 ha Informal Open Space 0.54 ha Children’s Play
	Rural	Victory Hall Play Park, Hamstreet Homewood School 3G Pitch, Tenterden

Note: the Sports hall at Repton Park has been included in both this monitoring indicator and the Play, Open Space & Sports indicator.