Greater Ashford Development Framework

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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Greater Ashford Development Framework

FINAL MASTERPLAN REPORT
APRIL 2005

urban initiatives

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01 INTRODUCTION

In February 2004, English Partnerships, on behalf of Ashford Borough Council and Ashford's Future, appointed a consultant team led by Urban Initiatives to commence work on the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF). This commission comprises a masterplanning exercise to direct the growth and change of Ashford in a clear and comprehensive manner.

The challenge is to expand the town by 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs by 2031 within the aims and ambitions of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Sustainable Communities Plan. It recognises Ashford's strategic location within Europe, the South East and Kent. This is afforded by the Ashford International station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) with services to London, the north of France and Paris as well the planned domestic passenger links to London in the future.

This section outlines the structure and purpose of the Report, it introduces the Brief for the Greater Ashford Development Framework and its relationship to the government's Sustainable Communities Plan.

01.1 THE REPORT

This Final Masterplanning Report reflects a summary of the range of studies, consultation events and decision-making undertaken over the programme of work during the course of 2004 and early 2005.

This section deals with the focus, structure and content of the report. It shows how the report relates to the brief and other supporting documents

In addition to this Masterplanning Report, a further report on Design Codes that defines the core qualities of the Masterplan is currently under preparation.

Details of support information and key background documents are listed in the 'Reference' section of the Appendix.

Focus of Report

The structure of the report reflects the process undertaken by the Team to meet the 4 stages of the Client's Brief for the preparation of the Greater Ashford Development Framework, which included:

Stage 1: Familiarisation, Team Capacity Building and Initial Visioning

Stage 2: Design Workshops, Spatial Options and Growth Area Model

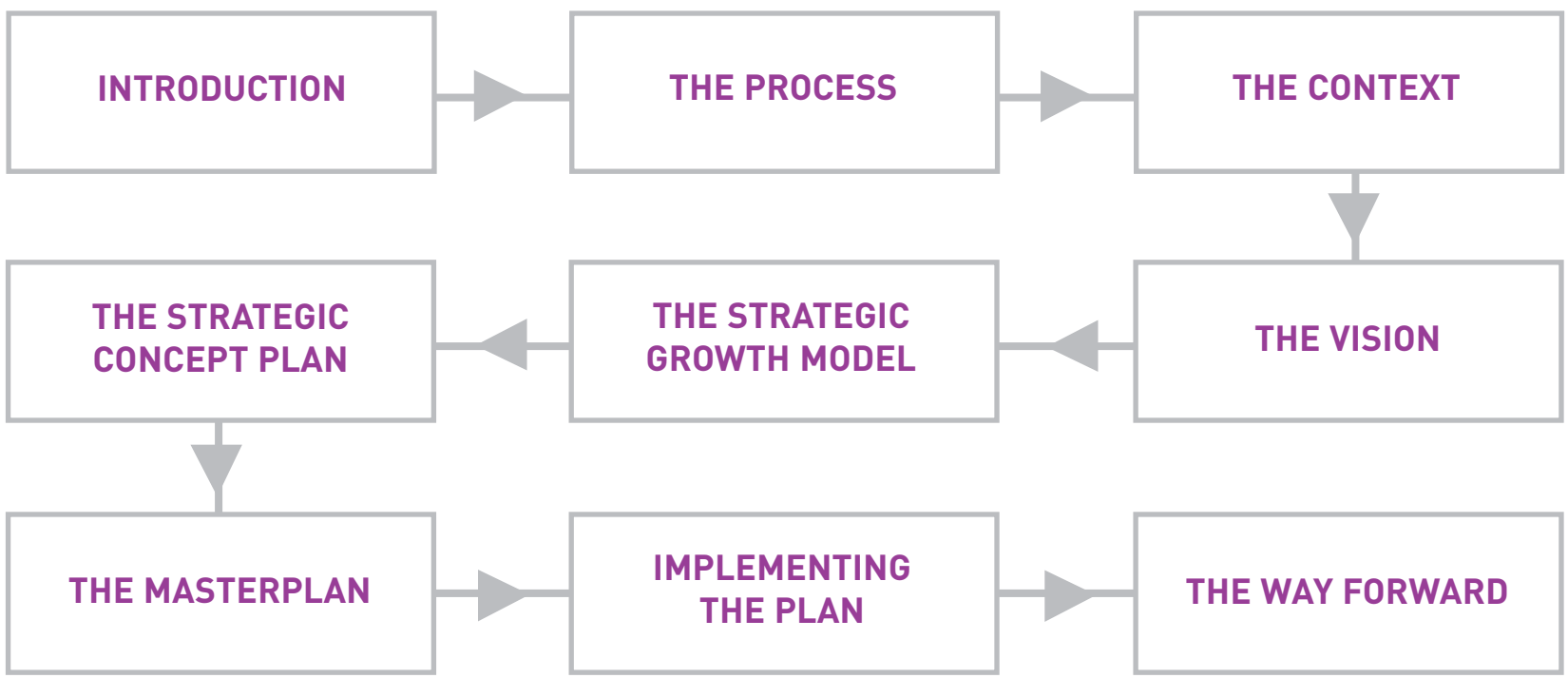
Stage 3: The Formation of a Strategic Plan

Stage 4: The Aspects of Delivery and Consolidation

The focus of this Final Masterplanning Report is to:

- Establish a strategic vision of growth;
- Provide a background to the process followed;
- Define a strategic model for growth;
- Review options for growth and the evolution of the preferred option;
- Develop a Working Masterplan;
- Develop a implementation strategy to deliver the Masterplan.

Ashford from the east, showing Ashford International Station in the middle



Content of Report

The Process

This provides an overview of the primary public consultation programme including the Eastwell Manor Workshop in April, the Public Exhibition in May and the July Workshops.

The Context

The context for growth and change in Ashford is outlined. This includes the background to the agenda for 31,000 houses and 28,000 jobs in Ashford. It sets out the policy context for how this agenda should be developed.

The Vision

The scale of the growth challenge is explored in terms of key qualities that should accrue with growth. The key theme of 'The Great Town and the Great Garden' is developed.

The Objectives

The primary objectives for growth in Ashford are explored, from the perspective of each 'workstream' or specialist area of interest.

Developing a Model for Growth

The potential development of Ashford is reviewed. The local plan and sites with consent for development are reviewed alongside 'best practice' principles.

Three Growth Scenarios

Three scenarios for growth including a 'Dispersed Model', a 'Decentralised neighbourhood Model' and a 'Compact Model' are reviewed. There is an overview of the preferred compact model for growth.

Key Concepts

This section deals with the key concepts that contribute to the compact urban model and establishes of the primary components of the plan.

The Evolving Plan – Four Options

The key aspects of the plan are developed. Four options or variants of the plan are assessed .

The Preferred Strategic Options

This involves an assessment of the preferred option arising from the consultation process and ongoing technical studies.

The Working Masterplan

The details of the Plan are developed and refined and the key early concepts are reinforced.

Implementation

The key phasing and delivery issues are examined.

The Way Forward

The early framework for delivery is explored.

Appendices

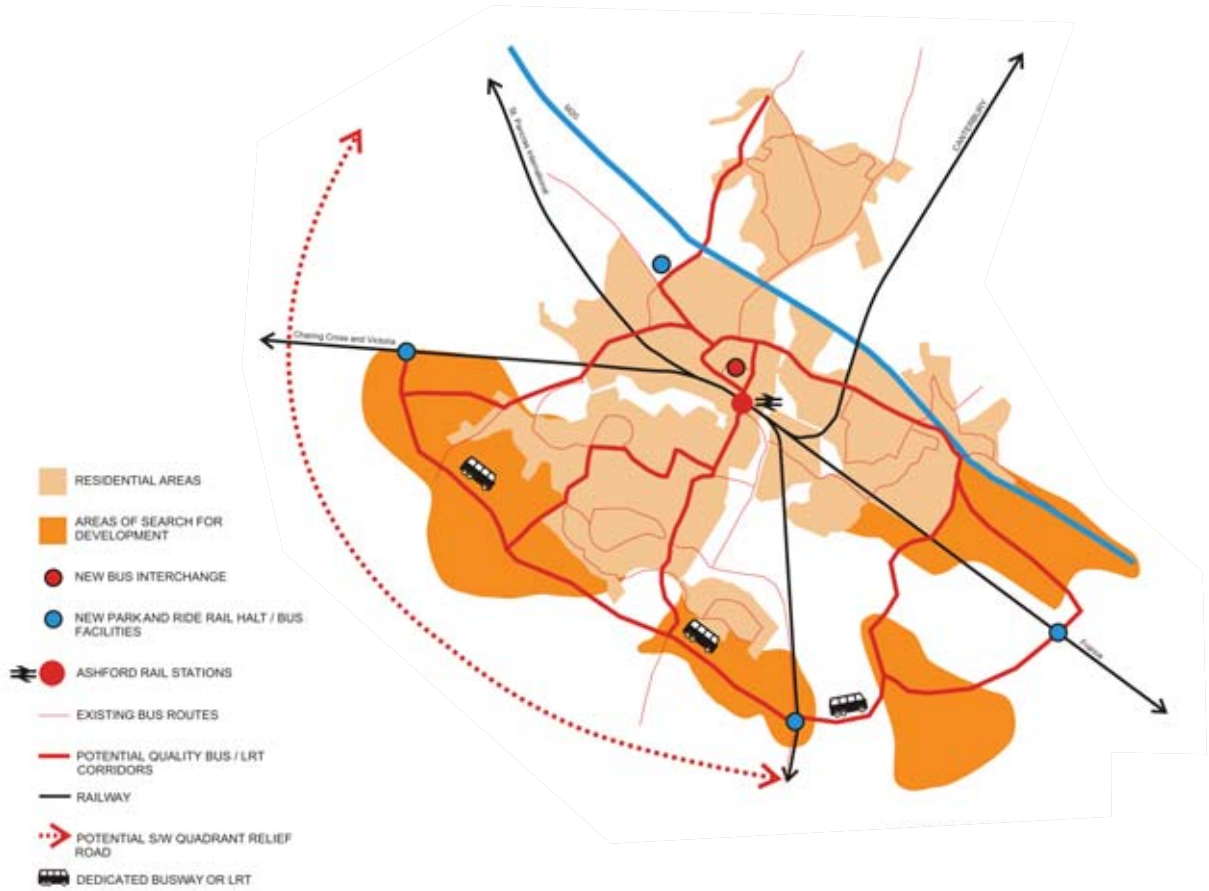
The plan and schedule are provided.

01.2 THE CHALLENGE

Background

The Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9 March 2001) identified Ashford as one of the growth areas in the South East. It did not state how much Ashford should grow but that the local authorities, with regional and central government partners, should carry out a study to assess the scope for growth and how to achieve it.

The Ashford's Future Study (Halcrow, 2002) was published in December 2002. It concluded that within the period to 2031, Ashford has the capacity to provide an additional 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs. More importantly, the study also concluded that achieving this quantity of development would be conditional on the necessary social, community and physical infrastructure being in place at the right time as well as for a step change to be made in terms of the quality of the town centre and developments being planned in and around the town. The Council's approach to the Government's growth agenda are embodied in the following guiding principles set out in autumn 2002 by the Ashford's Future partners which guided the Ashford's Future Study (Halcrow, 2002) and the GADF.



A Schematic Plan for Growth in Ashford linked to Sustainable Transport (Halcrow, 2002)

Although the Ashford's Future Study is not a formal policy document it was carried out with the detailed participation of the Government Office, Regional Assembly, County and Borough Councils. The approach taken has moved away from a top down approach to planning. The Ashford's Future Study has fed into a number of policy documents with its conclusions being reflected in:

- Sustainable Communities in the South East, building for the future (ODPM February 2003)

  - The Governments action plan for creating sustainable communities;
- Regional Planning Guidance for the South East Chapter 12 - Ashford Growth Area (Government Office for the South East July 2004);
- Draft Kent and Medway Structure Plan (September 2003).

The Study will also be reflected in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy and along with the Greater Ashford Development Framework masterplanning will form the basis for the preparation of the Ashford Borough Local Development Framework.

Guiding Principles

The partners to the study have agreed a set of guiding principles which should be used to inform the masterplanning and spatial development of Ashford. These are taken from page 4 of the Overarching Report. Again, although these principles are not intended to constrain creativity or innovative solutions. They need to be considered as a guide for the masterplanning process.

- To ensure that growth and change takes place in a sustainable way
- To make optimum use of the existing urban area including development and redevelopment opportunities, both to meet the needs of the growing population and to minimise the quantity of greenfield land needed for development
- To centre growth on the existing town, encouraging high quality urban design, making use of the infrastructure and investment that is already in place and the opportunity sites within the town centre
- To develop an urban renaissance at Ashford, and ensure higher standards of urban design in new development
- To plan growth around a 'sustainable transport model' centred on public transport nodes, walking and cycling
- Use housing and employment densities as a tool to maximise the accessibility of public transport and the quality of service that is provided

- To relate the housing growth to reasonable expectations of growth in the local economy as well as the number of jobs that are likely to be created
- To ensure that the benefits of growth at Ashford meet wider objectives of helping to regenerate East Kent
- To ensure growth at Ashford does not undermine other regional and sub-regional economic regeneration policies (including Thames Gateway and East Kent Priority areas)
- To ensure the protection of designated areas of countryside of national, countywide and strategic and local importance and be sensitive to the importance of local countryside character
- To respect the need to work within environmental constraints imposed by flood risk, water supply limits, water and air quality standards
- To reflect the need to minimise waste and encourage recycling as a key issue in the design and implementation of development
- To protect village communities from the potential negative effects of development
- To make optimum use of any greenfield land that needs to be developed.
- To ensure the provision of relevant community infrastructure

Sustainable Communities Plan

The Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM, February 2003) identifies the importance of Ashford and the other growth areas in delivering the Government's planning and housing agenda in the South East. This is not just an issue relating to the quantity of development but more importantly its quality. The Growth Areas are clearly seen by Government as providing the opportunity to bring together best practice and innovation in all aspects of community development, planning and design - providing a test bed for ideas and approaches that can then be used elsewhere.

The Sustainable Communities Plan sets a challenging and exciting agenda for the growth of Ashford. The following section is taken from the Plan.

This broad agenda is one shared by all of the partners represented on the Ashford's future delivery Board, including Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council - the local planning authorities.

The agenda has formed the starting point for the preparation of Greater Ashford Development Framework. It has moved away from being concerned just with constraints and land uses towards creating and delivering a successful community.

In the spirit of the Communities Plan and considering the need to deliver development in Ashford that is of a significantly higher quality than achieved in recent years, the work being carried out as part of the GADF process is being required challenge current policies and practices. This includes the approach to what in the past have been considered as absolute constraints (such as flood plain) and to the approach and mechanisms required to deliver development.

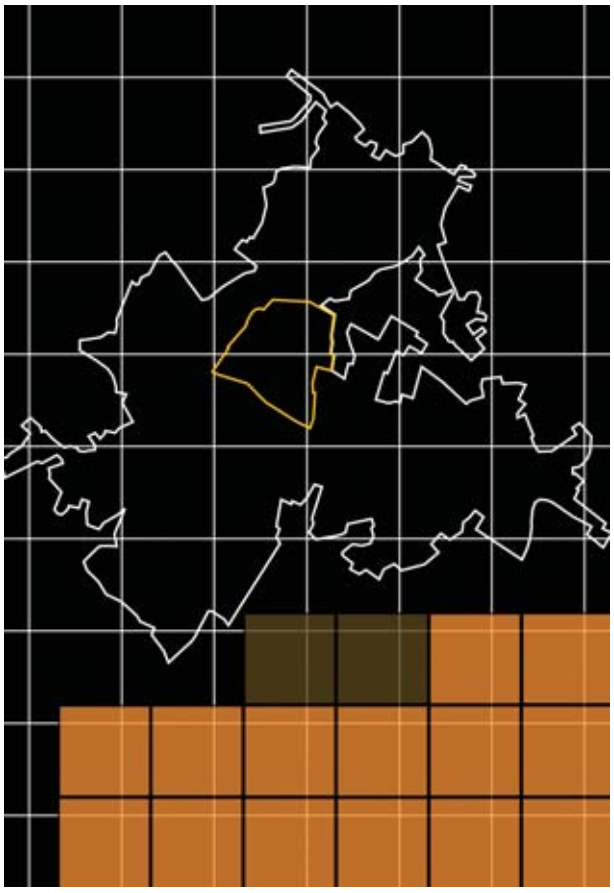
As with all complex projects there are difficult decisions that need to be made and a balanced approach needs to be taken to different objectives and policy choices. However, the work is being carried out within the context of a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This considers a wide set of environmental, social and economic issues to ensure that the decisions made through out the process are informed by an understanding of their environmental impact. (See Section 02.3 that refers to the latest SEA document to be published)

Set out below are some of the most important requirements of sustainable communities. This text was the product of discussions in a sub-group of the Central Local Partnership between the LGA and Central Government.

What makes a sustainable community?

Some of the key requirements of sustainable communities are:

- A flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth;
- Strong leadership to respond positively to change;
- Effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in planning, design and long term stewardship of their community, and an active voluntary and community sector;
- A safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space;
- Sufficient size, scale and density, and the right layout to support basic amenities in the neighbourhood and minimise use of resources (including land);
- Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres;
- Buildings -both individually and collectively - that can meet different needs over time, and that minimise the use of resources;
- A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes and incomes;
- Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure;
- A diverse, vibrant and creative local culture, encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it;
- A "sense of place"; and
- The right links with the wider regional, national and international community.



Ashford will need 14 square kilometres if it builds its housing requirement at the lowest level of PPG3 densities. Locating jobs in out of town locations will need a further 2 square kilometres

Balancing competing agendas

The Challenge of Growth and Change

The brief for the Greater Ashford Development Framework is to qualify where and how 31,000 houses and 28,000 jobs could develop in Ashford over a 30-year period.

"more than half of all new housing is built at less than 20 dwellings per hectare. That represents a level of land take which is historically very high and which can no longer be sustained" (PPG3, DETR, 2000).

This is true in Ashford where existing housing areas fall well below the required density for sustainable development and fail to provide the opportunity for sustainable public transport or local convenience retail. This coupled with the fact that most other standard volume housing types in the UK achieve the same result suggests that new housing types need to be developed that are suitable and appropriate for urban extension projects. Housing in Ashford can be broadly shown to be:

Model Type (Estimated Density/DPH)	Units per hectare	Habitable Rooms per Hectare	Parking; On - Plot
Low - density detached houses 'enclave' layout	10	80	2-4
Semi - detached houses, street - based layout	16	96	1-2
Semi - detached houses, Cul - de - sac Layout	30.8	154	1

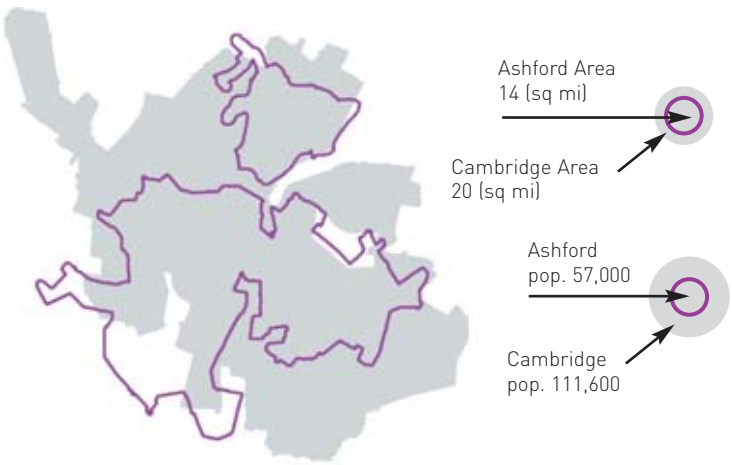
Even if Ashford were to build at the lowest levels of density as anticipated in PP3, using traditional housebuilder approaches, it would require a land take in excess of 16 square kilometres to deliver the anticipated 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs.

In light of this and as part of this project, we feel it will be critical to work with volume houses builders at Ashford to remodel traditional housing types and their urban design to create new housing typologies and urban layouts that respond to place, relate to public transport and provide enough footfall to sustain local centres/shops and community facilities. In this respect the Council's successful use of Enquiry by Design and the national Design Coding pilot project at Ashford Barracks should be seen as an indicator of Ashford's commitment to good urban design.

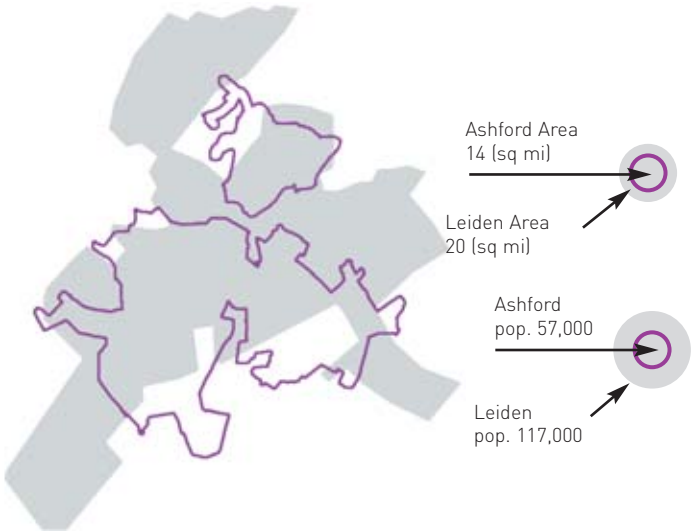
Balancing competing agendas

Growth of this order will involve a balance of critical, sometimes competing agendas:

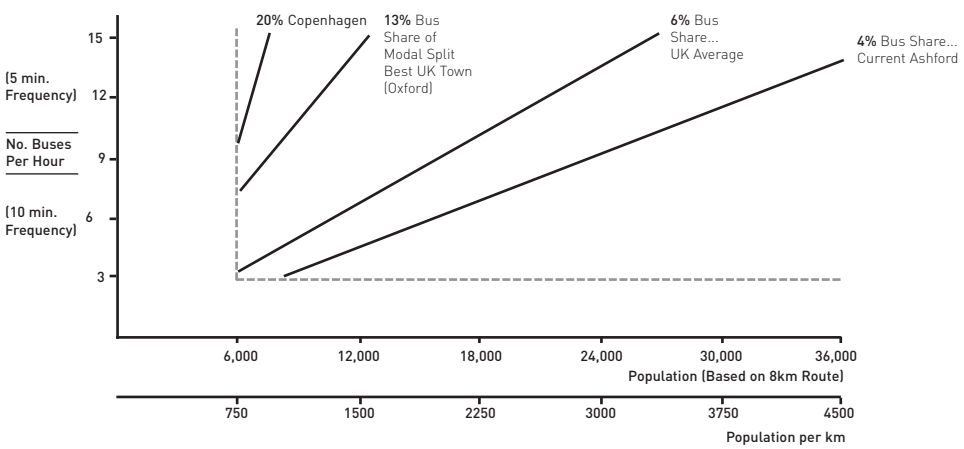
- **Environmental**
  - The need to protect and enhance the qualities of the environment
  - The need to minimise the impacts of growth on the environment
- **Movement and Access**
  - The need to improve and sustain natural and regional links
  - The need to establish a viable public transport network
  - The need to promote opportunities for walking and cycling
- **Urban Quality**
  - The need to attract a range of economic and job opportunities
  - The need to deliver and sustain social and cultural assets
  - The need to create positive places for communities to engage in



Cambridge City Comparison (Existing Ashford footprint shown in purple)



Leiden City Comparison (Existing Ashford footprint shown in purple)



Relationship between population, modal split and 'variable' bus frequencies for planning services in developments

Scale Comparisons

In order to understand the implications of this scale of growth, we analysed a basic physical comparison between towns of a scale to which Ashford could grow. These included Cambridge (population 111,600), Chelmsford (population 100,000), Bruges (population 116,246) and Leiden (population 117,000).

At a basic level this comparison gave an understanding of comparative footprints of towns of a similar population size. It also suggests the positive features and investment that a town or city of a certain scale is able to attract. In addition examples were selected to showcase how low lying settlements can be characterised through their relationships to water. There is good historic precedent that shows how potential risks of flooding have been harnessed through the creation of dykes, canals and retention areas that generate high quality living environments.

It is at the level of modal shift to public transport that the greatest challenge lies. The graph below shows where Ashford is relative to the best UK cities (Oxford) with Ashford only achieving 4% of the bus share (2% less than the UK average). If Ashford were to move to an Oxford target it would require 13%. This would require a major investment in public transport provision in the town, but this could be planned in at the outset, avoiding many of the current problems facing places like Oxford.

The challenge to create a development framework that meets the requirements of Sustainable Communities Plan as well as the targets set out in the Ashford's Future Study (Halcrow, 2002) is considerable. The last time that we planned on this scale was at Milton Keynes where the bulk of land was controlled by the public sector. This plan will need to be delivered with the clear co-operation of many. It will require changing the hearts and minds of many players: the community (both old and new), the housebuilders, the infrastructure providers and the funders, to name a few.

In order to fully understand the challenge, we need to understand the place and how it can accommodate this scale of growth and change.

02 THE PROCESS

This section reviews the process in the GADF masterplanning exercise. It includes four key aspects of the process:

- **The first is the Process of Decision Making**

This outlines the development of the Plan from the principles that were established, to a Compact Strategy for growth, to a series of options for growth within the Compact Strategy. It identifies how key decisions were taken through testing and modelling exercises and a public consultation process. It also clarifies how the GADF Masterplanning will relate to the Local Development Framework.

- **The second is a Public Consultation Process**

This records the key public events and mechanisms that were used to gain public input into the process and the evolution of the Plan. The full consultation process is outlined in the Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement.

- **The third includes a background to the Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The role of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to both set performance standards and targets for growth, as well as use the targets as a means of evaluating how the options for growth and plan evolves.

- **The fourth includes a background to the Technical Studies**

The role of the transport and flood modelling is to assess the land use and infrastructure proposals for growth relative to the Ashford Area Transport Strategy (AATS) and Integrated Water Management Strategy (IWMS).

02.1 THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

This section deals with the process of decision making related to the preparation of a Local Development Framework for Ashford. This process should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Process outlined in Section 02.2, (as shown in the table opposite) the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process in Section 02.3, and the Transport Modelling Process in Section 02.4.

Ashford's Local Development Framework

The Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF) will be one of the first masterplans to be prepared within the context of the new planning framework, as set out in the 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004'. The GADF will be given a formal and statutory basis through its incorporation in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).

The LDF will comprise of two types of documents:

- Local Development Documents(LDD) - a 'Core Strategy' plus other geographical or issue specific documents.
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) - explaining how core policy, included in the LDDs, will be interpreted and implemented.

The LDDs will be subject to full consultation and scrutiny - including a public examination in front of an independent inspector. SPDs will be subject to full consultation - but without a public examination. The documents forming the LDF will cover the whole range of issues raised by both the 'Sustainable Communities Plan' and the GADF, including:

- The 30 year vision.
- The development framework for the LDF period (to 2021).
- A broad phasing strategy.
- Policies for developer contributions and delivery.
- A 'Town Wide' design code.
- Area Action Plans for urban sites and the urban extensions (coming forward in line with the phasing strategy).

The GADF process has been structured to ensure that there is a seamless transition between the informal masterplanning work and preparation of the LDF. This 'Stage 4' Final Masterplanning report acts both as a summary of the GADF work and as an important supporting document for the LDF.

Initially the Masterplanning Report will be used as a supporting document for the 'Core Strategy 'Options Report' - explaining and justifying the preferred option and other options considered. It will also be used as a supporting document for the LDDs submitted to the Secretary of State, as well as further SPDs.

A key difference between the GADF masterplan and the emerging LDF will be the timescale. The GADF is a strategy for the development of Ashford up-to 2031. The LDF will cover the period to 2021. However, the context of the LDF will be set by the longer period - this is particularly important in providing the context for some of the major pieces of infrastructure that are subject to long planning and delivery timescales.

	INFORMANTS PRINCIPLES	THE MASTERPLAN: GREATER ASHFORD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMPACT MODEL	 OPTIONS	LDF PROCESS
THE PROCESS	• Principles contained in the Ashford's Future Study and the ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan	**Eastwell Manor (April 2004)** • Key Ideas • Key Characteristics • Initial Plan	**Eastwell Manor (July 2004)** Option 1 Option 2 Option 3 Option 4 → Option 5 → Option 6 Carried forward and amended for Options Report	Options to be reviewed
COMPONENTS	• From Principles to Vision	• 3 Growth Scenarios evaluated 1) Suburban Model 2) Polycentric Model 3) Compact Urban Model	• 4 options are reviewed 1) Option 1: An expanded Chilmington Green 2) Option 2: An expanded Kingsnorth 3) Option 3: An expanded Cheeseman's Green 4) Option 4: The Full Canal District	
OUTPUTS	• Formation of a Town Team ↓ • Town Charter established	• The 'Game' and Eastwell Manor Workshop (April 2004) ↓ • Compact Growth Model Selected	• The second Eastwell Manor Workshop (July 2004) • Formal Councillor meetings/workshops • Testing, modelling, viability exercises ↓ • Option 5: Partial Canal District and 3 neighbourhoods • Option 6: The current option ↓ • The Working Masterplan	• The LDF Process - ongoing consultation ↓ • LDF plan & policy

An outline of the Process of Decision Making

02.2 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

This section deals with the public participation process including major public events, capacity building and gaining input for the evolving Plan for Ashford.

- The first major consultation event was the Eastwell Manor Workshop, where a selected stakeholder group was invited to participate in an intensive four-day workshop.
- The second was the establishment of a Town Team as a group of community representatives who will liaise with their respective communities as the project evolves. The Town Team also has a primary role in the formation of a Town Charter, which establishes the primary principles and aspirations for development in Ashford.
- The third strand was the public exhibition that involved a far broader range of Ashford's citizens where views and comments were expressed.
- The fourth event was a series of reviews and workshops held from 12-16 July.
- A number of Parish and Borough Council meetings have also occurred.

The Strategic Growth Model Workshop Eastwell Manor: April 2004

The Eastwell Manor Workshop was held between the 26 – 29 April 2004, at Eastwell Manor on the outskirts of Ashford. This was the first major consultation exercise and four major groups were represented:

The Consultants

The Consultants appointed to the Greater Ashford Development Framework, as well as Consultants working on other projects in Ashford.

The Broad Client Group

The broad client group includes English Partnerships, Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council, Ashford's Future, SEEDA, GOSE and the Environment Agency .

The Agencies

The agencies include the key public organisations and officials working at the hands-on level with issues that affect Ashford, for example the Highways Agency, as well as private agencies such as Stagecoach.

The 'Town Team'

The 'Town Team' is a group of individuals who represent key Civic and Community organisations such as Councillors, Ashford Volunteer Bureau, Ashford Rural Trust, Kent Association for the Disabled, Ashford Visual Artists, and Tenants and Community Residence Groups.

The Workshop Agenda

- **Capacity Building**

To start building the capacity of civic and community groups to participate in the process through the formation of a 'Town Team'.

- **Focus on the Quality Agenda**

To propose key themes for growth around the quality of settlement and the quality of landscape, picking up on the principles included in the Ashford's Future Study which were set out in the brief.

- **Build on Previous Work**

To pick up principles included in Ashford's Future Study (Halcrow 2002) as set out in the Brief for the GADF.

- **Scale of the Growth Challenge**

To review the scale of growth and change through comparisons to relevant examples such as Oxford and Cambridge.

- **Confirm Workstream Objectives**

To clarify the issues of growth from the perspective of each workstream.

- **Explore Growth Scenarios**

To explore and broadly assess three possible growth scenarios for Ashford. The exploration of the three scenarios is described in Chapter 05 of this document.

- **Identify Preferred Growth Model**

To establish a preferred growth scenario as a primary output of the workshop. The 'in principle' support of the Compact Growth Model is covered in Chapter 05.

The Town Team and Town Charter

One of the key roles of the Town Team is to develop, refine and promote a manifesto for quality growth and change in Ashford. This manifesto or Town Charter establishes and affirm the local aspirations of the citizens of Ashford as their town evolves and develops. The Town Team draws on the talents and expertise of a cross section of local citizens who work together on the Town Team. The Town Charter qualifies the following questions:

- What kind of a town do we have now?
- What kind of a town do we want?
- What kind of town can we make?
- What do we need to make it happen?

The general response from the Town Team to the potential of a Town Charter was positive – Town Team members felt the need to challenge the recent directions that growth in Ashford has taken. The Town Team has established a charter editorial group with members of the Town Team, and the Ashford's Future Team. The central issues raised by the majority of the Town Team are;

- To develop the Charter through a broader consultation programme;
- To develop a Charter of aspirations for broader public review.
- The charter process will be developed over 2005.

The core aspirations for the Charter are as follows:

Our Aspirations

- We believe that Ashford should enhance its image in order to retain and attract high quality development, jobs, and investment. Ashford has many positive features. The pedestrian district in the town centre, an international rail station, a central park, natural water courses, and attractive countryside within easy reach of every resident. These are not, though, always designed, managed or used to their full potential. We believe that by having a clear vision and a good plan we can make Ashford a more beautiful place to live and work in.
- Ashford should grow within a defined and compact area with clear boundaries that respect the qualities and heritage of Ashford and its natural surroundings.
- Ashford's growth should create distinctive neighbourhoods that have new schools; health centres and well-connected streets. Ashford should be a series of friendly communities.
- Ashford's growth must deliver a stronger and more vibrant town centre.
- The growth must benefit the most deprived communities in Ashford.
- Our aspiration is that Ashford becomes a socially and economically successful town of regional importance with a distinctive cultural identity.

we want ashford to be...

the great town in the great setting

The Wider Public Consultation Event Ashford Town Centre: May 2004

On 22 May a team consisting of representatives from the Consultants, Ashford Borough Council and Ashford's Future held a public consultation event at the County Square Shopping Centre in Ashford's Town Centre. The key purpose of the consultation event was to introduce the growth challenge in Ashford to the broader public, and to capture public ideas and opinions.

The level of public engagement and response was positive.

- 1500 people were directly engaged in consultation activities.
- Of the 1500 people approximately 500 people were involved in playing a version of the Scenario 3 game (see section 05).
- Approximately 1000 additional people walked through and viewed the exhibition without direct engagement from members of the team.
- There were 300 written responses from a wide range of groups.

The Strategic Concept Plan Workshop
Eastwell Manor and Charter House: July 2004

The July Workshop was held between the 12th to the 16th of July and was broadly broken into three components:

- **The two-day workshop at Eastwell Manor**

The stakeholder group broadly comprised of the same groups that had attended the April Workshop at Eastwell Manor.

- **The two-day series of specialist workshops at Charter House**

A series of focus group sessions were held, namely:

- Town Centre Landowners, Developers and Strategic Owners around the edge of the town;
- Civic Domain (key public service groups such as education, social services, health, community services and church groups);
- Green Spaces (including representatives from English Nature, Kent Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, & KCC Landscape and Heritage);
- Town Centre (including key consultants, specialists and members of the Client Group).
- Victoria Way which focused on the role of a major public transport corridor and important street running parallel to Victoria Park past the Retail Outlet and into a redeveloped Romney Marsh Road. Three focus areas were reviewed

- **The exhibition at Charter House:**

The exhibition included the work that had been undertaken by the various groups over the course of the week. Participants of the two-day workshop at Eastwell Manor were invited to view the exhibition. In addition the material was left on display a two-week period after the July Workshop.

The central purpose of the July Workshop was to revisit the preferred Strategic Growth Model identified at the April Workshop and show how the team had moved forward with testing a series of Strategic Concept Plans. A key part of the workshop was to introduce and review the four variations on the model or option's that had developed since this date. The options at the stage prior to the July Workshop reflected a set of common themes (as established by the Consultant team) and alternative scenarios for dealing with additional housing numbers required to meet the plan. The risks for each of these options were also covered.

These four options are fully reviewed in Chapter 06 of this report. A fifth option arising from this workshop is included in Chapter 07.

02.3 THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process that has run alongside development of the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF). The SEA both establishes targets or performance criteria for the Development Framework, and evaluates the Options and Working Plan as they have evolved. This section provides a brief background to the SEA.

Introduction

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as defined by the EU Directive is the process for ensuring "the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans... with a view to promoting sustainable development".

SEA provides a systematic process for evaluating and anticipating the environmental consequences of decisions prior to the project stage. It is both a decision-aiding tool, and provides an audit trail of the decisions taken in plan preparation.

The diagram shows the SEA stages and interfaces with the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF) preparation. Progressing the SEA in parallel with GADF preparation is key to ensuring that the GADF reflects sustainability objectives which were developed in the early stages of the Development Framework process, building on 'Handbook for Change' (Halcrow, 2002).

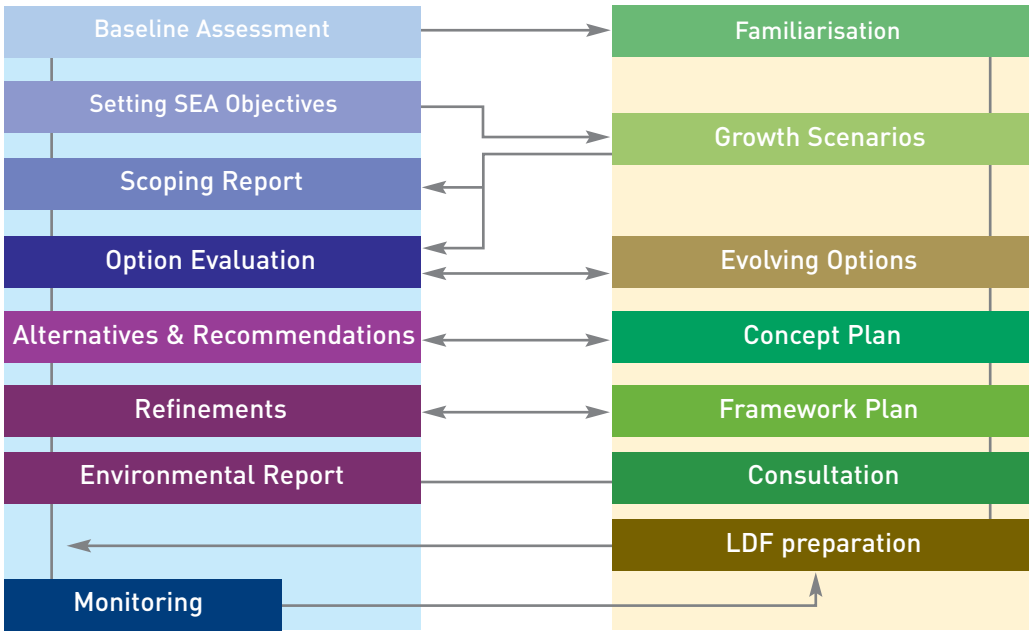
Appraisal Process

Following the establishment of the appraisal framework, the initial Growth Scenarios were appraised, and recommendations made in respect of the Preferred Scenario. The appraisal framework and appraisal outcomes were the subject of the Environmental Scoping Report which was distributed to Statutory Consultees (EN, EH, EA and the Countryside Agency).

The next key SEA phase has been the appraisal of Urban Initiatives Stage 3 Report (November, 2004), and associated Plans. The SEA focussed on the 4 evolving options and included recommendations for a preferred option to be taken forward, as well as the Concept Plan appraisal. In addition, a follow-through appraisal (assessing the extent to which the recommendations contained in the 1st Environmental Report have been addressed in Concept Plan development) was undertaken. The outputs from these appraisals are the subject of the 2nd Environmental Report which includes consideration of comments received from the statutory consultees, and recommendations in respect of alternatives to be considered as well as mitigation measures to improve the sustainability performance of the Concept Plan.

It was incumbent upon the GADF team to take these recommendations into consideration during the Final Stage of the GADF preparation. The Final Masterplanning Report will be subject to a final appraisal as part of the SEA, with any recommendations for further refinements made at this stage. It is intended that the Final Environmental Report will be updated to review the performance of the Framework Plan against sustainability objectives and targets.

It is intended that the Environmental Report will be made available for consultation at the same time as the GADF. The final Environmental Report (No. 4), Strategic Growth Scenario, is scheduled for publication in Summer 2004. Further SEA stages will include the development of a monitoring strategy, which will form the basis for the review of the LDF.



Integrating SEA and Development Framework Preparation in Ashford, showing key interfaces

The Appraisal Matrix and Presentation

In order to facilitate legibility and ease of understanding and use, the sustainability objectives, criteria, indicators and targets have been set out in the form of a matrix, and is being used to assess the GADF's sustainability performance.

The appraisal objectives and associated criteria, indicators and targets are not limited to environmental concerns only, but also address the broad range of social, economic and transport considerations.

The SEA topics, as identified in the SEA Directive, form the organisational logic of the matrix. These topics include: Biodivesity; Water & Soil; Population & Human Health; Air, Climatic Factors; Material Assets; Social Inclusiveness; Economic Development. The sustainability objectives have been classified into these themes for the purposes of clarity.

Objectives

The requirements set out in the SEA Regulations concentrate on environmental issues. During the initial scoping of this work the client group took the view that the SEA should be used as a tool for the whole community development programme. The Ashford SEA is not just confined to considerations of impacts on the environment, but also considers the ability of proposals to satisfy the full range of sustainability topics. These topics are social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. In addition transport and accessibility considerations have been included, as these issues are considered critical to future development in Ashford.

The objectives form the common basis for all the studies relating to Ashford's development. In order to ensure that the range of objectives proposed is in line with current sustainability guidance and practice, a range of documents were reviewed, including:

- Criteria
- Indicators
- Targets

Criteria

The criteria focus on the items, which are of direct relevance to the Development Framework preparation. For the purposes of the SEA, the extent to which the Development Framework is able to satisfy these criteria needs to be measurable, which is why the appraisal framework includes a series of indicators.

Indicators

The indicators are the yardsticks by which the performance of the Development Frameworks can be evaluated. These provide relevant measurements for the success of the Development Framework in achieving the identified objectives, and are a means of measuring the direct impacts associated with the Framework Proposals themselves. The Indicators will form the basis for monitoring the ability of the Frameworks' to deliver sustainable growth.

Targets

Where possible, specific targets have been identified relating to each of the criteria. These have been developed specifically for the Ashford context but have their origins in a range of sources. In most cases these targets have reference to the applicable statutory targets. However, the intention is that the Development Framework SEA Targets should not only consider the part Ashford has to play in meeting national or regional targets, but also to ensure that any backlogs in the achievement of these targets is addressed as part of new development. Further, the targets have been developed in such a way to promote the delivery of sustainable development in Ashford to a level over and above that set out in the statutory targets.

Refinement of the Appraisal Matrix

The draft appraisal matrix was prepared in October 2003, and issued for comment to the following consultees: the English Partnerships, Environment Agency, SEEDA, Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council English Nature, Kent Wildlife Trust as well as BDP who were working on the Town Centre Development Framework and the Building Research Establishment who were acting as advisors to this process.

The stakeholders were provided with at least 3 separate opportunities to provide input into the appraisal matrix development.

The full Appraisal Matrix is included on the following pages

Appraisal Matrix

Topic	Objective	Targets
1.0 Biodiversity, fauna and flora	1.1 Protection Ashford's natural ecosystems and its biodiversity	• Zero development in designated areas. • Avoidance of development on sites which support protected, rare, scare or locally important habitats and species as identified in the Kent BAP • Provision of resources for replacement habitat of equivalent or better value & agreement about the resources for the maintenance and management of these habitats
	1.2 Enhancement and improvement of biodiversity	• Increase in habitat extent & species numbers in Ashford in accordance with incidence/ % increase identified in the Kent BAP. • Increase the extent of watercourses maintained & enhanced for wildlife and habitats. • The creation of a green network by reducing fragmentation and increasing connectivity between habitats, natural, and semi-natural areas in Ashford.

	1.3
	To enhance awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and wildlife issues.
		• DF to achieve English Nature's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard in Ashford. Ensuring every home is within 300 m of an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 ha, plus:
		  • At least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km
		  • At least one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km
		  • At least one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km
		• Management measures are established for all natural areas
		• Achievement of EN's Countryside for All standards for disabled access & people with special needs.

2.0 Water and soil	2.1 Protection and enhancement of ground and surface waters	• 75% of paved areas in new development composed of porous paving & 75% of new roads to be served by Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.[1] • All new development to include on-site provision for rainwater re-use, with the intention of achieving rates of run-off comparable to an undeveloped site. • Provision of integrated, decentralised wastewater treatment solutions as part of development proposals • Up to 2010, all development to allow for retrofitting of grey water recycling. All development post-2010 to include provision for grey water recycling.
	2.2 To ensure a sustainable water supply	• Reduction in average household water consumption by 30% (over existing consumption levels) in new developments by 2010. 50% in new developments, post 2010. • All new development to include water saving technologies. No outside taps connected to the public water supply in new development. • Retrofitting to achieve reduction in average household consumption by at least 5% in existing development by 2010, and by 20% by 2030. • New water supply infrastructure to be provided by 2021[2] • Measures for retro-fitting of existing development to enable rainwater collection and grey water recycling to be promoted in conjunction with the EA and water companies by 2005.
	2.3 To ensure that new development does not increase flood risk and protects the capacity & integrity of flood storage areas	• No new housing will be at risk of flooding: either by building outside the floodplain or through specific design measures • Maximise the proportion of run off in new developments which is dealt with on site/ locally, with a target 50% reduction in runoff (peak) in new developments by 2010.
	2.4 To minimise the irreversible loss of agricultural land	• To avoid the irreversible loss of high grade agricultural land to development, unless it can be categorically established that no alternatives exist.
	2.5 Minimise the loss of soils to new development	• Zero loss of soils, which have an ecological or food-producing function (stripping and re-use to be incorporated as part of development where necessary). • 30% of development to include green roofs/ green walls.
3.0 Population and human health	3.1 Encourage healthy lifestyles	• 80% of development to be within walking distance of local amenities, including the following within 1000m: post office & banking facilities, primary and secondary school, medical centre, leisure centre, community centre, public house, children's play area. • To peg overall traffic levels to a maximum permissible 25% increase over current flows in Ashford. • To reduce modal share of the private car from 70% to 40%. • 95% of new dwellings to have provision for the adequate storage of cycles as follows: • 1 and 2 bedroom flat/house – storage for 1 cycle • 3 bedroom flats/houses – storage for 2 cycles • 4 bedrooms and above – storage for 4 cycles. • 80% of roads in new development to comprise home zones/ 20 mph zones
	3.2 Improve everyone's access to open space	• Increase the amenity value of the floodplain. • To establish connectivity between all green spaces
	3.3 Decrease impacts from noise and odour pollution	• By 2010 all public transport vehicles to be "low noise" emission vehicles
4.0 Air	4.1 Reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve over the longer term.	• Car parking standards for new development to be 25% below current ABC standards • Additional car parking in the town centre to be located in underground/ multi-storey car parks • Ensure all new buses are low carbon variety with the aim of introducing zero carbon as soon as technology permits • To ensure that design of new development enables the use of locally sourced materials with a targets of 20% of all materials to be sourced from within a 50km radius and 80% of built materials sourced from within 30km.
	4.2 To reduce air pollution from vehicular sources by improving transport choice	• Increase public transport use to at least 25% of modal share for local trips by 2010, across Ashford,[3] and 40% of modal share in the town centre by 2020. • Achieve an improvement in average public transport journey times to the town centre and employment areas over current journey times

Topic	Objective	Targets
5.0 Climatic factors	5.1 To reduce the impacts of climate change, with a particular focus on reducing levels of C02	• 20% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2020 over 1990 levels • 50% of energy requirements in new development to be provided from community renewable sources/ integrated renewables (e.g. photovoltaics) by 2020 • New development to be 30% more energy efficient than under current building regulations • All development to meet the Eco Homes or BREEAM ratings of "good"/ "very good by 2005", and "excellent "by 2010. • New development to result in a reduction in the average number of motorised transport trips per capita.
	5.2 To ensure that development is capable of withstanding the effects of global warming and climate change and microclimatic impacts	• Design of all new development to demonstrate robustness to climate change and to include weather resistant built forms.
6.0 Material assets	6.1 To maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings	• To accommodate at least 6,000 new dwellings on brownfield sites
	6.2 To maximise the efficiency in the use of land	
	6.3 To protect and reduce the use of non-renewable resources	• To ensure that at least 50% of construction materials are derived from renewable sources, including recycled sources, such as wood and concrete
	6.4 To promote waste reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery over the disposal of waste	• To introduce pro-active waste management initiatives aimed at reduction, re-use and recycling in conjunction with design initiatives in new development.
7.0 Cultural heritage & landscape	7.1 To maintain and enhance the historic & cultural assets of Ashford	• Zero adverse impacts on significant archaeological / historic sites as a result of development. • Design of new development to respect and reflect historic setting • Increase the number and quality of cultural opportunities in Ashford
	7.2 To maintain and enhance the quality of Ashford's landscape	• No net loss of land within, or damage to the natural beauty or the setting of areas of landscape importance.
	7.3 Promote access to cultural opportunities & Ashford's public spaces	• 1% of cost of development to be spent on public art
	7.4 Reinforcement of the role & vitality of the town centre	• Increase the number of community, cultural and educations uses (such as main library, museum, theatre & tertiary education facilities) within the town centre. • Increase proportion of retail floorspace located in the town centre.
8.0 Social Inclusiveness	8.1 Promote equity & address social exclusion by closing the gap between the poorest communities and the rest	• 100% of public & community buildings to be accessible by mobility impaired • 100% of pedestrian crossings and public spaces to be accessible by mobility impaired.
	8.2 To ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing that meets their needs	• 30% of new build to be affordable housing (Proposed alterations to RPG- South East- Ashford Growth Area) • 10% of all new build housing to be accessible to disabled people
	8.3 To enhance community identity and participation	• Maximise and continue stakeholder and local community dialogue as part of the DF and LDF development process. • Maximise initiatives to integrate new development into the existing community
	8.4 Reduce both crime and fear of crime	• All public spaces (including parking) designed to be overlooked
9.0 Economic Development	9.1 Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency	• Increase employment growth in key sectors • To ensure employment growth keeps pace with housing growth. • To achieve a balance between in and out-commuting • Increase number of fringe farming initiatives. • To improve access to training and education
	9.2 Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment	• Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land • Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment. • Improve journey times between M20 and Ashford town centre. • J10 improvements by 2010 and J9 improvements by 2015 • Improved linkages between IPS and town centre
	9.3 Maintain high and stable levels of income	• Improved overall skill levels. • Improved range of employment opportunities. Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ too 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020. Improved overall environmental & social performance of businesses in Ashford. Annual increase in community/ social enterprises

[1] With due consideration given to zones of High Aquifer Vulnerability.
[2] Either through raising of Bewl Reservoir or development of Broadoak Reservoir, will require liaison with the EA and Mid-Kent Water.
[3] Busses capture only 3-7% of modal share in Ashford currently
[4] Currently delays of more than 10minutes occur at J10 during peak periods.
[5] In 200, 22.4% of the Ashford workforce were qualified to the level of NVQ4+5.

02.4 THE TECHNICAL STUDIES

Transport and Movement

The Masterplan for Ashford aims to build upon the work of the 'Ashford's Capacity Report' (Halcrow) which established the intention to shift emphasis from the car to other, more sustainable modes of transport during expansion. From the earliest stages of option development particular emphasis has been placed upon developing a framework that supports commercially viable public transport services, walking and cycling as an integral part of the plan. Providing for these 'sustainable modes' has necessarily required an innovative approach to transport matters. Transport has thus been planned in tandem to land use with the location of homes, jobs and community facilities considered in the context of transport requirements and vice versa.

The 3 key roles of the Transport & Movement Workstream have thus been to:

1. Advise all Workstreams on how the location of homes and jobs will affect the viability of sustainable modes of transport.
2. Devise integrated walking, cycling, public transport and traffic networks whilst identifying and investigating the opportunities to create the new streets, bus links, bridges and other infrastructure that will encourage sustainable modes and disperse traffic.
3. Identify when that infrastructure should be provided, balancing the need to secure access to new development with advice on costs and the availability of funding from other Workstreams.

Encouraging Sustainable Modes of Transport – Making theory work for Ashford

Theoretically, high density development that mixes homes and jobs is the most sustainable in transport terms. This is for a number of reasons:

- The massing of people in close proximity increases the viability of shops and services enabling the creation of local centres.
- The close proximity of homes to employment, shops and services in local centres encourages walking and cycling.
- The mix of homes, employment, shops and services will increase demand for public transport throughout the day to and from the area.
- The massing of people in close proximity increases the viability of public transport since there are more potential users in any given area.

The ideal arrangement of such development is in a continuous corridor with a Town Centre at its focus. In simple terms then, the greater the proportion of Ashford's new homes and jobs that can be located this way, the better the quality of any public transport service will be. Consequently, development becomes more sustainable.

With the exception of this second additional recommendation, most advice was incorporated leading to the development of a new Option 6. In this latest Option, both the Canal District and Kingsnorth are identified as areas for development later in the plan period. Public Transport proposals are arranged such that access to other growth areas will not be compromised by the later development of these areas.

- Much of Ashford's existing development is suburban and low density. Roads are circuitous and direct through routes rare. Without controversial redevelopment, opportunities for areas of the existing town to form part of (and benefit from) the envisaged high density corridor were likely to be limited without undermining service quality.
- An alternative strategy of developing on the green corridors that penetrate the town centre might avoid the need for redevelopment but could have environmental and ecological implications.

It should also be considered that the advice of other Workstreams might conflict with this aspiration. For instance, the suggestion to mix jobs with homes throughout new areas of development might best support sustainable modes of transport. However, market advice might be that employers will only be attracted to Ashford if jobs are located in large business parks close to the motorway. It has been the task of all Workstreams to reconcile these opinions.

Stage 1

The Ashford Area Transport Study (AATS) established the baseline transport conditions in Ashford. The study sought to understand transport connections in the town and the wider area as the basis for the development of proposals and led to the establishment of an enduring philosophy. This remains to promote a Masterplan that:

- Supports public transport, cycling and walking as a priority.
- Provides adequate access for vehicles without compromising the public realm.
- Aids congestion through the intelligent dispersion of traffic.
- Ensures the safety of all road users.

In quantitative terms these principles manifest themselves as changes in modal share – reduction in car use in conjunction with increased walking, cycling and public transport usage. Assessment of Masterplan options has taken place in these terms.

Three initial scenarios drawn up by Urban Initiatives were tested in advance of major public consultation at the April 2004 Eastwell Manor Workshops which aimed to reach a consensus on a preferred Strategic Growth Model for further development by the various Workstreams. These were:

- **Scenario 1 (The Dispersed Model)** Largely suburban growth around the periphery of the town.
- **Scenario 2 (The Decentralised Neighbourhood)** Limited higher density mixed use neighbourhoods located on the edge of the existing urban area.
- **Scenario 3 (The Compact Urban Model)** High density mixed use corridor development partly within the existing urban area.

Embodied in all Scenarios was the commitment to 'mend it before you extend' – that is to correct the towns fundamental problems before attempting further growth. A paramount concern in this respect was providing for downgrading of the ring road which hinders development of the town centre.

In the assessment, Scenario 3 performed best in Transport terms due to the presence of higher density corridors of development linked to the town centre.

The consensus at the Eastwell Manor Workshop was for a Hybrid of Scenarios 2 & 3.

Stage 2 – Refinement of the Strategic Growth Model

In the following months work focussed on further developing the 'Preferred Strategic Growth Model'. Advice from the Movement Workstream was informed by preliminary modelling of some proposed road link options carried out as part of the Ashford Highway and Traffic Study (AHTS).

The 'Preferred Model' by now included a framework of key movement corridors agreed between the Transport and Land Use Workstreams. In order to limit the amount of new road building required these were focussed on existing roads and rights of way.

Ongoing Stage 2 Development

Further development of the Strategic Option took place over the following months as the team looked to progress this to a Strategic Concept Plan. The Movement Workstream undertook ongoing consultation with key stakeholders such as the SRA, Sustrans, and Local Public Transport Operators to assess the viability of proposals. These included:

- The opportunity to establish Ashford as hub in the UK Rail Network.
- Strengthening the case for bringing domestic CTRL services to Ashford which is competing with the Medway Towns.
- The potential to expand Lydd airport which could be served by rail or bus connections from Ashford.
- Developing existing proposals for a new National Cycle Network (NCN) route 17 through Ashford to ensure this serves the new growth areas where necessary.
- Investigating in principle opportunities to reduce unnecessary Freight movements through the town.

However, the evolution to a 'Strategic Concept Model' was guided mostly by developments in the Land Use Workstream and the development of four Strategic Options. These four options were unveiled and debated at a further Eastwell Manor Workshop and a following series of specialist workshops during July 2004. The major area of change for the Movement Workstream included work on revising the focus of the main public transport corridor and shifting the bulk of the development to the east of the town.

Strategic Concept Model - Option 5

These ideas were further synthesised into a fifth, 'Strategic Concept Plan' (Option 5), that was presented beside the other 4 options.

As such a decision was taken to assess the likely viability of a 3 armed high quality public transport service (by now dubbed 'SMARTLINK').

Each arm will be reinforced by a Park and Ride site at junctions with strategic road corridors.

It was identified that the least viable of the three arms was likely to be that to Kingsnorth since scaling back of the Canal District has weakened this particular corridor.

Towards a final Masterplan – Option 6

RPS undertook testing of the preferred Option 5 as part of the AATS. This reported disappointing performance of SMARTLINK relative to a similar service proposed in the AATS. The key AATS recommendation was to reduce SMARTLINK from a three arm to a two arm service in order to support SMARTLINK's business case. The Movement Workstream recommended the Kingsnorth arm be dropped and development from Kingsnorth be redeployed to reinforce the two remaining SMARTLINK corridors.

Other key recommendations included:

1. Increasing the mix of development along the Cheeseman's Green corridor through Sevington where it remained coarse

2. Redeployment of escalating non-industrial employment in Waterbrook to be spread along the SMARTLINK corridor to improve accessibilty.

With the exception of this second additional recommendation, most advice was incorporated leading to the development of a new Option 6. In this Option, both the Canal District and Kingsnorth are identified as reserve areas for possible development later in the plan period. Public Transport proposals are arranged such that access to other growth areas will not be compromised by a decision not to develop these.

The decision to change the location of the urban neighbourhoods has necessarily required some revision to the framework of Key Movement Corridors. Proposals for these have been developed in tandem to revisions to Transport Infrastructure phasing. Both have been informed by other Workstreams as well as preliminary feasibility studies and workshops. These have investigated delivery issues along several key movement corridors and the feasibility of key Transport Infrastructure such as Park & Ride.

Stage 4

Work has focussed mostly on the refinement of Transport Infrastructure phasing in response to infrastructure costing work by other Workstreams. Some improvement to the land use mix in Sevington has also been achieved. This is anticipated to bolster the business case for SMARTLINK.

With proposals for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport firming up, the key movement corridors have been further refined in tandem with the development of 'Design Codes' detailing the aspirations for the character of each. Further details are as outlined elsewhere in this report.

Transport Modelling

Ashford Area Transport Study (AATS) – the AATS is first stage in developing a strategy for development in Ashford. The aim of AATS is to produce an early vision of future transport in Ashford and a framework for its subsequent development. The study considers all transport modes and land uses in an integrated manner with the following objectives:

- To develop an integrated, multi-modal transport strategy for in inclusion in the Local Development Framework (LDF) with an horizon year of 2031.
- To develop transport strategies that support current and future sustainable developments within Ashford.
- To reduce the impact of transport on the environment and promote social inclusion.
- To assist in developing a spatial strategy that minimises car use and the need to travel.

The principal output from AATS is a report titled 'Towards a Transport Strategy'.

Ashford Highway and Traffic Study (AHTS) – the AHTS takes transport trip information form AATS and specifically considers the vehicular element of future trips in Ashford. The study develops a phased highway strategy for Ashford, identifying, analysing and appraising solutions to problems on the trunk road and County Road networks. The objectives of the study are:

- To devise options for the highway network consistent with the strategy work from the AATS.
- To consider the identified highway network needs in terms of deliverability, design, costs and benefits.
- To report on the procedures necessary for implementation of the required highway proposals and to advise on critical path actions necessary for delivery to the required timescale.

The principal output from AHTS is a report titled 'Report of Highway Needs'.

Flood Modelling

The flood modelling strategy for GADF has developed in close collaboration with the Environment Agency drawing on their detailed knowledge of the flood risk in Ashford, their Integrated Water Management Study (IWMS) being undertaken alongside GADF to look at flood risk waste management, water supply and water quality issues, and the requirements set out in PPG25 for development in flood plain areas.

Initial ideas for managing flood risk were identified at the IWMS Blue Sky Workshop in March 2004, and developed further in the IWMS phase 2 report published in April 2004. These included reprovision of flood plain areas, use of SUDS and conveyance improvements to channels.

Impacts from different growth scenarios were considered at the April Workshop and summarised in the GADF stage 2 report. The workshop concluded that some development in flood plain areas was necessary for a sustainable urban expansion of Ashford. This would require an equivalent relacement area ensuring no nett loss to the floodplain.

Following meetings with Environmental Agency to review the scope of flood modelling HR Wallingford undertook initial modelling on behalf of English Partnerships to establish the effects of taking land out of the flood plain in the Canal District, and the extent to which increased flood levels would be mitigated by compensation storage.

The results from the modelling assisted with the ongoing development of the growth model. Further flood modelling was undertaken through IWMS looking at the overall impact of GADF option 5, the beneficial effects of using SUDS, channel improvements and the overall impact of climate change.

Following this modelling work the Environment Agency instigated a detailed review of the base flood model and undertook further the flood modelling scenarios for GADF.

The outcome of this process as summarised in the Infrastructure stage 4 report is agreement with the Environment Agency that sufficient flood modelling has been undertaken for GADF, with detailed modelling to be undertaken as part of the Town Centre Development Framework for the Victoria Way corridor and areas south of the CTRL. The strategy for the Canal District has also been agreed whereby flood plain compensation measures would be undertaken ahead of development to take potential development areas out of the flood plain.

03 THE CONTEXT

The existing quality of the built and natural environment of Ashford presents the single biggest challenge to the ambitions of the Sustainable Communities Plan. Growth and change of the town is so predetermined by its morphology that has seen the evolution of the town from a medieval settlement through to a market town with a railway focus to its present day structure. The town has been shaped by its natural systems. It has also been shaped by policies, practices and major infrastructure interventions that have led to the fragmentation of the town into a series of disconnected areas of urban sprawl.

The GADF has an opportunity to rectify many of these mistakes but is largely dependent on the degree of intervention anticipated to ensure that any new development does not further marginalise the existing urban fabric and social systems of the town.

This section examines the strategic role and location of Ashford, its built and natural environment, and its policies and programmes.

03.1 STRATEGIC ROLE AND LOCATION

Ashford has been identified as one of the strategic growth areas in the South East of England. Its strategic role and location is seen as a major factor for this growth.

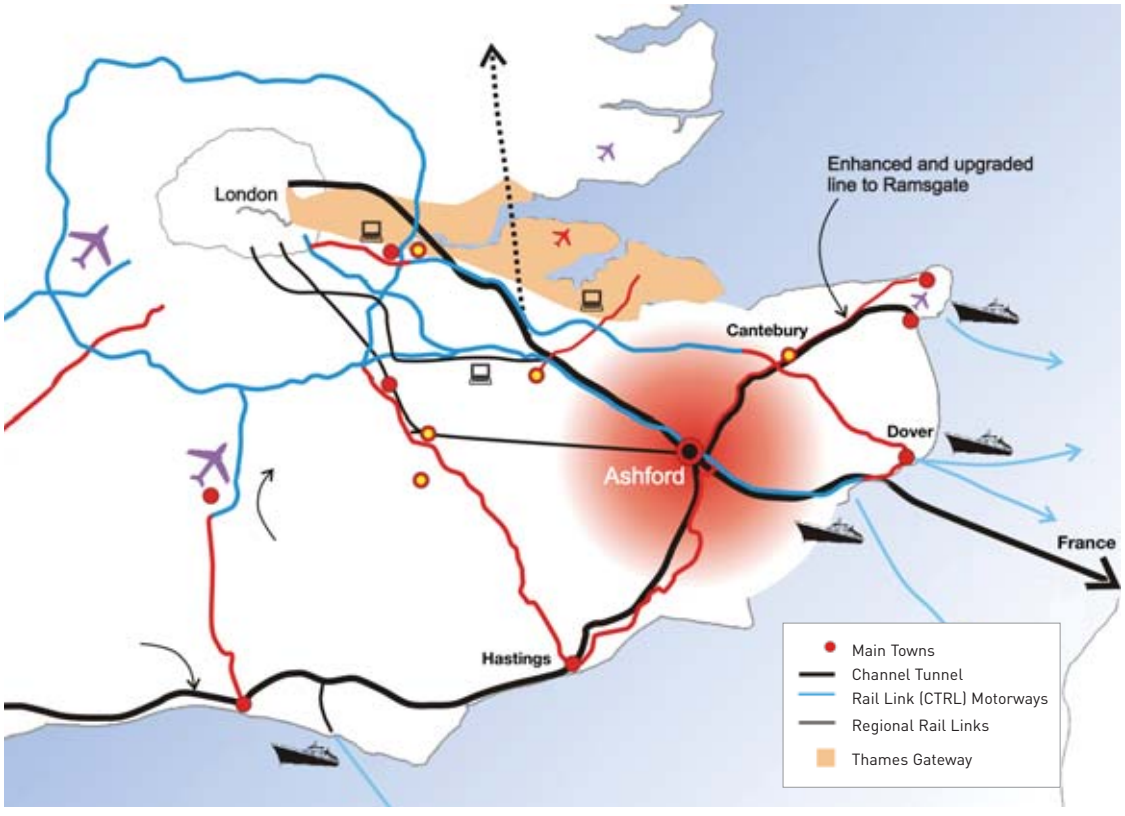
The town has a population of approximately 57,000 people (2002) and sits within the Borough of Ashford that has a population of approximately 102,000 people. It is Kent's fastest growing Borough.

As seen in the previous section, this population is programmed to grow to some 110,000. This will have significant implications on how the town sees itself, defines itself and markets itself within the wider context of the South-East, Kent and Europe.

Ashford's Connections

One of the major reasons for the designation of Ashford as a Growth Area within the South East is its existing and potential transport connections. Ashford lies at the junction of 5 rail lines providing an important combination of public transport links. The current journey time to London is 1hour 12 minutes but following the completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to St Pancras this time will be cut to 37 minutes. This will give Ashford a unique geo-strategic advantage – being both 40 minutes from London and 40 minutes from France.

Rail services to Canterbury, Hastings, Folkestone, Deal, Tonbridge, Rye and Eastbourne ensure good regional connections. In addition Ashford is linked to the motorway network via junctions 9 and 10 off the M20 (London to Dover/Folkestone). Further primary road links are to Canterbury (A28), Faversham (A251), Romney Marsh (A2070), Maidstone (A20), Tenterden and Hastings (A28).



Ashford in its Regional Context, Halcrow 2002

Ashford's Economy

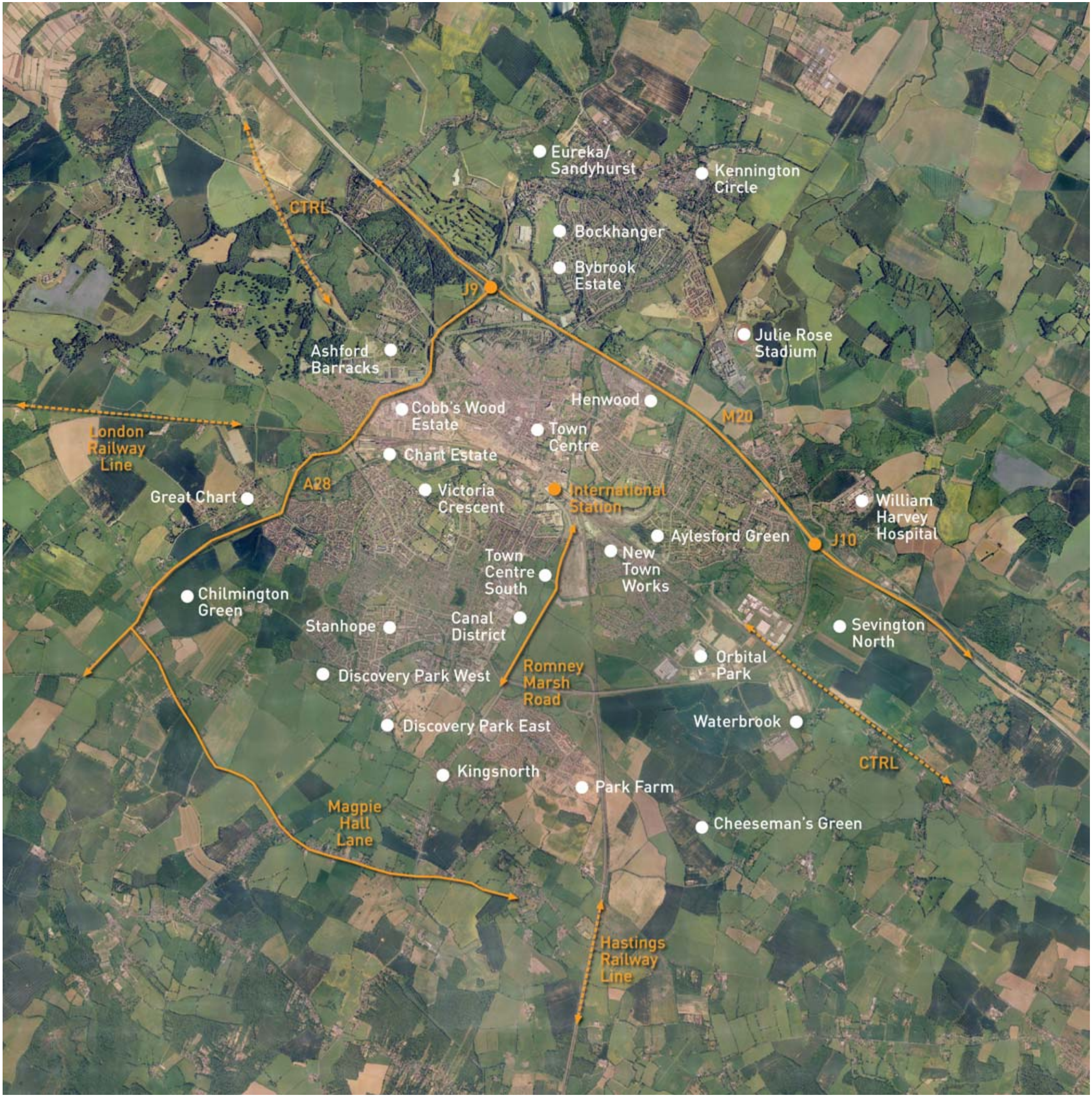
The recent Ernst & Young 'Economic Vision' report shows that Ashford has a locally-focussed economy populated primarily by small businesses. There are some 4600 businesses in Ashford Borough, of which 85% employ less than 11 people. Most businesses, by number, are in Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants, closely followed by Banking, Finance and Insurance.

In Ashford there is a high level of self-employment and a high business population rate. It is weak in terms of the rest of Kent, the South East and GB as far as HE and R&D businesses are concerned and weak as regards the South East and GB for Information Economy and Knowledge Based Services. However, the percentage increase in information economy employment from 1995 – 2000 at Ashford has been 15-30%, second only to Gravesham at 30%. According to the Ashford Business Link Database there are 4,602 companies in the Ashford area, which employ 59,534 staff. The largest public sector employers are the Inland Revenue, East Kent Hospital; the largest private sector employers are Balfour Beatty, Quest and Coty.

Ashford has not been a major destination of projects. Indeed limited inward investment has taken place, with the majority of new activities being small, low value-added and originating from within the UK. According to Locate in Kent, of the 218 projects locating in Kent that they facilitated between 1997 and 2003, only 18 were established in Ashford (6 were from the UK, 5 from France, 4 from the USA and one each from Japan, Italy and the Netherlands).

Business support is aimed mainly at micro businesses, SMEs and start-ups, as it is assumed that larger firms have their own professional advisers. This business support is in a state of transition, with the weight of resources tending to go to the Business Links.

In the future Ashford should encourage the existing business base to adopt higher value added practices. It should develop firms and businesses in the more knowledge intensive areas of the economy to set up or expand and remove restrictions to business set-up, growth and development for both home grown and international companies.



Aerial view of the GADF Study Area

03.2 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The range of development types in Ashford, from medieval times to the latest PPG3 compliant housing, has resulted in a disconnected urban fabric with little relationship between the sum and its parts

The Development of the Town

The urban area of Ashford has developed over a lengthy time period. The first evidence of a settlement in Ashford is from 839AD. By 1243 it had become market town for the area and by 1600 it was a particularly important market for livestock. Further development of the town was promoted by the arrival of the railway in 1842, followed quickly by the building of the railway works in 1846. Again in 1996 the development of the International Passenger Station in the Town Centre has contributed to changes in the town's recent and future development.

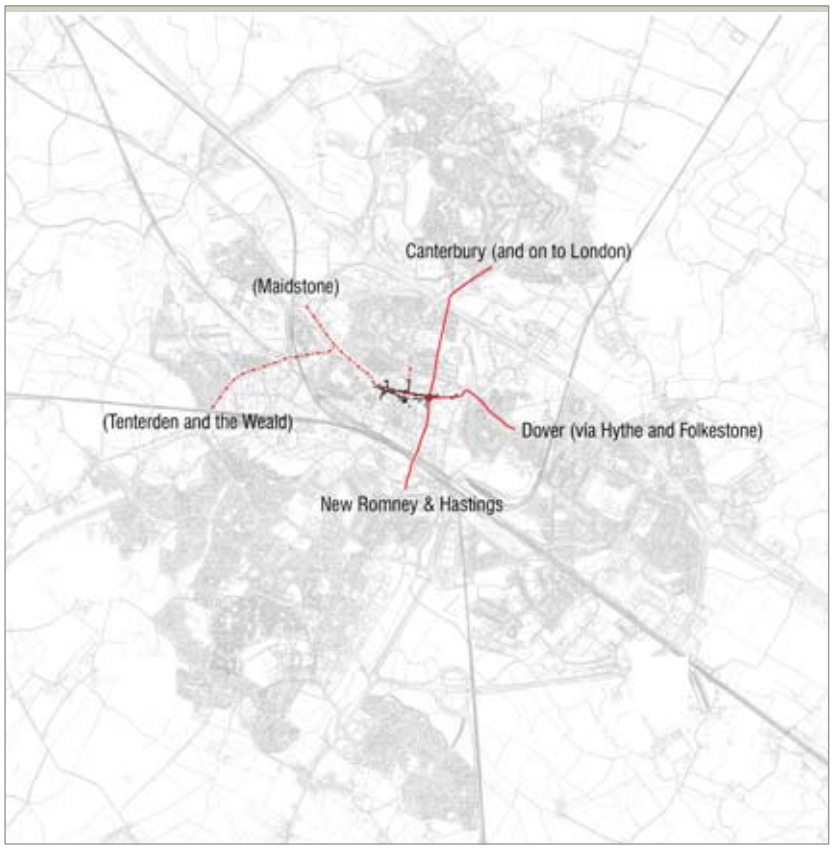
Ashford lies at the confluence of five main rivers – the Great Stour, East Stour, Aylesford Stream, Whitewater Dyke and Ruckinge Dyke. Historically this has led to widespread flooding in the area which has recently (1990s) been alleviated by the provision of detention storage reservoirs upstream of the town on the two main rivers. However, there are concerns about the impact of major new development on flooding.

Ashford has a historic town centre area with buildings from the medieval, Georgian and Jacobean periods. The core town centre is located within the A292 inner ring road, which is a barrier to access in and out of the town centre and a constraint on its expansion. The town centre currently offers a pleasant environment for shopping with both pedestrianised and shared surface streets. Ashford International Station is an important facility within the town. The station is not well connected to the core town centre area.

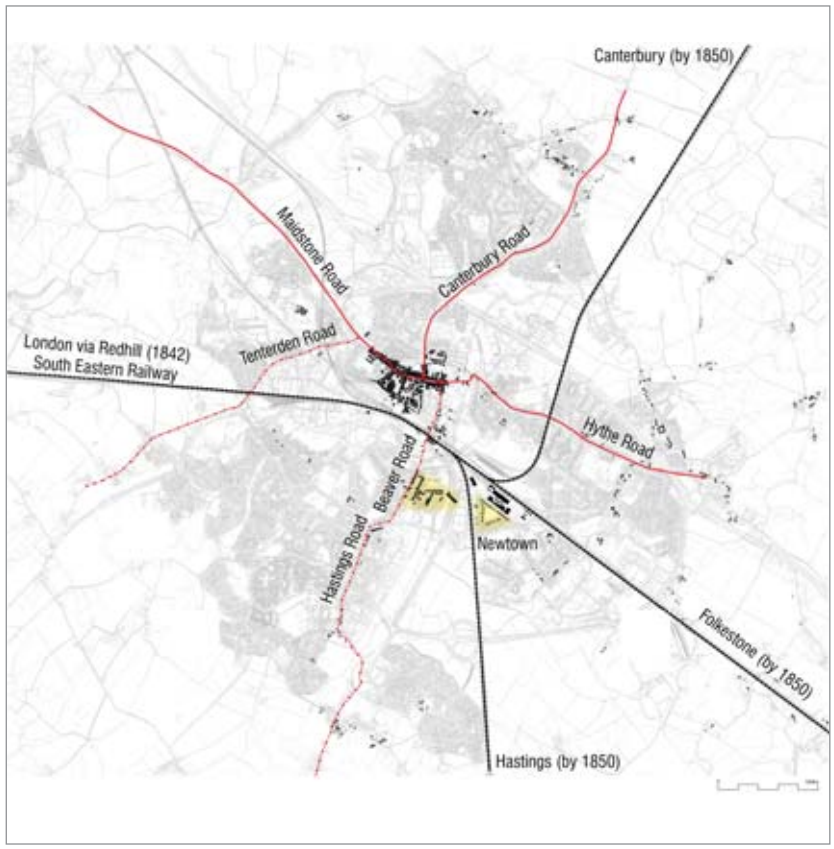
Much of Ashford's post war expansion has been in the form of suburban housing estates, many of which exhibit shortcomings in planning and design including:

- Single use development with low levels of activity during weekdays;
- Inefficient land use due to inefficient densities;
- Poor accessibility to amenities and public transport resulting in over-reliance on private car usage and
- Residual open spaces rather than positive, high quality public realm.

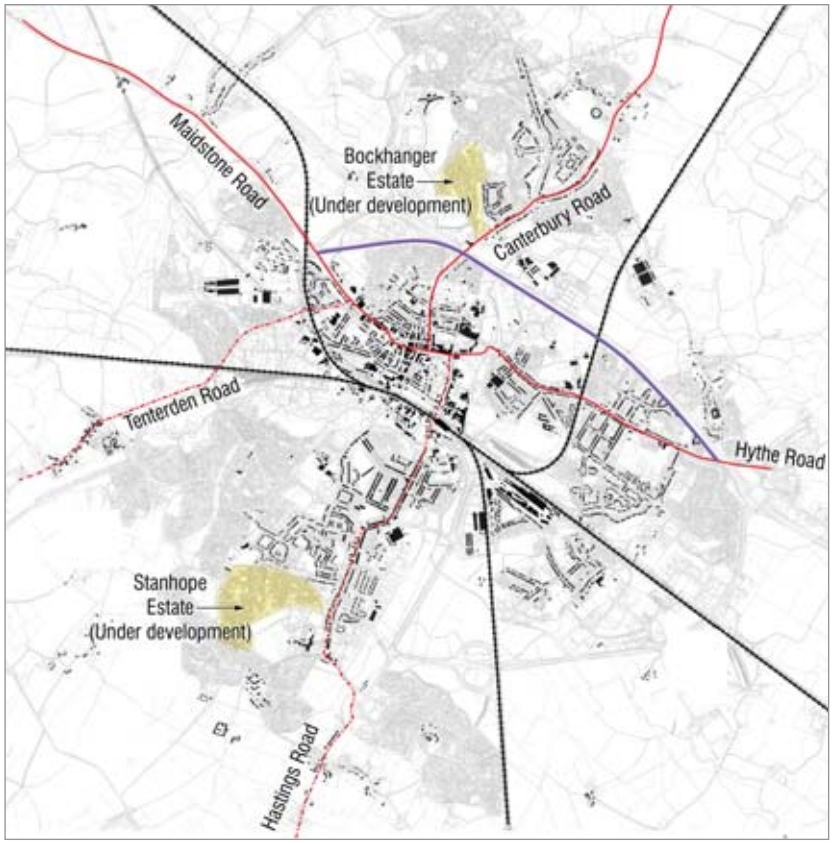
The historical development of the town is shown in the plans on the opposite page



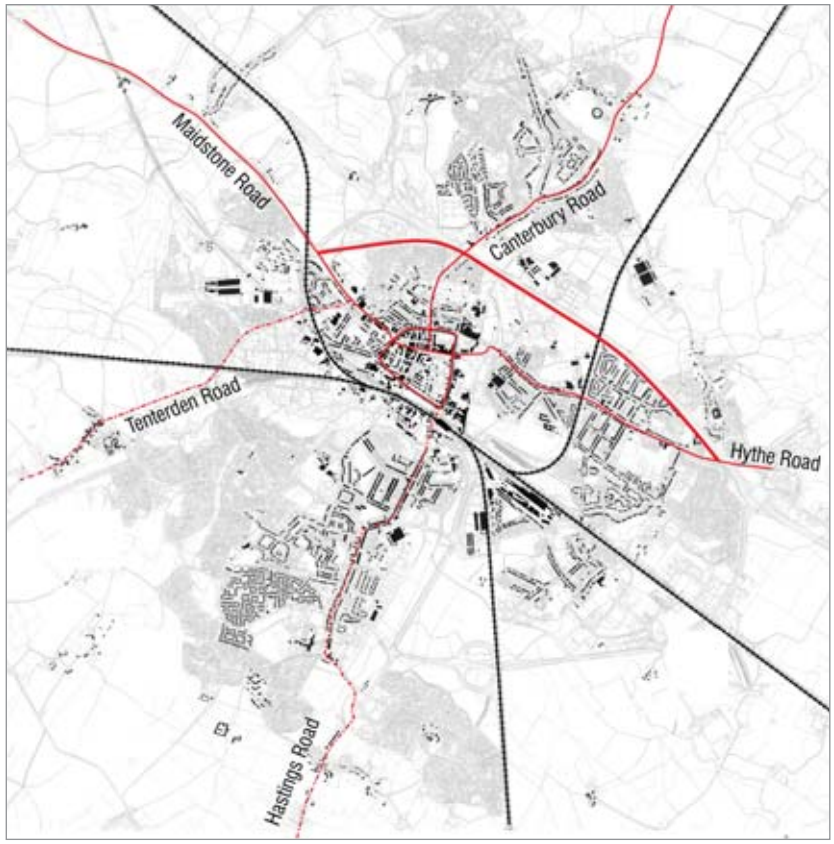
Historical Context: Medieval - The Market Town



Historical Context: 1850's - The Railway Town



Historical Context: 1960's - Increase in Infrastructure



Historical Context: 1970's - Limited Growth

Providing local and strategic connections through existing areas will prove the single biggest challenge, given the fragmented nature of existing development

Urban Analysis

Ashford has an extremely strategic location and is also favoured by a wonderful landscape setting. Growth prior to the 1960's reinforced the story sense of an historic centre core as well as surrounding development that directly responded its regional setting and connections. The positive aspects of this heritage are however counterbalanced with subsequent investment in infrastructure and housing development which has served to fragment Ashford as a whole. The sense of fragmentation has been reinforced by the lack of positive spatial response to the floodplain.

Fragmentation between settlement areas and between settlements to the landscape is a major issue for future growth and change. This is clearly evident in the plan opposite. Key issues are:

The structural problems of the town

A major issue is the need to overcome the structural problems of the town brought about by the caused by the severance the M20, A2070 and railway lines in the town. This includes:

- Poor local connections across the M20 to better link North Ashford with the town centre and improve access to the William Harvey Hospital. This could be achieved by making more effective use of existing local connections and rerouting strategic traffic directly to the motorway junctions and highway improvements to Junctions 9 and 10.
- Difficult local connections under the A2070 to link to new areas to the east of the town.
- Scarcity of crossings over and under the railway lines, particularly in close proximity to the town centre, New bridge crossings will be required to alleviate traffic through the town centre; widening existing underpasses where required; and, local pedestrian and cycling crossings within the housing areas.

Strategic connections

A number of issues relate to poor strategic connections that are required to improve the functioning of the town. These include:

- High levels of strategic through traffic approaching from Canterbury, making their way through Kennington to the M20 junctions.
- Providing a new 'main street' through the Bybrook Estate through to Sandyhurst to function as a local public transport corridor (as part of a strategy to regenerate this area).
- The urban form results in poor links through South Ashford. Opportunities exist for improving existing north-south corridors, particularly through the Stanhope Estate.
- Very few east-west connections exist in South Ashford. Opportunities exist for a major new cross route to the south of the main railway line; a new outer orbital route around the south of the town; and potential for an improved road on the broad alignment of the old Roman Road through the Stanhope area.
- The route through the New Town Works area is poorly developed and could provide a better link to the Cheeseman's Green area,

The existing urban fabric

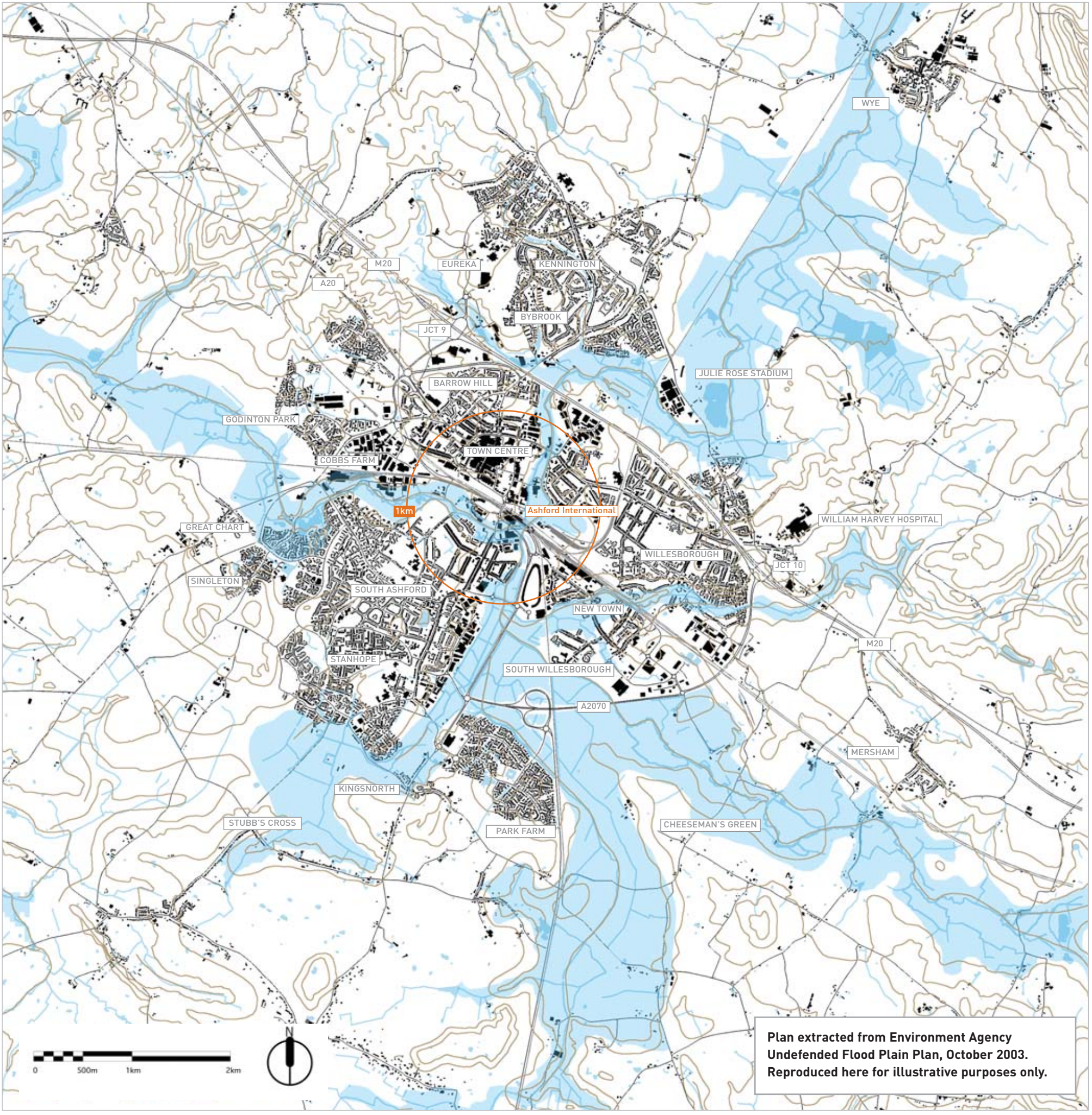
It is important that the GADF also seeks to regenerate existing areas by establishing links and relationships to existing neighbourhoods; examines the potential for regeneration of under-utilised brown field sites; and, considers intensification of poorly used areas. Key issues for consideration include:

- The fragmented nature of existing neighbourhoods brought about by the piecemeal nature of development. This is exacerbated by disconnected road patterns, buffer strips between development and the self-contained nature of social and community infrastructure. This will require active intervention within these areas.
- The scarcity of local, civic and social 'hearts' to act as community anchors within the later residential fabric. The GADF will need to address these places as part of the Sustainable Communities agenda
- The town has been 'wounded' by the CTRL works and as a result there are numerous under-utilised sites within close proximity of the town centre can can be brought into more effective use. This is also reinforced by the relatively low density industrial development in places such as South Ashford, Orbital Park, Cobbs Farm and Chart Estate.
- Poor open space structure considering the potential that the river corridors and flood plain offer to Ashford. This is a particular issue in the South Willesborough dykes area where open space is poorly developed.
- Poor relationship of new development to existing river and green corridors.

The town centre

The town centre is recognised as an important driver of the growth strategy. At present the town suffers as a result of the strangling effect of the ring road; out-of-town development that has robbed the centre of major leisure uses; poor range of social and cultural facilities; and, a lack of in-town residential opportunities.

The town centre has been the subject of a Town Centre Action Plan that in programmed for publication in Summer 2005.



The morphology of Ashford showing the effects of the indicative floodplain on its pattern of growth

03.3 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

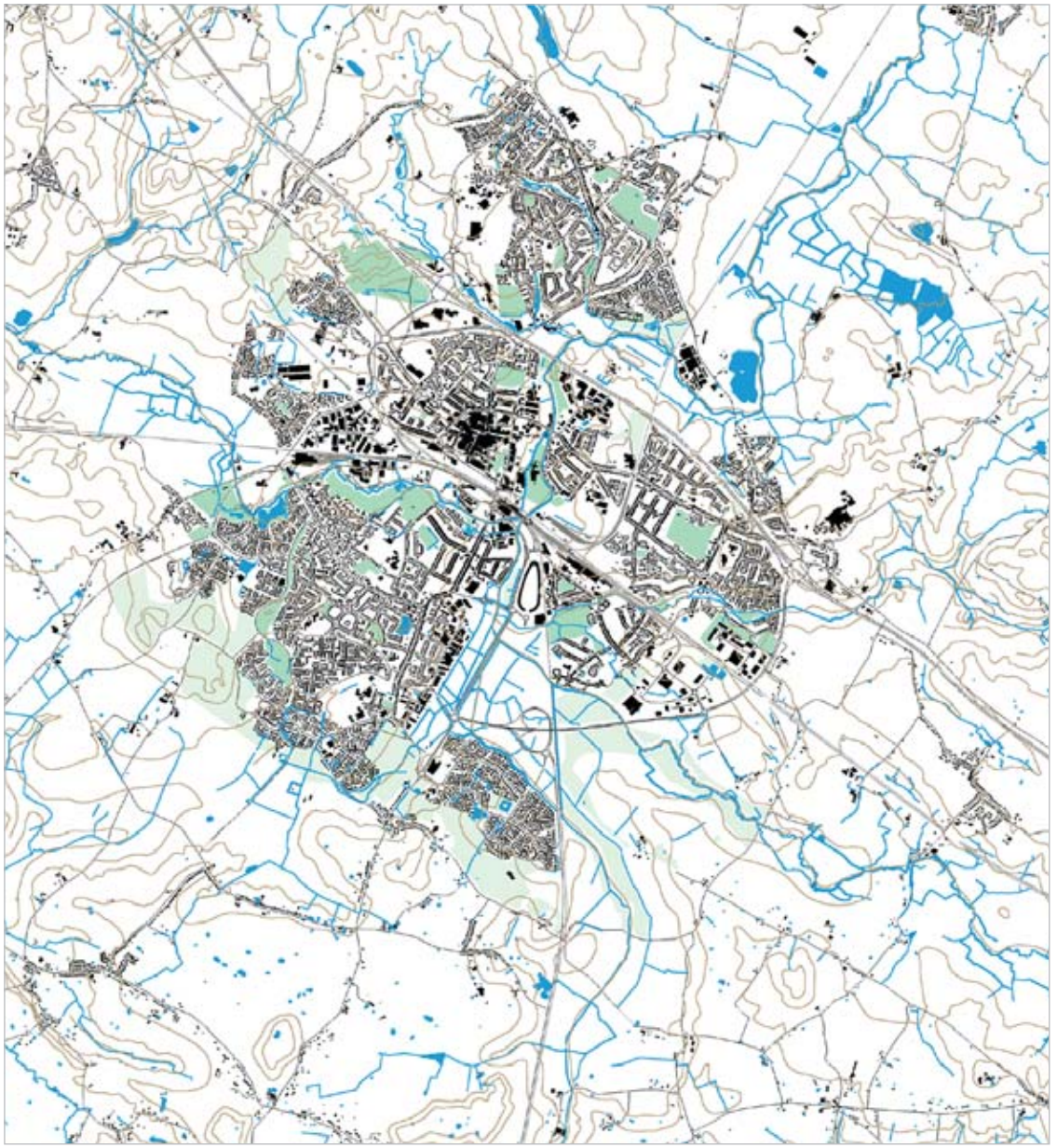
The Natural Environment includes many interrelated aspects. The Environment Workstream reviews key objectives and concepts in this section and develops the key opportunities and constraints. The issues considered have been collated in a series of supplementary reports by Studio Engleback who have also completed the phase 1 Landscape Character Study (LCA) relating to areas around each expansion zone.

The purpose of this section is not to act as a detailed Environmental Assessment that picks over every detail of the expansion area, and then looks at mitigation measures, that is the next step. In planning the expansion areas for Ashford, this exercise seeks to identify key environmental concerns that should be taken into account, along with other urbanism issues, in locating the expansion areas, and why some areas are to be preferred over others.

It is important to underline the intention to look forward as well as backwards, to consider creating or adding to existing habitats, as well as conserving environmental resources. A significantly larger town, in an era of climate change and the accelerating aims of sustainable development needs to look at new landscapes as well as protecting, linking, restoring or enhancing existing landscapes. We believe that green infrastructure must be considered as an essential element of urbanism today. This means that land must be set aside, or banked, for future green infrastructure delivering green services that may be implemented over the next 30 years. In doing so, this may include land that is not traditionally within a development area, but is farmland in the immediate hinterland of the town and could be used for alternative crops to provide fuel, catchwaters to reduce flooding, water cleaning and so on.

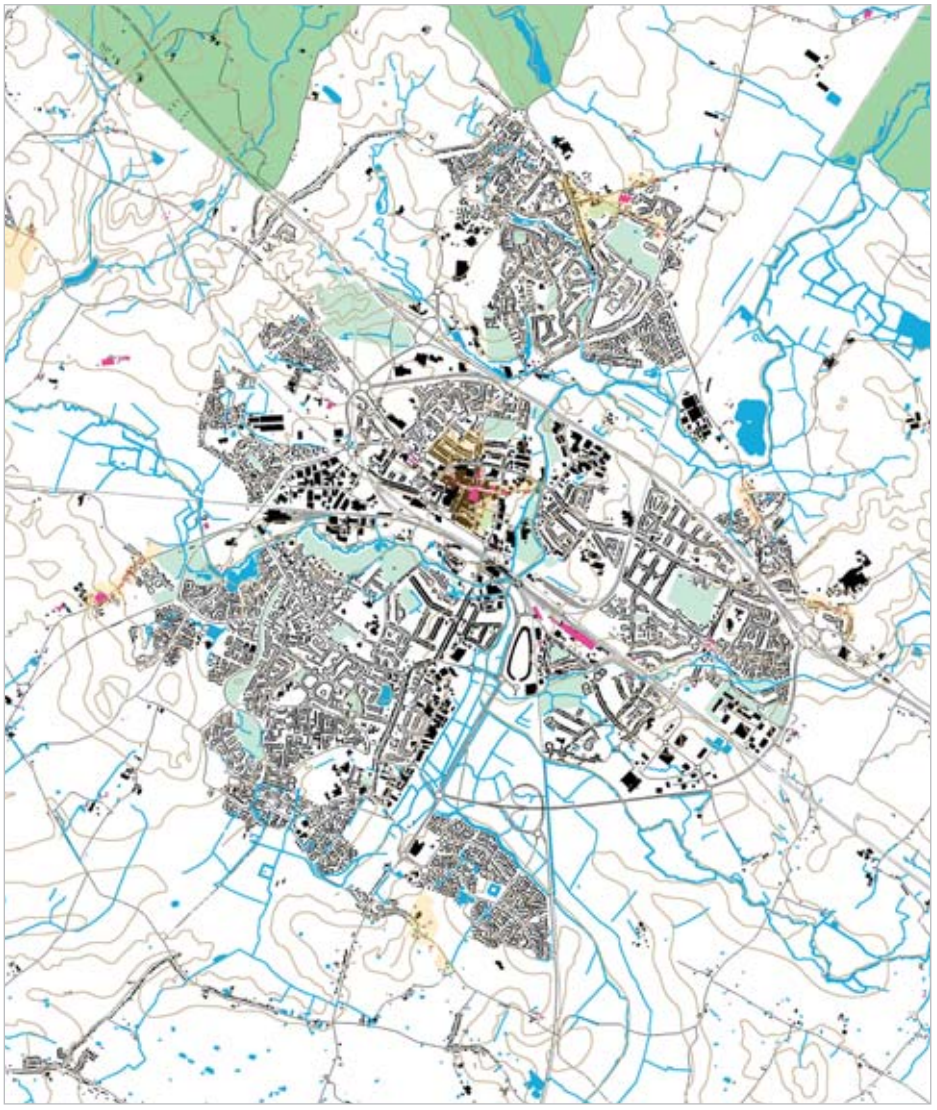
Constraints

There are a series of constraints against which the emerging plan should be measured. Not all constraints will carry the same weight because mitigation measures may be possible for some areas, and these measures can vary in scope, but there are also non-negotiables which cannot or should not be affected. The starting point, however, it to attempt to compromise as little as possible by a proposed development footprint.



Designated and Proposed Open Space

Public Open Space (2000 ABLP)
Proposed Open Space (2000 ABLP)
Water Courses
Contours



Listed Buildings
Conservation Areas
Public Open Space (2000 ABLP)
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Water Courses
Contours

Green Corridor (2000 ABLP)
Water Courses
Contours

Culture

There are a number of conservation areas, known archeological sites, and listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments in the area. The setting of these areas is important. There is also likelihood of further archeological finds that need to be surveyed. Historic landscape features like green lanes and old hedgerows, together with topographical features, need careful consideration when laying out new development.

Green Corridors

There are significant areas of designated habitats in and around Ashford range from Ancient Woodland, Acid and Calcareous grassland, to wetland. Using the Kent Habitat survey, Kent Lifescapes Information System (K-LIS) has identified further areas for habitat creation and linkage of existing fragments. The SEA identified areas of biodiversity importance.

The definition of a resource being 'affected' by development might include:

- development impinging directly upon a resource and so removing it for ever
- development isolating a resource, such as a woodland, within it
- proximity of development to a resource which may adversely affect it through people pressure, or related pressures for example predation by domestic cats or wildlife habitats.

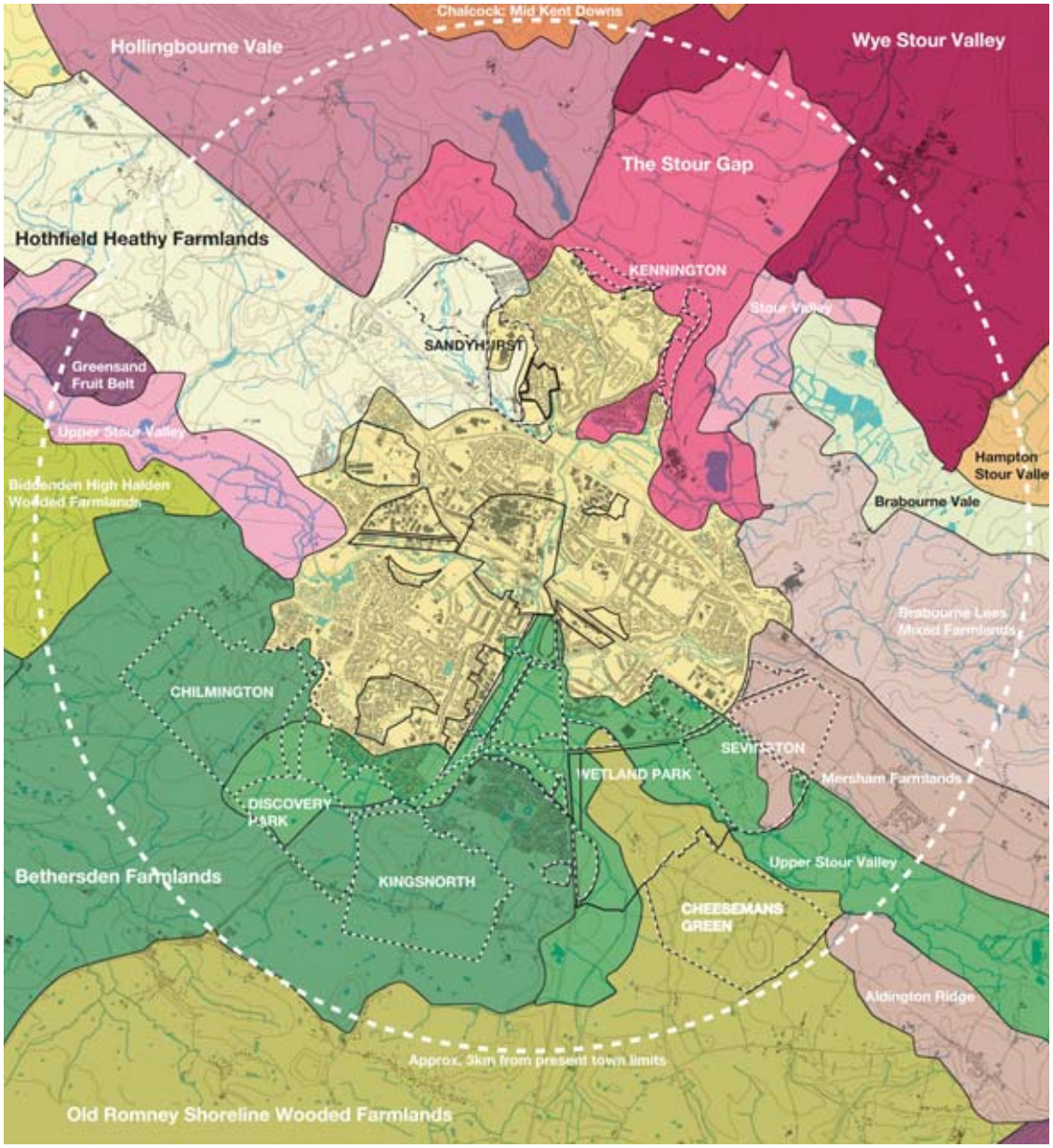
What is the scope of environmental considerations?

Environmental considerations are not limited to ecological considerations, although these rate highly in the context of Ashford and particularly (although not exclusively) in association with the river system, which is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) along its length and tributaries in the study area. It is, therefore, important that the integrity and viability of the river corridor is maintained, and this is reflected in the Design Codes for the river corridor. The Design Codes are scheduled for publication in Summer 2005.

Environmental issues also include cultural heritage issues such as archaeological sites, known and unknown, historic features which may be built or landscape features such as ancient tracks, hedges, banks, and woodlands.

Known features are irreplaceable and so should not be built upon, but they can be incorporated into the green grid of parks and pedestrian / cycle ways planned for the town. Some may need a buffer-zone to reduce wear and tear, or old hedges may need to be connected to a wider system so that there are more robust as part of the wider ecosystem. There is space within the developing plan for this. The Design Codes will touch on top-down issues, the finer grain will need to be addressed at the site briefing level.

In a wider sense, there is also the setting of the town in the rural landscape, and the special nature of the subtle variety of discrete landscape characters to be found impinging directly on the current town limits, or within a 3 km hinterland. The phase 1 Ashford Landscape Character Study has addressed some of the areas relating to the preferred expansion areas, and phase 2, which is yet to be commissioned, would complete a zone about 3km wide around the whole town and include an analysis of the sensitivity or holding capacity for development for areas of like



Landscape Character Areas, showing the Potential Development Areas dotted

Landscape Character Areas, showing the Potential Development Areas dotted

- Conserve
- Conserve and Reinforce
- Conserve and Restore
- Restore and Create
- Create

character, and relate these back to the broader brush Kent Landscape Character study. Key features such as Colliers Hill, or the Roman Road have been identified and fed into the GADF proposals as elements of the green grid.

Non-negotiables include those elements which may be lost for ever and are of regional or national importance such as archaeological sites or features that cannot be easily recreated, such as ancient woodland, or features that are essential to the working of the town such as floodplains.

Proactive environmental considerations

At this stage the decision making process becomes more complicated, because environmental issues are not solely about pure conservation, as the thrust of the ecourbanism approach is also to be proactive. The local landscape has changed significantly in the last 40 years, not always for the best, so the Kent Landscape Strategy that emerged from the Kent Landscape Character Assessment highlights areas that should create new landscapes, create and restore landscapes, or the conserve and reinforce existing landscapes in visual terms. Many of these are around and impinge on the current town limits. The fragmented nature of some of the local landscapes due to farming or national infrastructure projects need 'investment' or a return of capital to be sustainable for the future.

The Kent Lifescapes projects (K-LIS) comes from another, but related angle starting with the Kent Habitat Survey that mapped all the current habitats using desk-top and photometry techniques supplemented with some on-site checking, with topographical, geological and soils information to suggest where now habitats could be created to extend or link existing resources. Of particular interest to the GADF are areas for creating wetlands and acid mire and grassland. An issue raised by conservation groups also includes creating neutral grassland.

There are multiple variables that need to be taken into account in the environmental decision-making not only to conserve resources, but also to promote land-banking for resources that should be created to provide essential future green services and infrastructure. These include Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs), upstream catch-waters, phyto-technology waste water treatment, biofuel husbandry, and wind breaks. These 'green services' should also fit into the large scheme of local landscape character and biodiversity networks.

Therefore in making assessments for the preferred location of expansion areas, in addition to addressing the mechanics of making towns 'work' through compact urbanism, the opportunities must also be identifed for new and restored landscapes, as well as conserved areas, to provide a future valued heritage for the town. This area of potential has been highlighted in the guidance from the Countryside Agency on the Urban-rural Fringe, English Nature on Green networks in and around towns, the Landscape Foundation on 'New Landscapes', and more specifically in the Kent Landscape Strategy that identified large tracts of land around Ashford that should be 'created', 'restored', 'enhanced', and 'reinforced' as well as 'conserved'.

In Roman times, with the exception of the river corridors, most of the area under consideration was a forest. The wooded nature of much of the Weald still exists. Ashford District has 16% of the wooded areas of Kent covering 11% of the District. The nature of the Wealden forest was one of the reasons that there is a dispersed settlement pattern and heritage of the county, it is an essential part of its 'genius loci'. The Ham Street Woods and Orlestone Forest located immediately south of the town on the former Saxon Shoreline could be extended north to the new southern fringe of the town and so better embed the urban area with the woodland heritage of the area, whilst also providing essential green services for 21st century urban living. Woodland has many benefits for development as it can absorb development in the rural scene better than open landscapes; it provides protection from winds; it can be managed to produce biofuels, to deal with attenuating the effects of heavy rain, and even to clean waste water, as well as acting as a major wildlife and recreation resource.

A Landscape of Layers

The richness of the Ashford landscape is the combination of the layers of issues:

Landscape

Ashford is surrounded by designated landscapes the Kent Downs AONB being adjacent, and Special Landscape areas nearby. The aesthetic and biodiverse quality of the countryside setting of Ashford is a key driver. But in addition, sustainability demands that we do not compromise future generations, so grade 1 and grade 2 agricultural land (which may not coincide with this) should not be developed.

Green Corridors

A significant feature linking town and countryside. These corridors also play an important part in the hydrology and wildlife conservation of the area, and provide a seminal car free movement network. At present there is about 22km of urban frontage onto these spaces, much of it under utilised. Corridors may be extended by, and interlinked with, new development.

Flood Plain

Five 'main' rivers flow through the town. Clay soils in the headwaters mean these rivers are 'flashy' in response to rain events. This may be exacerbated by large areas of development suggesting the importance of catch waters and sustainable urban drainage to attenuate the effects of heavy storms. There is a general presumption against development in these areas. The significant impact of the flood plain is fully illustrated on page 33.

Key Opportunities and Constraints

Key landscape features in and around Ashford are the floodplains of the rivers in the Stour system and woodlands.

Building in the flood plain is a constraint, but fringe landuses compatible with floodplain include:

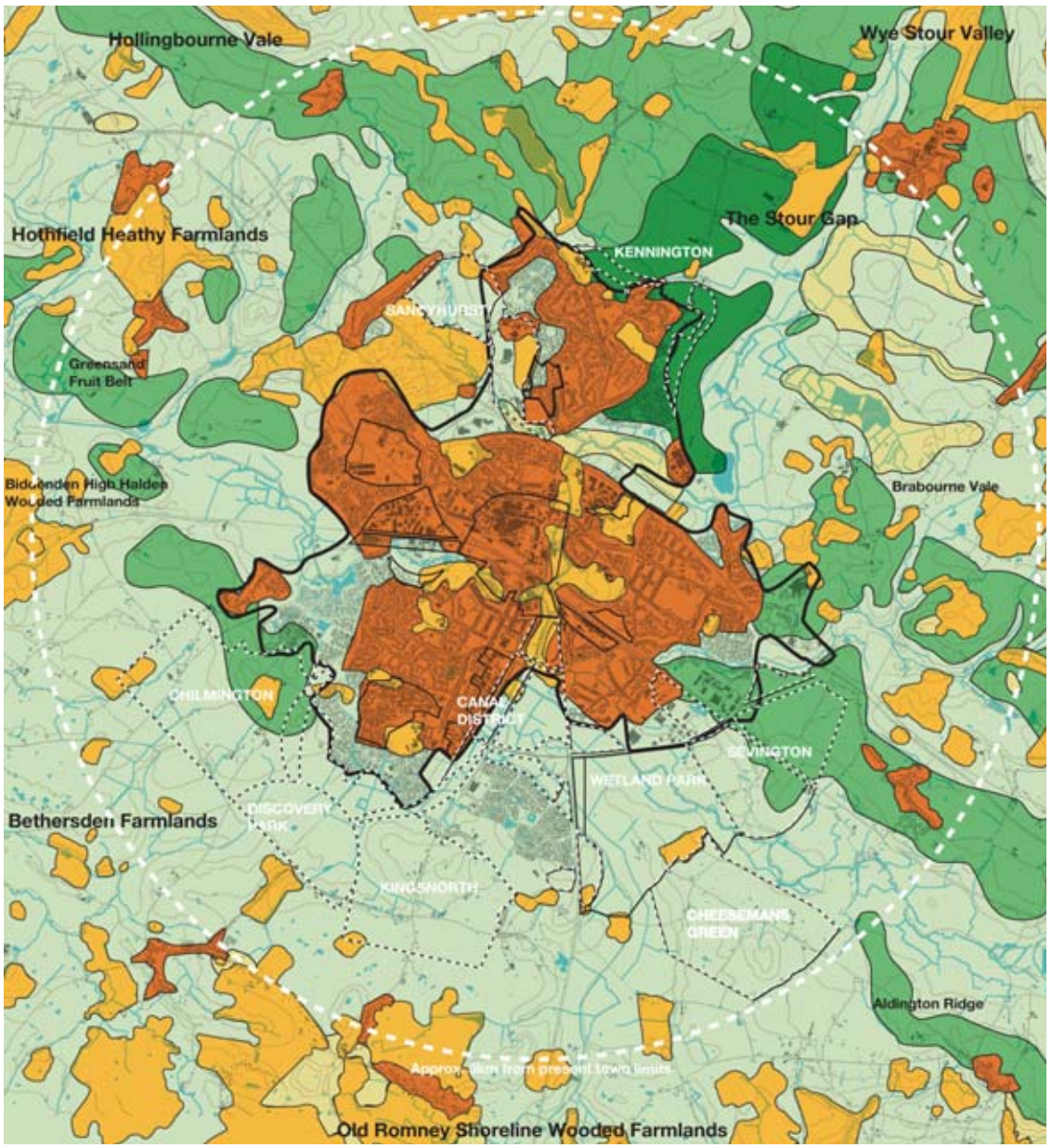
- Landscape design to improve the aesthetics and the function of the flood plain
- A landscape framework for sustainable urban drainage,
- Bio engineering techniques to treat sewage
- Growing willow coppice for bio fuels,
- Implementing habitat conservation and creation measures in line with the Kent Lifescapes Study
- Creating landscapes in line with the Kent Landscape Strategy / K-LIS

PPG 7 (1997) contains policies relating to development involving agricultural land. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) places land in five grades with grade 3 subdivided into grades 3a and 3b. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered 'Best and most versatile land' meaning it requires fewer inputs and is suited to a wide range of crops. The Kent Landscape Strategy reflected outcomes from the Kent Landscape Character Study. Landscapes compromised by modern agriculture and transport corridors have been highlighted for 'creation' or 'restoration & creation'. These areas largely embrace areas highlighted in the K-LIS Study for extending or creating wetlands and other key habitats. This land is also most likely to be more flexible in response to climate change.

National Policy is that 'Best and most versatile land' should be protected as a National Resource for future generations.This is a sustainability issue.

Landscape Opportunities

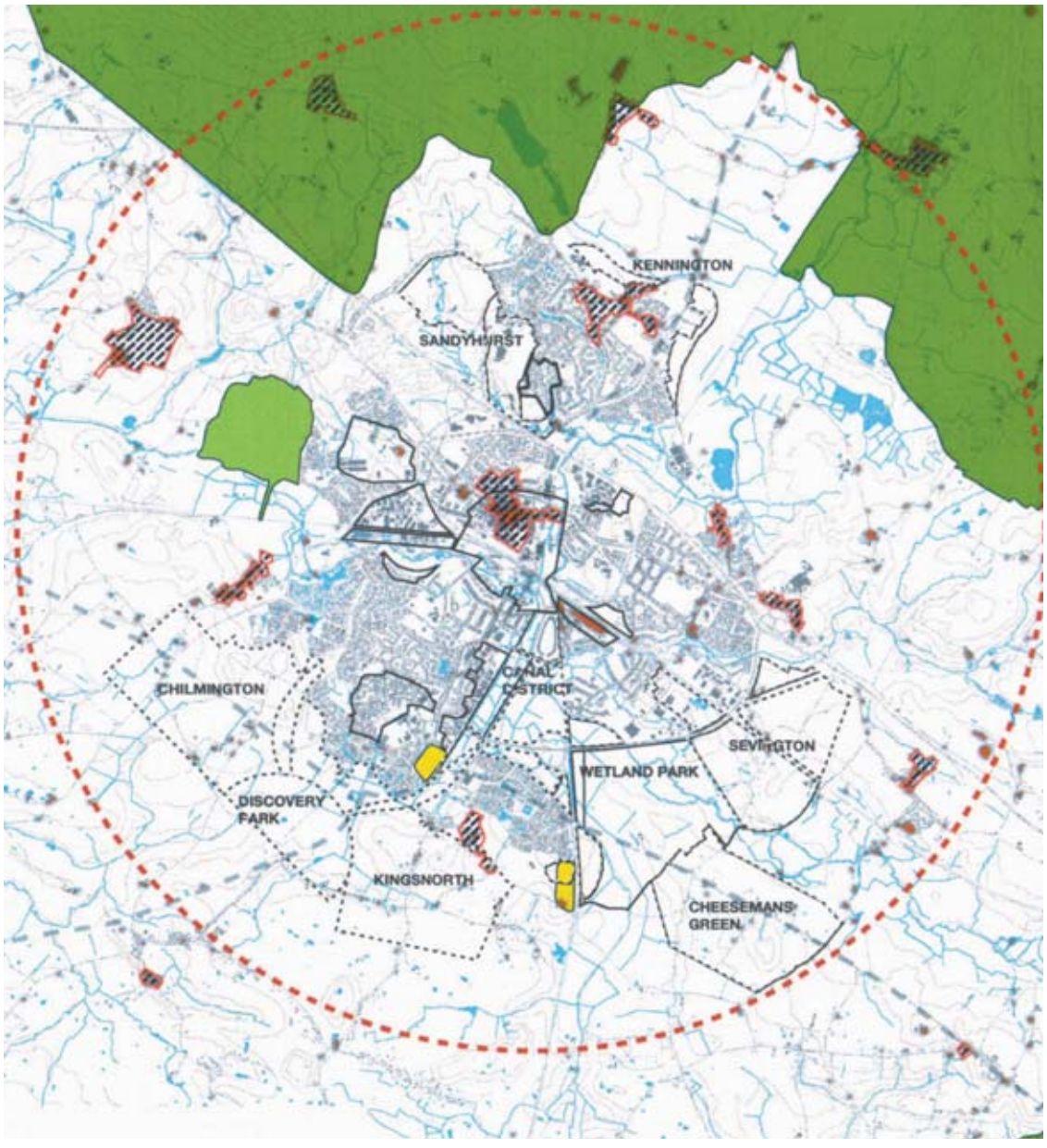
7 County Landscape Character Areas (CLCA) impinge on the present town limits, and 18 CLCAs are within a 3 km hinterland. Ashford has an attractive and varied setting that should be reflected in the character of each expansion area and the way these meet the surrounding countryside. The detailed landscape character study of Ashford will feedback into this process. Chilmington, Discovery Park, & Kingsnorth fall within the Bethersden Farmlands, but there is a local character variation between these areas due to landform, outcrops of wealden greensand, and land cover.



Broad Study of Agricultural Land Quality, showing the Potential Development Areas dotted

Agricultural Land Quality Designations
N.B. grades 1 and 2 are considered a valuable National resource

- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Non Agricultural Area
- Urban Area 1968
- Urban Area Today



Heritage Sites, showing the Potential Development Areas dotted

AONB
Godington Park
Conservation areas
Listed Buildings
Archeological Sites
Roman Roads

Cheeseman's Green falls within the Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmlands. This is mostly on wealden clay except for Colliers Hill, a local outcrop of wealden greensand.

The Wetland Park follows two arms of the Upper Stour Valley and a promontary between them which is part of the Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmlands.

Sevington is split physically by the railway and between two character areas. The southern portion is in the Upper Stour Valley, the northern portion is in the Mersham farmlands area on the greensand ridge.

The narrow Kennington expansion zones are on rich farmland in The Stour Gap. Bockhanger and Sandyhurst are on the greensand ridge within the Hothfiled Heathy Farmlands area.

The characters of each area are an amalgum of vegetation types responding to geology and soils, to landcover and topography. These features should be the starting point for SUDs, shelter planting and landscape elements.

Landscape Character

Key Issues

Heritage: Key areas avoided by proposals, listed buildings and historic landscape features could be incorporated into urban green grid. Ancient roads, green lanes and byways should be incorporated into the pedestrian / cycle network.

Landscape Character: There are 7 county landscape character areas adjoining the town,18 within a 3km hinterland. These should inform the local distinctiveness of each expansion area. The Kent Landscape Strategy shows opportunities for creation, and reinforcement of landscape character.

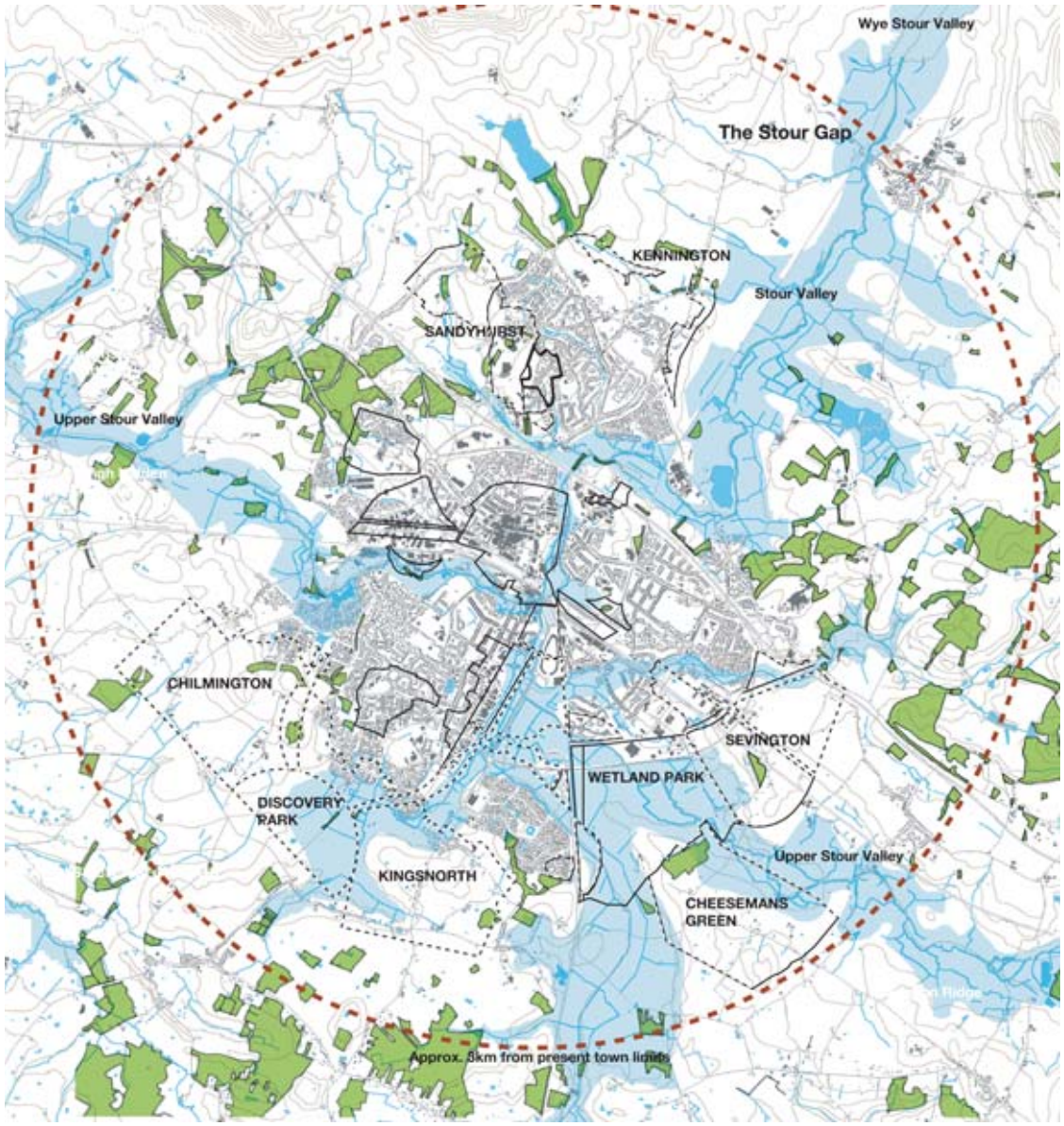
Ecology Opportunities and Constraints

Nature conservation is a key constraint, but habitat creation is a major opportunity. Habitat creation can be used to to link existing core habitat sites, provide a buffer zone to reinforce existing sites, or to make new habitats on land of low ecological value at present. The Kent Lifescapes Project has suggested that significant areas of wetland could be created along the Stour, and areas of different types of grassland and woodland can also be created.

As a general rule, designated sites should not be developed. Where this is necessary and the existing landscape is already compromised, the Kent Wildlife Trust wants to see a minimum 2 for 1 mitigation of areas lost to development.

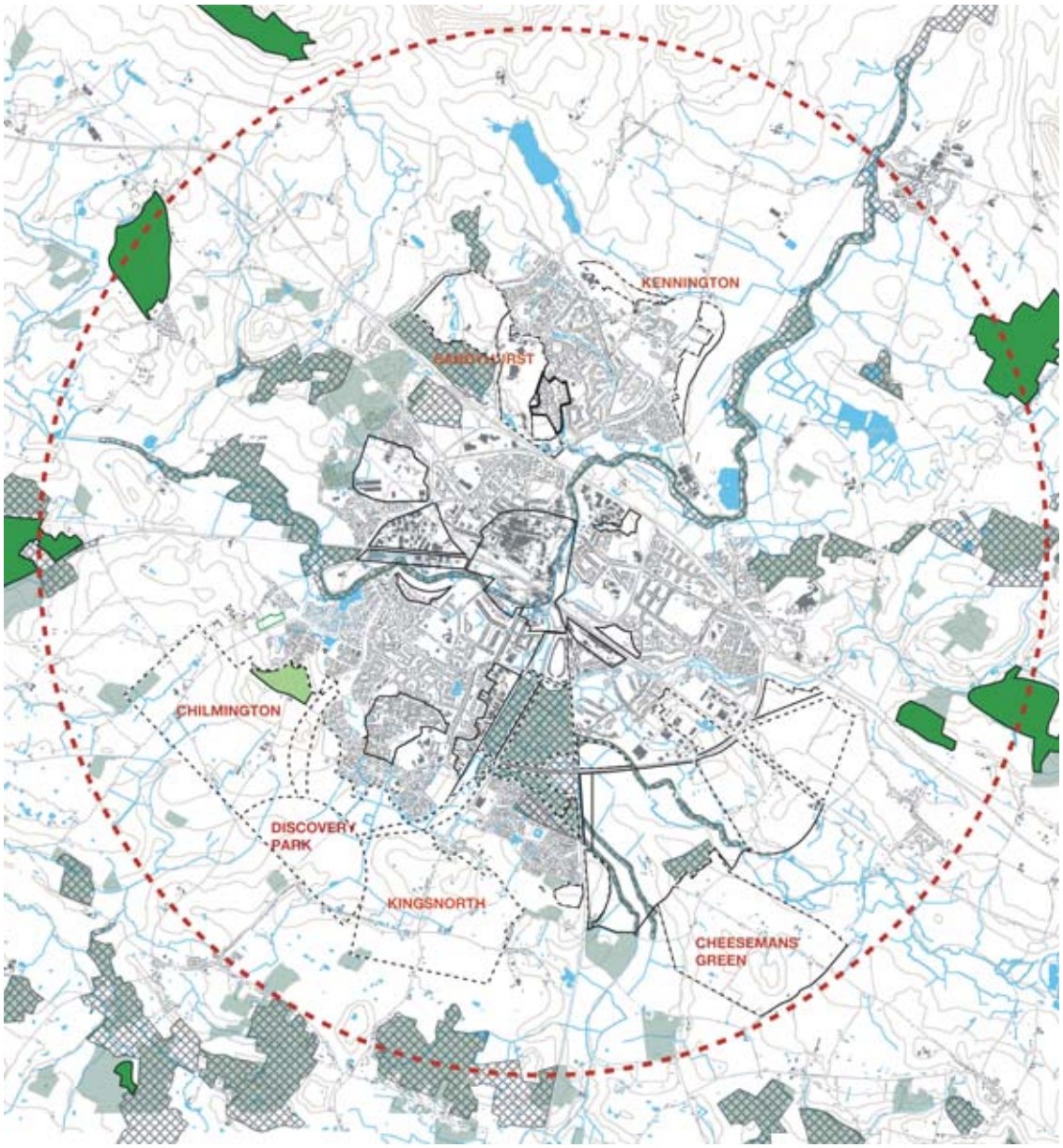
There are many landscape features / habitats which are not designated yet have great value, in particular ancient green lanes and hedge rows. These should be identified as early as possible, conserved and their links to core habitats and other sites maintained and strengthened.

There is an opportunity to create a significant net gain in habitat area and interconnection, including creation of significant areas of habitats in the National and County Habitat Action Plans.



Flood Plain and Woodland, showing the Potential Development Areas dotted

Natural Flood Plain
Woodland area



Protected Areas/Areas of Natural Beauty, showing the Potential Development Areas dotted

SSSI
SNCI
Woodland Trust Sites
other protected sites (2000 ABLP)
Millennium Woodland

Proposed Development Areas & Designated sites:

No conflict within Development footprint:

Kennington

Sevington

Cheeseman's Green

Discovery Park

Sandyhurst

Barracks

Adjacent to SNCI, buffer zones needed:

Cheeseman's Green (Captain's Wood)

Sandyhurst

Including Woodland Trust sites:

Kingsnorth

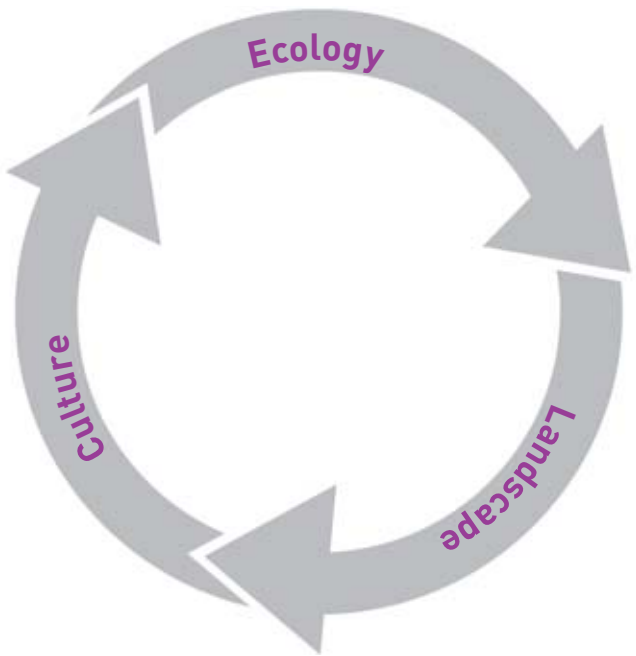
Chilmington

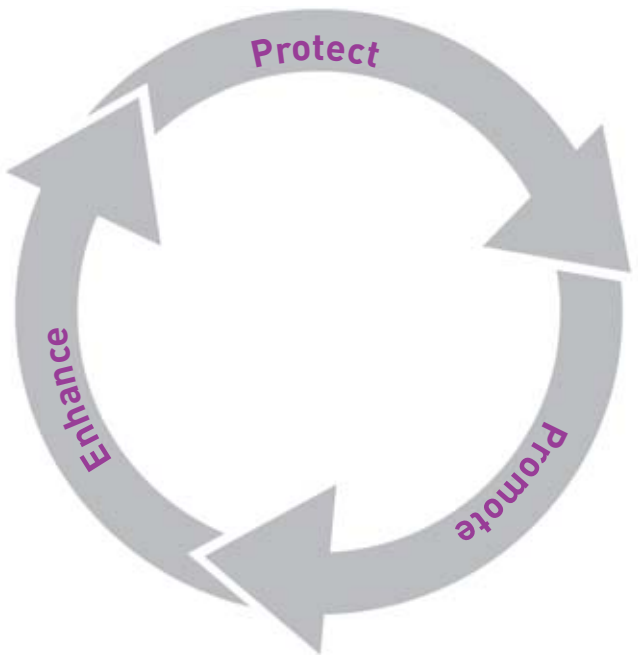
N.B. these sites can be included and buffered within the green space component of the expansion area

Conflict: building on SNCI:

Canal District

N.B. this landscape is already compromised by roads, and the proposed wetland park would add significantly to the area and richness of this resource





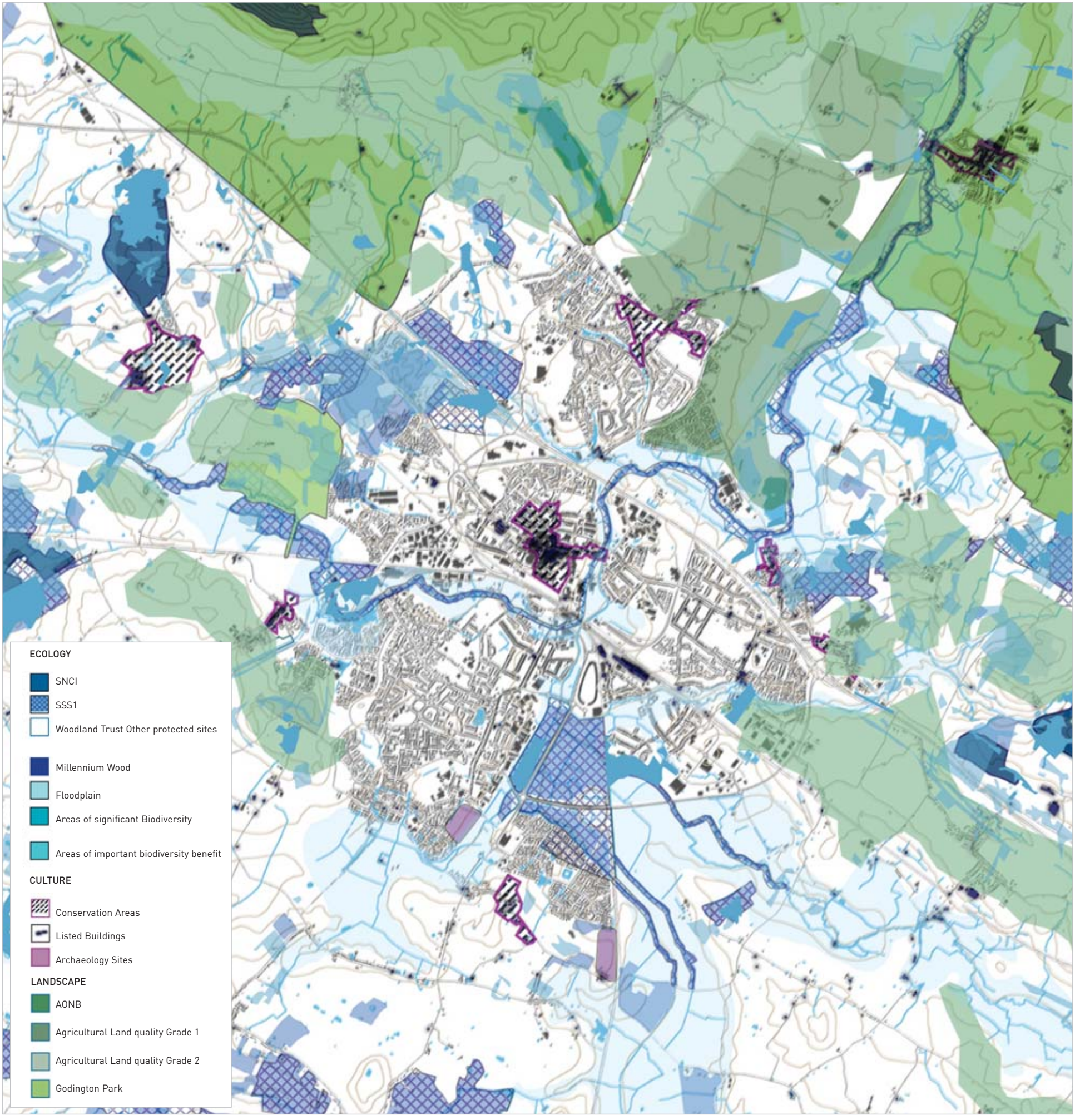
Conservation

The complex conservation issues around Ashford require careful consideration. The Strategic Environmental Assessment has suggested 'Non-negotiable' areas of biodiversity importance as well as areas of biodiversity benefit and areas that might be conserved and enhanced. Some of these areas potentially conflict with the creation of a viable urban entity. Further discussion is needed to examine whether some floodplain habitats can be sacrificed if replaced in another location. Kent Wildlife Trust has suggested a 'two for one' area of land lost to development solution put in place before development proceeds. KCC ecologists have noted that some habitats may be more 'reproducible' than others. The K-LIS study has suggested areas for habitat creation – especially riverine/wetland habitats.

English Nature have raised concerns about buffer zones between development and sensitive habitats. It must be remembered that impacts of development can affect remote sites. Detailed development of the plan will seek to integrate these complex considerations.

The landscape setting of the town is a major attractor for people and business. The green corridors are a fundamental link between town and country. The proximity of designated landscapes and the variety of the landscape characters around the town is significant, so key views to and from the urban area must be considered. The Landscape Character Study (phase 1) has identified landscape signatures & key elements as well as detractors. Phase 2 of the LCA study would analyse the carrying capacity for development. Landscape 'signatures' embody excisting habitat types can inform the design of neighbourhoods and urban fringes to enhance local distinctiveness.

The cultural setting is also important with a large number of medieval buildings in the area as well as Bronze age to Roman activity, much of which has yet to be fully researched. Development can destroy this unique resource. This aspect will be taken into account in the detailed development of the plan.



Combined Conservation Issues Plan

03.4 THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

The Ashford Borough Local Plan (2000)

The Borough has an adopted Local Plan containing major development proposals for the period to 2006 – a number of which have planning permission and a number that are close to being granted planning permission. In the majority of cases the allocations included in the ABLP have formed a starting point for the masterplanning – although the scale, form and mix of uses has been reconsidered to fit in with the aims and objectives of the GADF and the Sustainable Communities Plan.

The exception to this is part of Cheeseman's Green. Although the whole of Cheeseman's Green is included in the Local Plan, and the Borough Council has resolved to grant the scheme planning permission, the masterplan is considering this scheme in a different way. A full explanation of this position is included in section 06.

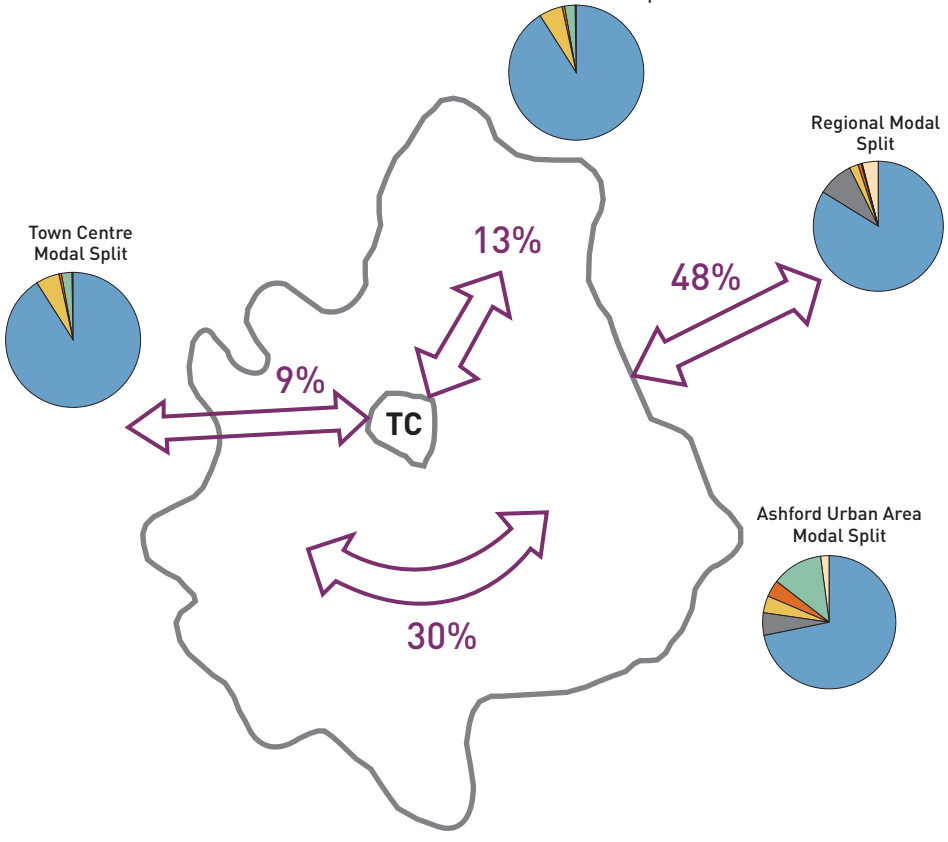
Other allocations, such as Waterbrook and Eureka, are also considered for potential intensification or change of use to reinforce the core objectives of GADF.

Policy Implications

As a result of this pattern of development, the current modal split in Ashford promotes car-dominated movements, largely out of Ashford. The town centre is not attracting a large share of residents' local trips and where these do happen, they are also car-dominated.

Regional bus trips are far lower than train with local bus share at 4% being 2% lower than the national average.

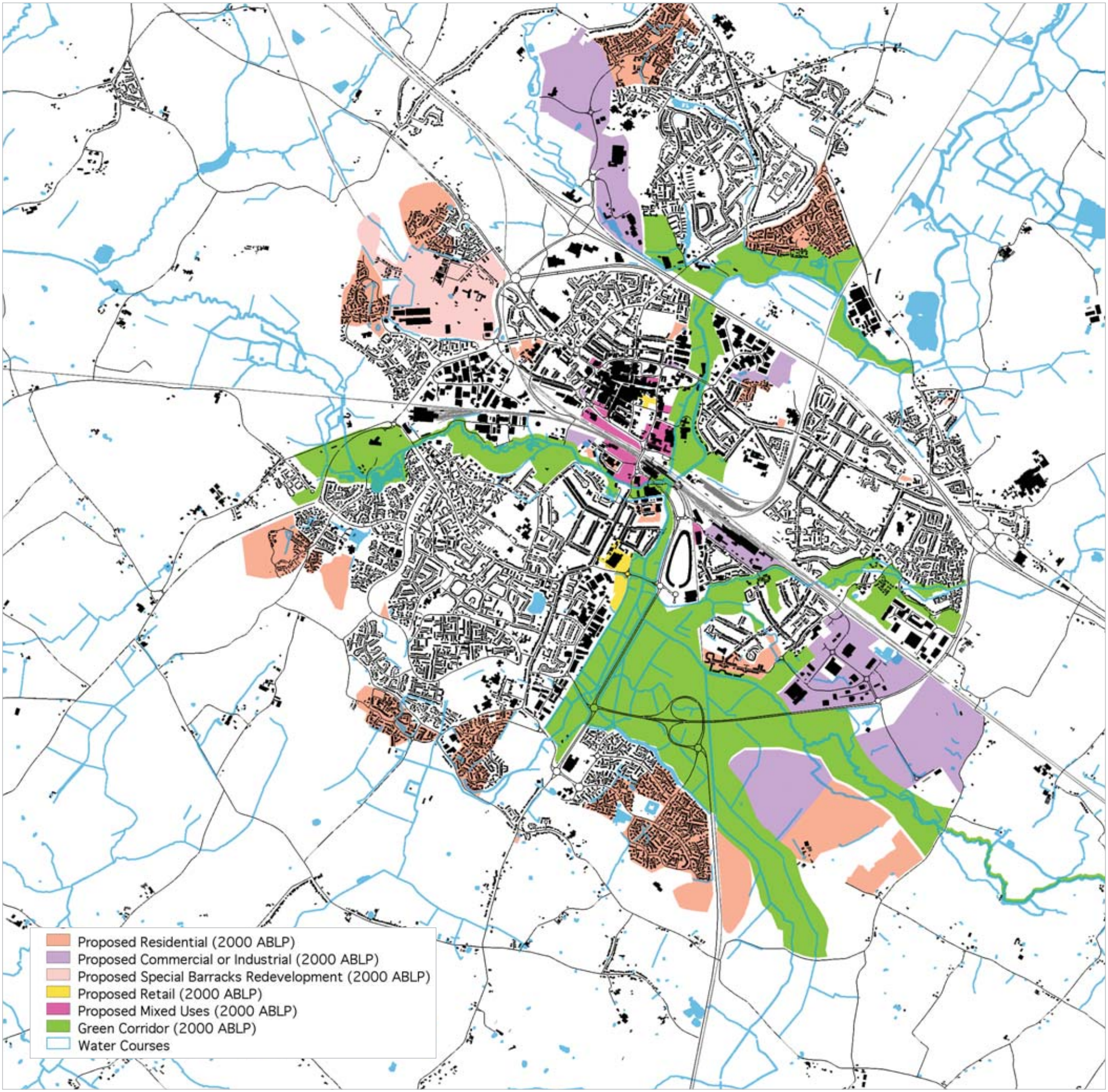
This process has led to a pattern of development that contributes to mono-functional suburbs with little local community infrastructure or jobs. Each scheme is planned in piecemeal isolation with little or no integration with surrounding communities. Even where PPG3 compliant development has occurred, it follows the same pattern, giving rise to higher density development poorly served by public transport because the surrounding area does not allow it and the limited scale of development does not sustain it.



The current modal split in Ashford and existing movement patterns

Mode	Town Centre (%)	Urban (%)	Regional (%)
Car	90.9	71.8	83.8
Train	0.0	5.5	8.9
Bus	5.6	4.1	2.2
Cycle	0.6	4.1	0.8
Walk	2.5	12.4	0.3
Other	0.3	2.1	4.0

Source: AATS Report by RPS 18/02/2004



Ashford Borough Local Plan Areas of Potential Growth

04 THE VISION

This section deals with the scale and growth of change predicted in Ashford over the next 30 years. It compares current Ashford with future Ashford against other places. It also promotes a strategic vision for the development of Ashford through the use of key themes embodied in the guiding principles set out by Ashford's Future partners.

In doing so, it clarifies the objectives established by the various workstreams, each informed by a range of background studies and developed in conjunction with the Client Group. These objectives provide the overall basis of moving forward with the development of a Strategic Growth Model and provide the basis for assessing the Working Masterplan.

The Vision derives from these objectives and establishes some overarching themes that can contribute to Ashford's future brand and values. These are important in communicating complex issues that underpin strategic growth and change to a wider public.

This section also deals with the way in which the Vision can be applied to the urban design of the town.

04.1 CLARIFYING THE OBJECTIVES

This section deals with growth in Ashford from the perspective of several specialist Workstreams.

The Workstreams

The formation of the **'workstreams'** occurred at the project inception. Workstreams represent key areas of work that rely on specialist information and expertise. The role of the workstreams is to increase the net of expertise and participation within a specialist area of work. Each workstream group is led by a workstream coordinator from the Consultant group and a Client counterpart. The workstream group includes representatives from public organisations and agencies. The purpose of the workstreams is to explore and develop specific aspects of the project and to feed this back into the GADF process. The seven key workstreams are; Movement Networks (Alan Baxter and Associates), Environment (Studio Engleback), Infrastructure (Alan Baxter and Associates), Urban Core (DTZ Pieda Consulting), The Workplace (DTZ Pieda Consulting), Civic Domain (Urban Initiatives) and Neighbourhood (Urban Initiatives).

In order to equip the broad stakeholder group with an understanding of general principles and particular issues for development in Ashford, each workstream group developed a set of principles, issues, drivers and opportunities to reflect particular concerns of the specific Workstreams.

1) The Key Principles

The overarching 'benchmarks' to direct the project, and ultimately to guide appropriate development. This includes showing how the aims and objectives of the Sustainable Communities Plan can underpin development in Ashford. These benchmarks also enable the competing agendas outlined in Section 01.2 to be balanced.

2) The Key Issues

The central issues and constraints within Ashford that need to be addressed.

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

The firm priorities that are required to drive change in Ashford.

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

The primary ideas and opportunities that should be explored as early wins to set the benchmarks for future growth and change in Ashford.

Movement Networks

Connectivity and Permeability

1) Key Principles

- Mixed-use, more compact development
- Reduce need to travel by car
- A walkable city
- Human scale development
- Active 'Living' Streets

2) Key Issues

- Maximising international, national and regional rail networks for Ashford
- Spare capacity exists on many routes
- Localised congestion at Junction 10
- Enhance the local bus network
- Improve the local cycle network
- Create a decent pedestrian environment and movement network
- Integrate the road network with urban drainage design

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Fix the centre first, then expand Ashford – 'mend it before you extend it'
- Change the perception and attitude to movement
- Create a viable and efficient public transport network
- Create a comprehensive and continuous pedestrian and cycling network

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

- Improvements to the Station Interchange and the surrounding area
- A new connection over the CTRL railway to relieve the single connection to the town centre
- Maximum intensity and mix of use within a 10 minute walk of the town centre
- Form of new settlement to sustain an economically viable bus service
- Down grading of the Ring Road
- Station Road as the 21st Century High Street
- Elwick Road as the Civic Spine
- Connecting missing links and extending the cycle network
- Comprehensive approach to SUDS

These aims and objectives have been informed by the Ashford Area Transport Study (AATS) and the Ashford Highway and Traffic Study (AHTS).

Environment and Natural Systems

Balance

1) Key Principles

- To create a robust sustainable resource
- Enhance quality of life in Ashford
- Promote local distinctiveness
- Promote biodiversity and habitat richness
- Minimise future risks – climate change, pollution, loss of green space
- Create a major environmental attraction for Ashford

2) Key Issues

- To promote net gain in bidiversity and interconnection of habitats
- The impact of climate change
- To see Ashford in a wider, regional context
- To develop high quality open spaces
- To promote net gain in area and interconnectivity of habitats and biodiversity
- To develop and extend the green corridors

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Address winter flooding and summer drought
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity
- Conserve cultural heritage
- Maintain and enhance landscape character

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

- Develop the concept of a comprehensive green grid for Ashford, made up of a network of accessible, sustainable and multifunctional spaces
- Incorporation of protected, conserved and archeological assets in the green grid
- Create great town parks
- Develop high quality water features in the urban, central areas
- Encourage the use of existing local resources for buildings to promote a regional identity
- Promote the use of locally sourced timber for building materials and energy generation
- Promote locally produced food and provide space and support for a local farmers market
- Use landscape to create strong rural edges to development
- Improve the quality of streams in Ashford through careful design and management of run-off and sewage treatment in combination with planting

Infrastructure

Efficiency

1) Key Principles - Efficiency

- Use water to develop great urban settings
- Use creative water management methods to address constraints including flooding
- Incorporate sustainable and energy efficient solutions in the design, upgrading and extension of infrastructure

2) Key Issues

- Development affecting flooding must not increase flood risk elsewhere
- Take into account the uncertainties of flood modelling and long term impact of climate change
- Water demand needs to be managed
- Significant investment in waste water infrastructure is required
- Change conventional perception and practice to meet sustainability requirements particularly in waste, water, sewage and energy use

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Limited development is possible in the floodplain, provided the capacity of the floodplain is unaltered.
- Create new waterways and wetlands as part of the urban landscape
- New infrastructure needs to meet the demands of the growth in innovative and creative ways
- Water efficiency and water demand management

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

- Capture winter water and use water as a positive feature to enhance development
- Careful design of drainage to reduce run-off
- Develop a townside SUDS approach for Ashford
- Design energy infrastructure in new neighbourhoods that is highly energy efficient and has the capacity to incorporate energy generated from renewable sources
- Minimise the demand for new infrastructure by designing into development resource efficient technologies
- Develop long term upgradable and flexible infrastructure to allow the town and surrounding villages to readily adopt improved sustainable services

These aims and objectives recognise that the impact of flooding should be of no detriment to the existing or proposed condition. It also takes into account the uncertainty of flood modelling and the long term impact of climate change

Urban Core

Vitality and Intensity

1) Key Principles

- Accept the basic findings of the Ashford's Future Study (Halcrow, 2002)
- Enhance and promote the town centre qualities through good design and prior key projects
- Develop a greater range and number of housing units in the centre
- Promote high quality development around the Station area
- Downgrade the Ring Road
- Improve the street quality of Station Road and Elwick Road
- Develop parking areas around the centre
- Promote the lead projects that are catalysts for change
- Create better public realm
- Create a rounded and well run cultural offer that is sufficiently distinctive to attract local and regional visitors

2) Key Issues

- A step change is required to reposition Ashford and its future
- Early win projects will play an important role
- Develop a 'masterbrand' to promote investment in the core
- Pursue a land assembly programme
- Pursue a funding programme
- Secure strategic public sector investment in key projects
- Promote private sector partnerships
- Lack of cultural offer

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Diversification and enhancement of the Town Centre
- A high profile public department relocation to Ashford
- A programme to develop and enhance arts and culture
- Promote distinctive town centre housing developments
- Play down the "cheap back office" card
- Anticipated infrastructure improvements are critical
- Major new campus development in or around the centre of Ashford
- Develop and build out the public realm so that Ashford becomes famous for the quality of its public space, gardens, squares, shop fronts and streets.
- A critical mass of cultural projects supported by policies, facilities and funding to attract and support the cultural industries and arts communities

The Workplace

Opportunity and Inclusivity

1) Key Principles

- Economic development needs to be tied to the economic vision developed by Ernst & Young (2004) and further evolved by the Ashford's Future Economic sub-group
- Align the vision, strategy and action plan to the urban design framework
- Balance employment growth, housing delivery and workforce growth
- The opportunities need to be expanded across a range of employment sectors
- Promote the use of local labour and business to build out Ashford

2) Key Issues

- The lack of a defined image for Ashford
- The economy generally reflects low productivity and low incomes
- There is a weak skills base and a high out-migration of young people
- Limited capacity on junction 10
- Strong regional competition for investment within the Kent region and along the CTRL

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Capitalise on CTRL and M20
- Raise skills base
- Gear up the 'quality of life' agenda – provide good quality public services, good quality public spaces, and a range of quality housing

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

- Develop a comprehensive programme to enhance the Town Centre
- Seek a range of high profile projects to help forge a new image for Ashford
- Develop a skills improvement programme
- Promote Ashford to entrepreneurs, set up excellent ICT links
- Form enterprise centres and incubation spaces for start up businesses
- Remove constraints on Junction 10
- Use the growth of Ashford to develop local skills and businesses

- Ensure that wherever possible, the growth of Ashford benefits rural areas

Civic Domain

Dignity and Civic Pride

1) Key Principles

- Integrate public resources into both new and existing areas
- Establish a high benchmark for the quality of design of public spaces and resources
- Promote good access to public resources
- Promote the role of the voluntary sector
- Promote the cultural aspect of public spaces
- Use the combined effects of a range of public resources to contribute to forming positive neighbourhoods as a seed for change
- Change the perception of Ashford through improved public spaces and service provision

2) Key Issues

- Quality housing and environment
- Integrating existing development and new development
- Maximising the potential of public investment in appropriate public spaces and resources to reinforce rather than fragment the town
- Create 'joined-up' links between public service providers and the voluntary sector

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Establish a public space network with a clear public structure for Ashford
- Establish a range of public resource hubs
- Establish a public sector forum for joined up thinking
- Establish a strategy to deliver integrated public resource hubs

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

- Establish the primary structure for public investment across Ashford as a 'Capital Web'
- Deliver the Learning and Skills Campus and Discovery Centre as the central component of a new emphasis on learning
- Create a joined up and well managed network of green spaces that focus on two new Great Parks – the Discovery Park and Willesborough Dykes
- Establish a champion to oversee and deliver cultural, social, health and educational infrastructure

Neighbourhood

Opportunity and Inclusivity

1) Key Principles

- Build 31,000 new homes
- Build sustainable communities (economically, socially, environmentally)
- Balanced, cohesive and well-integrated communities
- Deliver places that support human interaction and a range of activities

2) Key Issues

- Provide sufficient choice (housing type and tenure)
- Provide safe and secure environments
- Identify the necessary support services and spaces
- Connect neighbourhoods to each other and the centre
- Reduce the impact of development on the environment, create clear buffers/defined edge
- Produce flexible and adaptable neighbourhoods to take account of emerging demographics, lifestyles and technologies

3) The Key Drivers/'Non negotiables'

- Walkable neighbourhood environments
- Promote best practice to address environmental impacts. Work with accepted environmental standards and targets
- Address needs of both new and existing communities
- Exploit potential within existing urban areas

4) The Key Ideas and Opportunities

- Compact, mixed-use development
- Relate intensity and mix of development to most accessible locations
- Develop innovative construction methods, architecture, landscape and layouts
- Allow for a range of choice for neighbourhoods, meeting both the range needs of developers and the end-user through different locations, blocks and plots
- Promote the use of local, renewable and non-polluting materials in development to minimise environmental impact, enhance local character, and maximise the economic benefits of growth
- Adopt Eco-Homes 'Very Good' rising to Eco-Homes 'Excellent' within 5 years
- Design housing and neighbourhoods to facilitate waste reduction, reuse and recycling through design, construction and ongoing maintenance

04.2 DEVELOPING THE VISION

"We wish to encourage a holistic approach to the green space network in order to provide a **modern, functional** and **cohesive** green infrastructure which will enhance the new built environment"

Creating Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway (ODPM 2004).

The 'Town in the Garden'

Arising out of the study is the strategic vision of 'Ashford: The Town in the Garden'. This builds on the 'Kent: Garden of England' identity and firmly establishes the important relationship between town and countryside. It also establishes the distinction between the two, and so avoids the limitations of the garden city, with its inherent low-density urban sprawl.

What do we mean by 'Town'

By use of the term 'town' we mean wholly immersive urbanism, that is a place that is distinctly built environment and seeks to create compact walkable neighbourhoods, districts and quarters - all connected and interrelated in a complex pattern of urban form and function. This means that we establish a clear relationship with the natural environment that is mutually supportive rather that repressive.

Building on the tradition of town-making that celebrates the morphology of Kent's towns and villages we can contribute to a distinctive place. But we must recognise that the programme of growth will demand new forms of urban development that will add to this history.

Using principles that Abercrombie developed in nearby Aylesham, the town will require a fixed and controlled urban edge, clearly establishing limits for growth and ensuring that the surrounding countryside has a certain future.

What do we mean by 'Garden'

The 'garden' is an essential component of urban living. It is no coincidence that great places have great parks and open spaces. Access to nature is an essential ingredient of urbanity. It is also clear that sustainable urbanism requires a closer working relationship with nature if it has to meet the targets of Smart Growth. This includes sustainable urban drainage, green energy, local food production and alternative forms of transport. In a modern world the countryside has a symbiotic role in dealing with the impacts of growth and change. Without 'town' we do not have 'garden', and vice versa.

Core Themes

Having established this vision we developed a set of themes for Ashford. The themes encapsulate the core areas that Ashford needs to develop if it is to meet its aspiration of a vibrant and sustainable town. These were presented and adopted at the first Eastwell Manor workshop and are incorporated in the Ashford Town Charter.

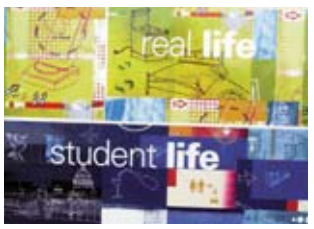
Key Themes 'Ashford: The Great Town in the Great Garden'

'Connected Ashford'

This builds on the International Station tag and stresses the European City dimension, the excellent transport links, strategic location and potential role as the 'Gateway to Britain' (tourism and conference) – convenience and connectedness.

'Start-up Ashford'

A focus on the small and medium enterprises; ease of starting a business; the fine-grain mixed use approach; the urban marketplace; links to learning, innovation and creativity – upliftment.



'Learning Ashford'

The concept of a learning quarter; educational hub and spokes; integration with all aspects of the above two strands.

'Smart Ashford'

This builds on the concept of "smart growth", low impact living, choice of living; integrated public transport systems, best practice in ecological design, moves to self-sufficiency, etc.- efficiency and integration.

'Walking Ashford'

Exploiting the flatness of the place and the regional walks to focus on the potential for creating excellent walks throughout the town and to the countryside, focussing on routes along the water systems, the great Streets, and walking Streets - promoting permeability, reducing severance, ease of access to public transport, cycling, etc. – ease of movement.

'Beautiful Ashford'

This strengthens the concept of great spaces, great streets, great parks and great neighbourhoods and establishes the benchmark for good design, ambitions and values – character and civic pride.

As regards the 'Garden' concept these are expressed as follows:

'The Water Garden'

This exploits the unique opportunity of water control and management required in Ashford giving rise to the potential for the great wetland park, the lake district and the canal district in the town. Ashford becomes an exemplar for environmental design, flood management, sustainable urban drainage and water treatment.

'The Woodlands Garden'

In concert with the above concept, Ashford builds a new urban forest that links with other forest systems, provides a clear definition of urban edge, interrelationships and linkages. – continuity and enclosure.

'The Country Garden'

The concept of local identity being strengthened in local foodstuffs, wines etc, and interrelationship with the marketplace, farmers market, self-sufficiency.

The Economic Vision

"A strong, self-sustaining and growing town, recognised as a world-class exemplar location combining an environment rich in resources with a technologically enabled, knowledge based learning economy"

"Recognised for the excellence of its physical, cultural, economic and digital connectivity with its surrounding region, the UK, Europe and the wider world."

"The preferred location in the South East where, given the quality of the built environment and the quality of life, people of all ages aspire to work, study, live, relax and visit, and can fulfil their potential." (Ernst & Young, 2004)

The Economic sub-group of the Ashford Future's Board has developed an Action Plan, describing the range of activities and investments that will contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities in Ashford. Partners have sought to ensure these actions compliment and actively promote the formative Greater Ashford Development Framework in seeking to consider the economic implications of infrastructure, employment and phasing proposals. Project development has also been more widely informed by market intelligence outside of the GADF process including the 2004 Locate in Kent sector development study.

Whilst seeking to support economic growth to underpin the Sustainable communities Plan for Ashford, this action plan is complimentary to, and consistent with, the SE Regional Economic Strategy, the Channel Corridor Partnership Area Investment Framework, Ashford's Community Plan and the strategies of other partners in Ashford's Future.

The plan is organised into 4 building blocks, each of which makes a distinct contribution to delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and local investment plans. These are subdivided into 11 strategic objectives in the Ernst and Young study.

A fully-costed funding plan will be prepared as projects are developed further and partners seek to formalise provisional investment commitments through their respective corporate planning processes.

The Strategic Objectives

The economic vision (Ernst & Young, 2004) outlines 11 strategic objectives for Ashford to achieve sustained economic growth:

1. To have in place strong political, community and business leadership to create an environment conducive to realising Ashford's vision.
2. To ensure that Ashford's infrastructure of road, rail and other physical as well as digital infrastructure is exemplary in order to support and drive forward growth.
3. To retain a larger share of Ashford's 15-34 year old age group to live, work, study and pursue their careers within Ashford, and to attract members of that age group from outside by provision of education, leisure and employment opportunities.
4. To improve significantly the provision, uptake and completion of education, learning and skills programmes within Ashford.
5. To improve the ability of property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs.
6. To revitalise the town centre as a venue for living, retail, leisure, business and related activities.
7. To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure, and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.
8. To develop a unique identity and brand that can be used to promote Ashford.
9. To identify and support initiatives to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in Ashford.
10. To grow Ashford as a community with active participation in creating the future, enabling all to take advantage of the opportunities offered by growth, ensuring that local transformations benefit all segments of the population, particularly those in greatest need of economic inclusion.
11. To grow Ashford's economy in a way that considers the views of the existing community and is complementary to those of the surrounding towns and coastal areas, bringing benefits to the sub-region and region more broadly.

1.0 Enabling Leadership

Ensuring strategic direction, effective management and strong communications

There are three thematic objectives within this section of the plan:

1.1 Leadership

Ashford faces radical change: This means making fundamental decisions that will often require speedy responses. Strong leadership with clear strategic direction is required to ensure that issues are addressed head on, decisions taken, and action monitored into delivery and beyond into evaluation. It is therefore important that there is strong political, community and business leadership supported with effective management in order to create an environment conducive to realising Ashford's Future.

1.2 Identity and Communication

Without a clear and well-defined identity Ashford will not be able to signal to it inhabitants and prospective markets what it is and what it stands for – both economically and socially. Ashford's identity should be made up of and reflect Ashford's past, its present and importantly its future aspirations. Identity will define and differentiate Ashford from its surrounding area. It is therefore vital that a unique identity is defined that can be used to promote and secure investment into the town.

1.3 Sub-regional Integration

It is important that Ashford maximises the outcomes and impact from existing economic development initiatives and partnerships to ensure there is not wasteful duplication, nor unnecessary competition, for investors or limited recourses. It is vital that Ashford's economy grows in a way that considers the views of the existing community and is complementary to those of the surrounding towns and coastal areas, bringing benefit to the sub-region and region more broadly.

2.0 Place Making

Delivering high quality design in physical development and effective infrastructure

There are three thematic objectives within this section of the plan:

2.1 Physical and Digital Infrastructure

Job creation and property development (industrial, commercial, office and residential) are dependent on the existence of a supportive infrastructure, the quality of which will differentiate Ashford.

At present there are significant physical infrastructure constraints impacting upon development which must be unblocked to realise Ashford's economic potential: Ashford is well

positioned to develop as an exemplary regional transport node linking road (M20, M2), rail (CTRL international and domestic) and air (Kent International Airport, London Ashford Airport). There are also digital constraints but Ashford is well positioned to develop as an e-enabled town, with exemplary fibre and wireless technologies incorporated within its developments.

2.2 Property Markets

Ashford needs to offer a range of high quality, sustainable sites, premises and dwellings that meet a range of market requirements in terms of type, availability, flexibility and price in order to be attractive to various market sectors. Removing factors constraining the supply of space, boosting confidence within the market and promoting sustainable solutions are vital ingredients to ensure that the industrial, commercial, office and residential property offer is of the highest quality and supports Ashford's need to attract quality private sector investment.

2.3 Vibrant Town Centre

A broad ranging approach is needed to revitalise the town centre into a pole of attraction for residents, investors, domestic and international visitors. Revitalising the town centre through improved accessibility, making best use of existing assets and developing the retail offer and evening economy will mean higher rents; improved yields for investment; attraction of prosperous residents and visitors; the retention of young people; and improved local employment. Revitalising the town centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities is critical to the success of Ashford as a vibrant community.

3.0 Developing Communities

Building vibrant, skilled and successful communities

There are four thematic objectives within this section of the plan:

3.1 Learning and Skills Development

The level of skills and training needs to be increased to provide Ashford's existing and growing population with the necessary tools to survive in an increasingly competitive and knowledge intensive economy. This will serve as a magnet for retaining Ashford's missing generation of 15-34 year olds, and attracting young people from other parts of the region, the rest of the UK and abroad. Widespread access and take-up of lifelong learning for all the community as part of the knowledge economy concept will be critical to the renewed vibrancy of the town. The overriding objective is to improve significantly the provision, uptake and completion of education, learning, and skills development programmes within Ashford.

3.2 Youth Retention

Socio-economic analysis of existing residents in Ashford shows there is clearly a need to retain a larger number share of Ashford's 15 – 34 year old age group. The overriding strategic objective is to encourage a higher proportion of Ashford's 15 – 34 year-old age group to live, work, study and pursue their careers within Ashford and to attract members of that age group from outside the area by provision of education, leisure and employment opportunities.

3.3 Quality of Life

Ashford is well connected and has a generous endowment of natural assets and resources that can form the basis of further development of the tourism and leisure industry. This includes open space, attractive countryside, existing infrastructure of hotel and tourist accommodation, cultural attractions, sports and leisure facilities. Development of these assets will also contribute to the creation of the identity that Ashford aspires to, while supporting several other of the elements underpinning the vision.

It is vital that initiatives to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors are encouraged, maximising opportunities arising from the cultural heritage and physical location of the town.

3.4 Community Engagement and Participation

Many economic development initiatives are currently underway. It is important that Ashford maximises the outcome of existing initiatives and partnership structures to ensure that there is not wasteful duplication or unnecessary competition for clients or resources. Consideration needs to be given to the aspirations of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which is delivering its three year action plan against a vision of "…. a safe, healthy and thriving environment that offers an excellent quality of life to all who live, work and visit the area….". Equally important is consideration of the totality of offer beyond Ashford to adjacent areas in the sub-region considered by the Channel Corridor Partnership and the East Kent Partnership.

A critical element of work will be to grow Ashford as a community with active participation in creating the future, enabling all to take advantage of the opportunities offered by growth, ensuring local transformation benefits all segments of the population, particularly those in need of economic inclusion.

4.0 Creating Competitive Business

Making Ashford an exemplary place to start and grow business

There are three thematic objectives within this section of the plan:

In order to prevent Ashford developing as a dormitory town and to provide employment opportunities to meet the envisaged jobs growth target as set out in the Sustainable Communties Plan, inward investment must increase, the business formation rate must increase and existing businesses must update their activities so that they become increasingly competitive.

4.1 Stimulating Business Formation

Ashford needs to build on its existing base of small businesses by facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure, high quality tailored advice and support networks that enhance the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to start and develop a business. This enabling should be complemented by measures to actively stimulate and nurture interest in entrepreneurship at all levels of society.

4.2 Development of Indigenous Firms

To be considered as the best pace to do business Ashford must provide an exemplary business support infrastructure in order to support the growth and development amongst indigenous firms. Building on the strengths of existing businesses, encouraging them to grow, facilitating additional clustering, and enhanced aftercare treatment are all vital elements. A vibrant and active business community is a powerful magnetic force. Continuous workforce up-skilling programmes are necessary to ensure that Ashford leads, not just responds, to changing technology and work place processes.

4.3 Inward Investment

Ashford must attract a greater share of inward investment by promoting and positioning Ashford's 'offer', taking advantage of opportunities in key growth sectors. The availability of high quality and well-designed commercial space, with effective linkages to transport infrastructure will support achievements of this objective. Developing and sustaining a workforce skills base that meets the technology and workplace process needs of potential inward investing businesses must be part of the Ashford "Offer".

04.3 DESIGN APPROACH

The design approach that the Team brings to the project is essential to both meeting the aspirations of the Brief and applying the Vision. In order to meet the challenge of the Sustainable Communities Plan we will need to make Ashford an exemplar in urban design. This is the approach we have adopted to making the 'Town in the Garden'.

Movement is the primary generator of Urban Form

Generative urbanism

The overall design approach focuses on the interaction of land use and movement. Post war planning (eg. New Towns, American New Urbanism) has promoted a suburban pattern of development that attempted to divorce development from interconnecting routes in order to mitigate the impacts of traffic. In many ways, Ashford typifies this approach with estate-based housing accessed off single connections from distributor roads. This approach however overlooked the activity-generating effect of movement. Learning from the way which towns and cities evolved over history, the foundation of any settlement was the crossroads – the point of maximum interaction and activity around which town grew up.

The approach exploits the potential of movement and create new 'main streets' for Ashford as the focus for local communities, creating a new sense of place and integrating development form, land uses and public transport accessibility into a more sustainable pattern of development.

Generative urbanism is proposed as our approach to a growth and change model for sustainable development. It is rooted in the belief that public transport accessibility in combination with walkability are the primary generators of urban form and, by definition, urban activity. The principle of linking density of development in existing areas to public transport accessibility, often by the use of Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs), is well established.

Generative urbanism is an 'upside down' way of thinking of this but links this to patterns of urban morphology. This model asks the question about the type of urbanism that is needed to support new investment in public transport, whether this involves opening a station on an existing rail line, building a rapid transit system, establishing a quality bus corridor – or just improving the level of service along these routes. Each action, depending on the levels of accessibility, predetermines the need for certain levels of density and mixes of uses within easy walking of interchanges or stops.

In theory, a definitive growth/change model can be developed to demonstrate this in three-dimensional form, even showing the range of uses according to locational criteria, although this might seem too mechanistic. Good common sense and an iterative design process can easily be applied to achieving a successful outcome.

This approach can be used for urban extensions of a reasonable scale, to regenerate existing areas through a programme of intensification, or to plan new settlements. It also can be applied to a range of settlement types; their parts and their public transport conditions whether they are existing or planned.

Each action also recognises that in well-integrated urban environments the urban dweller makes countless decisions about choice of travel. These are often influenced by such factors as the offer of shopping and leisure en route; quality of the walk; the desire for social interaction; feeling of safety – even the sense of well being. All of these might influence the direction, duration and continuity of the journey. In other words, the urban dweller might chose to walk longer to catch a bus that best serves his needs, or take a longer route because it is more pleasant.

This means that we cannot adopt simplistic approaches to movement as propagated by the New Urbanist movement. Single responses like putting a 400-metre walkband around a centre does not guarantee sustainability, any more than it sustains a public transport system. In the same way the blanket application of density does not lead directly to sustainable communities. Good urbanism is sophisticated and requires a more complex approach to building its urban structure and fabric. This recognises that a cascading zonal approach that classifies the high accessibility core, the intermediate zone and the periphery of the settlement up to the urban edge as three distinct urban conditions each requiring their own morphological approach – each requiring their own response to density, urban mix and physical context.

Good urbanism is good environmentalism

Environmental Quality will determine economic vitality of the town and the health and well-being of its citizens. Many people see this as being in the quality of the setting and spaces in the town. This quality is realised through good design and good future management.

Too often urban spaces are under managed, and consequently lower the quality of the experience or worse, add to a sense of fear. We are interested in a variety of data emerging from this country such as OC and Tiesdell's report on safer city centres in the UK, work by English Nature, and ideas promoted by the National Crime Prevention Institute in the USA in their report "Crime prevention through environmental design'.

If such spaces fulfil more than one role they generate a greater feeling of value for more people. This issue has been dealt with in a number of recent studies including English Nature's report on Multifunctional green networks in and around towns and cities, and Rohde and Kendle's report on 'Human well-being, natural landscapes and wildlife in urban areas - a review'. The Urban Green Taskforce and Urban Parks Forum, along with the Landscape Foundation and CABE Space are all tackling aspects of the quality of urban green spaces, whilst alternative space standards such as the ANGSt model promoted by English Nature. Reference needs to be made to these studies and other studies in the preparation of a strategy for a public open space network and hierarchy of spaces for Ashford.

Ashford aims to lead the way by pioneering sustainable natural resource management, conserving natural assets, aiming to be carbon neutral, capitalising on new environmental technologies and applications and in creating a viable and sustainable food and agricultural economy. We feel that the green spaces that help to link the neighbourhoods of the town together and the sensitive urban fringes need to have a multi-functional environmental role, not only to be efficient in dealing with currently targeted uses and aims such as conservation and mitigation of impacts, but to provide a degree of flexibility for possible future roles not yet envisaged. Some of these issues were raised in the pioneering PSA reports on 'Energy Saving through Landscape Design' and studies of the Urban fringe. This holistic approach to urban planning can be called 'ecourbanism'.

The town recognises the need to seek social cohesion and a high quality of life for all its citizens through educational, vocational, cultural and leisure pursuits, and these aims are central to the Urban White Paper and the aim of the ODPM. These are valid aims but a variety of approaches are required to ensure that the spaces between buildings are 'places' in their own right and provide legibility within the context of the town. In this regard we may look to the example of Jan Gehl in Denmark who investigated the 'Life between buildings'. Too often 'green corridors' can be seen as divisive elements, a no-mans land. In order to work, they need to achieve a sense of ownership and regular use by the local population. This can be achieved through high quality design and community participation in the planning stage and in the future management of these areas – not just maintenance, but also planning of a regular programme of activities to encourage greater use and appreciation of the resource.

A variety of action and interest groups can be involved ranging from local wildlife, anglers, rambling, parent teacher associations, sports clubs etc. Above all, especially in the current climate, people need to feel these areas are safe to use. Populating and overlooking key areas helps in this. Understanding that the green areas are also part of the natural processes in the town dealing with surface water attenuation, for example, also helps.

Part of the transport objectives in Ashford includes an aim to encourage people to live and work locally, to avoid urban sprawl and to encourage a denser urban form. Although Ashford already has major car routes and zoning that tends to encourage car use, the planning and design of the green space network can act as a 'green glue' to encourage safe walking and cycling and access to public transport.

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9) has already noted the need to achieve growth in a more energy efficient way that also makes a more sustainable use of natural resources, particularly of water whilst minimising the risk of flooding, and not increasing pollution of air, land or water. The design and layout of future neighbourhoods, allied closely to the strategic arrangements of the green infrastructure can help to achieve these aims.

There are five main rivers flowing through Ashford, all with a history of flooding. The increase in roofs, roads and other impermeable surfaces can increase the risk of flooding unless dealt with in a holistic manner. The Environment Agency LEAP reports for the local catchment areas and the UKCIP report, 'Rising to the Challenge - Impacts of climate change on the South East in the 21st century' note the changing pattern of rainfall here, with wetter winters and drier summers linked to greater incidence of violent storms. The Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) best practice manual produced by the DTI and CIRIA only addresses some of the methods that can be used to attenuate the water problem.

We need to build into the development plan a commitment to additional means which may include planting of alternative energy crops such as willow coppice and hedges in flood plains upstream from Ashford to take the energy out of flows and to hold the water in place for longer (there is already a considerable body of data about this); extensive use of green roofs and garden water storage (not covered in SUDs literature, but important in Germany to tackle this issue) to attenuate flows and to reduce summer water consumption during droughts; use of a network of bioswales and temporary water storage features in the landscape; and increased use of phyto-remediation techniques to clean grey water and surface water run off. All of these issues impact on the landscape and can be used to create new urban and rural landscapes that have a strong sense of place and worth.

This design approach has informed the development of the Strategic Growth Model and the further iterative work on the Strategic Options and Working Masterplan. It has proved robust in balancing the competing agendas for growth and change and has provided a valuable means of communicating with the wider stakeholder group and agencies.

Multi-functional landscape

The rural landscape has been shaped by man to meet needs. Combined with underlying geology and time this husbandry of the land has created particular landscape characters which in turn help to define place – the genius loci. In planning the new urban condition around Ashford, the same process can be applied to create a multi-functional landscape informed by ecology. This is highly desirable and seeks to realise the environmental aims alongside compact urbanism and the desire to raise the quality of life.

Macro

The expansion of Ashford will have an affect on the surrounding areas. Other factors such as climate change will also have an effect on town and country. Nine Landscape Character areas defined in the Kent Landscape Character Study directly impinge on the current town fringe and up to fourteen may be touched by the expansion. The existing green corridor resource links town and countryside, new green links can further improve accessibility. The treatment of the urban fringe zone is important in retaining the quality of the landscape setting, it is also important in retaining the appropriate setting to historic buildings or monuments or providing buffer zones to sensitive ecological sites. The Framework seeks to reinforce better links between green corridors, establish the green urban edge, and respect local distinctiveness.

Micro

At a detailed level, the section on this page represents how landscape and built form can be thought of as a single entity to improve microclimate, ventilation and air quality, energy conservation, water management, biodiversity, recreation and aesthetic value. It is through the design codes that this marrying of urban form and landscape can be reinforced to deliver environmentally sustainable development.

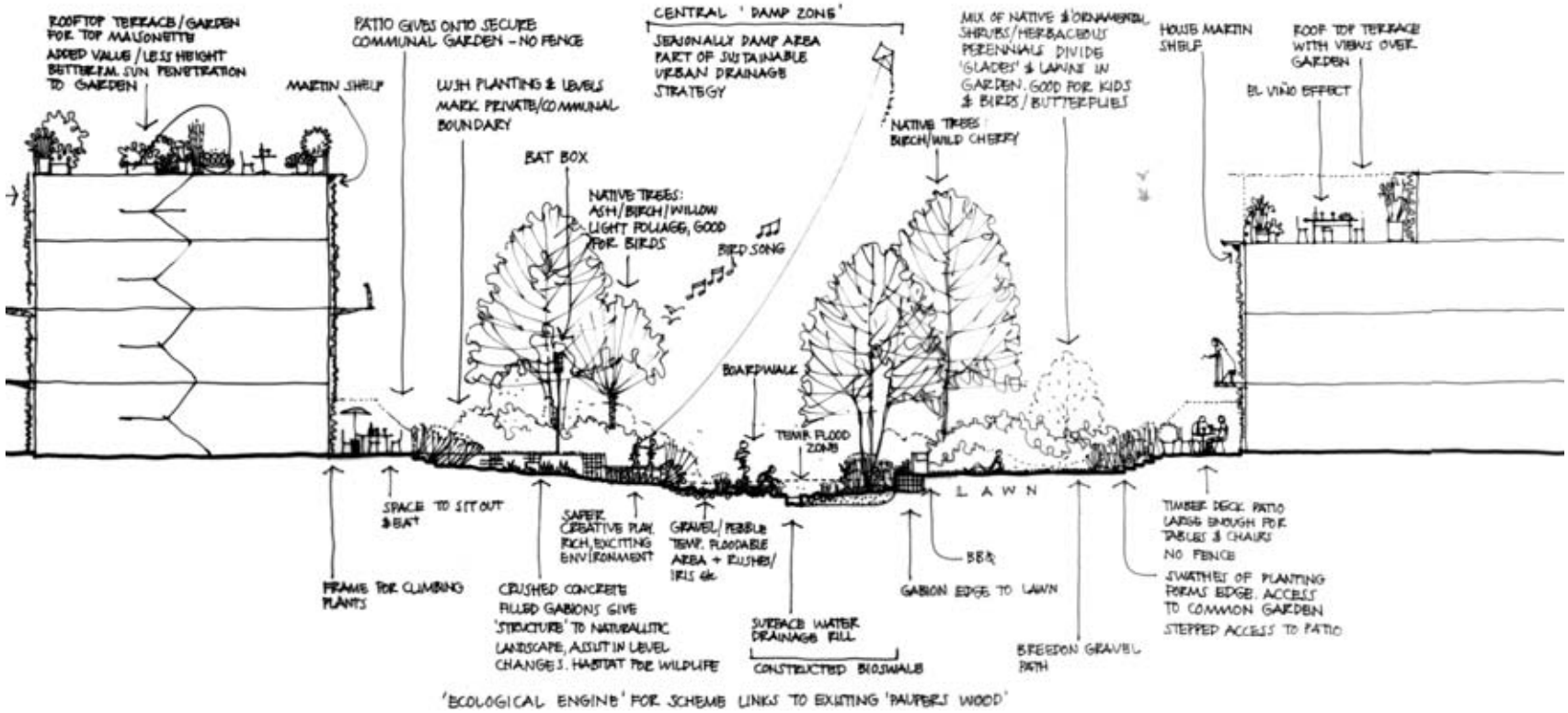
Sustainable Urban Drainage

Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) should be one of the key drivers for the landscape framework for Ashford. This is because the area is already subject to flooding from the five 'main' rivers flowing through the town, and several square kilometres extra of developed area can only speed up the rate at which rainwater runs off the land if conventional methods are used.

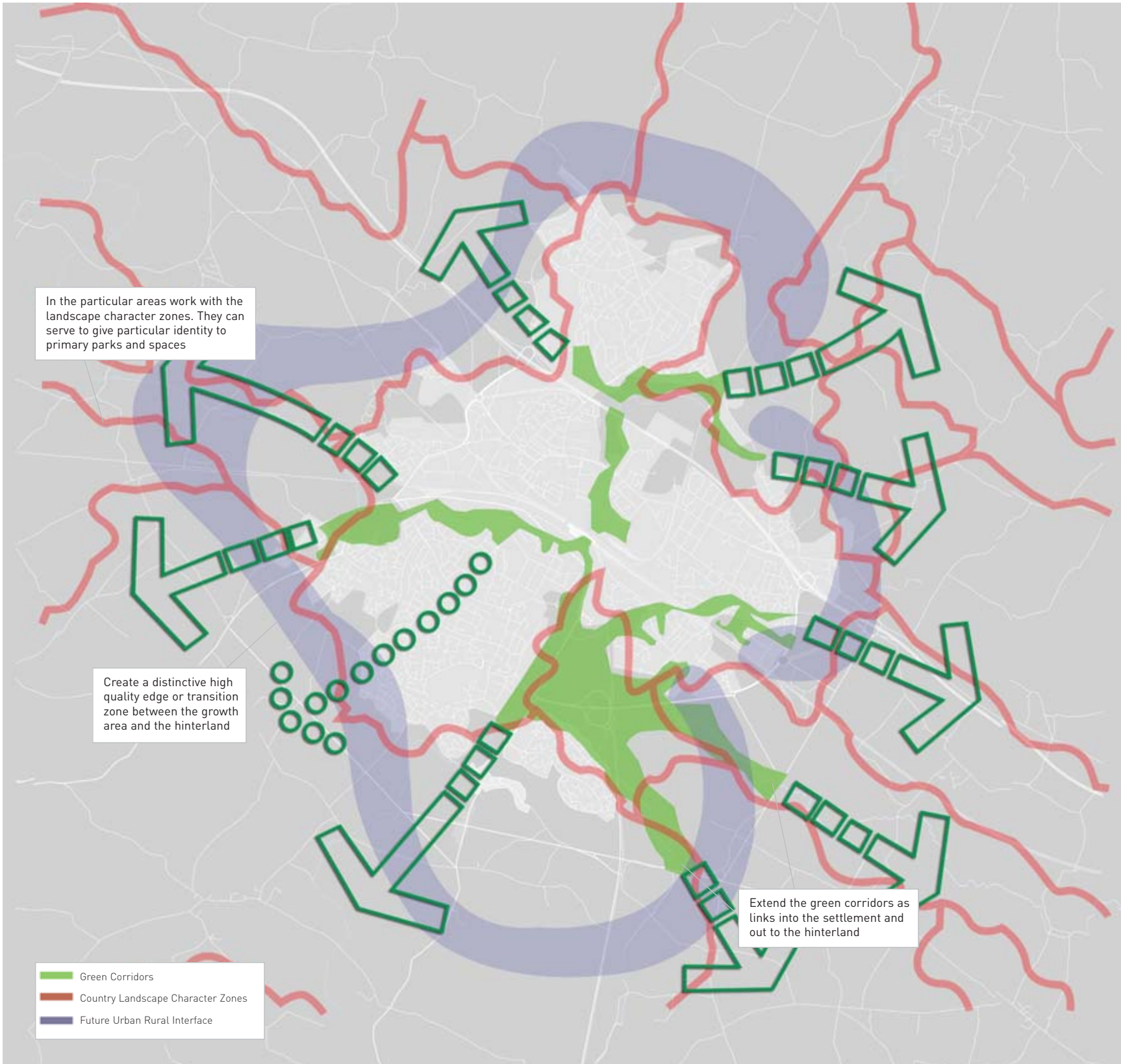
Various SUDs techniques are available ranging from permeable paving to infiltration beds or retention basins. Many have a positive, direct, ecological and aesthetic value. A conventional flood attenuation technique has been to build a few very large flood basins. In addition it would be possible to have many smaller units, more dispersed, and so spreading the risk. Natural drainage systems need not be large, complex or expensive, but best results are obtained by an integrated management approach developed in partnership with all stakeholders.

Due to the geology of the area there are distinct bands of underlying rock that influence the choice of SUDs. We propose that the widespread use of SUDs for existing and proposed development should also inform the landscape character of the town.

The landscape framework needs to be combined with the Integrated Water Management Strategy (EA/Black & Veatch) and the infrastructure framework for the masterplan.



Typical medium density area incorporating SUDs



Urban Fringe Treatment changes to match surrounding landscape character

04.4 ENVIRONMENT

The key landscape design issues are complex and cross cutting. The ethos of the environmental design is to create biodiverse multi-functional landscapes as part of a sustainable urban vision. It is important to grasp the big picture – this can be summarised in the points developed below:

- Climate Change
- Changes to radiation and cloud cover
- Changes to wind speed & storm hazard
- Natural and cultural heritage
- Local Distinctiveness
- Green Matrix
- Legibility
- Distribution, use & diversity of greenspace
- Green Corridors
- Green Edges
- Primary Green Spaces
- Quality, protection & resource management
- Land Banking
- Rural Urban Fringe
- Integration and enclosure
- Distinctiveness, character and environment
- Sustainable Urban Drainage
- Biodiversity

Climate Change

The quality of the environment will ultimately be affected by climate and the design responses and protection measures taken to address this.

The implications of climate change have been considered in detail in the Integrated Water Management Study, undertaken by Black & Veatch. This work has led to revisions of the Section 105 maps for the defended and undefended flood plain extents and to an additional assessment of the long term impact of climate change on the 100 year flood plain within Ashford. The development foot prints of the Masterplan, as well as more detailed proposals, have taken this work into account.

Preparing for climate change must be an integral part of any new urban design and must influence the objectives and detail of the design codes to create a balanced environment capable of coping with change. It is not just about flooding and drainage but also about dealing with other impacts.

These include:

- The incidence of storms and how development orientation combined with green infrastructure, plus altered building codes addresses this risk.
- The need to allow sufficient space for water and water related issues in the spatial planning such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs), alternative local level phyto-water treatment, and a broader level of flood mitigation interventions.
- The impact of longer, hotter summers on human comfort, health, water supply and use, and soil moisture. This has resonances for construction in relation to insurance, building codes in relation to comfort and reducing energy requirements, vegetation in relation to summer cooling, human and ecosystem health, water and air quality.
- The effects of sea level rise on competing towns and cities, which will affect transportation & infrastructure, economics and demand for housing.

Changes to Solar Radiation and Cloud Cover

In looking at Greater Ashford we must not only consider the local microclimate but the wider regional and global influences. The South East of England will experience the greatest rises in temperature, and cold winters will become more rare. By the 2080s, the high emissions scenario prepared by the UK Climate Impacts programme (UK CIP) may mean that the South East is an average of 5˚C warmer than at present. A hot summer such as experienced in 1995 or 2003 may occur one in five years by the 2050s and three in five years by the 2080s under the medium-high emissions scenario. Even at the low emissions scenario, two summers in every 3 may be as hot as 1995. With this temperature rise, summer precipitation may decrease by 50% or more by the 2080s, whilst winter precipitation may increase by 30%. Of great significance to the vegetation of the area, in this same period soil moisture has been predicted decrease by 40% for the high emissions scenario.

The increase in solar radiation is considered to lead to a reduction in cloud cover of between 10-20% by the 2080s in this area. Relative humidity may also decrease through the year for all scenarios with perhaps a 20% reduction in fog during the winter for the medium high scenario by the 2080s.

These factors may also have an effect on the incidence of skin cancers. They point to the need for shade trees in streets and parks as seen in southern Europe. There are also consequences for building design: Planting on building walls and roofs can help to reduce solar gain as vegetation has a much higher albedo, or reflective capacity, than masonry as well as providing a cooling effect through evapo-transpiration.

Changes to Wind Speeds and Storm Hazard

High winds can be very damaging and contribute to £1billion in building insurance claims every year. Estimating future wind speeds is difficult. Studies of recent storm events in northern Europe appear to show an increase in severe autumn/winter winds. Perhaps more alarming is the apparent change in the tracking of winter storms from the Atlantic.

The Benfield Hazard Research Centre has illustrated that mean winter tracking of storms is increasingly affecting the United Kingdom and northern Europe. Research by Dronia published as "Zum vermehrten auftreten extremer tiefdruckgebiete uber dem nord-atlantik" in Die Witterung in Ubersee (1991), showed that normal winter storms tended to split before reaching the British Isles due to pressure systems, tracking to the north of Scotland and south to Biscay and northern Spain. Warmer winters are closing this divergence with increased storms tracking through the English Channel, Southern England and northern Europe. This has been borne out by storm events over the past 15 years.

The development in the south of Ashford would be prone to these south-westerly storms as the land to the south west is generally very flat and open – it was until quite recently the sea. Shelterbelt planting is already a feature of the farmed landscape ranging from high hedges to planting of alders or poplar belts.

Belts of trees between the housing will help to take the energy out of the wind and to provide protection to the development from storms. In summer time they will help in cooling urban areas. Outwardly of aesthetic value these tree belts cold also combine with a network of Sustainable Urban Drainage swales and wet woodlands, and in so doing enhance the biodiversity of the area.

Natural & Cultural Heritage

Due to its proximity to continental Europe, east Kent has seen many waves of immigration and invasion that have enriched its cultural heritage and affected its natural heritage. Kent is one of the most wooded counties in England, formerly part of the vast Wealden Forest the current landscape still bear strong links to the Saxon occupation and clearance, hence the rampant white horse as county emblem – also an ancient Saxon emblem.

The Romans made their first footfall in this area, and left Roman roads and other remants of their occupation. Due to the nature of the ground little evidence is apparent visually, and much is still to be discovered. Roman and Bronze Age sites have already been excavated within the boundaries of the proposed extended town, and future finds would need to be protected and incorporated into a green matrix.

The river valley and woodland habitats are enhanced in richness by the diverse underlying geology – chalk, sandstone and clays which give a distinctive grain to the wider landscape.

Local Distinctiveness

A sense of place, or local distinctiveness, is important not only for marketing the town as a place to live and work, but also to ground new social networks. A clear identity to 'place' is more than the style of architecture, and in Ashford, the varied geology has given rise to a number of distinct areas within the development area. This needs to be recognised and reinforced. The Genius Loci is the special sense of place.

The Green Matrix

The Green Structure is perhaps more aptly termed the green infrastructure, or green matrix.

It is more than green zones between built elements and infrastructure.

Whilst the green matrix needs to deliver a series of functions or services, overall it is helping to set the tone and character for the development framework. Development is being proposed that will ensure key elements of built, archaeological and landscape heritage are set within the green matrix, along with functions such as Sustainable Urban Drainage, non-vehicular urban choreography, and biodiversity. Linkage is important for each of these elements.

Legibility

The topography of much of the town is low and fairly level; where it rises, the topography is gentle and rarely dramatic. Higher land therefore becomes important in terms of orientation, for example Singleton Hill, the rise south of Kingsnorth, the ridge between Sevington and Mersham and Colliers Hill near Cheeseman's Green on the northern end of the Aldington Ridge.

The varied character of the areas around the town are key drivers for accentuating the difference between parts of the town to aid legibility and sense of place.

The green corridors are key devices in linking the various parts of the town by a contiguous open space network.

Distribution, Use and Diversity of Greenspace

The ANGSt model and the NPA 'Six Acre Standard' set out a clear framework for the distribution of formal and informal open greenspace. The green space provision in Ashford needs to meld national guidance and aspirations of ANGSt an NPA with local needs highlighted in PPG17 (2002). We believe that the green spaces should contribute to a multi-functional, biodiverse, green infastructure that inturn reflects local landscape 'signatures' identified in the Ashford LCA. The British Medical Journal pointed out some years ago the benefits of greenspace on health outcomes, and this has been echoed in the recent CABE space report 'The Value of Public Open Space' (2004).

The ANGSt standards have been promoted by English Nature because they improve quality of life and enhance existing natural resources. In particular:

- Research is showing that everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life.
- Equality demands that everybody should be able to enjoy this contact in safety, and without having to make a special journey to do so.
- Natural greenspace in towns and cities can play an important part in helping to safeguard our national treasure of wildlife and geological features.
- Accessible natural greenspace gives everyone a chance to learn about nature and natural processes, and the opportunity to help to protect it in practical ways.

Green Corridors

Ashford already has a network of green corridors and parks. Their full potential has not yet been realised. The proposed expansion extends the system of corridors and proposes major new green spaces linked to them.

A key observation is that at present residential development tends not to address these key assets, instead turning their backs on them making them feel like back-lands in some instances, and promoting a sense of lack of safety. This way of thinking needs to be reversed for better integration of green spaces with the town so that they can fulfil their role in promoting social cohesion.

Green Edges

Edges and interfaces are all important. These include edges within the town looking onto organised and semi-natural greenspace, and the rural-urban fringe. Because the primary green corridors also serve a key function as part of the river Stour system, particular regard needs to be taken of the natural processes at work, the role of living riverine systems - hydrological and ecological through the town, and how formal urban edges meet softer 'natural' ones.

Primary Green Spaces

Ashford already has a significant green space legacy, but this needs to be co-ordinated and enhanced. The primary green spaces should be multi-functional

Quality, protection and resource management.

The quality of the new, and the protection and enhancement of the existing Ashford environment will be an important part of the design code process to ensure that the natural resources are used wisely and important habitats and landscape features are protected and enhanced. This requires an established method of maintenance and a 20 or 30 year landscape management plan

Subtle issues like the quality of the darkness of the countryside around Ashford should be recognised as many conventional street lights result in light pollution where some light fittings emit as much light to the sky as to the streets and parks they are designed to make safer. Light pollution also has a detrimental effect on widelife. This is a particular issue that needs to be addressed in the floodlighting of existing and proposed lorry parks and railway marshalling areas. The cumulative effect of inefficient lighting will destroy a particular quality of place around Ashford that bodies like the Movement for Dark Skies are keen to protect.

Soil or fill material is also a valuable resource that must be stripped retained and reused onsite where development is planned in those areas where uncontaminated topsoil or subsoil exist. Topsoil, which is a dynamic living material, can take many centuries to develop and should therefore be respected, while existing fill material should be used creatively on site to avoid unnecessary transportation or disposal costs.

Sites stripped of soil and being prepared for development easily become a source of siltation pollution for rivers, altering their nutrient balance and smothering vegetation. This was a clear result of works to the M20 and the CTRL in recent years. The development of planted 'catch waters' in advance of any development, that are part of the overall strategic Sustainable Urban Drainage and green network must be installed before any site is worked upon. They are low cost solutions that can have significant environmental benefits.

Land Banking

Land banking is needed to allow for the provision of new facilities or infrastructure. This includes green infrastructure, for example an extension to the floodplain capacity in the event that current flood predictions fall short of climate change outcomes, provision for phyto water cleansing instead of traditional sewage treatment, provision of local biomass for power etc. If we look back over the past 30 years and look at the significant changes in thinking about urbanism and environment, we can assume that there will be great changes in the future too and some provision needs to be made to allow flexibility in future planning decisions.

Rural Urban Fringe

Management of the rural urban edge is vital in ensuring that the setting of the town is maintained or enhanced, and that pressure on natural systems is reduced.

This hinterland area not only provides the setting for the town, it also has the potential to provide key services to the green infrastructure in terms of a sustainable approach to waste water cleaning, Sustainable Urban Drainage and attenuation of flooding, protection from violent storms, a source of biofuels for local energy production, an ecological driver for the green matrix and a link with the surrounding countryside.

The rural urban edge will respect the local character of the area, conserving elements such as ancient lanes and hedges, existing or former (pre recent industrialised farming) field boundaries, and buffer zones to existing sensitive sites. Due to geological conditions, there are a rich diversity of landscape characters around the current town boundaries and the wider hinterland into which the town will expand. Macro level design codes will be considered alongside the local character areas to realise local distinctiveness.

Integration and enclosure

The wooded nature of the south, combined with the high hedges and hedges with hedgerow trees are characteristic of the mixed farmlands surrounding the town, but contrast with the open fields of the floodplain which have been subject to enlargement for modern agriculture. The landscape has a higher capacity for development where it can be absorbed visually within a matrix of trees and hedges. These features will be reinforced or renewed as key features in and around the expansion areas in order to better integrate the rural urban fringe.

Connecting places and spaces is as important locally as it is strategically in order to improve the accessibility and amenity value of the landscape as well as its natural process functions and overarching biodiveristy. Primary green corridors within the town, allied to primary edges around it, are key drivers that will make a finer grain of green networks linking spaces, places and people work better.

Distinctiveness, character and environment

The strong landscape influences and elements of local distinctiveness around Ashford relate to the Wealden Clay, Greensand and Gault Clay and River deposits on which the town and the expansion areas are located, and the backdrop of the Chalk North Downs. There is a strong Northwest to South East 'grain' to the landscape that reflects the underlying geology and topography. This is overlaid by the 5 'main' rivers comprising the upper Stour system.

There are 7 county landscape character areas impinging on the town and 18 within a 3km hinterland of the existing town limits. At a finer grain, within a 1km hinterland of each expansion zone, there are a total 160 landscape description units that relate to seven broad historic landscape character types.

The Kentish landscape is still heavily influenced by the Saxon period, and contains a rich heritage of elements from antiquity to the modern era. In the last 50 years modern farming techniques involving field enlargement and drainage, plus major national infrastructure of the M20 and CTRL have significantly damaged a swathe of the countryside cutting the county in half and more specifically, CTRL dissecting the town. These are areas requiring restoration and creation of new landscapes.

Kent is one of the most wooded counties in England, and Ashford Borough has 16% of the county's woods covering 11% of the borough's land area. Around Ashford, much of this is just to the south of the town relating to the former Saxon coastline. This is significant as it provides a precedent to create new woodlands around the town as a way of integrating town and county. Many of these woodlands are managed by coppicing, a rotation of cropping timber which then regenerates from the 'stool' of each tree. As such this has positive implications for possible biofuel production as a new raison d'etre for managing a major resource of biodiversity and aesthetic value for which the traditional markets have largely disappeared.

The sea-shift in landcover from pasture to intensive arable use over the last 50 years has not only degraded areas of the landscape, turning a 'bocage' landscape into a 'prairie', but it has also altered the water holding capacity of the land, exacerbating the 'flashy' nature of the rivers draining a catchment mainly on impermeable clay. Changes in the Common Agricultural policy impact the landscape and how it functions in a wider sense. These changes are important to a town prone to flooding and need to be recognised.

The Low Weald is characterised by a multitude of moats, ponds, and wet woodland, features a that can be employed in Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems thereby reinforcing this characteristic.

Sustainable Urban Drainage systems

SUDS must be incorporated into the green matrix and green spaces adjacent to the built development they serve.

In the wider area, catch waters must be incorporated into the green girdle around the town to attenuate flows into the Stour river system, and to clean surface water run off during the construction phase in particular, when the ground is disturbed.

SUDS systems must take account of:

(a) The underlying geology for choice of generic drainage solution

(b) The landscape character of the areas to be drained

There are a variety of wetland habitats in and around Ashford that relate to local geology. Many of these are target habitats in the Kent and UK Biodiversity and Habitat Action Plans. They are characteristic landscape features of the area and so should be the precedents for wetland SUDS features.

A variety of SUDS options may be appropriate on different soils / underlying geology, and within a geological area.

Green Systems Strategy

The Landscape and Natural Environment Design Strategy aims to deliver a distinctive, attractive, safe, diverse and sustainable landscape for the Greater Ashford Development Framework. The focus is at the macro scale dealing with strategic issues, but also needs to inform detail, to prescribe flexible site-specific responses that will respond to changing times. It is important to emphasise that environmental issues often cut across professional boundaries and so require new and more integrated approaches to their design. This is exemplified by the idea of a 'Landscape of Layers' which is illustrated in the diagram opposite.

Development sites cannot be regarded in isolation to the whole urban condition. Macro issues such as micro climate, primary and secondary movement or 'choreography' and drainage issues are part of the green spaces and ecological programme for the town and its immediate surroundings. The development sites become homes and destinations and the interaction of people and places help to make the place safer.

Green systems are essential infrastructure

In looking at the whole system and it's setting, the GADF study is akin to the discipline of ecology which looks at the life form and its environment. The term Ecocity has been used for an EU funded research project to investigate a framework for sustainable urban development. The project features seven case – study cities in diverse European countries (UK not included) to demonstrate how sustainability objectives might be achieved under different conditions and in a variety of urban situations.

Some of the key projects have a resonance with the UI concept for GADF:

- City of short distances
- City of minimised land consumption
- City of balanced mixed use

We aim to establish a green matrix framework, that encompasses the principles of open space design, energy and resources, biodiversity, conservation, detail, materials and maintenance. in this way sustainable policies are melded with design intention.

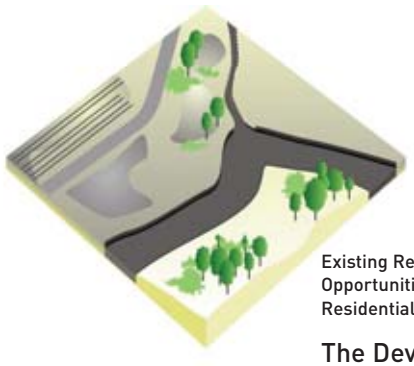
The landscape and overall environment needs to be multi-functional, people orientated to fulfil this objective, responding to the special landscape, cultural and ecological qualities of the town and its hinterland. In particular, it addresses the opportunities and constraints presented by drainage and flooding, as well as concerns of, access, accessibility and connectivity between neighbourhoods and other functions.

Furthermore, it addresses is micro climate,sewage disposal, energy conservation, air quality, community and safety. The Design Codes set down rules for providing a series of attractors in the expanded town that add up to a major sales pitch for Ashford, as well as by reinforcing and creating a sense of place and rejuvenated identity.

The design codes must address fundamental issues of what brings a quality of life and provides spaces for people and nature.

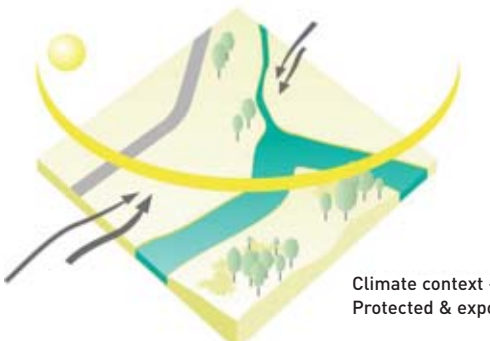
Our strategic objectives are to develop a design framework that:

- Respond to the landscape character, ecology and site context.
- Develop a hierarchy of spaces and places.
- Provide definition and identity to Ashford and its new extensions.
- Manage natural resources while improving accessibility and understanding.
- Develop a holistic approach of Sustainability and Ecourbanism.



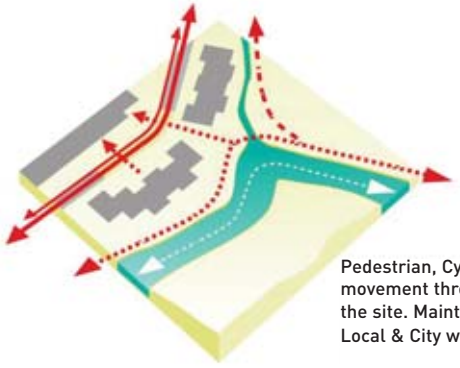
Existing Resources,
Opportunities and Constraints,
Residential Views and Concerns.

The Development Site



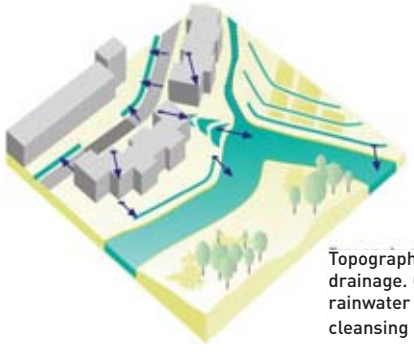
Climate context - wind, rain, sun
Protected & exposed areas.

Microclimate



Pedestrian, Cycle and Vehicular
movement through and within
the site. Maintenance access
Local & City wide context.

Site Choreography



Topography and general land
drainage. Opportunities for
rainwater collections and
cleansing Bioswales and ponds.

Drainage

Green spaces in and around the
site. Use of green spaces,
gardens, recreation, wild.

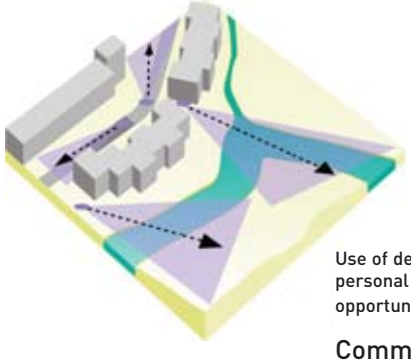
Green Spaces

Ecological context, local
resources, needs and
opportunities. Create a network
of green corridors

Ecology

Neighbourhoods as perceived by
residents. Local shops, schools,
community facilities, work.

Homes & Destinations



Use of design to increase
personal security and reduce
opportunities for crime.

Community Safety

Implications for Delivery

Forward Planning

The Green infrastructure needs to be considered and implemented ahead of development. Planting takes time to establish and make its mark on the landscape, so key structural planting should installed ideally be 6 years ahead of development. This not only provides a setting it should also raise land values.

Reducing Construction Impacts

Another role of the green infrastructure is to deal with surface water run-off during and after construction. A consequence of the CTRL and M20 works was serious siltation in the sensitive river Stour as rain washed disturbed soil from construction sites away. We have recommended that a series of 'catch waters' combined with woodland planting are located between the base of slopes and water courses well in advance of development. This work should be carried out by developers and set out as a condition by Planning.

Landscape Regeneration

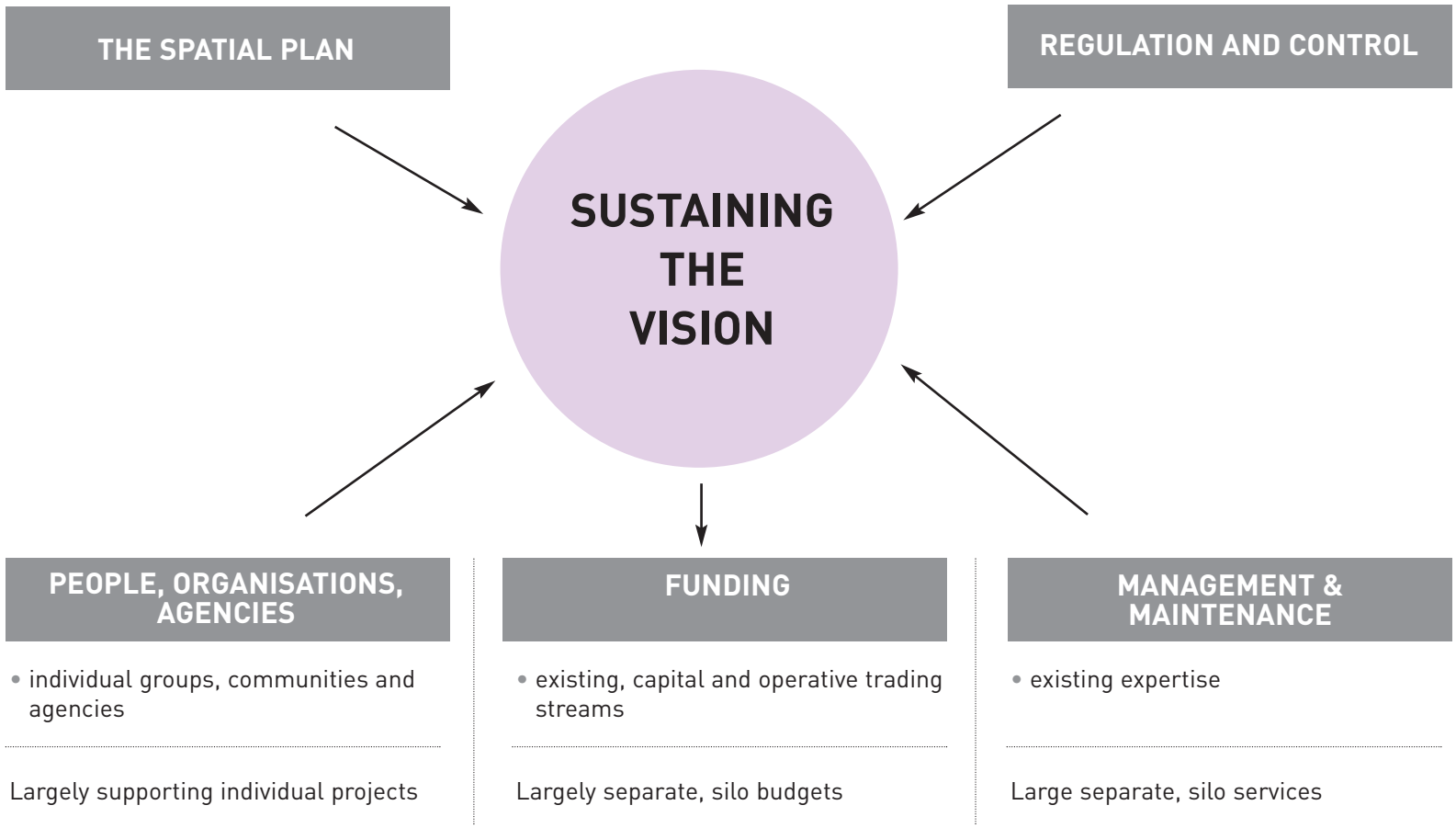
The existing green corridors, proposed 'green necklace' and primary parks will be an attractor for the town and so it is proposed that they are established early in the development phasing. There are successful precedents for landscape led regeneration across Europe. These parks need to be well funded to achieve high quality design and implementation, it is fundamental that they should also be well funded into the future with regards to maintenance.

Delivering a multi-functional landscape

Throughout we have called for a multi-functional landscape, and this suggests that the funding may reach across boundaries and interest groups. In particular with regards to the 'green services' that this landscape will be delivering as green infrastructure. There are some mechanisms already in place such as the nature conservation forum where a range of interest groups in open spaces meet on a regular basis with members of the council present. This needs to be extended and formalised into a funded body with the charge of co-ordinating the green infrastructure implementation and management.

The details of the funding and planning gain need to take account of the proposed green space development so that adequate funding is made available to improve and maintain the proposed green network in an exemplary manner.

1. THE FOCUS **The role of the Green Structure**	2. PLANNING AHEAD **The role of the Green Structure**
• to integrate the natural and built landscape • to protect and promote cultural asserts • to enhance the potential for biodiversity	• to raise the profile of Ashford • to raise the value of existing areas • to raise the value of new development areas



THE NEED TO DELIVER AND SUSTAIN LARGE SCALE, CROSS-CUTTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

- the role of different vehicles
- the role of environmental trusts

The Environment - Implications for Delivery

04.5 DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Delivering sustainable development is no longer an option: it is an imperative. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy "Securing the future" states that;

"Make the wrong choices now and future generations will live with a changed climate, depleted resources and without the green space and biodiversity that contribute both to our standard of living and our quality of life. Each of us needs to make the right choices to secure a future that is fairer, where we can all live within our environmental limits. That means sustainable development."

The options set out in this document will set the future course of growth in Ashford far beyond the period of this plan. New settlements, neighbourhoods, infrastructure and buildings developed today will be with us for hundreds of years, either as parts of thriving communities or if we get it wrong as a legacy of blight.

Throughout the document the plan seeks to find a balance between:

Urban form, movement and the physical environment; in order to achieve the optimum location, pattern and quality of growth.

and

Community, economy and environment; in order to ensure that the benefits of growth are optimised across all three areas rather than the norm which has often been to deliver economic growth at the expense of environmental quality and social cohesion.

The UK's approach to sustainable development has five guiding principles:

1. Living within environmental limits

2. Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society

3. Achieving a sustainable economy

4. Promoting good governance

5. Using sound science responsibly

It describes climate change as 'the greatest threat"[1] to the world today. The Energy White Paper 2003 sets out the framework for a low carbon economy with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, and by 60 per cent by 2050.

NATIONAL TARGETS[2]	
2050	60% reduction in CO2
2010	10% of electricity generation from renewables
2020	To increase renewable generation to 20%
2010	Reduce domestic energy consumption by 30%
2010	Good quality Combined Heat and Power generation of 10K MW
2018	Eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households
REGIONAL TARGETS[3]	
2010	5.5% electricity generation capacity from renewables
2016	8% electricity generation capacity from renewables
2026	16% electricity generation capacity from renewables
SUB-REGIONAL TARGETS	
2010	111MW renewable energy target (land based)
2016	154MW renewable energy target (land based)

Table 1: Summary of Key national, regional and sub-regional carbon and energy reduction targets

1 UK Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the future, 2005
2 DTI, Energy White Paper, 2003.
3 Defra, Governments Strategy for Combined Heat and Power to 2010, 2004
4 DTI, The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy, 2001. RPG9 South East, ODPM, 2004 (Amended Chapter 10 (Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy)

Regional Policy Guidance 9 for the South East

RPG9 covers the period up to 2016 setting out the framework for the longer-term future. Much of the guidance relates to how sustainable communities are to be planned and built. It recognises that the South East Region is particularly sensitive to the effects of climate change and without adaptation, water shortages could be commonplace every summer and flooding in winters could make flood plains more hazardous places to live.

It sets out 12 key Development Principles around issues such as the pattern of development, sustainable housing and access to jobs, services and cultural facilities. Another of these principles is that development is located and designed to enable more sustainable use of the Region's natural resources, in the supply of food, water, energy, materials and timber, in the effective management of waste, the promotion of renewable energy sources and to assist in reducing pollution of air, land and water.

It also sets out specific targets for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (as seen in Table 1) and Waste.

Measuring the scale of the challenge

Sustainable development has been described in some circles as 'living on the planet as if we intended to stay'. The overall ambition for the planned development must be to reduce Ashford's ecological impact on the environment as a whole, even as it grows.

One way of measuring environmental impact is to use Ecological Footprinting (EF), an accounting tool used to analyse the environmental impacts of a process or a person's lifestyle in terms of an area of land required to sustainably produce a particular natural resource or to absorb waste from consumption. The analysis measures the area of biologically productive land that is required to meet the needs of a given product, person or population. It compares this area with the actual available area on Earth and informs us whether we are living within the Earth's regenerative capacity. The notion of an 'eco-footprint' has been coined to define a person or communities total consumption of resources including from energy, food, transport, work and leisure.

SEEDA commissioned a report Taking Stock[4], to measure the ecological footprint of the South East. It estimated that the SE of England consumes more than 3 times the resource available to its population based on the ecological footprint analysis, or in other words, it suggests that if everyone on earth consumed natural resources and polluted the environment at the level of communities in the South East, it would take the equivalent of three planets to sustain the world's current population. Clearly, this is not a viable or sustainable situation.

Taking Stock identified that the major contributors to the South East's unsustainable levels of resource consumption included shared services, for example running schools, hospitals, roads, airports, lighting and maintaining the public realm and parks, public buildings and offices. In addition, the construction of public and social buildings makes a major contribution and it is therefore incumbent on everyone involved in delivering Ashford's Future to embrace the sustainability agenda.

Whilst the human race will undoubtedly become more efficient in its use of resources, including the ability to extract, process and dispose of materials, this has to be set against the current growth rate of the global population (which the United Nations forecasts will rise from 6 to 9 billion people by 2050) and the increase in the consumption of resources (based on historic trends global GDP is forecast to rise by more than 2% per annum). This is largely being fuelled by the developing world, where countries like China and India, are growing at a prolific rate. Unless there are radical changes to production and consumption patterns it has been calculated (Rocky Mountain Institute and the Wuppertal Institute for the Club of Rome) that societies everywhere will need to become 10 times more efficient in their use of resources by 2050 just to maintain our impact on the biosphere at 1990 levels.

A further consideration is that it has been estimated that global production of oil will peak within the next 5 years and will then steadily decline whilst demand will continue to rise. As a result oil, which is already topping $50 a barrel, is likely to increase in price substantially. This may encourage a move towards the adoption of non-fossil fuel sources of energy and therefore a requirement to incorporate flexible power generation and supply networks into new and existing development to cope with this transition.

As a result of the work that has been done on understanding the current and future relationship between global consumption patterns and the planets sustainable carrying capacity, the concept of 'One Planet Living' has been coined by BioRegional and WWF to describe new approaches to the design and management of settlements that aim to reduce demand for resources to a sustainable (one planet living) level.

The long term ambition for growth in Ashford must be to deliver developments that achieve One Planet Living standards, whist recognising that it will take time and radical changes in the capacity of the development industry, consumer demand, economic and fiscal circumstances and technology to achieve this ambition.

[4] Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology (CURE) and EcoSys Environmental Management and Education, Taking Stock: Managing Our Impact', 2001.

What is **One Planet Living?**

One Planet Living is a joint response from Bioregional and WWF to the challenge of how people everywhere can enjoy a high quality of life, within the carrying capacity of one planet? It is the realisation that if everyone on the planet were to consume natural resources and pollute the environment as we do currently in the UK, we would need three planets to support us The One Planet Living programme aims to show how this can be possible by promoting OPL guiding principles and building OPL networks across the world. They define a One Planet Living Community as one that adopts the following principles:

Zero Carbon
Sustainable transport
Local and sustainable food
Natural habitats and wildlife
Equity and fair trade
Zero Waste
Sustainable materials
Sustainable water
Culture and heritage
Health and happiness

One Planet Living, WWF and Bioregional , 2004

Ashford's response to the challenge of delivering sustainable growth

This development framework offers a major opportunity for Ashford to contribute to the UK's sustainable development agenda. By planning and designing communities that enhance the environment and promote a high quality of life for new and existing communities, development can make a positive economic, social and environmental contribution to the whole borough and sub-region.

This framework recognises that Ashford must strive to be sustainable and contribute to regional and national sustainability objectives. Sustainable approaches to development must inform both the way Ashford is regenerated (mend before extend) and grows.

The greatest opportunities to deliver Sustainable Development occur in the way the new urban villages are designed, built and managed because it is in these areas that the whole approach to resource management can be considered afresh from the choice and design of physical and social infrastructure, to the layout of villages and the design of individual homes.

However, there are opportunities to incorporate new sustainable technologies and thinking into the regeneration of the town centre, for example by installing flexible infrastructure into the design of new road developments that support energy efficient community heating schemes, sustainable urban drainage and water management and by creating cycle and pedestrian friendly streets.

Delivering sustainability is a core objective of the local development framework and the studies and workshops that have informed it. In 'Ashford's Future: The Overarching Report' (2002)[5] 'sustainability was identified as key driver and shaper of growth:

New development should be designed such that it... reduces energy and water consumption ... respects biodiversity and enhances local landscape ... and design excellence should be a hallmark of urban growth in Ashford, demonstrating the best in modern, high density, European-style housing design.

A workshop to review the vision for growth 2002 identified that there was an overwhelming desire among key stakeholders for Ashford to deliver a rounded and ambitious environmental agenda for growth. Aspirations arising from the workshop included: Lead and pioneer sustainable natural resource management (water, energy, waste, land, biodiversity)

- Capitalise on new environmental technologies and the rural connection for economic gain
- Create a viable sustainable food and agricultural economy
- Aim to be 'carbon neutral'.

Principles for delivering sustainable development

Delivering development in Ashford that meets and goes beyond the government's agenda for sustainable development requires new thinking and approaches to urban design and the growth agenda. The core principles that underpin this work are listed below and are further developed in section 4 of this report by each of the workstreams. These principles are adopted throughout this document in the approaches proposed for urban development, transport, the environment and economy. They are reiterated in the Design Codes and the Town Centre Development Framework. They give rise to the standards for development that have been used in the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the tool used to assess this document (see section 3) and in the table at the end of this section.

The overarching aim of these principles is to ensure that development is resource efficient, non- polluting or damaging to health, enhances the natural environment, promotes the use of local products and services, enhances the well-being of the community and contributes to the development of a distinctive and attractive place to live.

In aspiring to deliver high quality environmental development it is recognised that this must not be at the expense of economic and social improvement, and the principles must enhance rather than impede good quality generative urbanism.

The principles are designed to cover all stages of development from planning to site design, construction, management and maintenance.

The adoption of these principles is supported by a number of the recently published Planning Policy Statements (PPS), including PPS 1: Creating Sustainable Communities.

[5] Ashford's Future: The Overarching Report, 2002.

CORE PRINCIPLES[6]

Creating compact urbanism

Compact urbanism is the most effective way to deliver the sustainable growth of Ashford. This approach has been endorsed by key stakeholders through community consultation because it delivers efficient land use, and a density of use/population enough to support public transport and commercial/ community services.

In practice this has meant:

- Creating a range of development densities for the town centre, neighbourhood centres and villages to correspond to proximity to transport and other facilities;
- Locating development close to existing and proposed transport links including a Smart Link public transport system, new stations and improved bus services;
- Ensuring there is efficient use of plot area and height compatible with locale and amenity;
- Being more efficient with the space given over to cars by for example reconsidering the parking strategy, creating urban streets in place of busy car dominated road corridors and giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists;
- Encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking through the location, layout and design of new communities
- Allowing adequate green space within and throughout the development area.
- Minimising the overall land take required for growth and concentrating on development in and around the town center as far as possible.

Accessibility and Ease of Movement

Development layouts should, as far as possible, be accessible to all modes of transport and where appropriate, depending on the situation, limit vehicular access to some areas. All routes are linked into surrounding areas; they create new links where necessary, particularly around the town and ensure ease of movement within developments.

For example:

- Trip generators are located adjacent to public transport wherever possible;
- New and efficient public transport routes have been laid out;
- Vehicular speeds are controlled as appropriate, whilst giving priority to public transport;
- Consideration is given to the provision of cycle facilities/showers in new neighbourhood centres and the town centre;
- Corporate green transport plans will be encouraged for larger employers;
- Efficient vehicular access to all neighbourhood centres and residential developments is provided for in the codes;
- An integrated and connected network of greenspaces, parks and urban squares has been set out;
- All new developments are laid out to be permeable and to achieve a pedestrian friendly block size;
- New linkages are proposed where they are missing.

Enhance social and economic conditions

A guiding principle of this framework is to ensure all growth, including infill development delivers the maximum benefit possible to everyone and particularly the existing population of Ashford and to the poorest and most disadvantaged communities.

One core way in which this is to be achieved is to ensure growth contributes to the development and regeneration of existing communities, the 'mend it before we extend it' principle highlighted in other parts of the framework. These proposals aim to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to Ashford, by for example:

- Proposing mixed use development, where everyday facilities and workspace is located close to new homes that is easily accessible by foot or public transport;
- Growing jobs at a rate that is commensurate with the growth in population in order to avoid the creation of commuter and dormitory settlements;
- Improving the range and level of education provision in Ashford, particularly further and higher education.
- Proposing a wider range and mix of offices from low cost incubation and hatchery facilities to modern large footplate office accommodation.
- Proposing mixed tenure development to meet the needs of all members of society no matter what their physical, cultural or social circumstances;
- Ensuring that the supply of affordable housing meets demand

Sustainable Development and Design

1.27 High quality design ensures usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Planning policies should promote high quality design for new development areas and individual buildings in terms of functionality and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Good design is not just about the architecture of individual buildings, but also about the functionality and impact of the development on the overall character, quality and sustainability of an area including resource efficiency (for example energy consumption). There should be no acceptance of ill-conceived designs which do not contribute positively to making places better for people.

Design policies should encourage developments which:

- Are appropriate to their context in respect of scale and compatibility with their surroundings.
- Secure positive improvement to the streetscape or place where they are located.
- Create safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.
- Make efficient and prudent use of natural resources.
- Address the needs of all in society, including people with disability.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities, ODPM 2004

- Requiring landowners and developers to deliver development that is fully accessible;
- Promoting Lifetime housing standards;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles that encourage walking, cycling, through safe and well designed neighbourhoods and greenspace.
- Delivering high quality development, whereby all major development is scrutinised against a set of design codes and through a process of high quality independent review.

[6] Core Principles adapt those of the Landscape Design Associates.

- Delivering high quality development that attracts inward investment by businesses and creates confidence among existing residents and businesses to investment in and support the growth of the town
- Promoting the use of local materials and products from food to construction materials.

Environmental Capital

Wherever possible new developments have been located to avoid land with high environmental capital, and are designed to preserve and actively enhance biodiversity and nature conservation. In addition, it is important particularly in a rural location like Ashford that all development meets the 'Dark Skies' standards (see box below) for development and minimise their impact on surrounding areas.

Throughout the document this has meant:

- Carrying out an assessment of the environmental risks associated with proposed development sites and with this in mind a detailed landscape character and ecological assessment has been commissioned;
- Implementing measures to prevent added flooding risks or pollution resulting from the development;
- Putting forward proposals to protect and enhance existing landscape, ecological, and cultural assets and in particular by measurably increasing biodiversity in and around Ashford. In particular existing designated habitats (SNCI's, LNR etc) are to be protected from damage by development;
- Encouraging the re-use of Brownfield land especially in and around the town centre;
- Specifying the use of local species in landscape schemes;
- Identifying greenspace and habitat improvement areas and avoiding habitat fragmentation, whilst increasing connectivity;
- Achieving Dark Skies standards for all development;
- Conducting a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Site context, character and sense of place

Modern development too often lacks identity and a sense of place. As Ashford grows it is essential that it retains and enhances its sense of Ashfordness, both in order to attract business and people to use the town centre and to help build attachment and sense of belonging in the new urban villages. Development proposals are based on a robust appraisal of the site's context, character and local distinctiveness, whilst avoiding the temptation to simply mimic what is nearby. This approach is similarly promoted through the design code work, which accompanies this document.

Prime concerns include:

- Protecting and enhancing elements that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of different areas within Ashford;
- Planning new developments that are responsive to landscape character and views to and from sites;
- Use of topographical features to maximise wind protection and solar access;
- Responding to existing settlement patterns and topography;
- Ensuring the architectural style, massing and patterns of development fit local context;
- The preservation and sympathetic incorporation of built heritage;
- Protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment adjacent to new and infill development sites by ensuring that development embraces rather than turns its back on natural Ashford, particularly the river corridors;
- Promoting localism at all stages of the development process, by specifying for example where possible the use of local materials in construction, the use of local/indigenous plants in landscape schemes etc;
- Working with landform, landscape character, heritage and cultural assets to inform the masterplan, thereby enriching the sense of place.

Continuity and enclosure, security and a safe environment

Streets and spaces are designed to be overlooked with continuous street frontage and a consistent design approach between the roadway and building line. This theme is developed further in the design codes.

This is achieved by proposing:

- Overlooking and enclosure of main streets and spaces through the use of perimeter blocks (buildings to front of plot);
- Urban structures that create continuity and clear enclosure of streets and spaces;
- Appropriate building heights in relation to street and existing urban form width to create enclosure;
- An improved, more animated and safe public realm – providing for passive surveillance of public areas and the reorganisation of pedestrian and cycle routes to ensure they are overlooked;
- The promotion of active frontages in all developments;
- Entrances that contribute to streets/spaces;
- Clearly demarcated public and private spaces.

Legibility

Ashford has been hidden to visitors who often know it only by its international station or the out of town developments, such as the Designer Outlet. As Ashford has grown it has become disjointed, in part because of the nature of the natural environment and particularly the flood plain and in part because of the impact of new infrastructure, especially road and rail that have cut swathes across the town. This plan works to stitch the town back together, physically and socially and thereby transform the image of the growth area and enhance the sense of place and identity.

Layout designs have therefore focused on:

- The hierarchy of pedestrian and vehicle movement around the town and between suburbs and villages;
- Street cross section and position, scale and form of buildings to support the hierarchy

Lifetime Homes

The concept of Lifetime Homes originated in 1991 by the Joseph Rowntree Lifetime Homes Group. Lifetime Homes have sixteen design features that ensure that a new house or flat will meet the needs of most households. This does not mean that every family is surrounded by things that they do not need. The accent is on accessibility and design features that make the home flexible enough to meet whatever comes along in life. The core idea beyond Lifetime Homes is to build in flexibility to homes that can adapt as peoples' lives or occupant's change. Examples of a Lifetime Home standard include design of homes for future provision of a stair lift, or that the approach to all entrances should be level or gently sloping.
www.jrf.org.uk

- The relationships of new development to existing views/vistas/landmarks for orientation;
- The creation of distinct districts/sub-areas/character areas with their own local identity;
- Responding to existing pattern of townscape/landscape;
- Proposals for new landmarks;
- The use of locally distinctive materials and planting.

Variety and diversity

Wherever possible a mix of uses, variety and choice of property types and places has been proposed. In practice, the ability to deliver these aspirations will be partially dependant on market demand, location and other factors, but the development framework makes a major contribution, principally by:

- Stipulating a mix of uses both within the overall development and within individual buildings;
- Requiring a mix of tenures and property types with affordable housing pepper-potted throughout residential developments;
- Retaining good quality existing buildings where they exist, especially in the town centre;
- Advocating diversity in unit sizes and rents compatible with locale, supported by the economic vision and strategy;
- Promoting active ground floor uses.

Adaptable neighbourhoods and buildings

Society is changing fast: the nature of work, climate change and environmental awareness, communications, leisure and retail, demographics, the way social and health services are delivered and almost every other aspect of life is under-going radical change and no one can predict what society will look like or what its requirements will be in 30 years time.

A core principle therefore is to ensure that all new development no matter how big or small is designed to be flexible so that new standards and technologies can be readily adopted over time with the minimum of disruption and with the objective of minimising whole life costs and use of resources. Successful neighbourhoods, places and buildings change their use several times during their lifetime and such flexibility is vital to long-term sustainability.

The following has therefore been considered:

- Layouts for new developments with a block shape and size that allows for maximum future adaptability. In practice, this has meant a grid layout, a concept that has been developed further in the accompanying Design Codes;
- Buildings which are capable of alternative uses and future adaptation;
- Simple, uncluttered and useable public spaces;
- The development of buildings suitable for conversion and extension e.g. lifetime homes

Resource use and energy efficiency

Buildings and landscapes should be designed to minimise resource use during construction, operation and maintenance and further to use renewable and sustainably managed resources efficiently. This principle is further developed in the next section on standards where specific targets are identified for different essential resources.

In summary however this has meant:

- Consideration is being given to passive energy efficient design including solar gain, shelter and shade whilst avoiding over-heating and the need for air conditioning. Compact building forms have an important function to play in delivering this principle;
- Designing with natural ventilation and light and incorporating this principle into design briefs;
- Promoting low energy demand buildings and places as a principle in this document, and ensuring this principle is carried through into design briefs and planning documents;
- Promoting the use of renewable energy to power buildings, street lights etc.
- A requirement to justify for inclusion of any energy intensive services;
- The incorporation of sustainable drainage system (SUDS) / grey-water recycling in the design of infrastructure and buildings;
- Promoting minimal length of service runs and extent of road surfaces;
- Re-use of land, existing buildings and infrastructure;
- Promoting through planning guidance waste minimisation and incentives for recycling;
- A focus on whole life performance and costs, whereby revenue and maintenance budgets are considered alongside capital costs when designing new developments.

Dark Skies

Dark Skies is a campaign by the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the British Astronomical Association concerned with the loss of night skies through intrusive and unnecessary light pollution. This outdoor lighting spills into and colours the night sky and reduces the visibility of the stars, and also reduces the feeling of remoteness in rural areas introducing a suburban character deep into the countryside. The Dark Skies campaign presses for:

- Better protection for our remaining unlit landscape and countryside
- Greater attention to the siting and type of lighting used both in the country and in town, in order to reduce wasted light, and
- Removal of unnecessary lighting because of its impact on the night sky.

www.dark-skies.org

Sustainable Design Standards

Principles are all very well, but in order to give them teeth the Local Development Framework has developed a set of standards that will apply to all new development in Ashford.

This approach builds upon the RPG9 policy for delivering the enhanced quality of life following the principles of sustainable development, including the recommendation to adopt the SEEDA Sustainability Checklist. We have taken this recommendation and adapted it in the standards set out below.

These standards will constitute the minimum build quality that will be expected. The standards fall into two categories, the first is the adoption of good urban design practice that is largely covered in other sections of this document and the accompanying design code. The second set of standards (together with the Strategic Environmental Assessment) form the environmental resource management standards that all development will be expected to achieve. As outlined in RPG9 the SEEDA Sustainability Checklist for Developments will be used alongside the deisgn codes and sustainability standards to implement such standards at a development level[7].

The environmental standards include both the adoption of the Building Research Establishment's Eco-Homes and BREAM standards. The Eco-

Homes standard is designed to cover residential development, whilst the BREAM standards cover other types of buildings including public buildings and infrastructure as well as office and industrial development.

Eco-Homes and BREAM have been adopted because they are a recognised quality assured scheme. They have the advantage of:

- Allowing most of the core issues to be addressed in one target;
- Providing an independent method of judging development standards on a level playing field.

At the same time it is recognised that the government is introducing a sustainable building code, which will attempt to rationalise and formalise standards that all new development should adopt but these standards above are expected to complement the code.

Specific resource issues

The second part of the approach to management is to adopt a comprehensive set of qualitative and in two cases quantitative standards for 6 key areas of resource use identified in the Ashford Capacity Study and echoed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and in SEEDA's Taking Stock report. These standards have been adopted as an accompaniment the BRE assessment methods because whilst the BRE assessment methods are very useful they allow developers the flexibility to prioritise certain areas at the expense of other important resource issues.

The consequence of this can be that water conservation, which is a fundamental issue for Ashford does not necessarily have to be considered in order to achieve a 'very good' Eco-Homes rating if other factors a given priority. Because this plan will shape development for a long time to come, it is felt that each of the major resource issues needs to have its own standard.

The consequence of this can be that some resources, for example water, which is a fundamental issue for Ashford, do not necessarily have to be considered in order to achieve a 'very good' EcoHomes rating if other factors a given priority. Because this plan will shape development over the long term, it is felt that each of the major resource issues needs to have its own standard.

Phasing in sustainable standards

Whilst government and regional policy promotes the adoption of sustainable development standards across all communities Ashford recognises that it is far easier and less expensive to design sustainability into new build than to apply sustainable standards to existing neighbourhoods.

There is great potential to establish flexible and sustainable infrastructure in new development, for example district and community heat and power systems, sustainable urban drainage, improved cycle and pedestrian routes, home zones and bus stops, extensive biodiversity measures and waste management and recycling systems.

The intention therefore is to focus on these areas initially and introduce sustainability measures to existing communities more gradually.

For all types of development, standards are designed to become more demanding over time because it is recognised that developers and the public sector will need time to gear up to meet these objectives. It is anticipated that over the period of this plan European, National and Regional policy will change and standards will become increasingly onerous. This is reflected in the standards set out below.

The standards set out here are for new build only and are therefore more challenging than current government policy because government targets apply to the whole of the Borough, but for reasons given above, new build is expected to deliver radically higher standards that take into account the impact of growth on the delivery of sustainable development and quality of life across of the Borough.

The standards have been sub-divided into 3 categories to cover the 3 types of development; the new urban villages, town centre development and regeneration. The reason for this is that it is easier to achieve these standards in green belt developments where construction costs are relatively low, development is relatively unencumbered, and returns on investment are high. Town centre development will typically take place on Brownfield sites, which can be expensive to reclaim but offer good sale values, whilst regeneration sites are both difficult and expensive to develop and tend to achieve fairly poor returns.

Eco-Homes (BRE)

Eco-Homes is a widely recognised quality assured scheme that independently assesses the environmental performance of a home. The scale of the assessment starts from 'Pass', 'Good', and 'Very Good 'to' Excellent. It is an easy way to understand the wider environmental concerns of climate change, resource use and impact on wildlife balanced against the need for a high quality of life. It allows developers the flexibility to achieve better environmental performance of their developments along seven categories of:

Energy
Pollution
Transport
Health and well-being
Water
Materials
Ecology and land use

Eco-homes guidance 2005, BRE, 2005

THE 6 KEY AREAS ARE:

Energy

Each person in the UK produces approximately 12 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year, contributing significantly to global warming. The long-term objective is to create carbon-neutral development. The plan is to move towards this gradually by setting increasingly ambitious targets that will be introduced over the life time of this document in order to allow developers time to gear up. The means for achieving these reductions can be summarized as:

- Reducing energy demands from buildings and infrastructure;
- On-site power generation from low-carbon and renewable sources;
- Gradually set up energy supply companies (or work with existing suppliers) to manage sustainable energy supply;
- Consider establishing combined sustainable suppliers of energy, waste and water supply companies, focusing on the new urban villages.

Water

The average person in the UK consumes 150 litres of water a day. The South East is getting increasingly drier in the summer and prone to flooding in winter. In view of the existing environmental constraints on water abstraction, the fact that development already planned for will increase demand, and the likelihood that climate change will cause increased demand and reduced supply, planning for any further increase in water consumption in Ashford is imprudent. The analysis in the Handbook for Change points to an option that all future development should be 'water neutral' - that is, using a combination of on- site and off- site measures to achieve no net increase in water consumption. This has been shown to be technically possible for individual houses in areas with lower average rainfall than Ashford. This is however more ambitious than some stakeholders feel comfortable with. Increasingly strenuous water use targets are therefore introduced over time.

Measures that need to be considered in order to achieve this ambition include:

- The adoption of Sustainable urban drainage systems in all new development sites and the gradual incorporation of SUDS throughout the development area.
- The incorporation of grey and black water recycling systems into new development areas.
- On site capture and reuse of rainwater in gardens and for other uses
- The adoption of low water demand gardens
- The adoption of green roofs and other on site rainwater capture systems
- The adoption of water metering not only in all new development but throughout Ashford in conjunction with an information and education service to encourage water use reductions
- The adoption of variable water tariffs that give a financial incentive for water efficiency that reduces peakdemand.
- Roads and streets should be designed for extreme rainfall events that overload drainage systems and cause them to behave as watercourses that may channel water into homes e.g. via drop kerbs.
- Homes at risk of flooding should be designed to be flood tolerant and include emergency access to and from the building and neighbourhood.
- The promotion of low water use white goods
- The adoption of low flush toilets, spray taps and showers and other measures to reduce use in new and existing buildings.

Waste

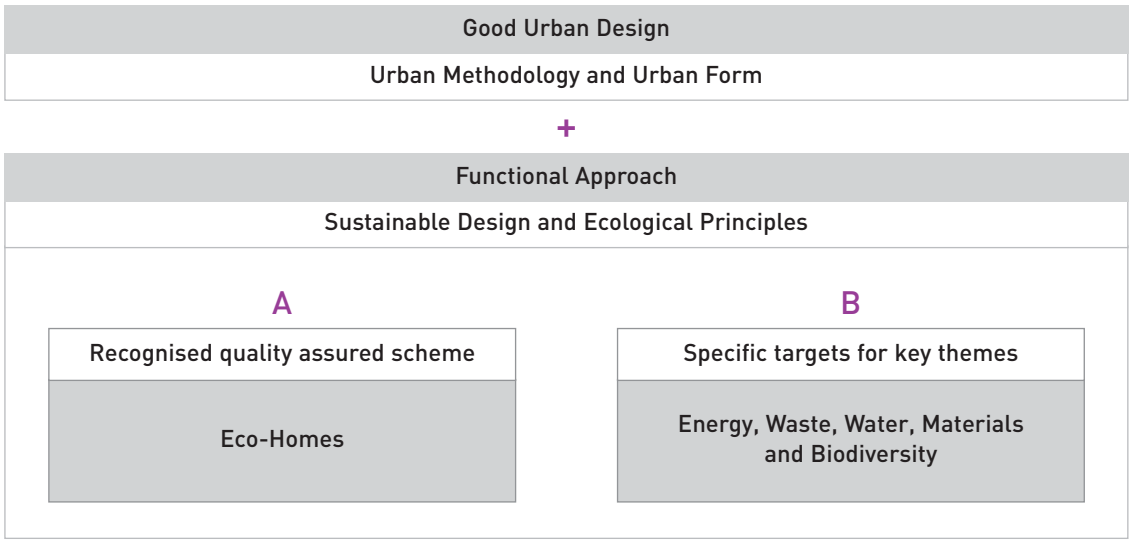
Municipal waste arisings are growing by 3% per annum and are inextricably linked to growth. 75% of waste currently goes to landfill and less than 10% is recycled. Increasing pressure on limited landfill capacity within Kent, limits to the physical possibility and political acceptability of shipping waste outside the area (contrary to the 'proximity principle') and the extreme political contentiousness and environmental impacts of incineration all point firmly to the priority of reducing waste arisings associated with new development. The ideal is 'waste neutral' development that combines on- site methods of reducing, reusing and recovering waste with off-site investments to offset the new housing's waste. In order to achieve this, new approaches need to be adopted, for example:

- Strategies for homes and businesses need to reduce waste production
- Incorporate recycling, composting and energy recovery systems into neighbourhoods
- Reduce construction waste

Materials

The average person in the UK currently uses 10 tonnes of materials per year, whilst the construction industry uses about 420 million tonnes per annum of which only 10% is from recycled sources and less than 1% is reclaimed. The transport of materials in the construction industry alone accounts for 30% of road freight.

The choice of materials used therefore play a key role in delivering sustainable developments. The sustainability of materials covers a number of issues such as their: embodied energy; toxicity and emissions; the sourcing of sustainably managed materials such as Forest Stewardship Certified timber; the durabability of materials selected and their whole life costs and life cycle impacts; provenance and in particular favouring



[7] RPG9 South East Chapter 12 - Ashford Growth Area, 2004
SEEDA Sustainability Checklist for Developments in the South East, July 2003

locally sourced materials in order to support local character and the local economy whilst minimising impacts from transport; and the use of recycled and reclaimed materials.

The Building Research Establishment, constructing excellence, HAPM guides to the component life manual of materials used in the construction industry and others have developed Environmental Profiling to measure the environmental performance of materials throughout a product's life. The BRE profiles provide key indicators of environmental sustainability such as CO2 emissions, ozone depletion, acidification, consumption of minerals and water, and give an overall ecopoint rating for different types of material. It is based on the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology. Core priorities for procurement therefore include:

- Selecting high performance in-use materials
- Local sourcing
- Encouraging reducing, reclaiming and recycling materials
- Promoting modern methods of construction that reduces amount of material required
- Selecting 'low-toxicity' materials in homes and offices
- Using materials that can readily be recycled at the end of their life
- Selecting durable materials that have a low whole life cost.
- Work actively with Remade in Kent to promote the use of recycled materials

For each of the 4 resource issues listed above the table at the end of this section provides targets for progressively reducing their use in line with the issues covered here. For biodiversity and transport however it is difficult to set specific targets and we have therefore concentrated on describing qualitative measures that need to be taken.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a broad term that describes the variety of life on the planet and the habitats and ecosystems that are necessary to support it. The Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) seeks to restore, enhance and create 28 priority habitats found in Kent; 17 BAP priority habitats are found within the GADF area of Ashford.

High levels of protection need to be given to valued landscapes, particularly those with national and international designations, habitats and natural resources (PPS1). Development within Ashford will also consider regional and locally designated areas and seek to protect these and other valuable habitats.

The proposals are that the development of Ashford should make a positive contribution to green space, habitats and biodiversity in and around Ashford by progressively contributing to the development of the green grid, strategic parks and to the improvement and long-term management of other areas of accessible natural green space in line with Kent BAP targets.

As with the other standards, the enhancement of green space will take time and resources and is a long-term objective. The key aims are to:

- Minimise the impact of the planned development on biodiversity;
- Design developments to support biodiversity in line with the Town and Country Planning Association's, publication Biodiversity by Design
- Ensure that if a priority area is affected that replacement habitat is provided;
- Overall enhance the biodiversity in and around Ashford
- Contribute to the strategic development of green corridors, the green grid and new town parks;
- Use native species wherever appropriate to enrich biodiversity
- Use green and brown roofs where possible;
- To ensure there are sufficient funds and a comprehensive management plan for all new, improved and reclaimed green sites.

Transport

The core principles were described above in some detail. The core issues and relevant standards are:

- That all new development must be readily and safely accessible by continuous and safe cycle and pedestrian route to town centre.
- Extensive cycle facilities to be provided in all new development and in town centre (lock ups for bikes, showers/changing rooms in office buildings/storage in homes etc).
- Town centre housing should provide a maximum of 1 parking space per dwelling (2 room) or 1.5 for three room or more decreasing over time as residents and visitors are increasingly encouraged to visit and travel within Ashford by public transport, cycle or foot.
- Parking charges to increase and parking provision to decrease in town centre to be replaced by edge of town and park and ride facilities over the next 10 years.
- Extensive and improved public transport network including smart link to be established starting by 2010 and all new development along the Smart link corridor to contribute at an early stage to its establishment.
- The network of continuous cycle and walking routes to be joined up, extended and improved over time so that they feel safe are well surfaced and connect new developments with the town centre and rural hinterland.
- The adoption of home zone standards in all new development and the gradual inclusion of these into existing residential areas and around schools.
- The gradual improvement of road environments into vibrant streetscapes that promote walking to and around town from the surrounding villages and suburbs.
- The promotion of public transport and car pooling systems for example by offering bus passes to new residents and by encouraging large developments to introduce car pooling facilities and support.

STANDARDS			Adopted dates for standards by development type		
			Urban Villages	Town Centre	Regeneration
CURRENT BASE STANDARDS	**Building Regulations (2006)**				
	Currently building regulations will be improving by 25% every 5 years, this is not sufficient to meet the resource savings outlined in the capacity study, and is therefore considered not to be an acceptable option for new development in Ashford.				
	Energy/C02	50 kg.m^2.pa CO_2 emissions 125 kWh/m^2.pa Energy Demand	2005	2005	2005
	Water	100 dwelling litres/person/day			
	Waste	470 kg/person/pa Domestic Waste 20m^3/100m^2 Construction Waste			
	Materials	10% recycled / 30% FSC Timber			
STANDARD 1	**Eco-Homes 'Very Good'**				
	This standard has been adopted by our partners the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and SEEDA for all new developments. It is also a recommended standard to be achieved in the SEA. Setting this standard increases the sustainability credentials of developments beyond Building Regulations (2006).				
	Energy/C02	35 kg.m^2.pa CO_2 emissions 95 kWh/m^2.pa Energy Demand	2005	2005	2005
	Water	89 dwelling litres/person/day			
	Waste	400 kg/person/pa Domestic Waste 15m^3/100m^2 Construction Waste			
	Materials	15% recycled/60% FSC timber/30£ 'A' Rated			
STANDARD 2	**Eco-Homes Excellent plus improved core resource utilisation**				
	This standard moves beyond best practice being set by our partners and begins to move towards the overall carbon, water and neutral target as set out in the accompanying text. It adopts many of the higher SEA targets within developments in addition to the higher Eco-Homes target of 'excellent'.				
	Energy/C02	25 kg.m^2.pa CO_2 emissions 72 kWh/m^2.pa Energy Demand	2008	2010	2015
	Water	67 dwelling litres/person/day			
	Waste	340 kg/person/pa Domestic Waste 10m^3/100m^2 Construction Waste			
	Materials	20% recycled/75% FSC timber/50% 'A' Rated			
STANDARD 3	**60% Carbon Dioxide Emissions reduction**				
	This standard follows the UK wide aspiration for 60% CO2 emissions reduction across the UK by 2050. But in order to meet this target higher standards are set for new developments in order to compensate for the more gradual adoption of higher standards in existing development.				
	Energy/C02	10 kg.m^2.pa CO_2 emissions 30 kWh/m^2.pa Energy Demand	2011	2018	2020
	Water	47 dwelling litres/person/day			
	Waste	260 kg/person/pa Domestic Waste 5m^3/100m^2 Construction Waste			
	Materials	35% recycled/100% FSC timber/75% 'A' Rated			
STANDARD 4	**Energy, Water and Waste Neutral - CARBON NEUTRAL**				
	This standard sets out the targets and implications of carbon neutral developments, whereby development follows one planet living objectives set out in the text. Which is also seen to represent a fair share of the earths resources. Ashford aspires to creating a pilot carbon neutral development in partnership with the private sector as soon as is feasibly possible.				
	Energy/C02	Carbon Neutral	2015	2020	2030
	Water	Water Neutral			
	Waste	Waste Neutral			
	Materials				

Table Definitions

FSC – FSC Timber is timber (or wood-based products) provided by Forest Stewardship Council certified forests that are responsibly managed and based on the FSC 10 principles that consider strict environmental, social and economic standards.

'A' Rated materials – The Building Research Establishment (BRE) assess the environmental performance of over 250 construction specifications, each is ranked on a scale of A to C, with A representing the least impact on the environment. Key issues of impact include climate change, ozone depletion, consumption of materials, water and fossil fuels, emissions of pollutants and waste.

05 THE STRATEGIC GROWTH MODEL

This section deals with the development of a Strategic Growth Model (SGM) for Ashford, seeking to locate the overall quantum of development within the context of Ashford. The earlier 'broad brush' calculations undertaken gave an indication of the scale of change anticipated in Ashford to meet the requirements of 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs as some 16 square kilometres of development landtake. The SGM quantifies in further detail these landtake requirements. It looks to where this land could be allocated and what form new development should take. It develops this in the context of previous studies, determined physical constraints and the overall ambitions and objectives of the strategic vision. It informs and supports the emerging Economic Vision and Town Centre Development Framework. More particularly develops the SGM within the requirements of the ODPM's 'Sustainable Communities Plan', the emerging Ashford 'Local Development Framework' and the delivery requirements of Ashford's Future.

This section tests three growth scenarios from which a preferred scenario and Master Option for growth is identified. An assessment of these scenarios from a workstream perspective is included.

05.1 DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC GROWTH MODEL

Playing the Strategic Growth Model game at Eastwell Manor

Critical to moving the Vision forward to a physical reality was the need to develop effective tools to engage with the wider stakeholder group in a meaningful way. This was particularly relevant to the challenge of growth and change demanded, recognising that a collaborative working approach had not occurred at this scale of development before.

Although we recognised that a strong and directive plan would have to be shaped by a clearly defined urban structure, we also recognised that we needed to test different development scenarios with these stakeholder groups. Testing options allowed us to assess as a group a number of issues:

- **What is a scenario that is optimal for respecting the floodplain?**
- **What is a model that is optimal to really support a viable and convenient public transport system?**
- **What is a model that will generate sufficient enthusiasm for people to set up job opportunities?**
- **What is a model that would be supportive of a diverse range of housing options?**

The Game

In order to move this forward, Urban Initiatives developed a simulation game that enabled the participants at the Eastwell Manor Workshop to envision and evaluate:

- where we wanted development to be;
- what form it should take; and
- the implications of such choices

Participants were drawn from amenity, voluntary and residents groups, parish councils, service providers, Borough councillors and Ashford's Future partners.

The main purpose of the game was to get those people who would be affected by growth and/or who would have to deliver the growth, to consider the broad model that should underpin the development of the town. Stakeholders were asked to consider the interrelated and complex issues of community development, rather than just the spatial implications.

The simulation game had three components:

1. Tiles: Scaled units of development for various density, mix and land use types.

2. Boards: Scaled plans for three different growth scenarios, showing physical constraints, key elements of movement infrastructure and potential zones for development for a range of density, mix and land use types.

3. Rules: Identifying the conditions under which the tiles could be played on the boards to achieve walkable neighbourhoods, sustainable public transport and efficient use of land and resources.

This game and its components has been a key determinant in developing the Working Masterplan and the emergent land use and density calculations can be tracked back to this process. It has been taken forward in the development of the Design Codes

The Unit of Development

Our goal for the game was to produce a series of tiles that would reflect the true nature of the land acreage of different types of urban development, particularly when residential homes are involved. It was therefore important to select a tile size that reflected the scale of a reasonable sized neighbourhood containing homes, play space, schools, retail and services

In order to achieve a realistic land take estimate, a 500m x 500m (25 hectare) square was chosen as the unit containing a theoretical centre comprising retail and community services serving a local (5 minute) walking catchment of all residences within the tile. For ease of comparison, this 25 hectare unit was used for employment and public open space tiles as well. Central amenity uses such as health and higher education had smaller land use requirements, but did not need population or employment calculations performed on them at this stage.

As regards other space-extensive uses, the 25 hectare tile was used to show industrial land take and parkland. For smaller units of development such as learning, arts and cultural quarters; an office precinct; and, major health and wellbeing facilities, a quarter tile was used

Residential Uses

Although the terms of reference of this study called for the creation of 31,000 residential units, the Team needed to create some understanding of how different residential environments have different demographic profiles. At the moment, Ashford's average number of residents per household stands at 2.4, but neither suburban homes nor town centre apartments would reflect this measure of population. We have taken into account the recent Halcrow Study that estimates an average of 2.06 person/household in the plan period. However, to ensure that we have provided the maximum amount of land take possible, we have kept the current 2.4 average as a 'safety factor'. In addition, to reflect demographic differences, approximately 25% more people per household, and town centre homes with 25% less. The connection between area and units in the three different residential tiles is defined by its density, or dwellings per hectare. The density figure for each tile results from the goals for the quality of residential area, the mix of other uses, application of space standards for community infrastructure and proximity of high quality public transport and higher order amenities. Thus, we created 3 types of tiles that had major residential components:

Residential Neighbourhood – This comprises housing at the lower levels of PPG3 densities, which meant predominantly family houses in the form of detached, semidetached and terrace houses with limited apartment living closer to local centres, as part of a predominantly residential neighbourhood. The nature of this development would generally allow on-site or on-street car parking. The average density of this tile was calculated as the mean between 30-50 dph giving 40 dph or some 650 dwellings per tile. Poundbury, in Dorset, was used as a proxy for this type of development.

Living Quarter – This comprises medium density residential development, being largely townhouse and apartment living with undercroft and on-street parking as part of a mixed use district. This would be say, predominantly 3-4 storey development, although this could increase to six stories along main streets and spaces. The density range would be between 50-100 dph giving an average density of 75 dph. Taking other uses into consideration this would give rise to some 1200 units per tile. Crown Street in Glasgow was used as a proxy for this residential tile.

Town Centre – This comprises higher density residential as part of more mixed-use development, including living-over-the-shop/business with predominantly undercroft or structured car parking. It was assumed that densities would range from 100-200 dph with an average density of 150 dph. Taking other uses into consideration this would give rise to some 1500 units per tile. Temple Bar in Dublin was used as the proxy for this tile.

Definition for Dwellings per hectare

The definition of dwellings per hectare (DPH) in the planning system is based on the policy document PPG 3 (Housing). DPH is a measure of net site area, including only those areas which will be developed for housing and directly associated uses. This will include:

- access roads within the site;
- private gardens;
- car parking;
- incidental open space and landscaping; and
- children's play areas.

It therefore excludes:

- major distributor roads;
- schools;
- open spaces serving a wider area; and
- significant landscape buffer strips.

Therefore, not all of the 25 ha tiles are part of the net site area used to calculate DPH. In the Residential Neighbourhood and Living Quarter tiles, only about 70% of the land will fall into this category, with schools and distributor roads taking up a significant amount of space. In the Town Centre, where there is intensive mixed-use activity, the new site area would equate to around 40% of the land.

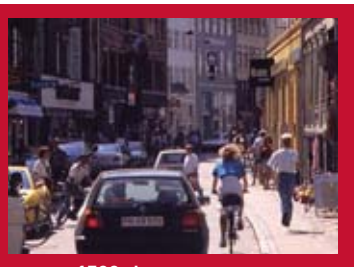
The Residential Neighbourhood

600	homes
5	hectares of open space
1.2	schools
2	community facilities
1.5	shops
~0	jobs (negligible)

The Living Quarter

1200	homes
3.5	hectares of open space
1.1	schools
2.2	community facilities
6	shops
750	jobs

The Town Centre



1500	homes
0.75	hectares of open space
1	school
(civic)	community facilities
60,000 m^2	retail floorspace
3000	jobs

Examples of 25 hectare tiles

Standards of Provision

This section deals with the principles and assumptions that the Consultant Team developed in order to test three different growth models for Ashford.

Community Infrastructure

Planning standards in recent publications such as 'Shaping Neighbourhoods' use population as a measure to provide services to residential tiles. We needed to make a connection between the population, number of units and the area required by the community services inside residential tiles. These measures are supplemented by residential amenity standards in the 'Kent Structure Plan' and the 'Ashford Borough Local Plan'.

These standards included:

- **Outdoor Playspace** 2.4 ha / 1000 people
- **Schools** 0.52 children / household
- **Shops** 1 / 1500 people
- **Community Centres** 1 / 4,000 people
- **Health Centres** 1 / 10,000 people
- **Libraries** 1 / 15,000 people
- **Houses of Worship** 1 / 10,000 people
- **Pubs** 1 / 6,000 people
- **Post Offices** 1 / 5,000 people

Applying the Standards

Using these standards, applying the adjusted household sizes, and making considered judgements as to the application of these standards within the range of density types, we calculated the following requirements:

Local and Regional Open Space - Common sense assumptions were made on the location of open space in residential areas. In the Residential Neighbourhood, all of the open space requirements directly associated with new build housing were to be met by 5 hectares of open space available within its own 25 hectare tile. In the Living Quarter and Town Centre tiles, the open space was reduced with the deficit made up by creating intensely managed regional parkland represented by 25 hectare tiles of their own. These spaces would serve the wider community, unlike those within the Residential Neighbourhood, and serve an important role in civic identity.

Local Amenities - The provision of local amenities and their respective land take was calculated for each residential type. The Living Quarter and Town Centre tiles also contain further allocations of amenities to satisfy the demand produced by surrounding residential neighbourhood areas. This took into account land take requirements based on the accepted standards and best practice alluded to above.This is outlined in the table below.

Education – The provision of schools was based on the pupil/product ratio (children per household) produced by KCC. This was varied to take into account demographic predictions of the number of families living in each sector of the town.

Circulation

The tiles take into consideration primary roads such as the Victoria Way, local distributor roads and main streets. All other roads are included in the gross residential areas.An allowance of 5% of the tile area has been given over to this higher order circulation.

	Residential Neighbourhood	Living Quarter	Town Centre
Residential population - Max. feasable	1800	2800	2700
Public Open Space	5ha	3.5ha (garden squares)	0.75 (urban squares)
Primary Schools	1	1	1
Secondary Schools	0.2	0.1	0
Local Shops	1.5	6	Part of retail component
Community Centre	0.5	0.6	0.6
Health Centre	0.2	0.3	0.3
Library	0.1	0.2	0.2
Places of Worship	0.2	0.3	0.3
Public Houses	0.3	0.5	0.5
Post Office	0.4	0.6	0.6

Table: Local amenities and public space to support 25 hectare tile (these figures will be subsequently reviewed by service providers)

Employment Uses

In exploring the location and type of employment space to meet the requirements of 28,000 jobs, a number of brush assumptions were made regarding the nature of employment demanded. This was partly informed by the emerging Economic Vision and by an examination of best practice elsewhere.

The provision of employment space took four forms:

1. As part of Mixed-Use Development

In a typical town centre of a medium density district, a significant number of office units intermingle within a residential community. These could be horizontally mixed in separate office and residential blocks, or vertically mixed in with residential, retail, or community uses. In order to quantify this type of development an estimate of 10% of the land in a Living Quarter tile and 40% of the land in a Town Centre tile was given over to local and town centre employment uses. Mixed use employment was calculated at a medium density (1 worker/30m^2) with a less intense demand, a lower building height, a new plot ratio of 1:0 was used for the Living Quarter. In the Town Centre, with increased retail/office demand, a net plot ratio of 1:5 was used. The same demand for circulation and parking (15% of land area) was assumed to calculate the net development area. This translated into 750 and 3,000 commercial and office jobs in Living Quarter and Town Centre tiles, respectively.

2. As Part of a Dedicated Office Precinct

A major proportion of office employment will be located within an office precinct within close distance of the Ashford International Station. This precinct would have a gross plot ratio of 1.5:1 and a high (1 worker / 20 square metres) employment density. A quarter tile accommodated some 3750 jobs.

3. As Part of Business park/ Industrial Estates

Not more than 20% of new jobs to be provided in low-density (1,125 jobs per 25 hectare tile) industrial estates at motorway junctions.

4. As a Result of Intensifying Existing Employment Areas

This includes redevelopment and adaptive reuse of employment zones within close proximity of the town centre. The density of jobs was not calculated but broad assumptions made that would need to tested in detail later.

Higher Order Land Uses

A range of quarter tiles were produced to reflect such uses as:

- An arts and cultural quarter
- A civic quarter
- A learning quarter, including student residential development, and
- A health and wellbeing complex

No detailed land take assumptions were made for these specific uses, as it was assumed the bulk of these would be accommodated within general mixed use development. This assumption would need to be tested in detail as part of developing the Strategic Concept Plan.

Open Space

A series of parkland, wetland and woodland tiles were also produced using the 25 hectare format. These could be grouped to create a major wetlands park, an active recreation park or to create a woodland corridor. Local open space was provided for in the Residential Neighbourhood and Living Quarter tiles.

Examples of higher order tiles

The Boards

Developing the Scenarios

Three development scenarios were constructed, each representing a potential growth model. We developed three different gameboards approximately 2 x 2.5 meters with a large aerial photo of Ashford as the primary game surface. The boards showed a number of key bits of information:

- A 25 hectare grid to complement the size of the tiles.
- The floodplain
- Key transport corridors, including the approximate position of Junction 10a, the proposed Victoria Way and New Town Bridge and the dotted alignment of a southern orbital route.
- The Ashford International Station and proposed new stations at Great Chart and Park Farm, all showing their relative walking catchments.
- The extent of development for each scenario shown as coloured squares. For each scenario there were four times as many playable squares as there were tiles that could be played.
- As a general rule special squares for industrial/business park development were identified at M20 junctions.

In all cases the extent of development was determined by combining all potential sites into potential development zones. These sites were identified through a number of sources:

- The areas of search identified in other strategic studies such as Halcrow Report (including their transport diagram) and the RPS transport work.
- The areas of search identified in Regional Planning Guidance.
- Sites identified by BDP in their Town Centre Strategy.
- Sites identified by Ashford Borough Council through representations from landowners, housebuilders and other interested parties.
- Sites that have been identified through analysis by the team.

The extent of the identified development area was not prescriptive and stakeholders were allowed, within reason, play outside the limits.

Each scenario had different development prospects:

1) The Suburban Model – largely qualified by dispersed lower density growth on the peripheral edge of Ashford broadly reflecting current growth patterns in Ashford. This scenario assumes that any new development would broadly achieve low PPG3 densities in predominantly mono-functional suburbs, supported by local centres. The maximum extent of potential playable squares was allowed for this scenario.

2) The Decentralised Neighbourhood Model – growth is polycentric and is defined by a series of larger medium density 'neighbourhoods' where development is focused around a strong district centre with a wide range of amenities and residential choice. The number of playable squares as reduced for this option with the additional requirement that any tiles played within a new station catchment had to be Living Quarter tiles.

3)The Compact Urban Model – growth is linear focusing as much development as possible in close proximity to the existing Town Centre and expanding the sense of the centre along highly developed transport corridors. The number of playable squares as further reduced to hold development closer to the town centre. As before, the additional requirement that any tiles played within a new station catchment had to be Living Quarter tiles. In addition potential relocation squares were identified that allowed underutilised areas to be regenerated. A further complication was that, development was allowed in the floodplain but only if an area could be identified for its relocation.

The following elements are common to all three scenarios:

- All of the tiles added up to the 31000 housing units and 28000 jobs that have to be delivered;
- Two Town Centre tiles to accommodate the intense and effective development of the Town Centre Area;
- One Office Precinct quarter tile to deal with key jobs within close proximity to the Ashford International Station;
- Six civic institution quarter tiles to denote higher order public institutions that are not absorbed in any of the housing tiles, such as a Learning and Skills Campus, a Health and Well-Being Centre, Arts, Cultural and Recreational Facilities.
- Players could trade up two Residential Neighbourhood tiles for one Living Quarter tile or vice versa, but they could only do this once.

Extent of potential development land

Potential development land translated into development zones

The Rules

Generative Urbanism, outlined in the previous section, was proposed as our approach to a growth and change model for sustainable development - public transport accessibility in combination with walkability being the primary generators of urban form and, by definition, urban activity. The primary determinant in calculating the scale and density of a settlement therefore is the quality and quantity of public and other forms of transport. If public transport were the only determinant, most settlements would be linear in form. Combined with walkability they become both linear and nodal.

The diagram to the right demonstrates the scale of settlement relative to walking distances and public transport provision required to meet the modal split requirements.

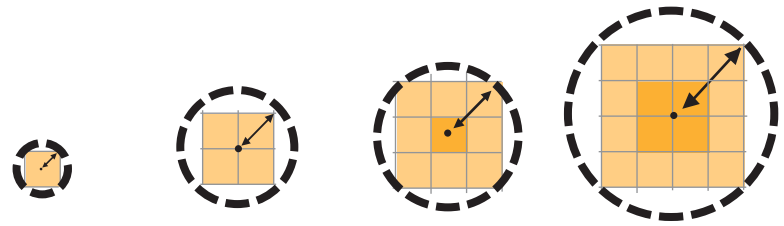
Current best practice shows that a 5 minute walkband to neighbourhood centres or to high quality bus services is a good target. This implies a scale of neighbourhood of 9 tiles, approximating some 6,000 units, assuming 8 yellow tiles and one orange tile.

The diagram to the right shows that in order to increase the bus usage to a level better than the UK average, the scale of neighbourhood should closer to 10 yellow tiles (6000 units).

Both confirm the optimum sizes of neighbourhood to be in the order of 6,000 units that equates to a neighbourhood population size of say 12,000 people. This becomes one of the most important informants to playing the game.

Analysis shows:

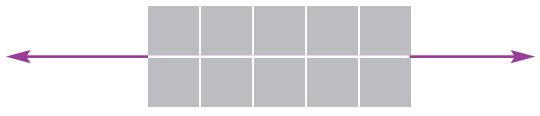
- **Size of tiles relative to walking and cycling catchments**
- **Number of residential units in each tile type estimated**



Tiles	1	4	9	25
Area: sq.km ha	0.25 25	1 100	2.25 225	6.25 625
No. Units (approx) Yellow Orange **Total**	 600 N/A **600**	 2400 N/A **2400**	 4800 1200 **6000**	 7200 4800 **12000**
Walking catchment	All within 5 minutes	All within 5 minutes	80% within 5 minutes	All within 10 minutes

Bus Route (every 15 minutes)

1. Just about viable with current bus use



Bus Route (every 5 minutes)

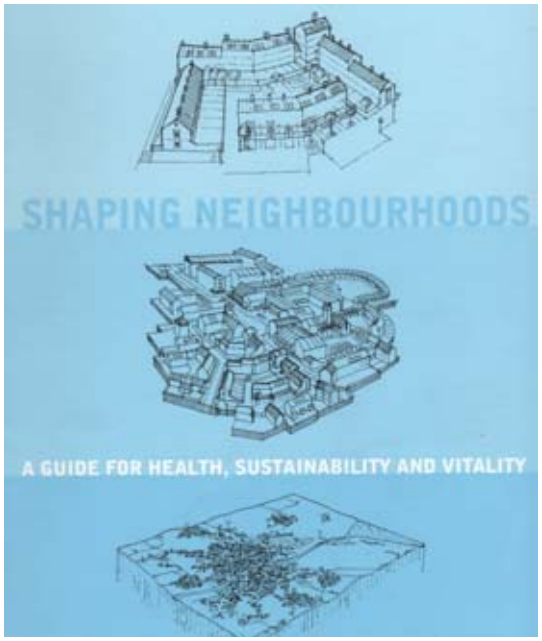
2. Better service with higher use (at UK average)

It is also important that we consider the scale of neighbourhood required to sustain a comprehensive range of community infrastructure and non-residential uses.

There is no real optimal scale of neighbourhood in social and economic terms and looking for the perfect scale has troubled planners in the past. The early work of the Urban Villages Forum proposed urban villages of 40 hectares (as in its Greenville proposal's) although this was not fully justified.

Calthorpe's work on transit-oriented development (TODs) in the United States proposes a scale of development unit that is related to scale of public transport provision but not scale of community infrastructure provision. The Urban Design Compendium (English Partnerships) only uses walkbands to determine scale of neighbourhood unit (50 hectares).

Sustainable urban neighbourhoods are far too complex to be determined by walkbands alone.



'Shaping Neighbourhoods' (UWE, 2002) was a valuable document to clarify the scale and nature of community infrastructure required to make sustainable urban neighbourhoods.

Community infrastructure

It is however at the level of local provision of community infrastructure that optimum sizes become a fundamental issue to making neighbourhoods work and building communities. How much development is needed to support a local foodstore, sustain local jobs or provide health, welfare or education uses?

The table below shows that neighbourhoods of some 5-6, 000 units is optimal in terms of providing the full range of community infrastructure. Using 9 tiles (one orange and eight yellow) we have a neighbourhood that can support:

- a local high street with a wide range of local shopping facilities including a foodstore;
- a full range of local facilities including health centre,the post office, leisure centres and places of worship;
- four primary schools and one secondary school
- a major neighbourhood park with local play areas within the neighbourhood

The sources supporting this conclusion for a 5-6,000 unit neighbourhood derive from Kent County Council standards, 'Shaping Neighbourhoods,' and current best practice for foodstore development in the UK (Source:DTZ Pieda), amongst others.

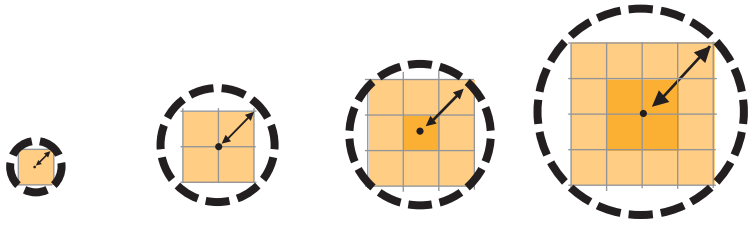
In taking forward the work of others we have identified that the scale of their neighbourhoods, based largely on walkbands only, are more likely to operate as sub-neighbourhoods. That is four sub-neighbourhoods of say 50 hectares will make one sustainable urban neighbourhood. Each sub-neighbourhood has access to its own primary school and local play areas and facilities.

This equates to say, nine of our tiles. It should be borne in mind that the tiles allow for some 20% open space, which could be largely grouped around the edges of the neighbourhood and create compactness closer to the neighbourhood centre.

This becomes the second basic informant to playing the game and supports the public transport case.

Analysis shows:

- Size of tiles relative to walking and cycling catchments
- Extent of community infrastructure to be provided



Tiles	1	4	9	16
Area: ha	25	100	225	400
No. Units Living Quarter	0	0	1200	4800
No. Units Residential Neighbourhood	600	2400	4800	7200
Population @ 1.91 (LQ), 2.18 (RN)	1,308	8,720	12,756	24,864
Range of facilities supported (Education)	None	1 Primary School	1 Secondary School 4 Primary Schools	2 Secondary Schools 8 Primary Schools
(Shops)	1 Corner Shop	4 Shops	1 Supermarket 8 Shops	1 Hypermarket 12 Shops
(Community Centres)	None	1	2	3
(Health Centres)	None	1	2	3
(Library)	None	None	1	2
(Pubs)	None	1	3	2
(Post Offices)	None	1	2	2
(Employment)	0	0	500 jobs	2000 jobs
Public open space	5 ha (25%)	25 ha (25%)	43.5 ha (19%)	74 ha (18%)
Green Dividend	0	0	+12.75 ha	+ 26

Common Rules

- All tiles that were calculated for each respective scenario have to be played. - 31000 housing units and 28000 jobs have to be delivered.
- Two Town Centre tiles are always played in the town centre to accommodate the intense and effective development of the Town Centre Area;
- One office tile to deal with key jobs outside of the Town Centre and Industrial areas;
- One industrial tile to deal with industrial development areas;
- Six civic institution tiles to denote higher order public institutions that are not absorbed in any of the housing tiles, such as a Learning and Skills Campus, a Health and Well-Being Centre, Cultural and Recreational Facilities.
- Each game allowed for two opportunities to swop tiles: 2 yellows could be swopped for one orange tile, two orange tiles could be swopped for one red tile.
- Games 1 and 2 did not permit any development tiles to be played in the floodplain.
- Game 3 allowed for conditional development in the floodplain. Any floodplain area allocated for development would have to be relocated on a 1:1 basis.
- For each game, there was three times the spaces allocated against the tiles that had to be played.

Basic Informants

- 8 yellow tiles and one orange tile were required to sustain a five minute bus service and a full range of community services.
- These could be played to create a separate urban neighbourhood or could be added to existing development to make these areas function better.

Basic principles of clustering began to reinforce the basic benefits of urbanity – if the tiles were well played they could generate access to convenient public transport and neighbourhoods that could support a range of public services.

The Green Dividend

The principle of a 'green dividend' was established that rewarded scenarios with less land take with parkland/wetland/woodland tiles that could be played to create landscaped parks. These were allocated as follows:

Scenario	No of Green Tiles
The Suburban Model	None
The Decentralised Neighbourhood Model	8
The Compact Urban Model	16

By adding these Green Tiles to the number of tiles for each of the scenarios, they all came out to the same land take.

Playing the Game

The stakeholder group of 120 people were divided into groups and each group played through each scenario. In each scenario there were therefore three responses. The first 15 minutes of the first game caused many heated debates and arguments – each person trying to steer the game in favour of their own particular interests. Gradually however the greater principles began to come to the fore. Two critical understandings developed during the course of the games. The first is that you cannot solve the problems of a whole town from the perspective of your own backyard – ''Nimbyism'' limits the potential of the whole. Secondly growth at this scale is complex. There are competing and overlapping concerns and agendas so that within reason, trade-offs have to be made.

The tangible, physical quality of the game gave people a chance to shift around development blocks and directly explore the implications of their actions. It proved to be an extremely useful participation tool.

Each gameboard was controlled by a Gamesmaster who had a clear remit to keep the game playing. Each gameboard was supported by a range of experts in transport, environment, flooding, urban design and planning. They could be consulted throughout the game.

The fundamental rule of the game was simple: 'All tiles had to be played!'

Grouping the tiles together creates sustainable neighbourhoods with facilities within close walking distance

05.3 THE GROWTH SCENARIOS

This section deals with the 3 different Strategic Growth Scenarios for Ashford, and the assessment of each scenario from the perspective of the stakeholders group and the workstreams.

It plots the course of the Eastwell Manor Workshop to the point where a preferred Strategic Growth Model is identified.

Whilst the development scenarios explained in this section enabled people to identify and protect those aspects of the town's environment that they valued and wanted to protect, it also allowed participants consider the implications of these decisions in terms of the wider environment, the provision of public transport and other services.

The Strategic Growth Model Game was not about generating a masterplan. It was a gaming strategy to consider the type of growth wanted, the form of this growth and its implications. Although the game determined where tiles could be played, the players were allowed to play outside these areas if there was a good reason.

More detailed analysis has been developed specifically in terms of:

- Movement
- Environment
- Infrastructure and
- Future Employment

References to detailed background documents and reports have also been referred to.

Scenario 1: The Dispersed Model

Basic Description

Settlement type: A series of largely suburban neighbourhoods, with small neighbourhood centres typified by the PPG3 standards.

Land Take: This form of settlement would consume the most land as it is the most dispersed form of settlement.

A dispersed built form would result in a large land take of around 1300 ha in total with 81% comprising residential zones.

Town Centre Tiles (Red)	2
Living Quarter Tiles (Orange)	4
Residential Suburb Tiles	38
Office Precinct	1
Industrial Estate	1
Civic Institutions	6
Parkland	8

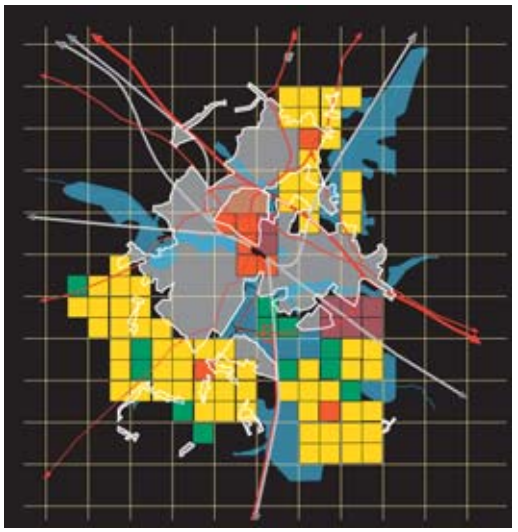
Transportation: This model is unlikely to support any significant public transport network such local stations and/or frequent bus service.

Location

There will be minimal development in the floodplain.

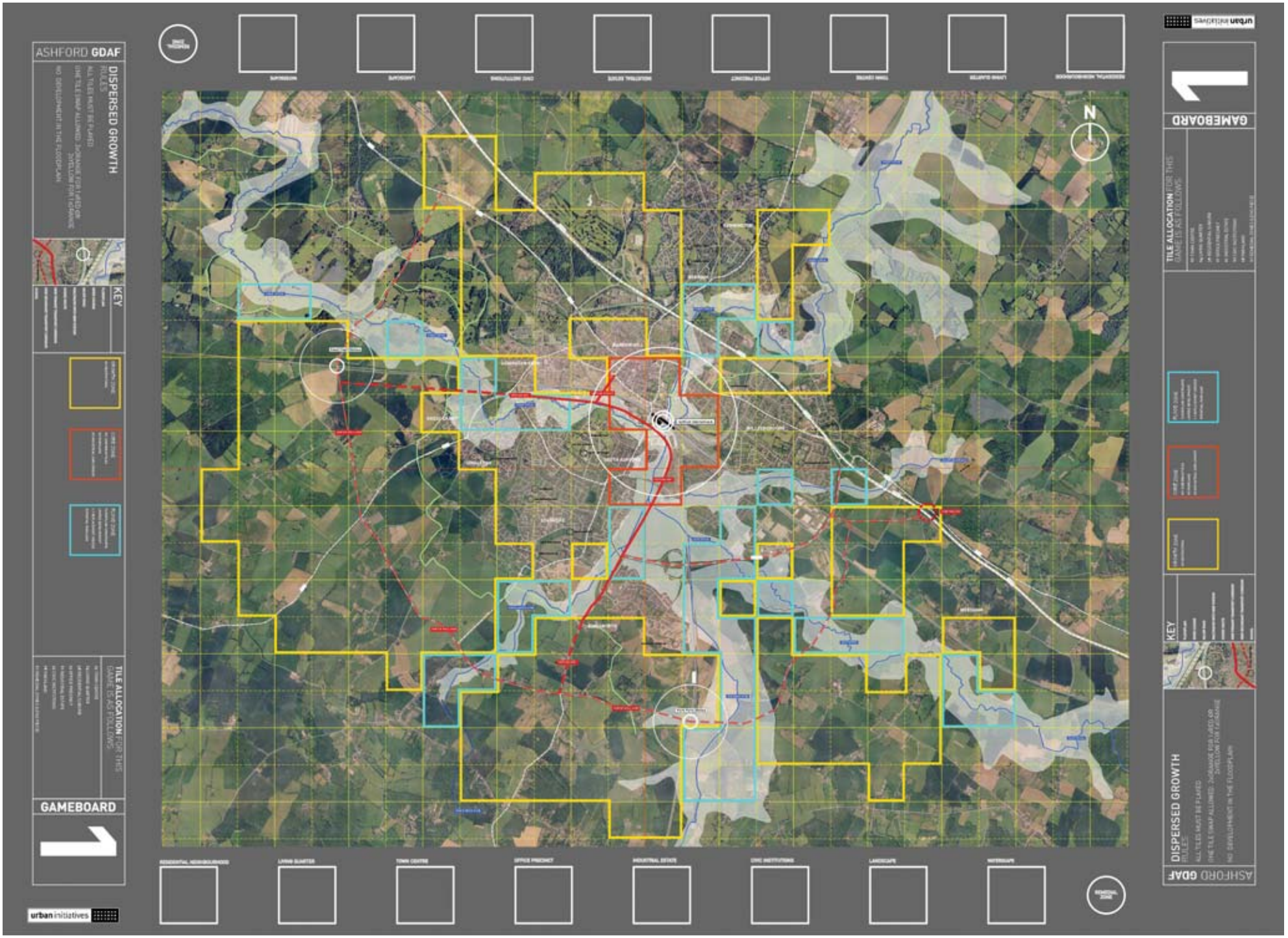
Settlement areas are largely to the South of the town. These locations have been informed by the Halcrow Report, the RPS Study, as well as a review of existing sites with representations made by landowners.

Quantity of growth required



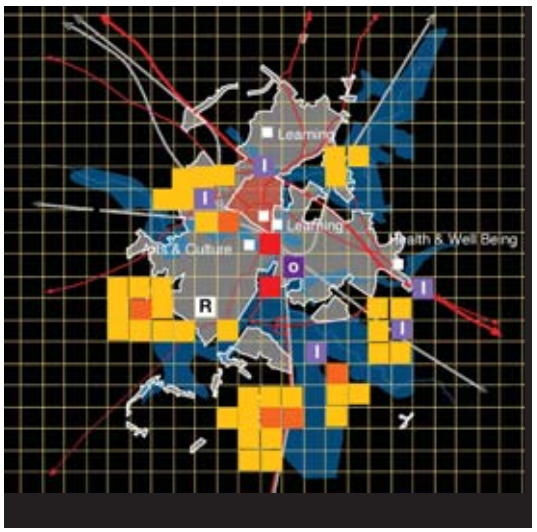
Potential growth distribution through Ashford

- A series of neighbourhoods on the edges of Ashford.
- Model as played by the Consultants team, prior to the workshop to test the model.

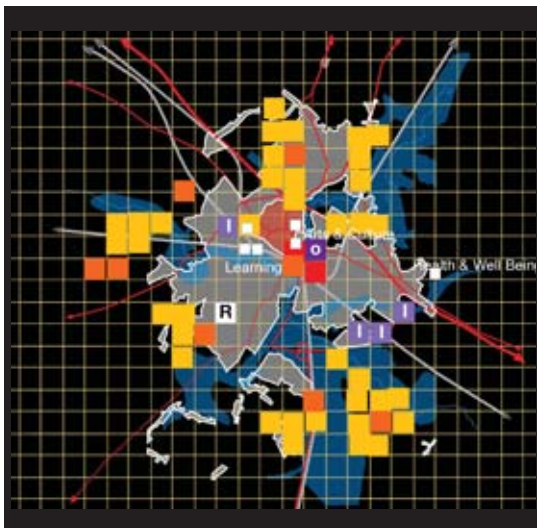


Gameboard 1: Scenario 1

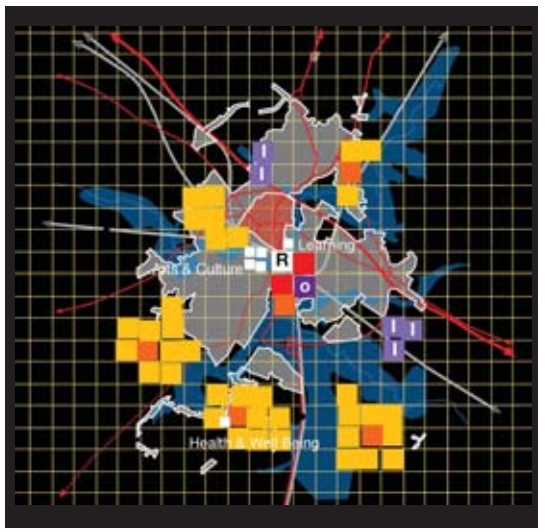
Scenario 1: The Assessments



Scenario 1 - Dispersed Model GROUP A



Scenario 1 - Dispersed Model GROUP B



Scenario 1 - Dispersed Model GROUP C

Stakeholders

- Each of the three games played by the three groups at the workshop show a series of settlements focused around local centres.
- The location of these centres varies; there is a consistent centre played south of Park Farm, south of Singleton and at Cheeseman's Green. Other centres particular to each game included the Godinton Estate, north of Great Chart and east of Kennington.
- Remedial or regeneration tiles were played at Stanhope, and at in the Industrial area off Norman Road.
- Industrial tiles are generally focused near Junction 10
- Office tiles are played in and around the Town Centre, as are intensive mixed-use tiles.
- Civic and public resource tiles tended to be more dispersed throughout the whole area.
- **The stakeholder group dismissed this model outright. It represented a development pattern that perpetuates existing development trends in Ashford. It was also recognised that this model would not sustain a viable public transport system, nor would it be likely to attract new forms of private investment. This model represented 'more of the same' for Ashford future.**

Movement

- Distinct employment and residential areas and a lack of mixed-use leads to a reduction in potential walking and cycling modal shares.
- The dispersal of development leads to viability problems for a high quality public transport system and may encourage increased car use. This in turn reduces benefits for existing areas.
- The possibility of sporadic development may also compromise viability of public transport.
- New development would probably be served by conventional buses on radial routes. Combined with the issues mentioned above, this could lead to a potential public transport modal share lower than that predicted in the AATS strategy.

Mode	2003 Base (%)	2031 AATS (%)	2031 Scenario 1 (%)
Car	65	54	60
Public Transport	4	13	11
Cycle	3	5	3
Walk	28	28	26

Notes: The above table shows the relative proportions of different transport modes for the 2003 base year, the AATS strategy in 2031 and Scenario 1 in 2031.

Environment

Conservation

There is a major impact on grade 1 agricultural land affected near Bybrook, grade 2 agricultural land affected near Great Chart.

This scenario would only have limited impact on the town centre conservation area.

There are no known sites of archeological importance affected by this scenario.

Listed buildings will need assessment on an individual basis when models are further progressed.

Ecology

The impact is significant with encroachment on woodland north of Cheeseman's Green affected and other green corridors may being affected. Woodlands would be incorporated into settlements at Cheeseman's Green, Kingsnorth and Chilmington green areas.

Landscape

Where possible development could define a clear quality of edge to the southern area of Ashford. Areas of particular value, including the designated woodlands would need to be protected. The landscape features would need to be protected and enhanced through landscape policy, to prevent sprawl undermining the landscape qualities.

Open Space

There would be a major impact on the countryside because of the extent of sprawl generated by the amount of lower density PPG3 development.

Infrastructure

Flood risk

Potential for some intrusion into the flood plains of the Great Stour and East Stour along the Victoria Way corridor and north of the railway station from new town centre development.

Policy

Environmental Agency (EA) consent will be required for potential intrusion into the flood plain for the town centre development and confirmation can then be consented on 'developed areas' under Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 25. It is possible to locate the dispersed model of development away from the flood plain. Whilst this scenario is in compliance with PPG25, it was pointed out that it is likely that significant interventions will be required in any case to protect existing communities, because of increased effects and climate change.

Water management

- Dispersed growth would require significant new drainage infrastructure to serve centralised wastewater treatment at Bybrook.
- New wastewater treatment plants are more likely to be considered in locations to suit dispersed development.
- Lower density development is likely to generate opportunities for natural wastewater treatment systems.

Opportunities for creative use of water

Limited to local retention ponds and reedbeds associated with sustainable drainage solutions.

Deliverability

No specific issues in relation to infrastructure workstream.

Viability

The dispersed model has the greatest land take and consequently would require the greatest extent of secondary services infrastructure to serve the dispersed growth areas.

Urban Core

Investment Potential

- The layout of Scenario 1 with a peripheral focus may not allow the town centre to develop a sufficient high quality areas to attract investment, although the dispersed nature of this model will encourage the development of out-of-town shopping and leisure facilities.
- Some residential pockets appear to be 'stand alone' developments with little ability to create communities through linkages and infrastructure. The sustainability of local centres is likely to be marginal as car-based movement patterns encourage larger centres.

Deliverability

- Much of the land allocated for housing in the south fits in with the current land ownership and development patterns.
- Rapid development may be seen as quick win with respect to meeting housing quotas and kick starting the project.
- Within this scenario, development is poised to take place around the Junction 10 motorway which will potentially fund the redevelopment works.
- The large scale greenfield urban development largely reflects existing and emerging planning consents and allocations with respect to new growth.
- Some development could possibly generate areas of distinct quality and improve land values. However, the cost revenue generated by home sales may not stretch as far as it would had the development occurred in a more strategic location. Much of the land utilised already has planning consent and development options, so the increase in value here may not be as significant as areas that are strategically located, but where land values may be comparatively lower.

Workplace

Deliverability

- Overall deliverability is probably higher in this model than the others because it represents a continuation of past trends in growth (and hence a greater degree of familiarity and knowledge over how to deliver employment growth with this form of expansion) and significantly lower government intervention. The delivery of a step change and innovation and quality may remain an issue.

Financial Viability

- Within this model there is less requirement for relocation of existing employment sites compared with higher density scenarios. However the viability of creating a range of employment opportunities associated with mixed use development is more limited.

Range of Opportunities

- This scenario also implies that a smaller range of jobs would be provided with a smaller range of location options. The opportunities will be focused on the centre and the peripheries.
- This model would suit the expansion of the manufacturing sector. This is forecasted to be the second largest growth sector in Ashford as implied by the Roger Tym and Partners forecasts for the Ashford Future's study. It may also suit opportunities associated with designated industrial parks and office precincts.

Vision

- Of the three scenarios, the dispersed model contributes the least to fulfilment of the elements contained in the outline economic vision for Ashford.
- The dispersal of growth in Ashford will not lead to the intensification of the Town Centre, which forms a crucial element of the socio-economic vision for Ashford.
- Key elements of the vision include retaining the 15-34 year old age group, revitalising the town centre, improving the property market offer, strengthening the tourism and leisure industry, and developing a unique identity for Ashford.
- Economically, this does not represent a very aspirational approach and leaves the town exposed to the risk of lower value-added activities (which currently characterises much of the employment base in the town) to move to lower cost locations.
- Spatially, the dispersed model will create an expanded version of the current Ashford. There is a fundamental interdependency between the Urban (Masterplanning) vision and the Economic vision. Failure to deliver one will result in a lower chance of success with the other.
- This scenario will not allow Ashford to develop any particular distinctive advantage within Kent and the South East and consequently the aspirations for the socio-economic development of the town are less likely to be met.

Civic Domain

Areas of distinction

The area that is most likely to attract, support and sustain higher order public resources is the Town Centre. Resources that need larger areas that cannot be accommodated in the centre are likely to occur on the edges, where they do not necessarily relate to centres of gravity or areas of intensity and vibrancy. This is typified by the current comparative isolation of key resources such as the Julia Rose Sports Stadium and the William Harvey Hospital. It is unlikely that existing areas will attract or be closely associated with any significant higher order public resources.

Ease of access

When a large proportion of development is associated with lower density areas on the edge of settlements, there is limited opportunity to support a viable public transport system. It also means that settlement is more space extensive, reducing the attractiveness of pedestrian and cyclist movement. This means that key public resources are generally more difficult to access, and largely depend on car based access. This has negative impacts on the user groups who do not have access to a car such as the young, the disabled, and the elderly.

Efficient distribution

A more dispersed form of settlement is unlikely to sustain a core area or heart beyond a basic collection of local public resources. In order to distribute resources so that they reach local user groups, resources tend to be more dispersed and less clustered. This reduces the potential for local resource hubs and resource clusters where resources have the potential to be shared, or benefit from close proximity to on another. It potentially increases the management issues as local authorities are required to manage a number of separate resources and facilities.

Neighbourhood

Urban Form

The predominant low density of this form of development would negatively impact on several of the policy aspirations in particular as expressed in PPG1, PPG3, 'By Design' and the Sustainable Communities Plan.

There is a wide range of evidence (including for example that of the Urban Task Force's 'Towards an Urban Renaissance') to suggest that the viability of local services and facilities is highly dependent on the number of people within an easy walking distance. A dispersed model tends to increase distances and dependency on the car. This would result in insufficient support for local shops, services and public transport. Either these would not survive or they would be heavily dependent on public subsidies. This is likely to reduce the mix of uses and mean that new neighbourhoods become almost entirely residential. Increased car use leads people to use out-of-town shopping and leisure centres rather than those in town centre locations.

A dispersed model might also fail to produce sufficient 'eyes on the street' to ensure the natural surveillance of public spaces or the levels of activity that make places feel safer and more vibrant. In general public spaces will tend to be under-utilised and therefore there may well be problems creating a coherent sense of community.

Existing forms of dispersed settlements have also tended to lack identity and local distinctiveness. In too many recent developments based on this model, local vernacular or modern designs have been ignored in favour of a limited range of standard house designs and layouts. This has led to reduction in housing choice (especially for single people), significant affordability issues for first-time buyers and a lack of diversity within neighbourhoods. There is a risk that building new neighbourhoods in the same pattern as many recent developments would repeat these mistakes.

Developing in areas away from the flood plain will also mean people having to travel considerable distances between the new neighbourhoods and the existing town centre or other centralised services.

This scenario would have significant impact on local rural communities, undeveloped countryside and natural ecosystems.

Economic Viability and Deliverability

This model is relatively easy to deliver. House builders and developers have a good track record in building this type of residential development. It would involve the lowest requirement for government intervention to assemble the land required for development. In the short term this type of development would be economically viable (i.e. The units could be sold). However it would be harder to establish and sustain a decent range of services and shops, and this will impinge the overall quality of life, and long term value.

Stakeholder Response

At the Eastwell Manor Workshop, there was a clear and strong consensus expressed from participating stakeholders that this scenario would not deliver their aspirations for Ashford, particularly in terms of the loss of surrounding countryside and the poor support for local amenities and local transport.

The dispersed model of development would also essentially focus resources resulting from growth in new greenfield sites thereby not dealing with the pressing needs of many existing neighbourhoods for rehabilitation. Many of these existing opportunities have suffered from social problems due in part to poor design and connections, lack of viable shops and services and general under investment.

These factors mean that the dispersed model does not readily fit with local community aspirations.

Scenario 2: The Decentralised Neighbourhood Model

Basic Description

Settlement Type: A polycentric model with a limited number of neighbourhoods focused around a district centre. The neighbourhoods include a level of mixed-use development associated with the centre. We have worked with an assumption based on provision standards that 9 residential neighbourhood tiles (yellow) clustered together would be able to generate a secondary school. Twelve residential neighbourhood tiles (yellow) clustered together would support a regular bus service.

Land take: This form of settlement would consume less land than Scenario 1 as it allows for a greater level of more intensive, mixed-use development.

A series of neighbourhoods would result in a built land take of 1175 ha. – 90% of the dispersed option. 79% of this land would be taken with residential buildings. This would still have an impact on existing communities, greenfield land and ecosystems although this would allow for around 50% more space for green parkland than scenario 1.

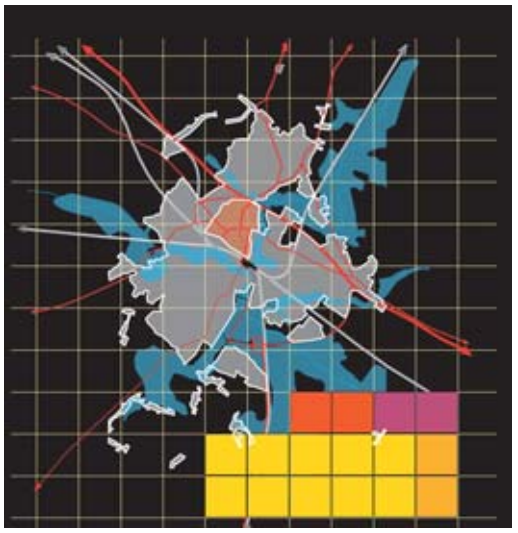
Town Centre Tiles (Red)	2
Living Quarter Tiles (Orange)	9
Residential Suburb Tiles	28
Office Precinct	1
Industrial Estate	1
Civic Institutions	6
Parkland	12

Transportation: This model is likely to support a reasonably frequent public transport system. Given the land-use pattern proposed and the resulting travel demands, with much travel contained within Ashford, then it is considered that there is little potential for future stations. This may change if out-commuting significantly increases although Ashford Station would offer a better quality service and the local public transport strategy proposed aims to provide high quality access to the station. The AATS study indicates that while it maybe possible to deliver a new station at Park Farm it maybe difficult to operate the service due to limited demand.

Location

This model would result in limited development in the floodplain on the proviso that the capacity of the floodplain is not reduced. A one-to-one replacement of the floodplain would be required.

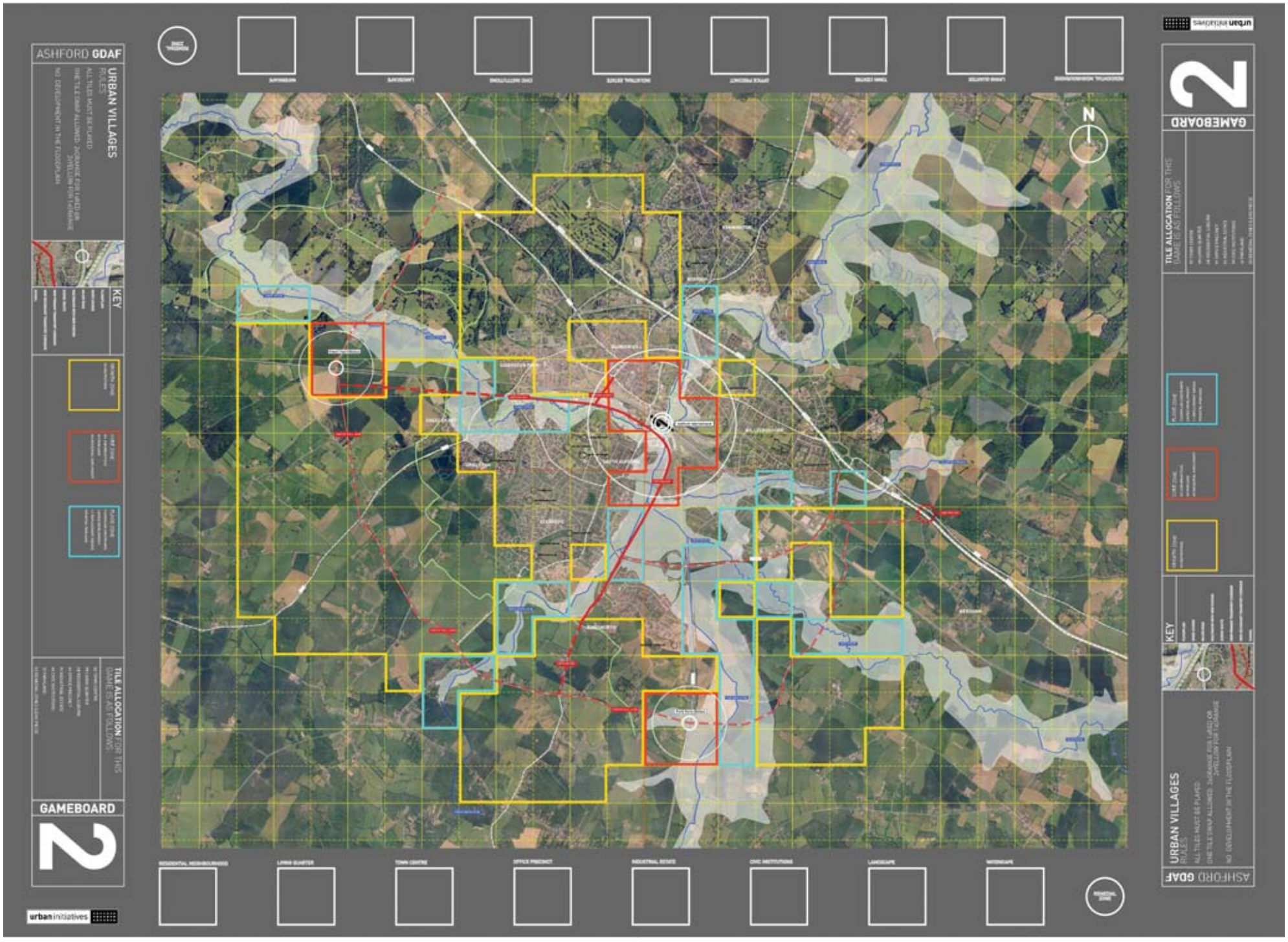
Settlement areas could potentially relate to two possible station sites, one on the southern Hastings line and one on the western London line. Settlement areas to the South And East relate broadly to the RPS study.



Quantity of growth required

Potential growth distribution through Ashford

- A series of District Centres and an expanded Town Centre.
- Model as played by the Consultants team, prior to the workshop to test the model.



Gameboard 2: Scenario 2

Scenario 2: The Assessments

Scenario 2 - Neighbourhood GROUP A

Scenario 2 - Neighbourhood GROUP B

Scenario 2 - Neighbourhood GROUP C

Stakeholders

- The three groups generated variations of a model that reinforced the Town Centre and generated a limited set of District Centres.
- In each case the location of the centres varied; centres were focus to the west of Great Chart, south of Kingsnorth and at Cheeseman's Green. A smaller collection of centres was also played at Bybrook, and near Junction 10. The location of centres broadly reflects the possibility of stations on the Hastings and London lines.
- Remedial or regeneration tiles were played at Stanhope, at the A2042 junction north of Park Farm, and in the area South of the International Station.
- Industrial tiles were consistently played near Junction 10.
- Office tiles are played in and around the Town Centre, as are intensive mixed-use tiles.
- Civic and public resource tiles were generally focused in the Town Centre area and in the District Centres.
- **The stakeholder group thought that this model still did not serve to maximise the potential benefits of the land in and around the Town Centre. Although the principle of well resourced district centres was supported, it was also thought that little benefit was extended to existing areas. This model was not dismissed outright although there was not overwhelming support for it.**

Movement

- Mixed-use developments closely resembles the AATS scenario and would result in similar level of public transport provision. This may eventually evolve into a guided system along two medium density corridors.
- Use of some land within the existing urban area leads to better integration of new developments with the existing town.
- High quality public transport service could serve existing areas.
- Proposed possible new railway stations that form the basis for a new settlement were located on the London and the Hastings Lines. It is unlikely that these railstops are likely to achieve significant modal share.

Mode	2003 Base (%)	2031 AATS (%)	2031 Scenario 2 (%)
Car	65	54	56
Public Transport	4	13	12
Cycle	3	5	5
Walk	28	28	27

Notes: The above table shows the relative proportions of different transport modes for the 2003 base year, the AATS strategy in 2031 and Scenario 2 in 2031.

Environment

Conservation

Known important archeological sites would not be affected, but other sites may yet be discovered when areas are developed.

Apart from the town centre, conservation areas would be largely unaffected or within park zones.

Listed buildings will need individual assessment when models are developed further.

Grade 2 agricultural land would be affected by location Great Chart neighbourhood and the associated parks.

Ecology

The proposed Woodlands Park area to South Willsborough Dykes, and the Great Stour/Victoria Park will bring improvements. However other woodlands would be affected by the three southern growth areas.

Landscape

Strategy Areas are unaffected directly by new development. However the area around Great Chart Village is designated for conservation and reinforcement. This is an issue for new development in the area.

Open Space

The choice of more green tiles in addition to green space element of yellow tiles provides opportunities for better green links in and around the town. This scenario would mean encroachment of South Willsborough Dykes green corridor, but would also result in the creation of new corridors . Rural paths would be largely unaffected by development and the Stour path passes through an upgraded area.

Infrastructure

Flood risk

Similar to Scenario 1 although increased town centre development is likely to result in greater impact for the flood plain along the Victoria Way corridor including realignment/reprofiling of water courses through the town centre. Most of the neighbourhood development could occur without building on the flood plain; limited development in the floodplain may occur, particularly in proximity to the area south of the town centre.

Policy

Similar to scenario 1.

Water management

Similar to Scenario 1, except that the less dispersed development is likely to result in less secondary infrastructure to service it than for the dispersed model.

Opportunities for creative use of water

Likely to be greater than for the dispersed model due to reduced land taken for development.

Deliverability

No specific issues in relation to infrastructure workstream.

Viability

Less land take than for the dispersed model and likely to require less extensive network of secondary infrastructure.

Urban Core

Investment Potential

- The layout potentially allows both the town centre and two sub regional centres to develop high quality areas to attract investment.
- Some development could possibly generate areas of distinct quality and improve land values however the acquisition of some land may be high.
- Local centres are more likely to be sustainable each lying at the heart of a community.

Deliverability

- Strategic land that delivers the required numbers of housing units in proximity to the town centre is potentially unlocked.
- Land allocated for housing in the south broadly fits with the current land ownership and development patterns. There is therefore a less likely requirement for CPO. Development may be seen as a quick win for housing delivery.
- It creates a focal point through the creation of sub regional centres. These will provide new urban areas with a central point for transport and activity.
- The growth pattern appears to largely reflect emerging planning consent.
- Areas that have a high attractive capacity for people to come to Ashford to live and work are potentially generated.
- There is limited Residential and Employment Use near Junction 10a. This may have an impact on the funding of works on the Junction 10a redevelopment, as well as potential of this area.

Financial Viability

- There is an increase in the number of residential clusters on greenfield land. The sustainability of these needs to be reviewed with respect to financial viability, transport and infrastructure linkages.

Acceptability

- The impact of the extensive development north-east of Great Chart needs careful consideration.

Work Place

Financial Viability

- As with the dispersed model, relocations of existing employment sites would be lower than in the compact model.

Range of Opportunities

- This model leads to the potential provision of a greater range of job opportunities in a range of locations within Ashford.
- The higher density/mixed use core of the neighbourhoods may create developments which are more tailored towards accommodating small/medium sized enterprises (SMEs), than compared with the lower density dispersed model.

Deliverability

- It is difficult to assess whether these 'neighbourhoods' would do much more than serve the retail and leisure needs of the local populations and it should not be assumed that by simply locating the higher density tiles in the two 'neighbourhoods' that employment opportunities in those tiles will be taken up by the local population. These centres will have to be well served by public transport, and will require concerted effort to motivate public and private investment at the heart of these areas.

Vision

- The intensification and development of the town centre will not be as significant under this development scenario as with the compact scenario, which forms a key element of the economic vision for Ashford.
- This will also carry implications for retaining the 15-34 year old age group (since a key element for attracting and retaining this group would be a vibrant, well connected town centre, improving the property market offer, strengthening the tourism and leisure industry and developing a unique identity for Ashford).
- The 'neighbourhoods' will offer a range of job opportunities in locations other than the town centre or on employment sites near to the M20, however, there are issues over feasibility and viability of developing these locations.

Civic Domain

Areas of distinction

In this Scenario, as with Scenario 1, the centre would be favoured for key public resources and facilities, while existing areas would more than likely suffer from limited further public investment. However the creation of a limited number of more focused settlements around centres offers real potential for areas of distinction. These settlements would be sufficiently large to generate higher order resources such as a secondary school. The local centres would probably be able to service most local public resource needs.

Ease of access

The district centres and district areas would probably be large enough to support a regular if not very frequent public transport service. This would affect how easily residents could reach the resources in the Town Centre and vice versa. Because these centres would have a larger proportion of mixed use, medium density development than Scenario 1, pedestrians and cyclists would access local resources more easily.

Efficient distribution

There is a greater potential for resources in the district centres to be focused and clustered, and to stimulate a range of local resource hubs for the neighbourhoods. If the settlements are approximately located adjacent to existing settlements, there is the opportunity to link new and existing areas and resources.

Neighbourhood

Urban Form

This denser form of development would generally conform with the policy context more than the dispersed model described in Scenario 1 in that it would create a compact urban form with efficient use of land although this would introduce potential conflicts with the requirements of PPG25.

The neighbourhood model would increase activity and lead to more natural surveillance and use of public spaces when compared with the dispersed model. The presence of some local services combined with a higher level of intensity is likely to create communities with higher levels of cohesion and vitality.

This form would maintain a basic range of services for each neighbourhood. There would still be significant levels of car dependency which would not maximise the potential of local and town centres and encourage some out-of-town developments.

The neighbourhood form produces relatively self-contained and distinct settlements, each of which has an identity of its own. Given that the neighbourhoods are located away from the centre it would be critical, through policy to qualify a sufficient range of diversity housing design and tenure that is required to produce diverse communities or help with affordability issues for first-time buyers.

Economic Viability and Ease of Delivery

This model is relatively easy to deliver although it may be more challenging than the dispersed option as this form of development on this scale is still relatively rare in Britain. However some house builders and developers are increasingly willing and able to deliver this type of development. Because of the increased range of local services, design and infrastructure required this might be more expensive to deliver in the short term but the local transport and public services are likely to be more viable in the long term. This scenario is likely to require intervention in terms of both land assembly and infrastructure engineering.

Stakeholder Response

Although the neighbourhood model of development would result in little remediation for existing communities it could add development around existing communities to achieve the critical mass required to support local amenities and public transport. These areas included Kennington, Bybrook and Singleton. This model still represents a significant level of greenfield land take and consequent impact on natural ecosystems.

As a result the neighbourhood model was identified by participants at the Eastwell Manor Workshops and elsewhere as being far more closely linked with community aspirations than the dispersed model.

Scenario 3: The Compact Model

Basic Description

Settlement type: A compact urban model where development is tied to a linear structure that has the capacity to sustain a pubic transport network. The model would be characterised by a high level of mixed-use development. The model would generate an expanded Town Centre linked to a series of district centres.

Land take: This form of settlement would consume the least land as it focuses as much development as possible within a 1km walk band of the Town Centre and allows for a greater level of intensive, mixed-use development. It potentially yields a green dividend through the release of large portions of land for natural and recreational functions.

A compact model would result in the smallest land take of the three scenarios with a built area of 1025 ha. in total with 76% of this being residential. The land take represents just over three quarters of that of the dispersed model, significantly reducing the impact on local rural communities and natural ecosystems. This model incorporates the possibility of including 400 ha. of wilderness and recreational parkland – double that of the dispersed model.

Land Take

Town Centre Tiles (Red)	2
Living Quarter Tiles (Orange)	15
Residential Suburb Tiles	16
Office Precinct	1
Industrial Estate	1
Civic Institutions	6
Parkland	16

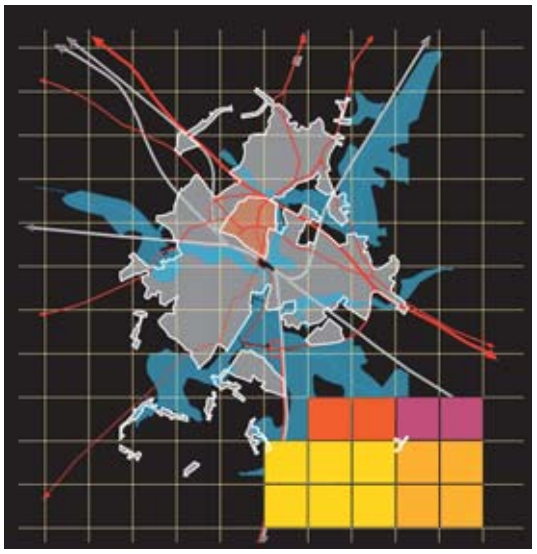
Transportation: This model is predicated on a efficient and convenient movement network underpinned by a public transport network. The RPS study indicates that public transport is likely to be most deliverable as a road-based model.

Location

The location of development land focussed on a number of brownfield sites and underutilised locations within close proximity of the town centre. This included all sites to the south of the south centre along the River Stour, the Cobbs Farm estate and industrial land along the eastern edge of South Ashford. In all instances the aim was to make better use of this land and potentially relocate businesses to locations that would best serve their needs.

Limited development in the floodplain on the proviso that the capacity of the floodplain is not reduced. A one-to-one replacement of the floodplain is required. This model reviews the potential of releasing floodplain land in close proximity to the Centre for development. The proviso is that the development would have to be characterised by how it creatively worked with water as an asset through the formation of a 'canal district' where water is used as a feature.

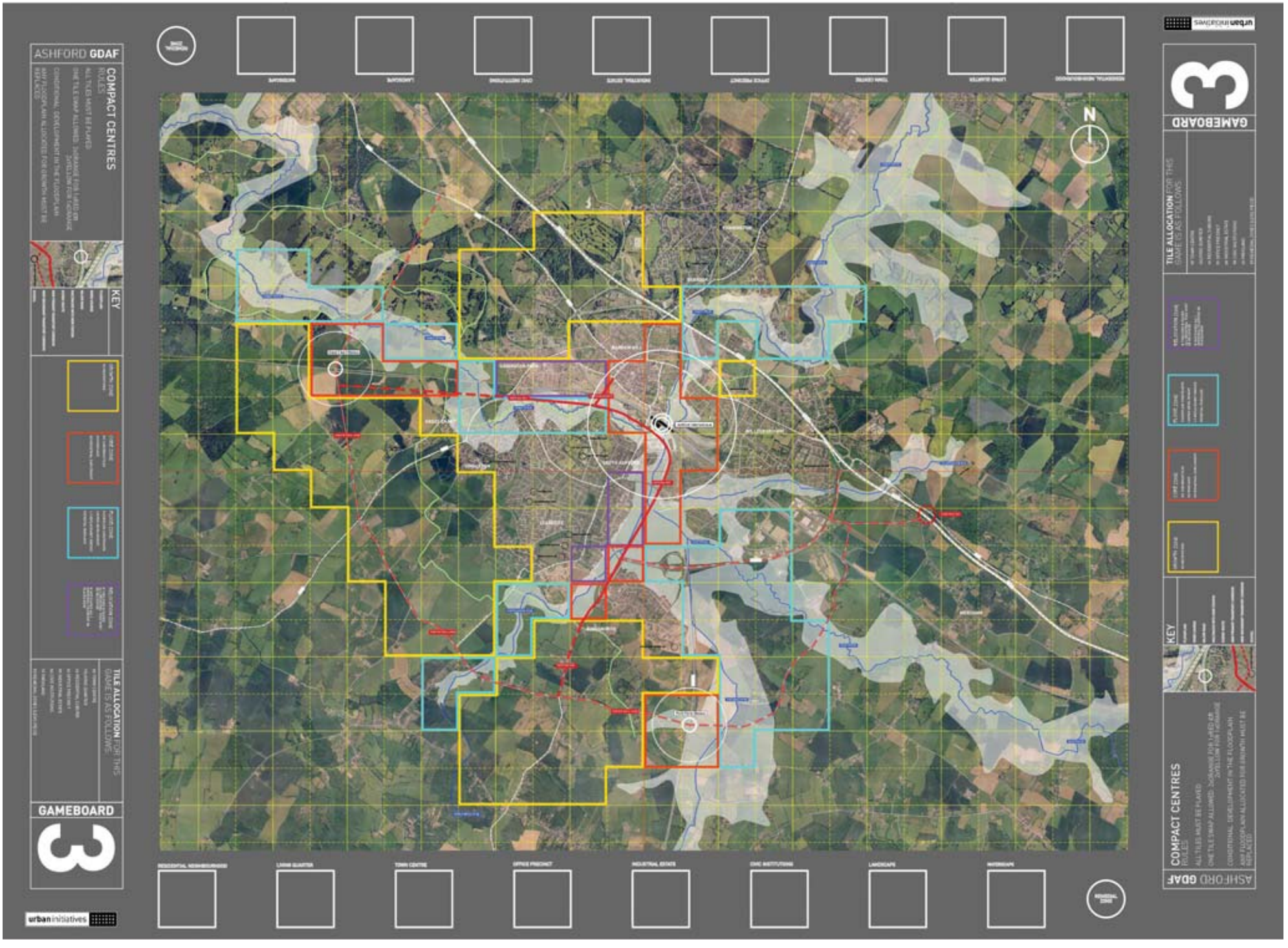
Settlement areas would largely relate to linear public transport corridors that are connected to the Town Centre. Settlement is largely kept within the limits of Magpie Hall Road. Because development is focused largely within existing town limits, large portions of Southern Ashford could potentially be tied in and connected to new development.



Quantity of growth required

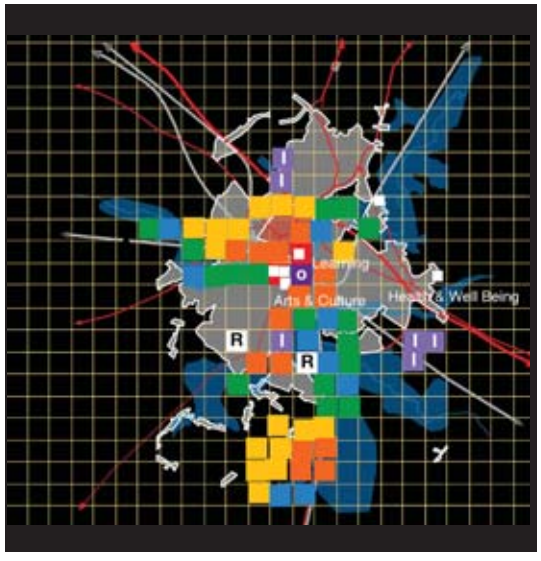
Potential growth distribution through Ashford

- A linear model around a public transport model.
- Model as played by the Consultants team, prior to the workshop to test the model.



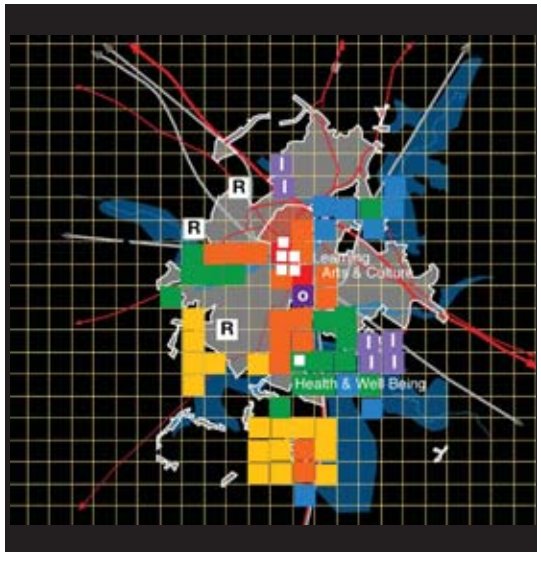
Gameboard 3: Scenario 3

Scenario 3: The Assessments



Scenario 3 - Compact Model GROUP A

Scenario 3 - Compact Model GROUP B



Scenario 3 - Compact Model GROUP C

Stakeholder

- The three groups generated variations of a model that substantially reinforced and expanded the Town Centre . The general pattern of dispersement was far more compact than the previous two models.
- In each case the location of the more mixed-use development varied; tiles were focused along new or potential movement corridors. In two of the versions, a large cluster of tiles was played along the edge of the A2070, south of Park Farm.
- Remedial or regeneration tiles were played at Stanhope, at the A2070 junction into Park Farm, at Bybrook and Godinton Park
- Industrial tiles were consistently played near Junction 10, and in other cases at the exiting industrial areas at Eureka and Norman Road.
- Office tiles are played in and around the Town Centre, as are intensive mixed-use tiles.
- Civic and public resource tiles were all played in and around the Town Centre and expanded Town Centre.
- **There was close to unanimous support for this model from the stakeholder group. This model represented the greatest potential to maximise the potential benefits of the land in and around the Town Centre. There was also an understanding that this model would be able to support a viable and efficient public transport services, and that there would be a greater range of development types and hence greater choice for different environments for living and investment. The other attractive aspect of this model was the minimised overall landtake for development and the consequent green dividend of large parkland areas.**

Movement

- High density mixed-use development along two corridors supports high quality public transport thus increasing the potential public transport modal share.
- Use of floodplain and existing areas close to town centre leads to good integration between new developments and existing town.
- Compactness of development reduces walking distances to key facilities and hence increases the walking modal share.
- A station on the Hastings Line might be feasible but as a 'second tier' of public transport - the primary movement will be bus based.

Mode	2003 Base (%)	2031 AATS (%)	2031 Scenario 3 (%)
Car	65	54	51
Public Transport	4	13	16
Cycle	3	5	5
Walk	28	28	28

Notes: The above table shows the relative proportions of different transport modes for the 2003 base year, the AATS strategy in 2031 and Scenario 3 in 2031.

Environment

Conservation

An archaeology site near Kingsnorth would be affected by development.

No conservation areas would be affected apart from town centre.

Listed buildings will need individual assessment when the plan develops.

Grade 2 agricultural land, a national resource, would be affected around Great Chart.

Ecology

Key Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) are located in areas where water/park tiles were placed. The Canal District encroaches onto a large portion of the Willesborough Dykes SNCI. This is an opportunity to create major habitats with good links. some Woods would be affected by development at Cheeseman's Green and near Kingsnorth but these could be incorporated into a wider woodland framework and girdling the town, linking back to established woods in the hinterland into the proposed settlements.

Landscape

Most development falls into areas designated for conservation and reinforcement, however this is mitigated by the large number of green tiles forming a major new park to the south of Ashford.

Open Space

The use of green and blue tiles in addition to the green space element of yellow tiles provides opportunities for better green links. The encroachment into South Willsborough Dykes green corridor is significant but may be mitigated by the creation of new corridors and habitats. The Stour Valley walk will pass through a major new green urban spine as against current backlands. Major development affects the Greensand way, but it could pass through major new park.

Infrastructure

Flood risk

Increased town centre development likely to result in greater impact on the flood plain along the Victoria Way corridor including realignment/ reprofiling of water courses through the town centre. Significant impact on the flood plain in South Willesborough Dykes to create the Canal District between the town centre and Kingsnorth. This requires other low-lying areas of land to be brought into the flood plain for compensation flood storage, with additional flood defences.

Policy

The reprovision of flood plain for the Canal District requires a policy decision from Environment Agency in relation to PPG25 for undeveloped areas which will be more extensive than in scenarios 1 and 2. In the event of a precautionary principle being taken by the Environment Agency, a higher level assessment would have to be made.

Water management

Similar issues to scenarios 1 and 2 except that concentrated development around town centre will tend to favour expansion of Bybrook wastewater treatment works.

Opportunities for creative use of water

In contrast with recent development a compact model could work with water and treat the rivers as positive resources including elements such as sustainable urban drainage systems, improved biodiversity and improved leisure facilities.

Deliverability

More difficult to develop and deliver than scenarios 1 and 2. There are land ownership issues to be resolved in relocating the flood plain as well as the technical, policy and insurance issues.

Viability

There are additional cost issues with the scenario primarily associated with the reprovision of flood plain and development of the Canal District. This will need to be balanced against reduced requirement.

Urban Core

Investment Potential

- This scenario offers more variation in development opportunities as a scheme with a greater concentration around an expanded Town Centre.
- There is a good potential to create high quality added value schemes with the existence of the expanded Town Centre.
- Scenario 3 potentially has the ability to generate areas that will have a high attractive capacity for people to come to Ashford to live, work and invest in Ashford. It offers a distinct 'step change'.

Financial Viability

- The layout of Scenario 3 potentially allows both the town centre and two district centres, and the higher density development of the flood plain district to attract investment. Additional masterplanning work is required to assess the high level of intervention that is required to deliver the model.

Deliverability

- There is no substantial provision for development near the Junction 10a motorway which could have an impact on its redevelopment, and investment potential as an key area.
- Development within this scenario does not reflect all existing and emerging planning consents or allocations in certain areas. In addition development in the floodplain will require compensatory land that might already be allocated in the local plan as development land. This adds complexity to delivery and might slow early wins, unless a level of intervention is considered.

Workplace

Employment Gain

- The compact model will help to revitalise the town centre, potentially leading to a greater intensification of economic activity in the area, thus offering new employment opportunities for the town. The intensification of the wider town centre area, if appropriately delivered, can also help to give Ashford a unique identity and attract a range of employment opportunities.

Vision

- Overall, the compact model represents the scenario most likely to deliver a significant change to Ashford's urban form which potentially makes it the scenario most likely to deliver against the spatial elements of the emerging economic vision for Ashford.
- The higher density and mixed use developments outlined for the area surrounding the town centre would assist in realising the elements of the socio-economic vision for Ashford that relate to: retaining and attracting the 15-34 year old age group; revitalising the town centre; improving the property market offer (particularly through delivering high quality office space and space appropriate for SMEs); and the strengthening of the tourism and leisure industry (through the potential creation of a waterside area).
- The compact model may well be more likely to deliver a larger quantity of floorspace and accommodation that would suit the requirements of a range of sectors, which is an important criteria for this Workstream.

Deliverability

- The compact model requires the most intervention of the three development models. This will require the agreement and concerted efforts of the delivery partners and Ashford Board members, as such, it carries some risk, which will need to be managed. However, this level of intervention will bring significant additional benefits in terms of the quality of urban form, the sustainability of development and long term viability of public transport. no front investment of time and money will bring a longer term return
- However, the compact model requires the most intervention of the three development models and is consequently the most risky.
- The model implies a significant degree of displacement/relocation of existing employment sites in Ashford which is both potentially expensive and high risk.
- This probably makes the compact scenario the most costly of the three scenarios and therefore raises questions over the viability and acceptability.
- Another dimension is that the greater level of intensification and development will lead to a reduction in the number of 'cheap' sites/location within the area surrounding the town centre. This could stand against the vision of Ashford as an enterprising centre since the cost base would increase, although it would imply that there could be a greater degree of higher value added functions located in the central area.
- Intensifying employment sites around the town centre area is problematic if people are located there because the current cheap offer. Agencies may need to intervene to provide new space at appropriate rental levels so as to avoid displacing existing jobs out of Ashford.
- The compact scenario will shift the range of jobs in locations - the town centre would probably become a mixed use economy.

Civic Domain

Areas of distinction

The effective area of the Town Centre would be expanded. The Town Centre and its surrounds would be able to generate a wide range of development sites for public and private resources. The expanded centre would be able to support critical public resources such as the Learning and Skills Campus. The expanded centre would also generate a range of mixed use and residential development that would support and sustain a range of public resources and facilities, particularly the arts and cultural offer. The expanded Town Centre would be adjacent to existing development areas releasing the potential for new resources and facilities in existing areas. The more compact use of land would release a 'green dividend' of larger spaces available for distinctive green areas.

Ease of access

The more compact, mixed-use development type has a real capacity to support a viable, efficient and frequent public transport service. The effective settlement areas are reduced, generating public resources and facilities closer and therefore more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The potential of the Town Centre area is maximised for development, thereby placing some of the key public institutions within walking distance from the station.

Efficient distribution

Public resources and facilities would tend to be more focused and potentially more clustered, increasing the potential for public resource clusters or service hubs. Because of a distinctive change from the status quo in Ashford, this form of development may be able to attract distinctive, special civic resources.

Neighbourhood

Urban Form

The high density of this form of development would positively reflect most but not all of the policy aspirations. Density in and of itself will not create sustainable communities without well-supported public services and good urban design. There are many examples of communities living in densely populated neighbourhoods that suffer as a result of poor design and lack of services. However if well-designed and supported, higher density neighbourhoods should result in more vibrant, mixed-use and accessible places.

The compact model allows for a wide range of local services available within short distances from most people's homes. Because of the higher levels of pedestrian footfall and large numbers of people within local catchments these services (including public transport) are likely to be more viable and better used.

This form ensures that development is focussed as much as possible within a 1km walk band of the town centre, thereby reducing car dependency and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport. This will also strengthen the existing town centre shops, services and leisure facilities. The town centre will be expanded and incorporate a significant number of new homes.

A well-designed compact form raises the levels of natural surveillance onto public spaces and increases the amount of activity thereby making places feel safer, more attractive and friendly. Higher utilisation of public spaces and a comprehensive range of local services will help to create and sustain a coherent sense of community.

If carefully designed, the compact model will generate a range of housing types and tenures that will ensure that communities are more diverse, that people can live in appropriate housing types and that the problems of affordability is alleviated. Local vernacular styles of housing tend to be highly compatible with the compact model.

Economic Viability and Ease of Delivery

This model is more complex to deliver. It requires a culture shift in the mindset of developers, planners and politicians. It also might be more costly in the short term due to the increased provision of local services and engineering of the flood plain. However in the long term this solution is likely to be more economically viable because local services should be more self-supporting and the town centre should be more successful. Of the three scenarios this model will require the highest level of intervention through land assembly and planning powers. It involves the relocation of some existing employment areas in order to release under-utilised, centrally located sites for higher density, mixed use development.

Stakeholder Response

In the workshop and subsequent meetings, there has been consistent support from a wide range of communities for the compact model of growth. This has largely been because of the well-founded perception that growth should also benefit existing neighbourhoods and that Greater Ashford has special natural and historical assets worth preserving an enhancing.

The Preferred Strategic Growth Model

The preceding assessment by the stakeholders and the workstreams of each scenario establishes an 'in principle' support of the Compact Growth Model.

This support has come from various sources:

- The outcome of the Eastwell Manor Workshop established a strong support for this model.
- The Economic Vision (Ernst and Young, 2004) through the requirement for a definitive step change and focus on a compact centre as well as the transport work (RPS) which requires a level of compact, mixed development to support a public transport system.

The choice of this Model by stakeholders and workstreams was predicated on certain aspects of this model undergoing a process testing.

At the Eastwell Manor Workshop each Scenario was explored through the playing of the game, and a subsequent planning session. The result from this plenary session was:

i) a dismissal of Scenario 1 as an appropriate growth model.

ii) positive support for elements of Scenario 2, namely the notion of 'clustered development' around limited growth centres.

iii) a close to unanimous support for Scenario 3 - the compact model.

The plenary was conducted through presentations, a discussion from the floor and visibly by a show of hands.

Developing the Strategic Growth Model

At the workshop the three versions (Groups A, B & C) of the Compact game were coordinated into one model. Comments from the floor were taken into account and where possible subsequent changes were made to attempt to balance the comments. The resulting model is characterised by:

- A focus of red tiles in the Town Centre, supported by a large number of orange tiles played to the west and south of the Town Centre. Orange tiles are played in two floodplain areas. The first is the Brownfield area south of the CTRL line. The second is along Romney Marsh Road. This 'boomerang' area is focused on mixed-use development supportive of a public transport system.
- Two clusters of residential and mixed use development to the northwest of Great Chart and to the southeast of Kingsnorth and Park Farm.
- A few residential tiles at Cheeseman's Green and to the east of Kennington.
- Industrial tiles are focused at Junction 10 and Eureka.
- Office tiles and compact red tiles are focused to the south of the Town Centre. A 1 kilometre walk band is drawn around the station to indicate the area for development opportunities.
- Remedial or regeneration tiles are in Stanhope, Bybrook and north of Park Farm.

Key components of the Model

The key components of the model as developed from the game and parallel studies are:

- An expanded, Town Centre with a downgraded Ring Road, and 'good streets' along Station Road and Elwick Road that sustain development and activity off their edges (as initiated in the BDP Town Centre work).
- A new bridge crossing for the Town Centre, relieving congestion off Beaver Road Bridge.
- A new urban street in 'Victoria Way' connected to the Town Centre and allowing access for new development to the south of the Town Centre.
- A viable, efficient road based public transport system associated with Victoria Way.
- The longer term potential of two rail stops on the Hastings and London lines.
- The upgrade of Junction 10A.

Technical testing of the Compact Model

The compact model, while establishing strong principles for where and how development should occur, is a relatively coarse model, developed out of a combination of 25-hectare tiles. An elliptical area was drawn on the model indicating an area of floodplain adjacent to Romney Marsh Road where further investigation would specifically need to occur. Detailed testing and modelling would be required for the following aspects:

- **Transport**

The AATS supports the compact growth model. RPS would review the model in terms of trip generation, modal split and the potential to sustain a viable public transport system. This required a more detailed schedule of accommodation, and location of potential jobs.

The SEA also shows that the compact model comes out best in terms of sustainable development targets.

- **Flooding**

Two key aspects needed to be resolved. The first is the Environmental Agency's acceptance of development along Town Centre Corridors (these mostly comprise of brown field areas). The second is the Environmental Agency's acceptance of the 'Canal District', the area of potential development associated with a strip of land on either side of Romney Marsh Road. The testing and modelling of the 'Canal District' needed to occur in two ways;

i) Proceed with initial floodplain modelling.

ii) On the basis of an initial successful outcome carry out further modelling of the re-profiling of Whitewater Dyke and East Stour as part of the Canal District.

Following the initial testing, a meeting was required with the high level authorities to get acceptance at a policy level. If policy agreement was received, then the remaining modelling exercises could be undertaken in relation to Town Centre developments and additional flood defences for the Canal District.

- **Investment potential**

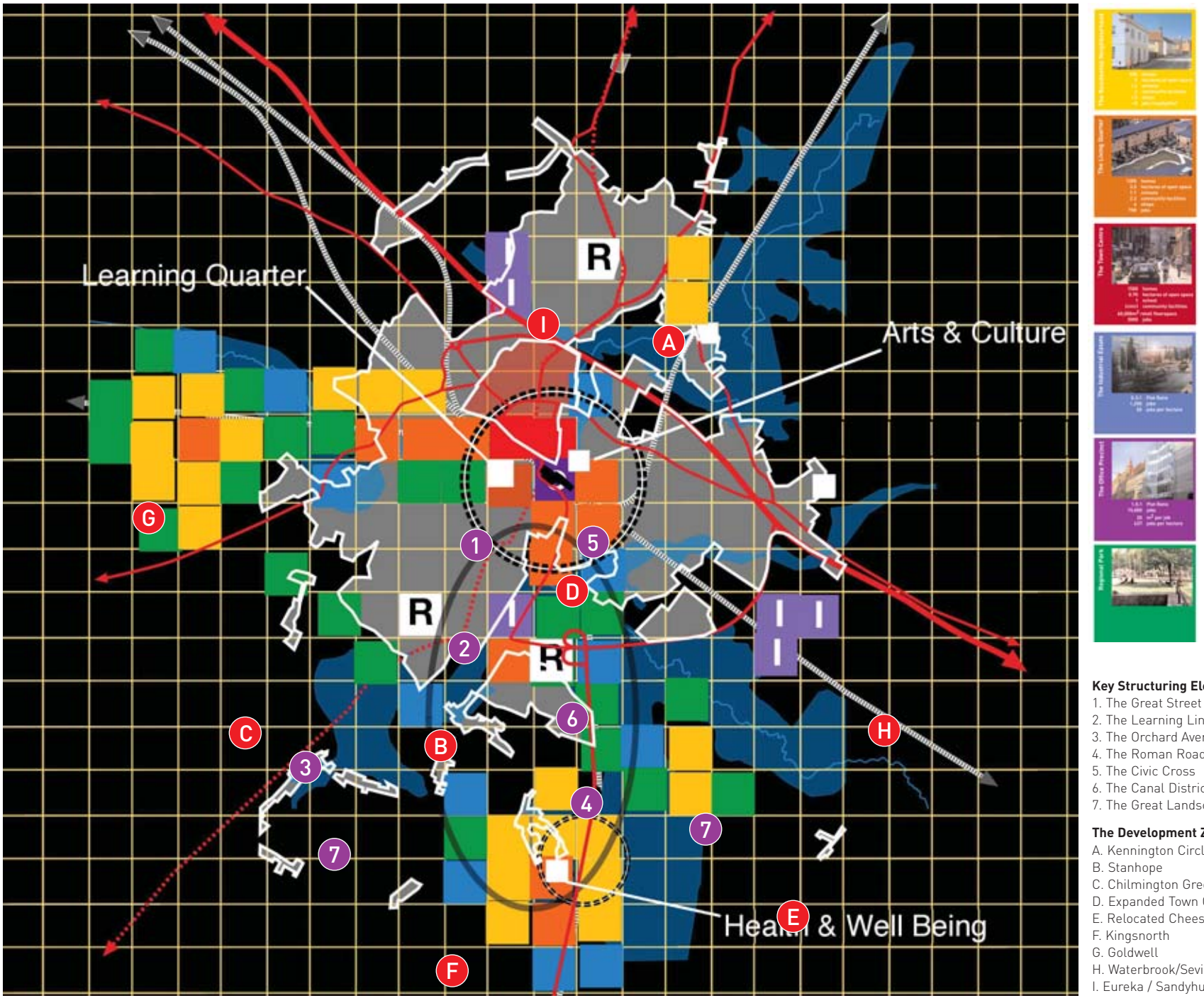
Potential investment interest, opportunities, cost of development and development strategies for implementation needed to be evaluated.

- **Employment opportunities**

An analysis of the kind of job opportunities, locational distribution of jobs, and the incubation of these opportunities needed to be evaluated.

- **Effects on existing settlement**

There are existing settlements in Ashford that have special qualities. These unique characteristics relate to a particular quality of life. The scale of growth and the requirement to meet the challenges of the brief, means that many existing areas are likely to be affected. In particular, the village areas, which have distinct rural qualities will be affected. The association of new development areas, adjacent to Kingsnorth, and Great Chart, needed consideration, where detailed evaluation would also occur beyond the GADF Commission.



Key Structuring Elements
1. The Great Street (Victoria Way)
2. The Learning Link
3. The Orchard Avenue
4. The Roman Road
5. The Civic Cross
6. The Canal District
7. The Great Landscape Parks

The Development Zones
A. Kennington Circle
B. Stanhope
C. Chilmington Green
D. Expanded Town Centre
E. Relocated Cheeseman's Green
F. Kingsnorth
G. Goldwell
H. Waterbrook/Sevington
I. Eureka / Sandyhurst / Bybrook

The composite preferred model, as recorded at the final session of the Eastwell Manor Workshop, April 2004

06 THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT PLAN

This section deals with the evolution of the Compact Growth Model into a physical plan that could be tested against the key principles outlined in the Vision. It also enabled the stakeholder group to revaluate the implications of their earlier decisions and take the necessary steps to make the changes. Only by drawing a plan could one see the impacts .

The Strategic Concept Plan is developed through a framework of 'Urban Structure' and 'Green Structure'. Urban Structure relates to the role of of major movement networks and places of significance. The Green Structure relates to the protection and enhancement of the primary natural and green areas. Both expand on the Generative Urbanism and environmental approach outlined in Section 04.3.

This section also identifies the key structuring principles and shows the ten big ideas that add value to the Plan. Potential areas for development are also expanded upon.

06.1 DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT PLAN

The Preferred Strategic Model gave a coarse grain of potential development. The Team was given the remit to take this forward into more detailed design, testing some of the assumptions made and reconciling any differences. This section deals with the evolution of the Plan and the structuring principles and ideas that shape its future.

From Strategic Model to Concept Plan

Having worked this up further, a number of issues emerged that have influenced the development of the Preferred Concept Plan. These include:

- The relocation of the Kingsnorth Neighbourhood closer to the junction of Magpie Hall Road and Romney Marsh Road. This was due to the fact that the transport consultants alerted the Team to the concern that the proposed Park Farm Station might not be the major generator of urban form that was previously anticipated and would most likely function as a rural halt, if realised.
- The availability of land within the town centre and along Victoria Way was not as great as expected and we were forced to look at expanding other areas. The remedial tile played on Singleton was expanded to become 5 new Residential Neighbourhood Tiles to create a new neighbourhood centre to reinforce the Singleton - Chilmington Green area.
- The development anticipated in Kennington was not realisable to its full extent because of the boundary of the North Downs and because it is difficult to effectively service the area with public transport. This resulted in only 400 units being proposed on the northern and eastern edges of the settlement, thus introducing a new relief road system for Kennington.
- The Canal District along both sides of Romney Marsh Road is considered to show a medium density mixed use environment close to the Town Centre and International Station.
- The potential of developing the full extent of the proposed Canal District remained a contentious issue for the Environment Agency.
- Alternative options are considered for part of Cheeseman's Green with one option showing the relocation of the proposed development (as committed) to the east of Captain's Wood. The area currently occupied by the proposed Cheeseman's Green footprint becomes an uninterrupted new Regional Wetlands Park. Part of this area also provides the possibility for future replacement storage, This could be for the portion of the floodplain potentially occupied by the Canal District and for new growth in general.

The Structuring Principles

As development grows and changes in Ashford it is critical to establish the essential structure of the plan. The structure is the core framework or essential 'skeleton' that serves to direct and promote development over time. These are the more constant components of the plan and relate to primary concerns around movement and green systems as well as the higher order spaces that will begin to characterise growth in Ashford.

Key Ideas

On the opposite page are the ten primary generators of the plan - our big ideas that give the strategic vision life. These ideas give physical form to the themes developed at the first Eastwell Manor workshop and are critical to underpinning the urban design qualities of the Plan.

Potential Development Zones

The potential development zones derive directly from the Strategic Growth Model and the basic informants set out in the rules of the Game. They are shown on The Initial Strategic Concept Plan in the form of revitalisation areas, new neighbourhoods and districts.

The Initial Strategic Concept Plan

The plan shows how these principles could be applied to the development of a Strategic Concept Plan. It represents the first attempt by the team to give physical form to the Plan and provided a vehicle to test early development with the stakeholders.

In developing the Strategic Concept Plan, the overall spirit of the Preferred Strategic Model remains but moves closer to being a hybrid with Scenario 2 (The Decentralised Neighbourhood Model). As a result there is a relative increase in lower density development at the expense of medium density development. The total land take for new development is now anticipated to be between 1060 and 1200 hectares. This is a reduction from the previous assumption of 1600 hectares.

The Key Structuring Principles: 10 Key Ideas

The Great Street (Victoria Way)

An intense and compact development seam characterised by primary public transport routes and great mixed-use potential along Victoria Way, the extension of Romney Marsh Road along Victoria Road to the east. This could effectively expand the town centre development area, relieve congestion around the centre and connect new growth in the southern area of Ashford.

The Learning Link

A series of educational institutions attached to a largely existing route extending from the pedestrian bridge, through Victoria Park, through Stanhope, culminating in the Discovery Park in the south. Key resources are located along this 'safe route to schools' such as the Discovery Centre, the Learning and Skills Campus, schools and local community resources, and Discovery Park.

The Orchard Avenue

A long stretch of tree-lined avenue through the south of Ashford linking existing and new settlements serving all ranges of movement and including a dedicated walking and cycling route. This works in concert with a new linear woodlands forming the southern edge of Ashford to clearly define the urban edge.

Town Centre Green Bridge

This provides a wide green bridge from the Town Centre to Victoria Park that allows easy pedestrian and cycle movement across the busy railway line and contributes to the extension of the Learning Link idea through South Ashford. This will replace the existing pedestrian bridge at this point.

Green Necklace

A green corridor that connects the Julie Rose Stadium in North Ashford to the proposed Great Landscape parks in South Ashford. This is through a linear park system along the River Stour and along the existing green corridors. The idea is to link to Millennium Woods through to the Park Farm Country Park and on to Captain's Wood at Cheeseman's Green.

The Roman Road

A historic route connecting Ashford to the coast that is secured before Park Farm, but which could be connected back to Ashford through a pedestrian and cycle bridge across A2070.

The Civic Cross

Station Road as a vibrant 21st century High Street that sustains a mix of activities along its length, and supports commercial activity, reducing the divisive effect of the Ring Road between the town centre and the rest of the town. Elwick Road as a spine onto which key public and civic components can locate, thereby lending a great civic presence to the Town Centre.

The Green Urban Edge

A new opportunity to clearly define a fixed and controlled urban edge through the introduction of extensive woodlands tree planting in advance of new development. This establishes the limits to growth and sets up a strong identity to the new development, reinforcing the environmental approach and providing an essential part of the 'Town in the Garden' concept

The Great Landscape Parks

Discovery Park as a 'people's park' for open-air events and recreation in south Ashford, connected to both the Learning Link and Orchard Avenue. To the east of the town a Regional Wetlands Park as a natural uncultivated landscape, dealing with retention but also promoting wetland habitat, forming part of a more extensive regional park system

The Canal District

The creation of a new mixed use urban quarter, harnessing the potential of water in developing the 'Water Garden' theme. This could involve the canalisation of an area within the existing floodplain and its potential relocation to the Regional Wetlands Park. The area will be served by a high quality public transport corridor and have excellent walking links to the Town Centre.

Potential Development Areas

There are different areas, both new and existing, which are by virtue of location likely to take on different development qualities. There are three types of area-based project or 'Character Zones':

Revitalisation Areas

- **Kennington – Bybrook**

An area for limited new development on the northern edge and where public resources are needed to reinstate a 'heart' to this area.

- **Stanhope**

While we do not envisage densification of this area, it is important to establish a public realm in Stanhope and to integrate this isolated are into the urban structure relating it to the 'Learning Link'.

- **Waterbrook/Sevington**

This area becomes the expanded new focus for more employment around a new Junction 10A, and includes links through the New Town area.

- **Eureka/ Sandyhurst**

This area could be intensified and expanded to create a more mixed use environment with a strong employment focus.

- **Cobbs Wood**

This area is in proximity to the Town Centre and could take on a more mixed-use role.

New Districts

- **The Expanded Town Centre**

The strategic land in and around the Town Centre needs to be maximised to realise development potential that is supportive of high quality urban environments. This will support the revitalisation of the Town Centre.

- **The Canal District**

A new, unique mixed-use development area harnessing the great potential of associating development with waterside assets, including a new canal system, lake and linear park. This area would be supported by public transport and could attract diverse residential and employment opportunities for Ashford, whilst helping to transform the identity of the town.

- **Ashford Barracks**

It is assumed that this area will be developed in accordance with its masterplan.

- **Victoria Park**

This area involves the creation of a new district around Victoria Park and the Chart Industrial Estate

- **New Town Works**

A new mixed use district based on the New Town Works and Hunter Avenue site (to the north of the Works)

New Neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhoods represent an opportunity to focus development around distinct 'hearts' or centres that are able to support a good mix of public and private investment, offering a range of resources and facilities. Because of the sensitivities of landscape and existing villages the design of these areas requires detailed consideration.

- **Kingsnorth**

The Kingsnorth Neighbourhood around the existing Kingsnorth Village could focus around a high street, which connects the area back to the Town Centre. The area could support a high street similar to that of Tenterden.

- **Goldwell (Great Chart)**

The Goldwell area to the north west of great Chart is not envisaged as a growth area within the 2021 period. A key factor in the development of this area is the potential for a new station on the existing commuter line to London (Notably this area received no real support at the subsequent July workshop).

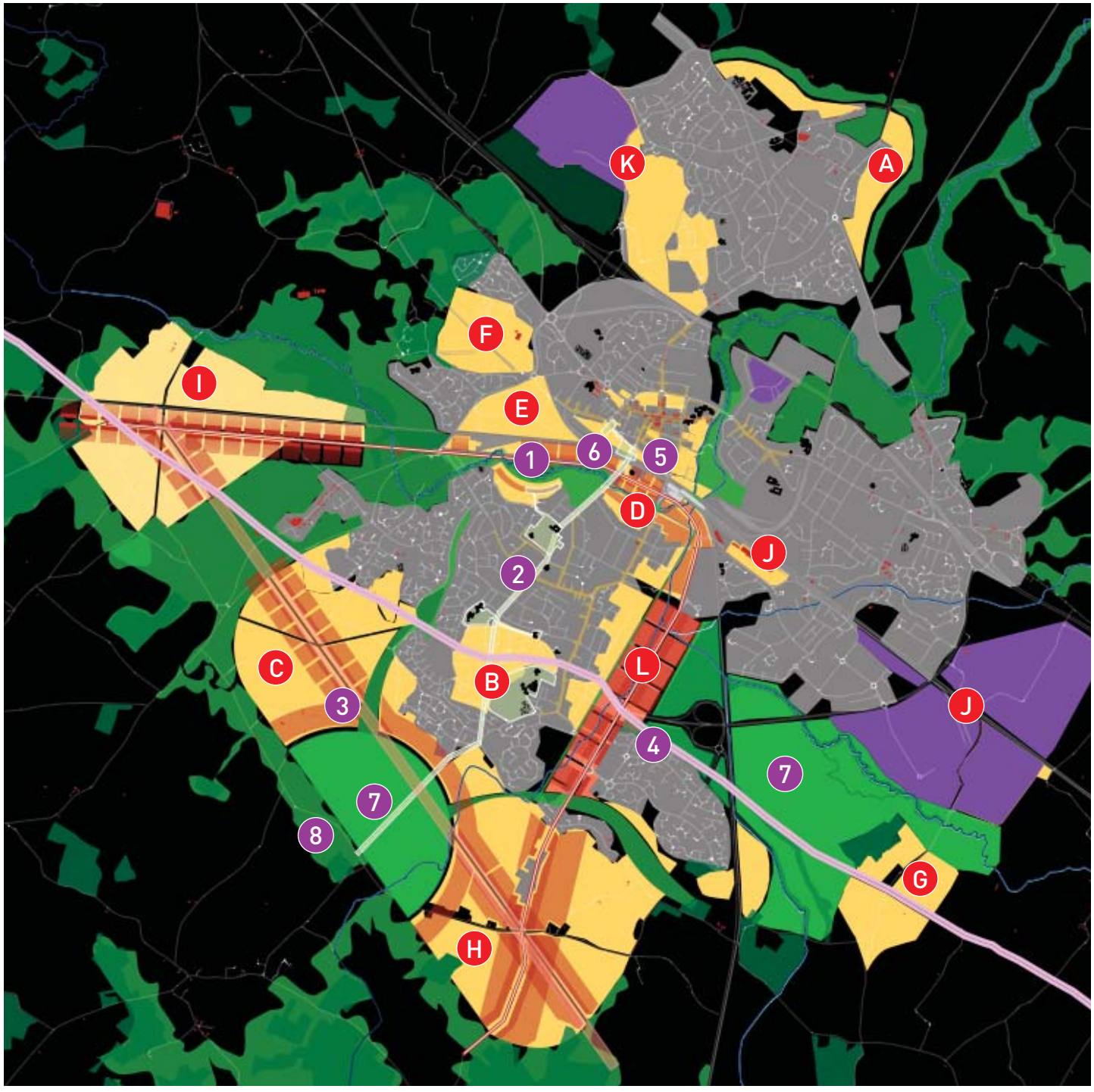
- **Chilmington Green/Singleton**

This area could absorb additional development and establish a growth area to the southern edge of Singleton.

- **Cheeseman's Green**

Proposals for this area involve exploring the potential to relocate the neighbourhood further eastwards, freeing up the possibility of relocating the floodplain within the consented area, and preserve the integrity of Captains Wood.

The Initial Strategic Concept Plan



Key Structuring Elements
1. The Great Street (Victoria Way)
2. The Learning Link
3. The Orchard Avenue
4. The Roman Road
5. The Civic Cross
6. The New Town Centre Bridge
7. The Great Landscape Parks
8. The Green Urban Edge

The Development Zones
A. Kennington Bybrook
B. Stanhope
C. Chilmington Green
D. Expanded Town Centre
E. Cobbs Wood
F. Ashford Barracks
G. Relocated Cheeseman's Green
H. Kingsnorth
I. Goldwell
J. Waterbrook/Sevington
K. Eureka / Sandyhurst / Bybrook
L. The Canal District

An example showing how the Structuring Principles were applied (developed after the April Workshop)

The Role of the Primary Structure

The primary structure is the key framework or the 'DNA' for the plan as a whole. It establishes the key spatial actions required to establish the core components of the plan, and will serve to qualify what kind of place Ashford can be. The primary structure reflects the integration of two key components: the Green Structure and the Urban Structure.

The Green Structure

The Green Structure relates to both existing and proposed landscape and habitat areas that will assist in structuring the growth of Ashford. The essential components of the Green Structure relate to: the Green Corridors, the Primary Parks, and the Edges or transition areas. They incorporate the majority of sensitive, flood and other ecologically important areas and will enhance and conserve these conditions.

The Urban Structure

Smart Link

The Smart Link is the primary public transport network that forms a 'Boomerang' linking new growth areas to the Town Centre. The two primary legs to the Boomerang are Victoria Way and Newtown way.

Orchard Way

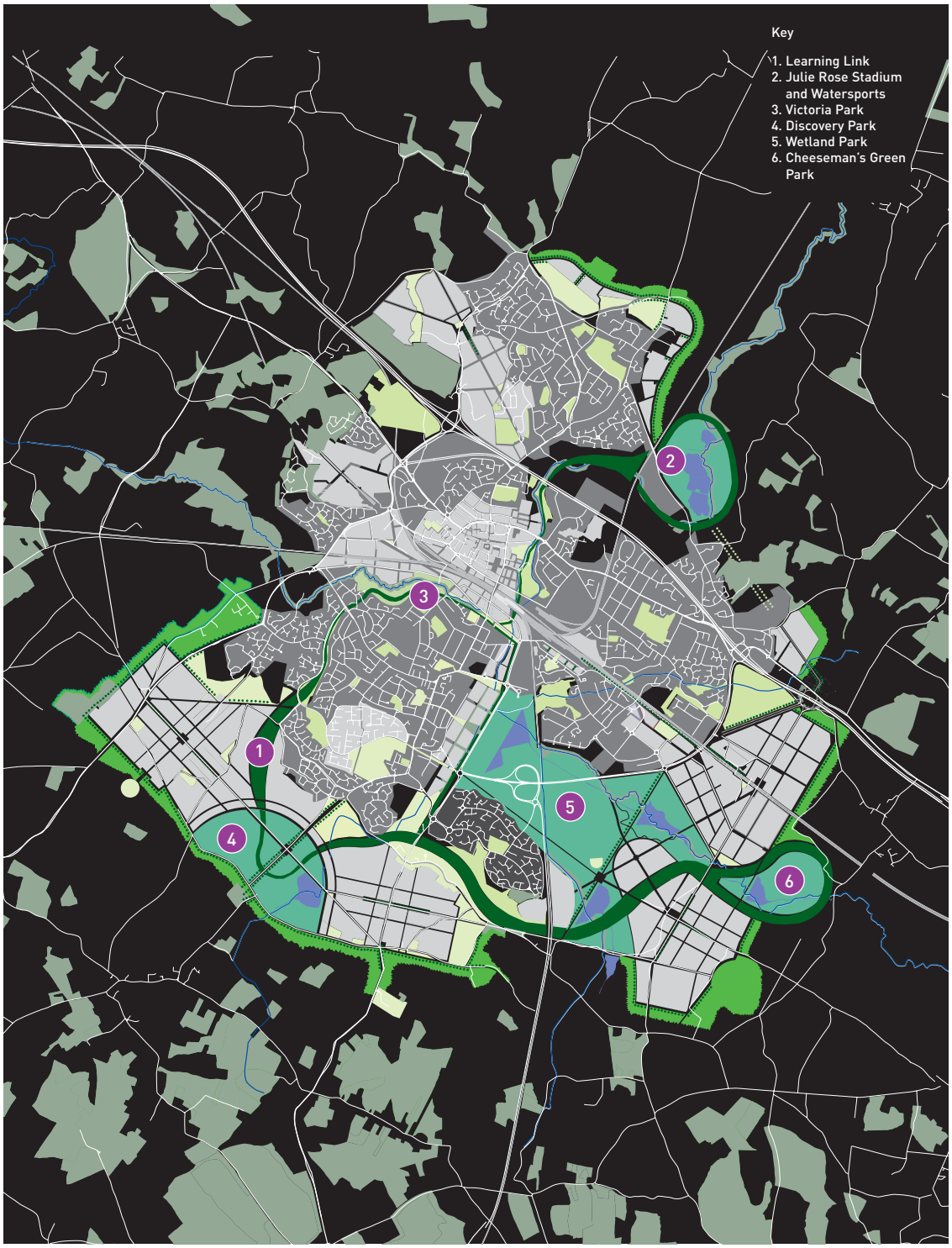
Orchard Way is a local street that links the core new growth areas in the south and east. Rather than a southern orbital, this is a key street that should have the capacity to sustain mixed use activity and range of resource hubs and special places along its route.

The Cross Link

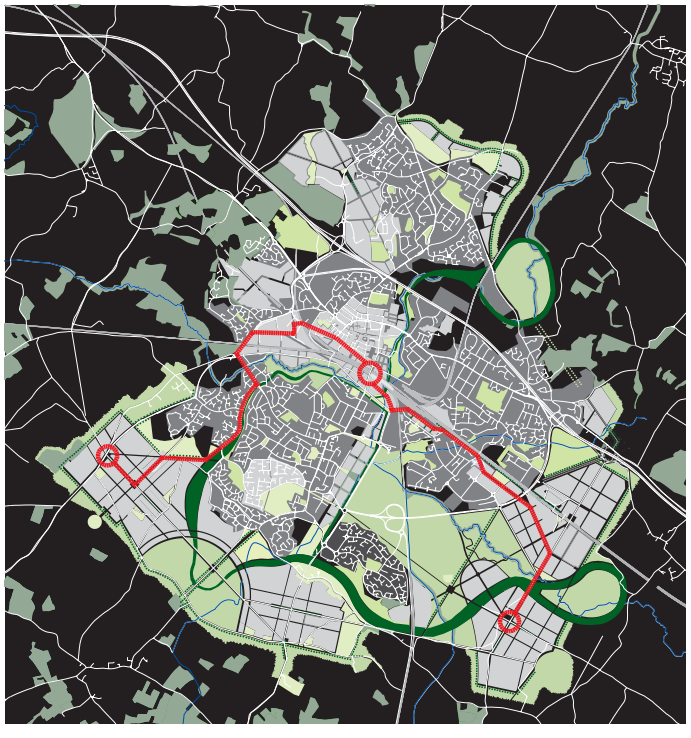
The Cross Link is a primary north-south and east-west link through Ashford. The existing north-south Link ties to Kennington in the north to Kingsnorth in the south. The east-west link ties to the A20 in the west to the William Harvey Hospital in the east.

The Connectors

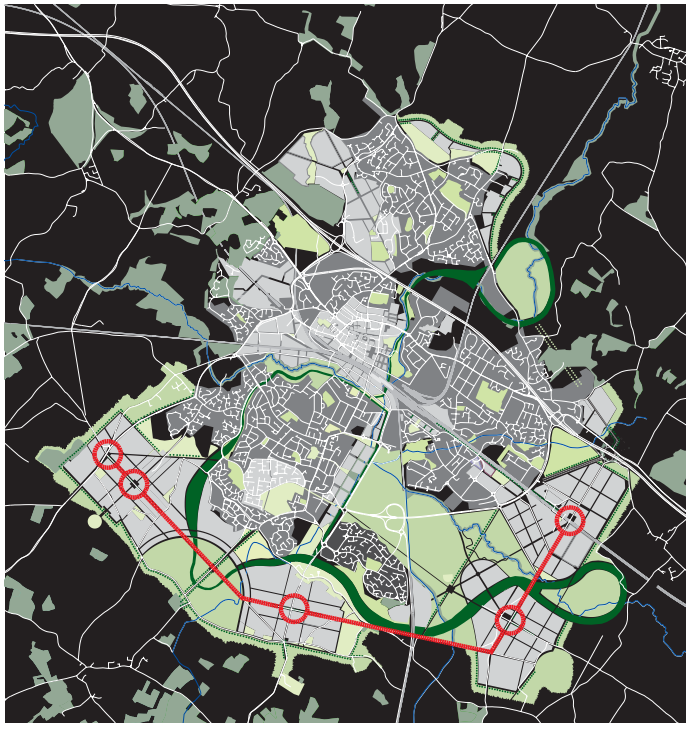
The connectors link together key areas in the south. The connectors partially carry vehicles, but are predominately focused on pedestrian and cyclist movement through Ashford. The Learning Link connect to the Discovery Centre and Town Centre in the north to the Discovery Park in the south. The Roman Road/Stanhope Way ties Cheeseman's green and the regional wetlands park in the east to Chilmington in the west.



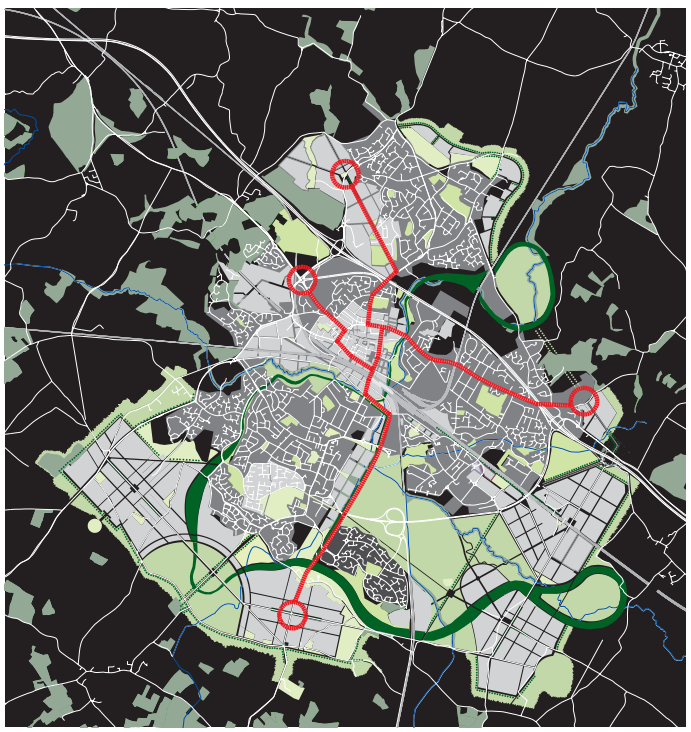
The Green Structure



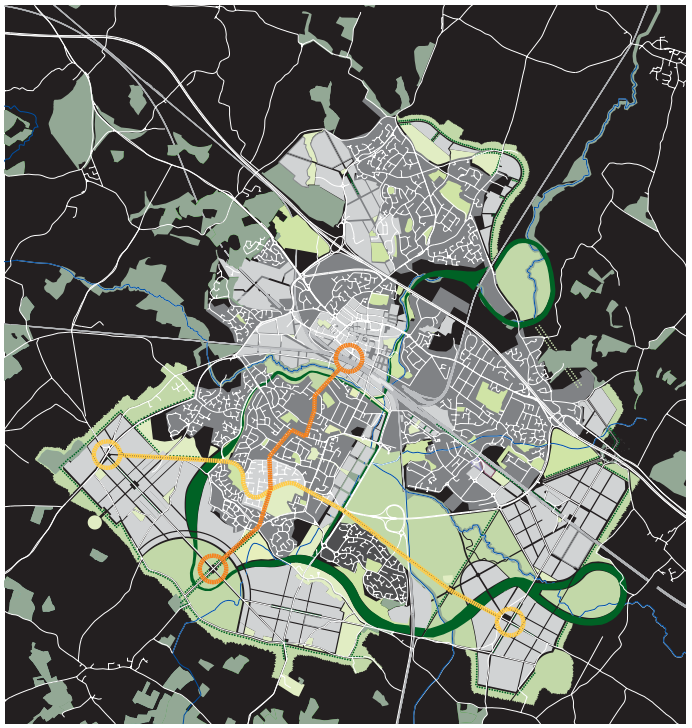
Smart Link - Victoria Way/Newtown Way



Orchard Way



The Cross



The Connectors - Learning Link/Roman Road

Movement and Access Concepts

The work by Halcrow (2001) in the "Ashford's Capacity Report" established the clear ambitions to shift Ashford from a car dominated environment towards a public transport driven solution.

Key Components of the Plan

The following movement infrastructure is proposed to deliver the Preferred Strategic Concept Plan:

1. The Victoria Way 'Boomerang'. A highly developed purpose-designed urban avenue and/or boulevard linking the Kingsnorth and Goldwell (Great Chart) neighbourhoods via Victoria Park, Expanded Town Centre/Southern Station zone and the Canal District. The ends of the system culminate in two strong public transport interchanges within the neighbourhood centres. The system could extend through Kingsnorth to a possible new station/park-and-ride complex at the new A2070 junction.

2. The New Town Centre Bridge. This new bridge provides an alternative to the Beaver Road Bridge, enabling future rerouting of traffic away from the Town Centre. The Beaver Road Bridge can be downgraded in the future to provide local access, public transport and good walking routes. In addition this bridge links the Victoria Way public transport corridor with Junction 9 and other established main corridors serving the Town Centre from the north, east and west. Two options were assessed for the location of this bridge – one at West Street and another linking to the Cobbs Wood estate, with the latter being the favoured option.

3. The Civic Cross. This involves turning Station Road and Elwick Road into two high quality town centre streets: great for shopping, walking, sitting outside and getting onto public transport. Under these conditions both streets are downgraded and turned into two-way operation with effective pedestrian crossings at every intersecting road. At the junction of these routes we create a new urban square to act as the focus for arts, cultural, civic, public transport, and local market activity. This could be associated with opening a new station entrance on the downgraded Beaver Road Bridge.

4. The Kennington Circle. This involves the introduction of a new bypass system along the northern and eastern edges of Kennington, linking the Canterbury Road with Trinity Road and Kennington Road (linking to Junction 10). Associated with this road infrastructure are some 400 new homes that form the outer edge of Kennington. This proposal allows the public transport facilities through Kennington/Bybrook to be strengthened.

5. New Town Way. This entails building a high quality public transport route from south of the station, through the New Town Works and along New Town Road across the north of the Orbital Park, under the trunk road, through Waterbrook to Cheeseman's Green. This is associated with bringing the New Town Works into effective use, intensifying the rear of the orbital for employment uses and restructuring Waterbrook. Related infrastructure include widening the existing bridge under the Hastings Line and a new bridge under the trunk road, adjacent to the CTRL.

6. Stanhope Way. This involves the reconfiguration of the street to the south of the Stanhope Estate to function as a direct connection to the A28 trunk road on the east to Tenterden Road on the west, via the Stanhope commercial centre and the Chilmington Green neighbourhood centre. This road should be designed as a high quality urban street with continuous tree planting, on street parking (particularly around schools) and effective traffic management to ensure that it does not contribute to increased severance in the area.

7. Orchard Avenue. This involves proposals for a major urban avenue that links all the neighbourhoods and provides an orbital link along the south, west and eastern edge of Ashford connecting Junction 10A in the east to the Tenterden Road. The latter is associated with the development of Goldwell (Great Chart) neighbourhood post 2021.Where this avenue runs through the neighbourhood centres in becomes a 'fat street' similar to the main road running through Tenterden. It follows the broad alignment of country roads where it runs through natural areas, thus retaining the qualities of the local landscape.

8. The Green Links. These comprise new walking cycling links to:

a. **Roman Road,** on the line of the Roman Road extending from Cheeseman's Green to the Romney Marsh Road with a new pedestrian /cycle bridge over the Hastings railway line.

b. **The Whitewater Canal/ Great Stour corridor** to run parallel to Victoria Way and connect through the town centre to the north;

c. **Orchard Avenue** along its length that does not accommodate cars; and

d. **The Learning Link** extending from the Town Centre to Discovery Park. This includes the replacement of the existing pedestrian bridge over the railway line to create a wider and easier transition from South Ashford to the Town Centre

e. **The Green Necklace** following a system of new and existing green corridors linking the Julie Rose Stadium in the north to the Discovery Park in the south and on to the new major wetlands park system in the east

9. M20 Junction Improvements. This includes major improvements to the strategic highway network to the west and east of the town:

a. **Junction 9**, entailing signalising of the roundabout and bus priority measures.

b. **Junction 10**, entailing signalising of the roundabout and bus priority measures.

c. **New Junction 10A** to the east of the existing junction to relieve the conflict between local and strategic traffic at Junction 10

10. Park and Ride These include sites at:

- The existing site at Warren
- A28 South West Corridor
- A2070 Corridor (near Waterbrook)

The plan opposite reflects the movement diagram prior to the July Workshop and is broadly applicable to the four Strategic Options.

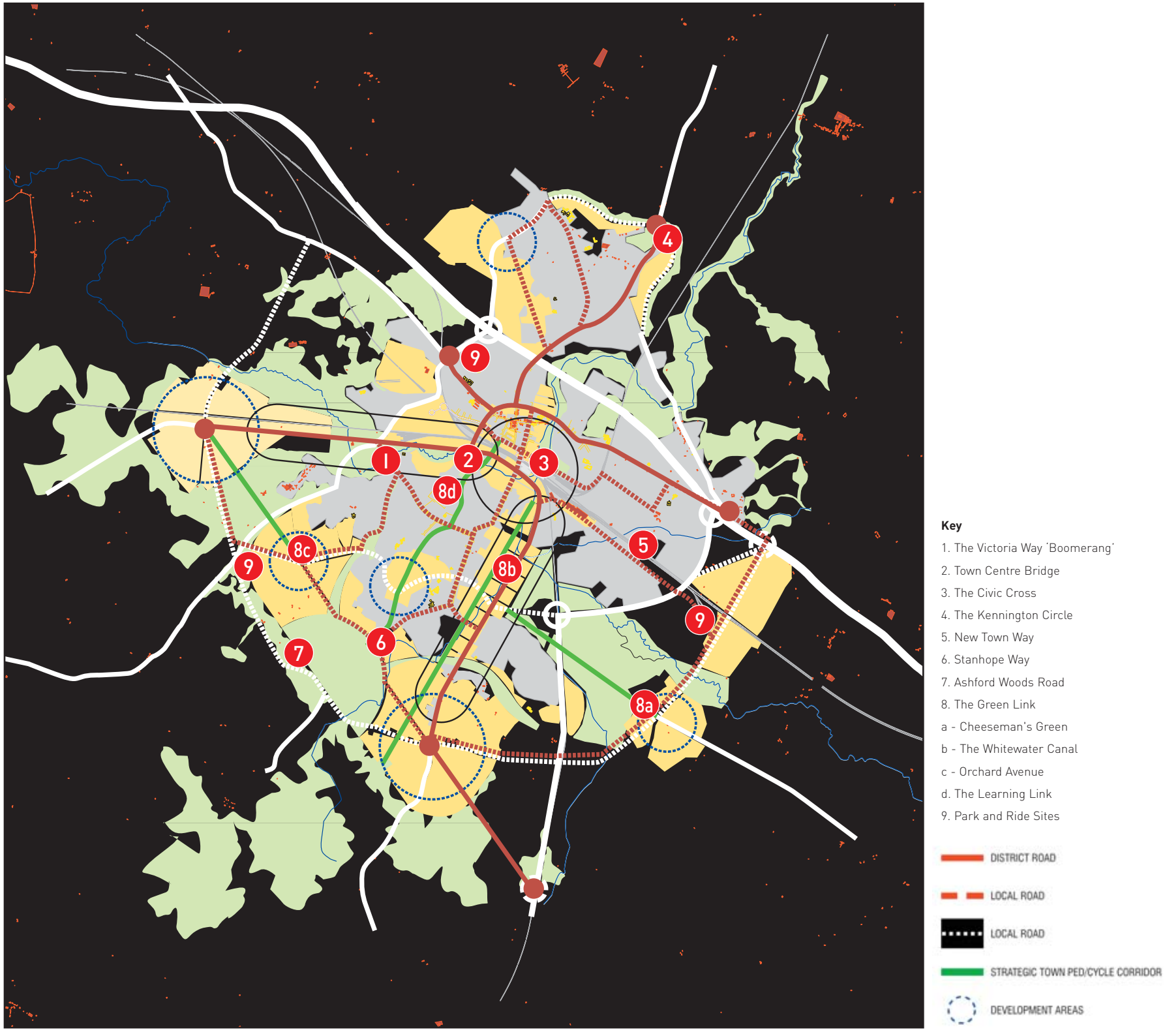
High Quality Public Transport – the SMARTLINK

The Ashford's Capacity Report identified that a high quality public transport system would need to be provided to support the levels of growth envisaged in Ashford. An aim of the AATS is to identify an appropriate system for Ashford. This study has shown that the provision of a high quality, high frequency service results in a significant increase in overall public transport use and consequent lower rates of traffic growth.

SMARTLINK will form transit corridors between the large mixed-use development areas to the south-east and south-west of the town and town centre. There is a wide range of measures and technologies available for the provision of street based transit systems ranging in cost and complexity. The choice of technology will depend upon a number of different factors but will often focus on demand, cost and the economic benefits of introducing the system. A further issue of importance is the need for the system to be responsive to changes in land use patterns over a 30 year period and being capable of phased implementation.

In order to encourage use of the SMARTLINK appropriate supporting passenger interface infrastructure will need to be in place. The would typically include:

- Platforms or raised kerbs providing level boarding and alighting
- Shelters providing all-weather protection
- CCTV and other systems to assist with safety
- Ticket vending machines selling a range of ticket products including the ability to 'top up' smartcard products.
- Real time information showing the time and destination of the next two or three departures from the stop.
- Minimum standards of printed information provision at stops
- A Passengers' Charter.



Movement Diagram of the Initial Strategic Concept Plan (Developed after the April Workshop and prior to the July Workshop)

Potential Scale and Location of New Jobs

This section outlines the preliminary spatial requirements that were established to meet the future employment challenge in Ashford. Although it formed an early basis to access the Options, the work has been substantially refined in Chapter 9.

The growth of 28,000 new jobs to 2031 represents a 59% increase in employment in the Borough of Ashford, and slightly slower growth than achieved in the past 25 years (63%).

The principal sectors that are expected to grow over the period 2001 to 2031 are: Business services, Manufacturing, Retailing, Construction, Hotels and Catering, which can be seen as a proxy for tourism.

The significant growth in manufacturing employment is noteworthy since it is contrary to trends in many parts of the region and the country (e.g. London). The role of manufacturing in the economy is generally expected to decline as a proportion of the town's employment base. However, this broad sector represents a relative strength of the economy of Ashford.

Growth in the business services sector is in line with trends in employment growth in other areas, and consistent with the anticipated structural changes in the regional and national economy generally.

The analysis of potential employment growth to 2031 and type of employment by skills and occupation will certainly necessitate infrastructure provision and other policy intervention including the improvement of strategic accessibility (e.g. CTRL, junction capacity at M20, high quality ICT) and new housing growth. Other types of intervention will cover improving and expanding training provision (and therefore overall skills levels, notably at NVQ 3 and 4 levels) and improvement of the quality of life in the district.

Spatial Requirements

Ashford's forecast employment growth implies that total new floorspace requirements in 2031 would be in the region of 1.7 million m2 . Taking 2001 as the base year this implies the following additional quantities of floorspace are required over and above 2001 levels in the three main areas of:

- General office (B1) requirement of approximately 143,000 m2. Public administration would need approximately 24,200 m2 of B1 use.
- General industry (B2) requirement of approximately 213,000 m2.
- Distribution (B8) will require approximately 135,000m2 of floorspace.

The previous analysis suggests that employment growth in Ashford will be derived from three broad sources.

- Firstly, an 'organic' increase in employment caused by the population expansion
- Secondly, an expected expansion of Ashford's existing employment base and sectoral strengths, particularly in manufacturing and distribution.
- The final main source of employment growth in business services is anticipated to be catalysed by the completion of the CTRL.

The emerging pattern of employment distribution in Ashford has been underpinned by analysis, but overall it will be a function of market realism and sustainability. The quantitative analysis has considered the spatial implications of the employment forecasts for Ashford, produced for the original Ashford's Future Study, (Halcrow 2002). The qualitative analysis has considered the spatial elements from the emerging economic vision for Ashford. Taken together this results in an evolving distributional pattern of employment summarised in the table.

Potential Locations for New Jobs

Initial estimation of the type and spatial requirements suggest a range of potential locations for new jobs in Ashford.These include:

The Tight Boomerang

Locations within the Town Centre and Victoria Way areas :

- **Town Centre** focussing on the potential of creating a new office precinct to the north of the International Station as part of a new office-led mixed use development
- **Expanded Town Centre** locations including new employment possibilities on land to the south of Elwick Road and south of the railway line as part of a new learning/living-led urban quarter.
- **The Cobb's Wood/ Chart Estates** with the prospects for relocation of space extensive distribution uses to motorway locations and the intensification of the existing employment sites.
- **The Canal District** should this project be brought forward as a mixed use district.

The Neighbourhoods

These include locations within the neighbourhood centres as part of creating vital mixed use hearts.

The Out of Town Locations

These include new areas well served by the motorway network and best suited for space extensive distribution and business park uses including:

- **Eureka Park/ Sandyhurst** with the prospects for intensification and expansion of the existing employment sites near Junction 9 on the M20.
- **Sevington North** with the potential for new employment sites near Junction 10 and 10A on the M20.
- **Waterbrook/Orbital Park** with the prospects for intensification and expansion of the existing employment sites near the A2070.
- **Henwood** already allocated but not yet implemented.

Aerial View of Ashford – Reference Plan

06.2 EARLY STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The workshops held in April clearly identified strong support for the compact model. The Initial Strategic Concept Plan that was subsequently developed was based on this model. It included a full Canal District, which on its own, accounted for 3500 homes and 2200 jobs. Although the Canal District received significant support from stakeholders at the April workshops, and through subsequent consultation, it was acknowledged that at this stage there were potentially significant risks attached to a Masterplan that depended upon the Canal District. It was considered appropriate at this stage to consider alternatives in case it was subsequently decided that the Canal District was unacceptable or undeliverable.

This section reviews the four options of the evolving plan presented at the July Workshops. It describes the common themes and primary structuring components that are common to the options. In assessing these options, the Options Appraisal developed within the Strategic Environment Assessment (Halcrow, 2004) is also referred to. At this stage it was concluded that the creation of a fourth new neighbourhood would be unlikely to work in terms of public transport or other service provision (see section 09.2). Therefore, options 1 to 3 each extend one of the proposed new neighbourhoods that form part of the compact element of the compact model.

The Full Canal District is incorporated in Option 4. The further testing that has been applied to the Canal District is set out later in this report.

Cheeseman's Green

A major concern arising out of the Strategic Growth Model process was the location and scale of the committed Cheeseman's Green proposals. It was concluded that it would be difficult to integrate the proposed scheme into the primary public transport infrastructure and that the future sustainability of the proposed local centre was doubtful, given the potential for Waterbrook to become a stronger development node. This is demonstrated in the 'Development Corridors' plan opposite.

Efforts should be directed to relocating all or part of Cheeseman's Green to the east of Captain's Wood, an important environmental constraint, and creating a larger neighbourhood with the local centre served by SMARTLINK.

In all options Cheeseman's Green is shown to be relocated further eastwards although in all options some development to the north-west of Captain's Wood could be delivered. In all options the committed employment area at the western edge of the site is moved to the Sevington area.

The Four Early Options

Four options were developed in response to the Initial Strategic Concept Plan to address the concerns over the potential loss of units in the Canal District. These options included:

Option 1: Expanded Chilmington Green

Option 2: Expanded Kingsnorth

Option 3: Expanded Cheeseman's Green

Option 4: The Full Canal District

The numbers of houses and jobs are common to all four options. Options 1-3 show how the shortfall in housing and jobs are met if the Canal District is not realisable.

The assessment of the options needs to strike a balance between three core aspects namely; the Environment, Movement and Access and Urban Quality. These are assessed using the yardsticks outlined in Section 4.

- The Environment
- Movement and Access
- Urban Quality

All of the options are assessed within the framework of these three competing forces.

Common Themes

All of these options have the following common themes, they only differ in terms of scale and location of neighbourhoods vs. inclusion of the Canal District:

Potential Neighbourhoods/Districts

The potential for new **neighbourhoods** ranging from 3,500 units (associated with existing development to 6,000 units (freestanding, self-contained settlements) at

1. Goldwell (Great Chart)
2. Chilmington Green
3. Kingsnorth
4. Cheeseman's Green

New residential **districts** of 1,000 to 2,500 units (as part of mixed-use development) at:

5. Waterbrook
6. The Canal District
7. The Expanded Town Centre
8. Ashford Barracks
9. Bockhanger/Sandyhurst

New urban **extensions** of 300-1,000 units at:

10. Kennington
11. William Harvey Hospital
12. Discovery Park
13. Park Farm South

Potential Employment Sites

The majority of jobs to be accommodated in new and intensified **industrial/ business parks** at:

1. Eureka/Sandyhurst
2. Sevington North
3. Waterbrook/Orbital Park

New jobs as part of **mixed use districts** to include:

4. The Expanded Town Centre
5. The Canal District
6. Cobbs Wood/ Chart Estate
7. William Harvey Hospital

New local jobs as part of the **neighbourhoods** at:

8. Goldwell (Great Chart
9. Chilmington Green
10. Kingsnorth
11. Cheeseman's Green

Potential Green Structure

This focuses on green corridors and major green spaces as part of the 'Green Dividend' to include

1. The Emerald Necklace
2. The improved Julie Rose Stadium Park
3. The Discovery Park
4. The Regional Wetlands Park at South Willesborough
5. The Waterbrook 'Country Club'

Potential Development Corridors

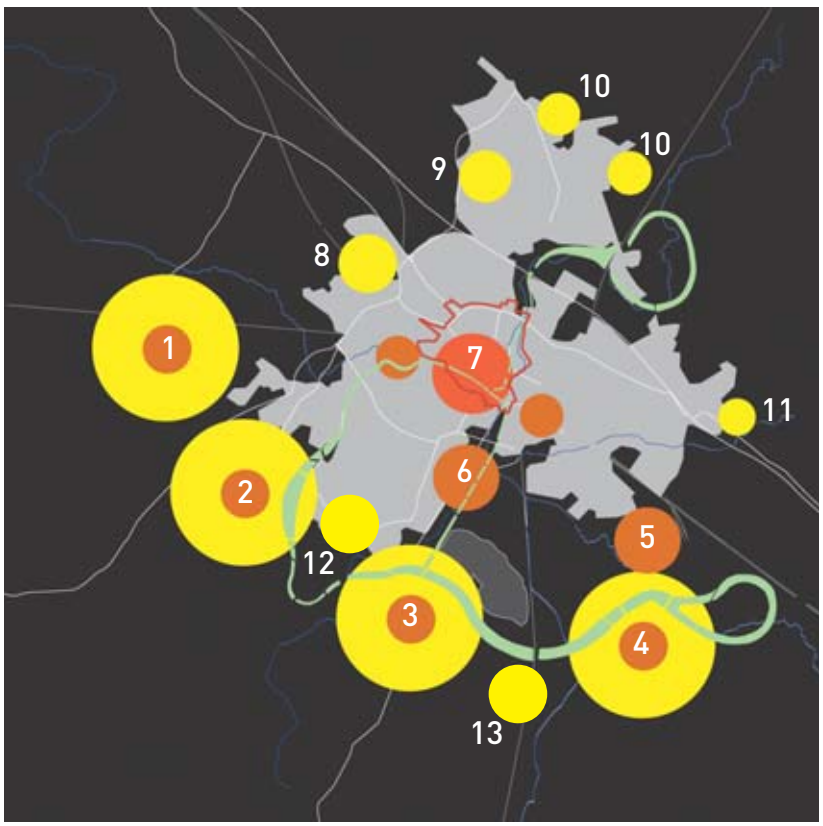
These represent **higher order** quality public transport corridors that become the focus for intensive mixed use development and include:

1. Victoria Way (consistent with all options)
2. Goldwell/ Great Chart
3. Tenterden Road to Chilmington Green (via Singleton)
4. Romney Marsh Road to Kingsnorth (via Canal District)
5. New Town Way to Cheeseman's Green (via Waterbrook)

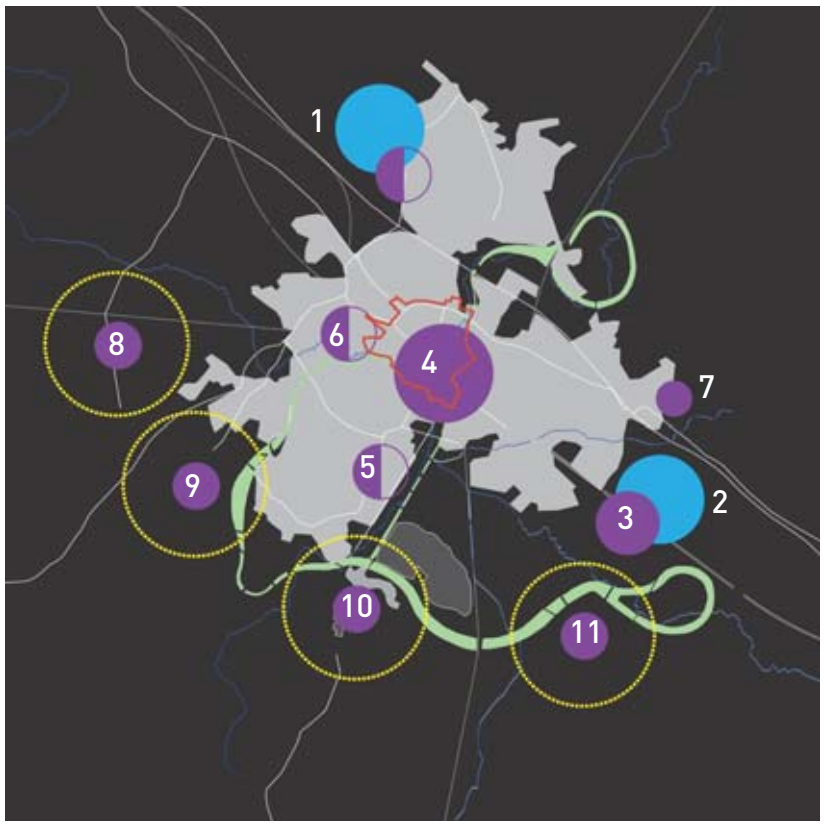
These relate to **lower order** development corridors and include:

6. Bockhanger Wood (via Bybrook)
7. The A20 to the Warren Park-and-Ride site
8. The William Harvey Hospital

The four early options are considered in some detail on the following pages. The highlighted text in the various tables indicate where the shortfall could be met if the Canal District option was not pursued.

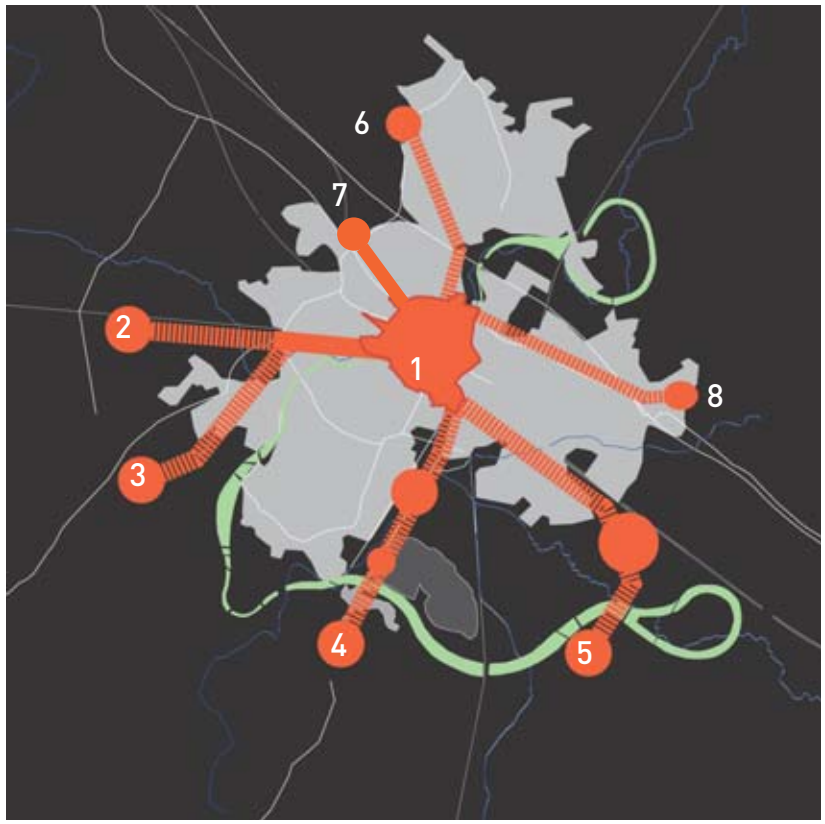


Potential neighbourhoods and districts



Potential location of employment

Potential green structure



Potential development corridors

Option 1: Expanded Chilmington Green

In this option the proposed development of Chilmington Green moves from some 2,650 units to closer to 6,150 units. The means that Chilmington Green moves closer to a fully developed neighbourhood such as that proposed at Kingsnorth, with a wider range of facilities. In this instance the centre of the neighbourhood is relocated to the junction of Tenterden Road and Magpie Hall Road. The settlement is served by a strong public transport system through Singleton to Victoria Way and on to the Station/Town Centre. Additional jobs are provided within the neighbourhood and in out-of-town locations.

- **The Environment**

- The proposed Chilmington area includes portions of grade 2 agricultural land.

- **Movement and Access**

- The loss of the Canal District development area would make the major public transport corridor to Kingsnorth less viable, and may downgrade it. This may reduce the attractiveness of the service to Kingsnorth residents.
- The increase in development at Chilmington Green may increase the viability of the major public transport route to it.
- Residents at Chilmington would be more remote from the town centre and existing neighbourhoods than at the Canal District, and therefore they would be likely to make fewer walking and cycling trips.

- **Urban Quality**

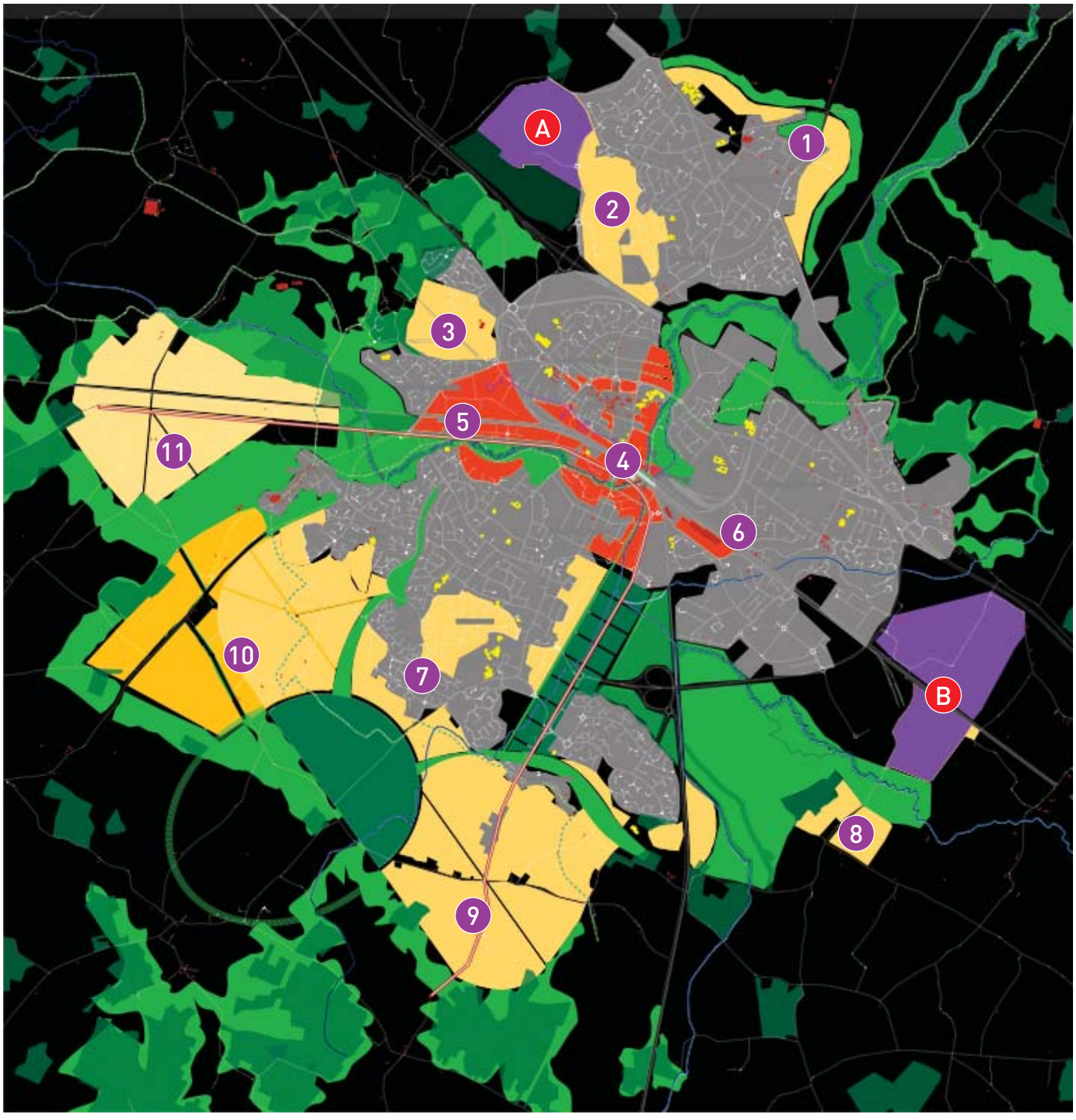
- The expanded Town Centre is effectively separated from the new Kingsnorth by the floodplain area along Romney Marsh Road.
- Cheeseman's Green is a remote area as part of this Option, poorly connected to Ashford town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The expanded Chilmington Green transgresses the Magpie Hall Road which could serve to define a green edge to development in the south. However Chilmington Green would have the potential to perform as a full neighbourhood

Possible Residential Development Areas for the Options

Implemented Development	Description	Total Units
Park Farm/Singleton/etc.	Built housing within the Local Plan period	**3090**
New/Committed Intervention Areas		
Kennington Circle	Major infill development along relief roads	400
Bockhanger/ Eureka/Bybrook	Intensification, infill and regeneration	600
Ashford Barracks	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,350
Expanded Town Centre	Higher density, mixed use development	3,150
Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park	Regeneration of industrial estates/housing infill	1,450
New Town Works/Hunter Avenue	New mixed use, medium density development	550
Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park	Housing estate renewal/new development	9,50
Cheeseman's Green	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,100
		9,550
Neighbourhoods		
Kingsnorth	New neighbourhood to the south of Park Farm	6,150
Chilmington Green	**New neighbourhood south of Singleton**	**6,150**
Goldwell (Great Chart)	New neighbourhood (post Local Plan period)	6,060
		18,360
	TOTAL UNITS	**31,000**

Possible Jobs Allocation Areas for the Options

Implemented Development	Description	Total Jobs
Orbital Park/Henwood	Jobs delivered within Local Plan period	**2,290**
New Employment Areas	**Description**	
Neighbourhoods	**Small-scale local employment**	**2,250**
Out-of Town Areas	**Eureka/Sandyhurst and Junction 10/10a sites**	**9,870**
Intensified Central Areas	Cobbs Wood/New Town Works/Cheeseman's Green/etc	1,200
Town Centre	Including Town Centre South	12,390
		25,710
	TOTAL JOBS	**28,000**



Residential Development

1. Kennington Circle
2. Bockhanger/Eureka/Bybrook
3. Ashford Barracks
4. Expanded Town Centre
5. Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park
6. New Town Works/Hunter Avenue
7. Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park
8. Cheeseman's Green
9. Kingsnorth
10. Chilmington Green
11. Goldwell (Great Chart)

Employment Areas

A. Eureka/Sandyhurst
B. Waterbrook/Sevington

Fallback to and Expanded Chilmington Green

Option 2: Expanded Kingsnorth

In this instance a new neighbourhood of some 3,500 units is created to the south east of the Kingsnorth neighbourhood straddling the new route from the B2070 to Kingsnorth. This could be associated with a new station on the Hastings Line (to replace the option at Park Farm). The public transport system serving Kingsnorth could be extended to serve this new neighbourhood. Additional jobs are provided within the neighbourhood and in out-of-town locations.

- **The Environment**

- The proposed Kingsnorth extension includes areas of designated floodplain.

- **Movement and Access**

- The loss of the Canal district development area could make the major public transport corridor to Kingsnorth less viable, but this should be mostly compensated for by the addition of Goldwell at the end of the corridor.
- The likely increased average distances of the residents to the public transport corridor may dilute demand.
- Residents at Goldwell would be more remote from facilities and existing neighbourhoods than at Canal District, and therefore they would be likely to make fewer walking and cycling trips.

- **Urban Quality**

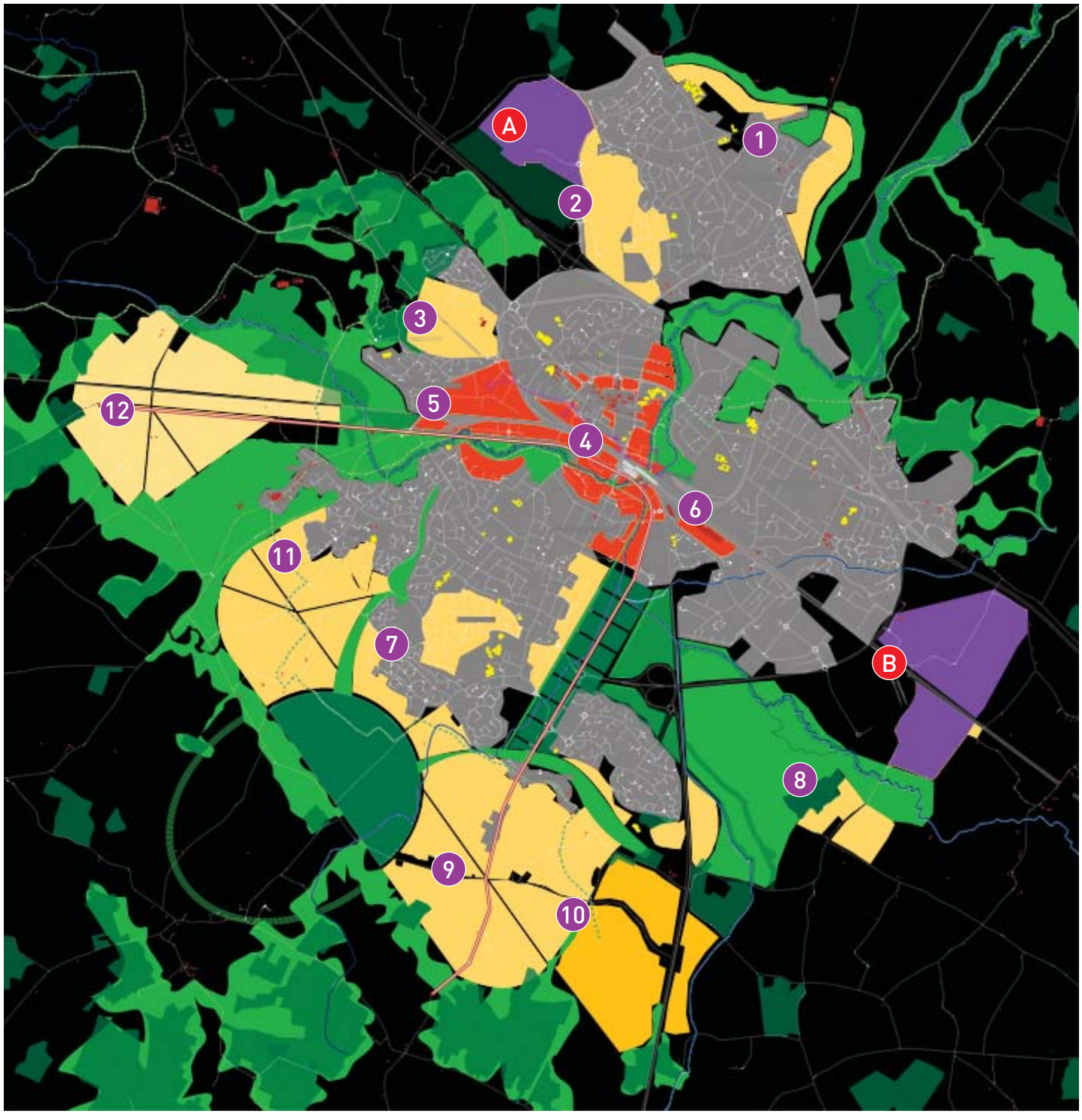
- As with Option 1 the expanded Town Centre is effectively separated from the new Kingsnorth by the floodplain area along Romney Marsh Road.
- Cheeseman's Green is a remote area as part of this Option, poorly connected to Ashford town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The Kingsnorth area could potentially be served by both a public transport route from Romney Marsh Road and a new station on the Hasting's line. The potentially large development area would support both modes of public transport.

Possible Residential Development Areas for the Options

Implemented Development	Description	Total Units
Park Farm/Singleton/etc.	Built housing within the Local Plan period	**3090**
New/Committed Intervention Areas		
Kennington Circle	Major infill development along relief roads	400
Bockhanger/ Eureka/Bybrook	Intensification, infill and regeneration	600
Ashford Barracks	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,350
Expanded Town Centre	Higher density, mixed use development	3,150
Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park	Regeneration of industrial estates/housing infill	1,450
New Town Works/Hunter Avenue	New mixed use, medium density development	550
Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park	Housing estate renewal/new development	9,50
Cheeseman's Green	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,100
		9,550
Neighbourhoods		
Kingsnorth	New neighbourhood to the south of Park Farm	6,150
Kingsnorth	**New extension east of neighbourhood**	**3,500**
Chilmington Green	New neighbourhood south of Singleton	2,650
Goldwell (Great Chart)	New neighbourhood (post Local Plan period)	6,060
		18,360
	TOTAL UNITS	31,000

Possible Jobs Allocation Areas for the Options

Implemented Development	Description	Total Jobs
Orbital Park/Henwood	Jobs delivered within Local Plan period	**2,290**
New Employment Areas	**Description**	
Neighbourhoods	**Small-scale local employment**	**2,250**
Out-of Town Areas	**Eureka/Sandyhurst and Junction 10/10a sites**	**9,870**
Intensified Central Areas	Cobbs Wood/New Town Works/Cheeseman's Green/etc	1,200
Town Centre	Including Town Centre South	12,390
		25,710
	TOTAL JOBS	28,000



Residential Development

1. Kennington Circle
2. Bockhanger/Eureka/Bybrook
3. Ashford Barracks
4. Expanded Town Centre
5. Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park
6. New Town Works/Hunter Avenue
7. Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park
8. Cheeseman's Green
9. Kingsnorth
10. Kingsnorth Neighbourhood
11. Chilmington Green
12. Goldwell (Great Chart)

Employment Areas

A. Eureka/Sandyhurst
B. Waterbrook/Sevington

An Expanded Kingsnorth

Option 3: Expanded Cheeseman's Green

This could involve moving the current scheme at Cheeseman's Green from the proposed 1,100 units to 4,600 units to create a more viable settlement. This options places more emphasis on achieving the New Town Way public transport corridor. Additional jobs are provided within the neighbourhood and in out-of-town locations.

- **The Environment**

- The proposed expansion of Cheeseman's Green to the east will have an impact on Mersham and Colliers Hill, an important landscape feature.

- **Movement and Access**

- The loss of the Canal district development area would make the major public transport corridor to Kingsnorth less viable, and may downgrade it. This may reduce the attractiveness of the service to Kingsnorth residents.
- The increase in development at Cheeseman's Green may increase the viability of the major public transport route to it. This may be diluted by the increased distance of the residents to the service.
- Although residents at Cheeseman's Green would be considerably more remote from the town centre and existing neighbourhoods than at Canal District, and therefore they would be likely to make fewer walking and cycling trips, they would however be better served by local facilities.

- **Urban Quality**

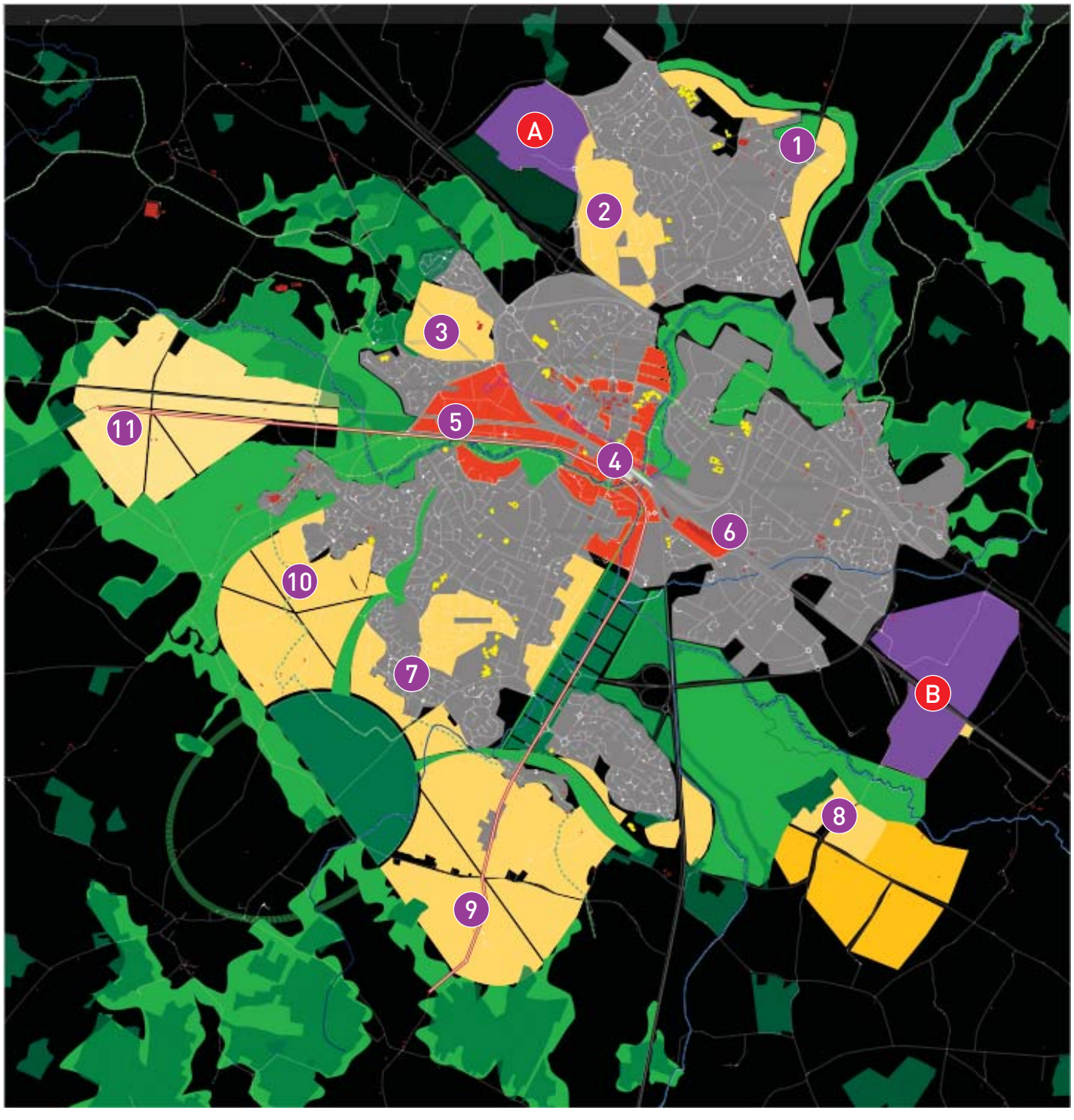
- As with Options 1 and 2, the expanded Town Centre is effectively separated from the new Kingsnorth by the floodplain area along Romney Marsh Road.
- The expanded Cheeseman's Green creates a larger threshold to support facilities and resources.
- The development in the southeast could potentially be supported by a New Town Way public corridor which leads from the south east of the expanded Town Centre.
- The emphasis in this area could sustain employment zones at Waterbrook and Sevington North.

Possible Residential Development Areas for the Options

Implemented Development	Description	Total Units
Park Farm/Singleton/etc.	Built housing within the Local Plan period	**3090**
New/Committed Intervention Areas		
Kennington Circle	Major infill development along relief roads	400
Bockhanger/ Eureka/Bybrook	Intensification, infill and regeneration	600
Ashford Barracks	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,350
Expanded Town Centre	Higher density, mixed use development	3,150
Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park	Regeneration of industrial estates/housing infill	1,450
New Town Works/Hunter Avenue	New mixed use, medium density development	550
Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park	Housing estate renewal/new development	9,50
		8,450
Neighbourhoods		
Kingsnorth	New neighbourhood to the south of Park Farm	6,150
Cheeseman's Green	**New neighbourhood (including committed housing)**	**4,600**
Chilmington Green	New neighbourhood south of Singleton	2,650
Goldwell (Great Chart)	New neighbourhood (post Local Plan period)	6,060
		19,460
	TOTAL UNITS	**31,000**

Possible Jobs Allocation Areas for the Options

Implemented Development	Description	Total Jobs
Orbital Park/Henwood	Jobs delivered within Local Plan period	**2,290**
New Employment Areas	**Description**	
Neighbourhoods	**Small-scale local employment**	**2,250**
Out-of Town Areas	**Eureka/Sandyhurst and Junction 10/10a sites**	**9,870**
Intensified Central Areas	Cobbs Wood/New Town Works/Cheeseman's Green/etc	1,200
Town Centre	Including Town Centre South	12,390
		25,710
	TOTAL JOBS	**28,000**



Residential Development

1. Kennington Circle
2. Bockhanger/Eureka/Bybrook
3. Ashford Barracks
4. Expanded Town Centre
5. Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park
6. New Town Works/Hunter Avenue
7. Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park
8. Cheeseman's Green
9. Kingsnorth
10. Chilmington Green
11. Goldwell (Great Chart)

Employment Areas

A. Eureka/Sandyhurst
B. Waterbrook/Sevington

An Expanded Cheeseman's Green

Option 4: The Canal District

In this option, a full Canal District is created 500m from the International Station, and extends approximately 1.5km to the south, along the existing Romney Marsh Road. Although this land is currently within the designated floodplain, it could serve to generate a vibrant, mixed use area of development. 3500 houses and 2200 jobs could potentially be sustained in this area. As far as possible additional new development is kept to the north of Magpie Hall Road.

- **The Environment**

- The Canal District occupies designated floodplain and SNCI. The landscape is of low visual quality affected by elevated roads and railways, traffic noise and lighting. Grazing marsh is a UK BAP priority habitat. With reference K-LIS land lost here could be recreated two fold in the proposed Great Wetland Park, currently arable and there is huge scope to increase riparian habitat resource.

- **Movement and Access**

- The Victoria Way (to Goldwell) mixed-use public transport corridor replaces the New Town Way corridor. Part of this route duplicates a possible mixed-use corridor to Chilmington Green, and therefore the Chilmington Green public transport corridor may be diluted and be served with traditional bus routes instead.
- Park and Ride sites are less easily integrated into the main public transport corridors.
- Goldwell is not immediately adjacent to existing neighbourhoods and therefore would generate limited walking and cycling trips to and from these neighbourhoods.
- Goldwell may be able to support a new station on the Tonbridge railway line, mainly catering for London commuters (probably served by an extra stop on existing stopping services) and this could increase regional rail trips.
- The limited development at Cheeseman's Green is isolated. This may make it difficult to establish viable bus services to it, and encourage a high proportion of car trips to be made.

- **Urban Quality**

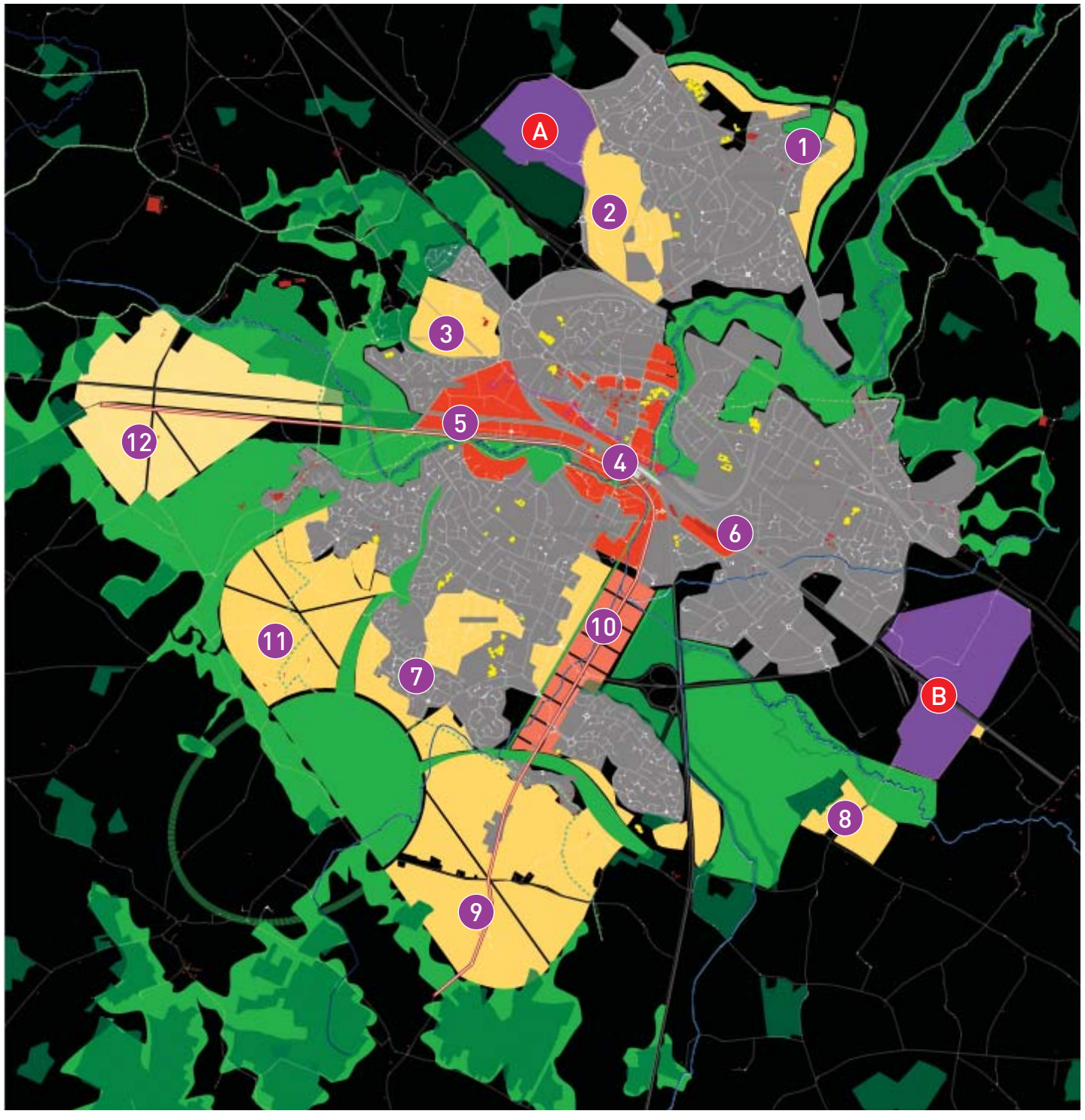
- This option strongly reflects the compact model
- It generates a continuous public transport and development link from the Town Centre to development in the south, while development in the south is contained by a green edge along Magpie Hall Road.
- The development of the Canal District would regenerate existing communities to the west, linking communities to amenities.

Residential Development

Implemented Development	Description	Total Units
Park Farm/Singleton/etc.	Built housing within the Local Plan period	**3090**
New/Committed Intervention Areas		
Kennington Circle	Major infill development along relief roads	400
Bockhanger/ Eureka/Bybrook	Intensification, infill and regeneration	600
Ashford Barracks	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,350
Expanded Town Centre	Higher density, mixed use development	3,150
Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park	Regeneration of industrial estates/housing infill	1,450
New Town Works/Hunter Avenue	New mixed use, medium density development	550
Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park	Housing estate renewal/new development	9,50
Cheeseman's Green	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,100
		9,550
Neighbourhoods		
Kingsnorth	New neighbourhood to the south of Park Farm	6,150
Canal District	**New mixed-use, residential district**	**3,500**
Chilmington Green	New neighbourhood south of Singleton	2,650
Goldwell (Great Chart)	New neighbourhood (post Local Plan period)	6,060
		18,360
	TOTAL UNITS	**31,000**

Jobs Allocation

Implemented Development	Description	Total Jobs
Orbital Park/Henwood	Jobs delivered within Local Plan period	**2,290**
New Employment Areas	**Description**	
Neighbourhoods	Small-scale local employment	1,500
Out-of Town Areas	Eureka/Sandyhurst and Junction 10/10a sites	8,420
Canal District	**Medium-scale local/strategic employment area**	**2,200**
Out-of Town Areas	**Eureka/Sandyhurst and Junction 10/10a sites**	**9,870**
Intensified Central Areas	Cobbs Wood/New Town Works/Cheeseman's Green/etc	1,200
Town Centre	Including Town Centre South	12,390
		25,710
	TOTAL JOBS	**28,000**



Residential Development

1. Kennington Circle
2. Bockhanger/Eureka/Bybrook
3. Ashford Barracks
4. Expanded Town Centre
5. Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park
6. New Town Works/Hunter Avenue
7. Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park
8. Cheeseman's Green
9. Kingsnorth
10. Canal District
11. Chilmington Green
12. Goldwell (Great Chart)

Employment Areas

A. Eureka/Sandyhurst
B. Waterbrook/Sevington

The Full Canal District

Risks and Alternatives

Although the Option 4, presented as the preferred plan at the July Workshop, meets many of the objectives of the strategic vision and the requirements arising out of the various workstreams, it also has many risks. These risks derive mainly from the proposal for the Canal District that involves relocation of the floodplain and the proposed New Town Centre Bridge. These risks were raised at the Workshop.

The Canal District

The risks associated with this include:

1. Technical Feasibility – Is the relocation of the floodplain achievable in engineering terms with the key principle that there is no overall loss of flood storage capacity in the area? Studies undertaken by hydrological consultants, Black & Veatch and HR Wallingfords to test the implications of shifting the floodplain to the Cheeseman's Green (and adjacent area) and within the Discovery Park showed that this was feasible.

2. Viability – Are the physical costs of moving large volumes of soil offset by the relative values that are generated by releasing medium density development on one or both sides of Romney Marsh Road? Also, do the costs of delivering the infrastructure to create the Canal District create sufficient value to make it worthwhile in development terms, and can this additional value contribute to the costs of the public transport system? Feasibility studies by Turner & Townsend and DTZ Pieda proved that this option was viable

3. Deliverability – Can the land for the relocated floodplain at Cheeseman's Green be delivered through negotiations with the Church Commissioners? Also can a successful scheme for Cheeseman's Green be achieved by moving the committed 1100 homes and the business park to the East of Captain's Wood? The relocation of part of this committed scheme to east of Captain's Wood has been pursued with the landowners.

4. Cost Benefit – How does this scheme compare with the alternative of achieving density at a lower density elsewhere and the consequent impact this has on delivering a high quality public transport system? Also what are the additional road-building costs associated with lower density development? A cost appraisal was undertaken by Turner & Townsend proved that medium density development with undercroft parking in the Canal District has significant cost benefits.

5. Policy Implications – Will the Environment Agency ever agree to the relocation of the floodplain even if it is proven to be technically feasible? Discussions will need to take place with the Client Group, ODPM and DEFRA at the highest level at the earliest possible time.

More recently, the Environment Agency have indicated that they may be willing to consider limited development in this area.

6. Political Acceptability – Will local politicians accept the proposals, given their previous stances on flooding issues? Early indications have shown strong political support for this option but full support will be clearly dependent on satisfying the risks outlined in 1-5 above

As well as raising a number of risks the Canal District clearly has a number of benefits in terms of urban design and place making, sustaining a high quality public transport route and in helping to regenerate the existing urban area. It is felt that these benefits make this part of the proposal worth taking forward into the detailed development planning.

Despite having risks, it is felt that these can be reasonably managed. The management broadly falls into three types of actions.

- By designing the homes, buildings and wider area in a way that protects the development from the risk of flooding and also does not cause detriment to existing properties
- By phasing the Canal District so that the delivery of the Masterplan is not dependent on the short term delivery of the Canal district
- By having an open and realistic approach to detailed risk management so that the implications of the development and how the risk is being managed will be understood by the existing community, the potential residents, their insurers and the Environment Agency.

Given the above, it is imperative that we do not have a single plan that is dependent on the Canal District as its only solution. At the Eastwell Manor Workshop it was clearly stated that all scenarios could work, to a lesser or greater effect.

Moving to a less compact model will have the following consequences:

- It will make the desired transport modal split less easy to deliver.
- The plan will lose a major 'transformational project' that will deliver the step change Ashford needs.
- The scheme will lose 4000 units and 2250 jobs within close proximity to the International Station, and along a highly developed public transport corridor.
- Losing the medium density housing may result in a doubling of land take elsewhere to achieve the same number of houses.
- Losing the jobs in this district will require more jobs elsewhere, perhaps in more structured business parks or industrial estates.

The New Town Centre Bridge

The risks associated with this include:

1. Technical Feasibility – Is the bridge achievable in engineering terms, given the fact that the first proposal crossed both the CTRL and domestic lines and arrives at a high level adjacent to Victoria Way? Alan Baxter & Associates assessed this feasibility and concluded that if the right alignment is chosen, it would be deliverable.

2. Viability – Are the physical costs of building the bridge justifiable? The team will need to show that the scheme offers major benefits to the Town Centre and Station Area.

3. Deliverability – Can the land for the bridge be delivered either by agreement or sale? These negotiations have not yet started, but require further involvement by the Borough and English Partnerships.

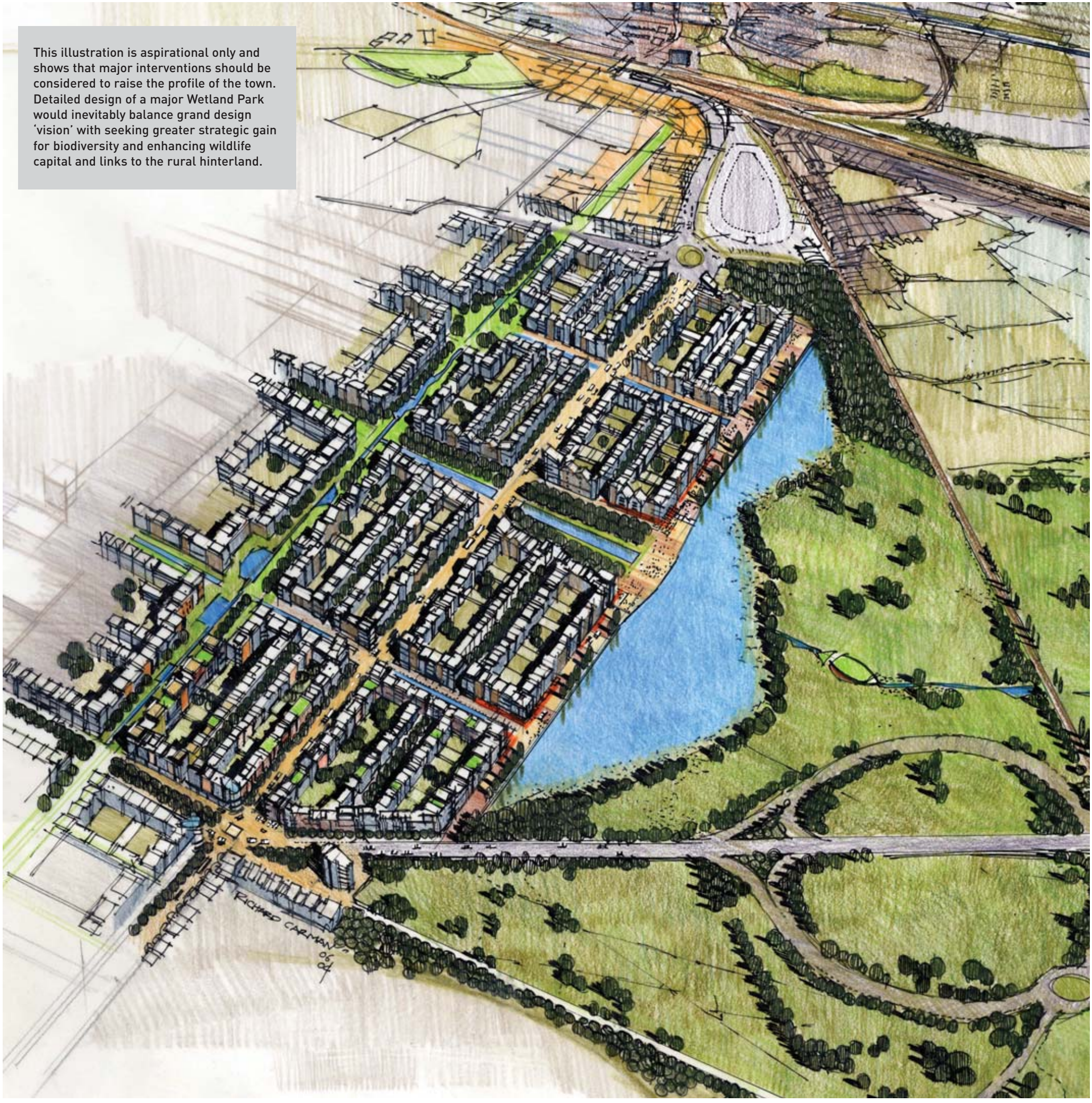
4. Cost Benefit – How does this scheme compare with the alternative of keeping all traffic on the Beaver Road Bridge? Early indications have shown that it is essential to achieve some form of relief to the town centre if the ambitions of reducing the impact of the ring road around the town centre are to be met. Also what additional road-building may be required to provide additional relief to the Town Centre once the town reaches its new size? In combination with Victoria Way, this project is an essential component in achieving east-west links as an alternative to building a major outer orbital road. In this respect it has major costs benefits.

5. Policy Implications – Will the Strategic Rail Authority ever agree to the proposal (or make it extremely costly) if it is proven to be technically feasible? Discussions will need to take place with the Client Group, ODPM and SRA at the highest level at the earliest possible time.

6. Political Acceptability – Will local politicians accept the proposals? This will need to be addressed by the Client Group.

Given the above, it is imperative that we develop a phased plan that considers the stage at which the New Town Centre Bridge could be delivered. Should we proceed with this scheme we should ensure that we link this project to other rail-related infrastructure proposals, such as the improvement of the pedestrian bridge on the Discovery Link; the widening of the railway bridge to facilitate New Town Way; the widening of the bridge over the CTRL to serve Cheeseman's Green from Junction 10A; and, the pedestrian/cycle link over the Hastings line on the alignment of the old Roman Road.

This illustration is aspirational only and shows that major interventions should be considered to raise the profile of the town. Detailed design of a major Wetland Park would inevitably balance grand design 'vision' with seeking greater strategic gain for biodiversity and enhancing wildlife capital and links to the rural hinterland.



Artist impression of the 'Canal District' showing full development

Issues around Flood Risk

The Environment Agency seeks for the precautionary principles to be applied to new development as set out in PPG25, but recognises that the allocation of the growth areas proposed by Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan must balance wider sustainability issues.

Sustainable flood risk management policies need to be considered at a strategic level through Catchment Flood Management Plans and Strategic Flood Risk Assessments.

Flood risk management needs to address the increased risks ensuing from climate change and adopt creative landscape and a systematic approach to sustainable urban drainage in the plan to manage and minimise flood risk.

- Strategic flood risk assessment to be undertaken by Ashford Borough Council to re-assess land allocation in respect of flood risk
- This needs to consider:
  - Impact on existing flood risk from climate change (additional 20% river flows)
  - Town centre (including Victoria Way – Areas 1 & 2)
  - Outer areas (including canal district)
- Strategy subject to strategic flood risk assessment & policy review with EA

Area 1 (Town Centre)

- Currently well defended
- Brownfield redevelopment likely to be acceptable
- Full compensation storage required for any development on undeveloped sites in the flood plain
- Any development would need to demonstrate that the overall flood risk is reduced
- Detailed modelling for individual sites is required

Area 2 (Town Centre)

- Higher risk than Area 1 as current defences have little impact this area of the flood plain
- Potential to redevelop existing sites currently prone to flooding with enhanced defences to reduce flood risk
- Any development on undefended areas would need to fully maintain existing flood plain capacity i.e. only 'stilted' development would be acceptable
- Detailed modelling is required
- Compulsory storage area would be required in order to maintain the overall storage capacity

Area 3 (Canal District)

- Greenfield site
- Initial modelling undertaken to confirm technical feasibility of relocating flood plain within or adjacent to this area
- Detailed modelling required

Flood modelling

HR Wallingford have undertaken initial modelling on behalf of English Partnerships to establish the effects of taking land in or out of the flood plain in the area of Urban Initiatives proposed Canal District.

Scenarios modelled by HR Wallingford have removed areas of land from the flood plain to represent the Canal District and then considered the extent to which increased flood levels are mitigated by compensation storage areas in Cheeseman's Green and along Ruckinge and White Water Dykes.

The modelling work was carried out for the full extent of the Canal District considered in scenario 3 (the Compact Model), but undertaken as incremental elements of land taken to enable the reduced effects of lesser landtakes to be considered.

The initial modelling indicates that taking land out of the flood plain over the full extent of the Canal District shown in the Compact Model would increase flood plain levels by about 100mm to 200mm. The compensation areas currently modelled reduce the increase in flood plain levels to about 50mm to 100mm.

If the extent of land removed from the flood plain is limited to the West side of Romney Marsh Road, then the modelling suggests flood plain levels are generally balanced by the potential compensation storage areas to within about 20mm.

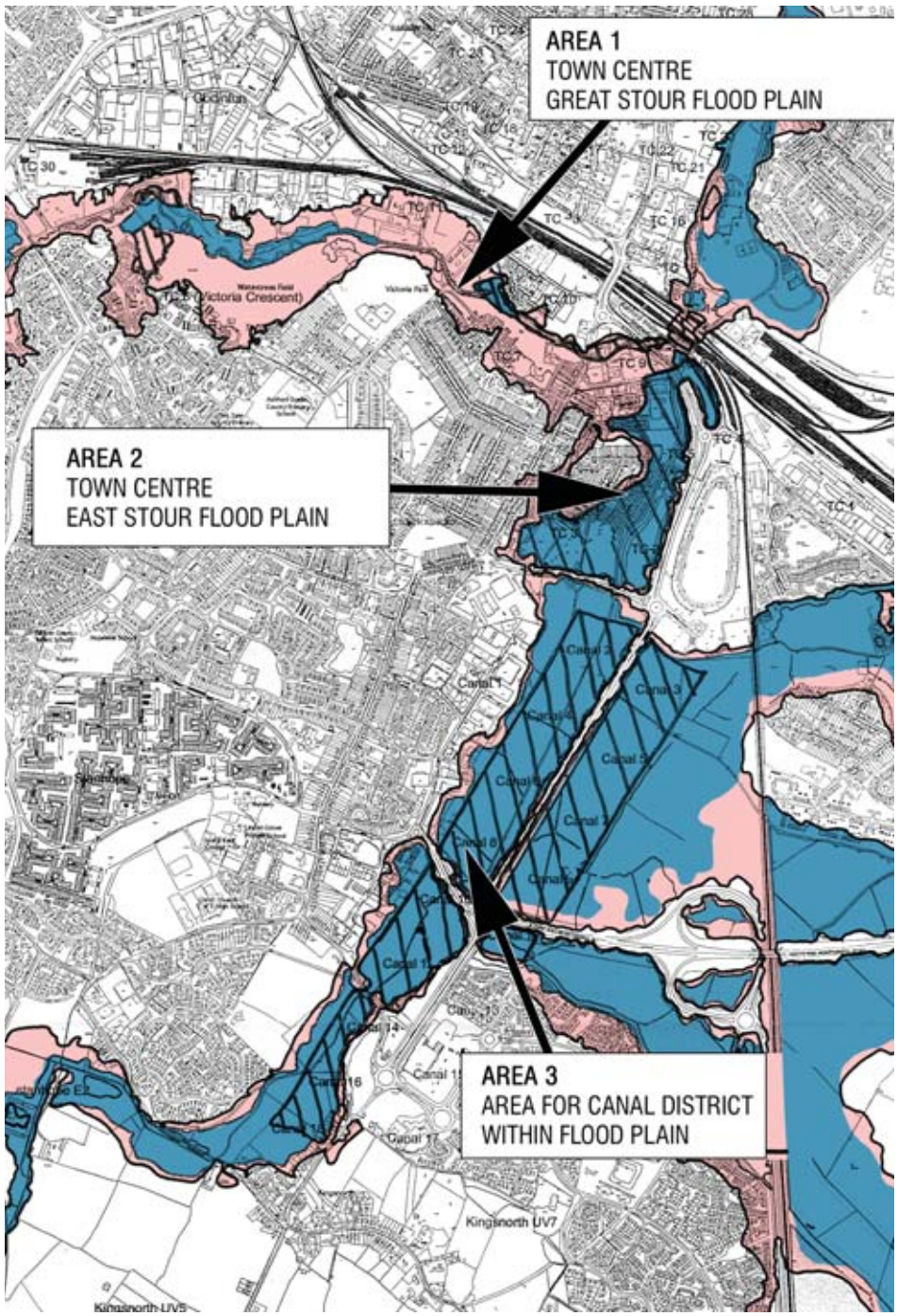
The modelling shows that flood plain levels are sensitive to both the location as well as the size of land changes. Further detailed modelling will be required to determine an appropriate balance from a technical viewpoint. Urban run-off characteristics together with more detailed modelling of hydraulic changes to river flows through Canal District will be necessary.

The sensitivity of the results suggests that this further modelling is likely to be quite extensive and should not be undertaken in isolation of other significant factors:

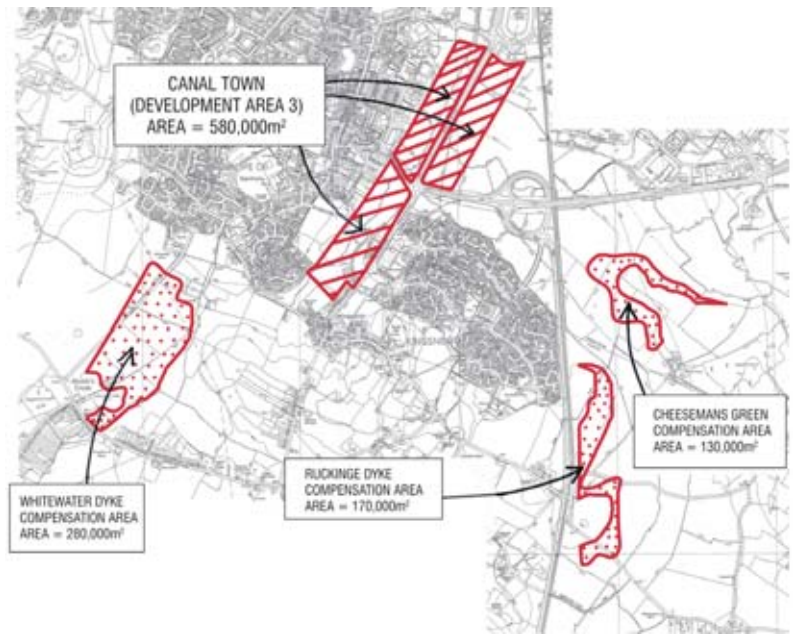
1. Impact on flood plain levels from climate change. This scenario is currently being modelled by Environment Agency and will determine the minimum intervention required in relation to existing flood defences. It will also determine the relative significance of the Canal District compared to climate change effects.
2. Land availability for compensation storage and other potential flood defences. This will set an upper limit to the potential size of the Canal District from a technical viewpoint.
3. The environmental impact of filling the area. The nature of medium density development will require building undercroft parking that will have an effect of raising the ground floors of development out of the floodplain. This will therefore require limited infill, reducing the impact of major earthmoving and construction impacts in the area. The energy implications of the land remodelling will most likely be offset against the reduction of car trips in the future.
4. Other ecological issues associated with development within the South Willesborough Dykes.
5. Costs of this type of development. Clearly additional costs will be associated with the formation of the canal system and associated public realm infrastrucure. This will most likely be offset by the amenity value of the area and its proximity to the International Station

The initial modelling is a first stage that demonstrates that the Canal District can be delivered and that there is likely to be a technical solution that will ensure that the development is protected from the risk of flooding itself and that it will not increase the risk of flooding downstream.

Although the initial modelling has shown the potential for the Canal District to be realised, a Reduced Canal District has been pursued in the later options. This limits development to the western edge of Romney Marsh Road. This recognises that more detailed modelling work will be required if or when the Canal District is taken forward and the detailed development framework is prepared.



Option One - Canal District Focus



Possible areas for floodplain comparison

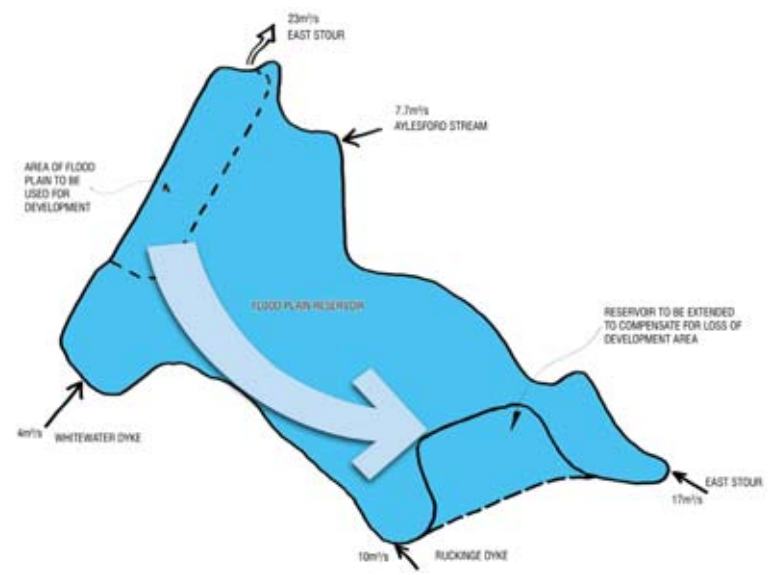


Diagram indicating potential floodplain compensation

06.3 THE EVOLUTION OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

The Plan: Post July Workshop

This section deals with a plan that evolved from the July Workshop and subsequent Councillor Workshops. At the two-day workshop at Eastwell Manor followed by two-days at Charter House the central aspects of the Compact Model (Chapter 8) were revisited and supported. There was general support for many of the common themes in the Strategic Options but a number of concerns were raised around certain issues.

From the stakeholder perspective there were a number of comments. The key re-occurring themes are briefly summarised:

- **Goldwell (Great Chart)**

A general concern for the proposed development area to the north-west of Great Chart described as Goldwell, although this was presented as a long term proposition. It was felt that an neighbourhood in this location would have a major impact on the historic Great Chart Village , on Godinton Park and the surrounding countryside. This option would raise questions for a new motorway junction to the west of the town. It would also have a major impact on Junction 9 and undermine the case for Junction 10A.

- **Magpie Hall Road**

There was general concern that the boundary of growth should be limited and well defined, and the general feeling that Magpie Hall Road should mark the southern extent of the development.

- **Cheeseman's Green**

Cheeseman's Green allocation had previously been made and there was broad and strong support for Junction 10A. The need to explore further development options for Cheeseman's Green, on the proviso that better links are created between Cheeseman's Green and existing and proposed development areas, particularly Waterbrook, which was seen as an area for potential development. Regional Planning Guidance RPG9 and the Halcrow Report had also confirmed the early focus of development on south-east Ashford.

- **Waterbrook**

The need to review the potential of the Waterbrook site for more-intensive mixed-use development and to review the location for the truck stop.The move to make Waterbrook a stronger development node would reinforce the case for a major public transport route along the New Town Way corridor and further reinforce the case for an expanded Cheeseman's Green.

- **Newtown**

The need to explore the potential of the Newtown area, given its close proximity to the International Station, as well as the potential role of a link from Newtown through to Waterbrook and onwards to Cheeseman's Green. This link could possibly bring forward public transport to the Waterbrook/ Cheeseman's Green areas sooner.

- **William Harvey Hospital/Julie Rose Stadium**

The need to improve the links from Ashford to the William Harvey Hospital, in recognition of the primary role it plays as a regional resource. In addition the Julie Rose is an athletic venue of regional standard and its potential should be enhanced.•

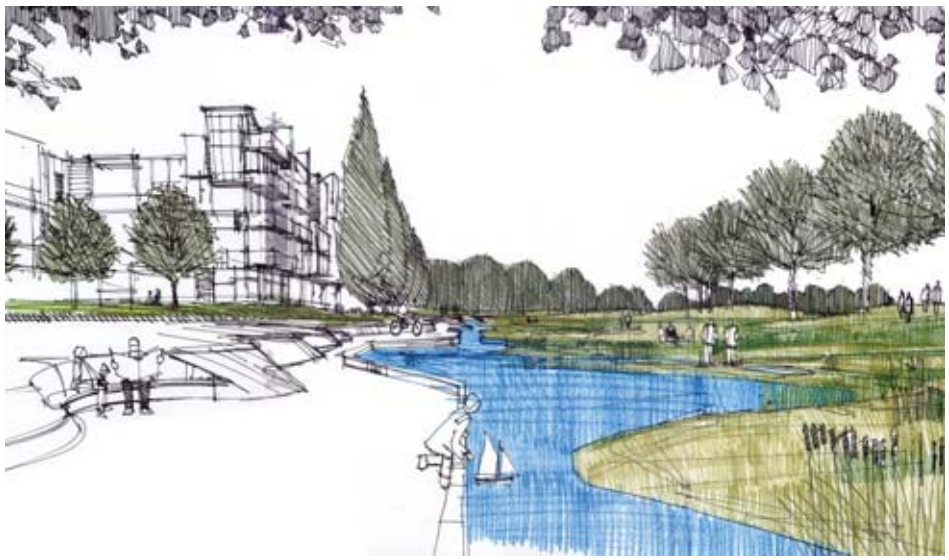
The Canal District

There are two perspectives on the Canal District. The first is strong support for an area that could effectively extend the potential of the Town Centre and deliver an area with a diverse range of housing types. Moreover the potential unique qualities of the Canal District were regarded as being central to the required 'step change' for Ashford. The Canal District was seen as a key part of the Compact Model.

The second perspective is that there needs to be a level of caution around building in the flood plain. It was emphasised that the impact of the Canal District needed to be tested to evaluate the effects and feasibility of this proposal.

- **The Expanded Town Centre**

There was across the broad support for an expanded, intense, mixed use town centre that had a strong arts and culture offer. The Town Centre area was generally regarded as a critical area to realise early win projects and programmes and a strong east-west cross link would reinforce this potential.



Sketches for the Victoria Park area, July workshop

Option 5: Shifting the Pendulum from Goldwell (Great Chart) to Cheeseman's Green

In this option, we see the shift of the pendulum from the west to the south and east of the town. The reasons for this shift are outlined on the preceding page and driven by a combination of factors: the environmental and heritage impact of development around Great Chart were likely to have; potential impact on historic parks and gardens such as Godinton House and its historic setting; the need for a high order road link to the A20 and junction 8A and resulting associated environmental impact; incremental new development pressure around Great Chart; the growing realisation that the Waterbrook and Newtown axis would strengthen the case for an expanded Cheeeseman's Green: all adding weight to Junction 10 proposals. In order to maintain the strong public transport corridor to counteract the loss of the Goldwell node, Chilmington Green was expanded to create a destination at the western end to the proposed SMARTLINK. This was further reinforced by the early indications that Kingsnorth and the Canal District were slipping back in the phasing to lie outside the LDF plan period.

These changes were made in response to the July Workshop and further technical studies undertaken:

- **Reduced Canal District**

This is reduced in area to the west of Romney Marsh Road, still supporting a public transport link along Romney Marsh Road. There is a greater emphasis of additional development in the the south east of Ashford.

- **Expanded Town Centre**

A new bridge crossing is proposed linking the Victoria Way through the Cobb's Wood Estate towards Junction 9. The alignment of this bridge was tested at the July Workshop. Changes in the Victoria Way area will have to weigh carefully in the balance, the impact of people living in this area with the need to create the basis for the town centre to grow and provide for the needs of a town which will double in size.

- **Waterbrook/Orbital Park North**

These sites are brought into more effective use by the introduction of New Town Way. The Waterbrook site becomes more important as a node along the public transport corridor with the opportunity for more mixed use, medium density development.

- **Cheeseman's Green**

This area is increased to become a full neighbourhood. The proposed business park is relocated to Sevington South because it is currently too remote and disconnected from main transport routes, Junction 10A and the town centre.

Assessment of the plan:

- **The Environment**

- The Canal District occupies designated floodplain and SNCI area. However this land is already compromised in landscape terms, and the Canal District reduced to the west of Romney Marsh Road would not have a major impact on the floodplain (HR Wallingfords). In the K-LIS this area of low quality land is designated for 'create wetland'.

- **Movement and Access**

The linear public transport corridor remains but this is shifted towards Newtown Way and Tenterden Road. Orchard Avenue is realigned to reflect the changed importance of Chilmington Green as a neighbourhood. Victoria Way is realigned to maximise development potential in the area

- The compact nature of the land use proposals should encourage walking and cycling trips between different neighbourhoods and the Town Centre.
- The highest trip-generating land uses (mainly office) are concentrated in the Town Centre and areas close to it. This should encourage trips into and out of the Town Centre and support a radial model of public transport provision.
- The proposed high-density residential development around the station and Town Centre should encourage more regional trips to be taken by rail and bus rather than by car, and more local trips to be taken by foot and cycle.
- The proposed mixed-use development corridors along New Town Way (supported by Waterbrook) and Romney Marsh Way (supported by the Canal district) also support radial public transport routes by locating new development within a short walking distance of the routes.
- Chilmington Green can be served by another radial public transport corridor, supported by major development at Cobbs Wood and Chart. Part of this corridor along the A28 has less continuity of development, and this may dilute the demand.
- Park and Ride sites can be accommodated on the main public transport radial routes.
- The large mixed-use development sites at Chilmington Green, Kingsnorth and Cheeseman's Green generate demand to support the main radial public transport routes. They also have some employment uses that may generate some reverse commuting movements that could help to relieve congestion, but this effect is likely to be limited. They are compact developments that should encourage walking and cycling. Chilmington Green and Kingsnorth can also encourage walking and cycling between adjacent existing neighbourhoods.

The viability of the primary public transport system at this stage still needed to be fully tested.

Aerial showing proposed New Town Way, July Workshop

Option 5: Shifting the pendulum from Goldwell (Great Chart) to Cheeseman's Green

- There are some major movement generators, such as existing supermarkets, the hospital and the Park & Ride at Warren, that are not on the radial public transport corridors. These would probably need separate bus routes. Orbital bus routes may be necessary (that may need to be subsidised).
- Low trip generating uses, such as warehousing, distribution and industrial, are generally proposed on more peripheral sites such as Sevington North. They are also close to the motorway, reducing HGV movements into Ashford.
- Development at Kennington and Bockhanger can support marginal bus services in these areas, but there may not be enough development to achieve major improvements.

• **Urban Quality**

- Although the Canal District is reduced in size, this option allows for intense , mixed use development to be focused along Romney Marsh Road to the South, as well as the proposed New Town Way to the east.
- The public transport routes potentially associated with Romney Marsh Road and New Town Way will link both the expanded Kingsnorth in the south and Waterbrook and Cheeseman's Green in the south east, to the centre.-

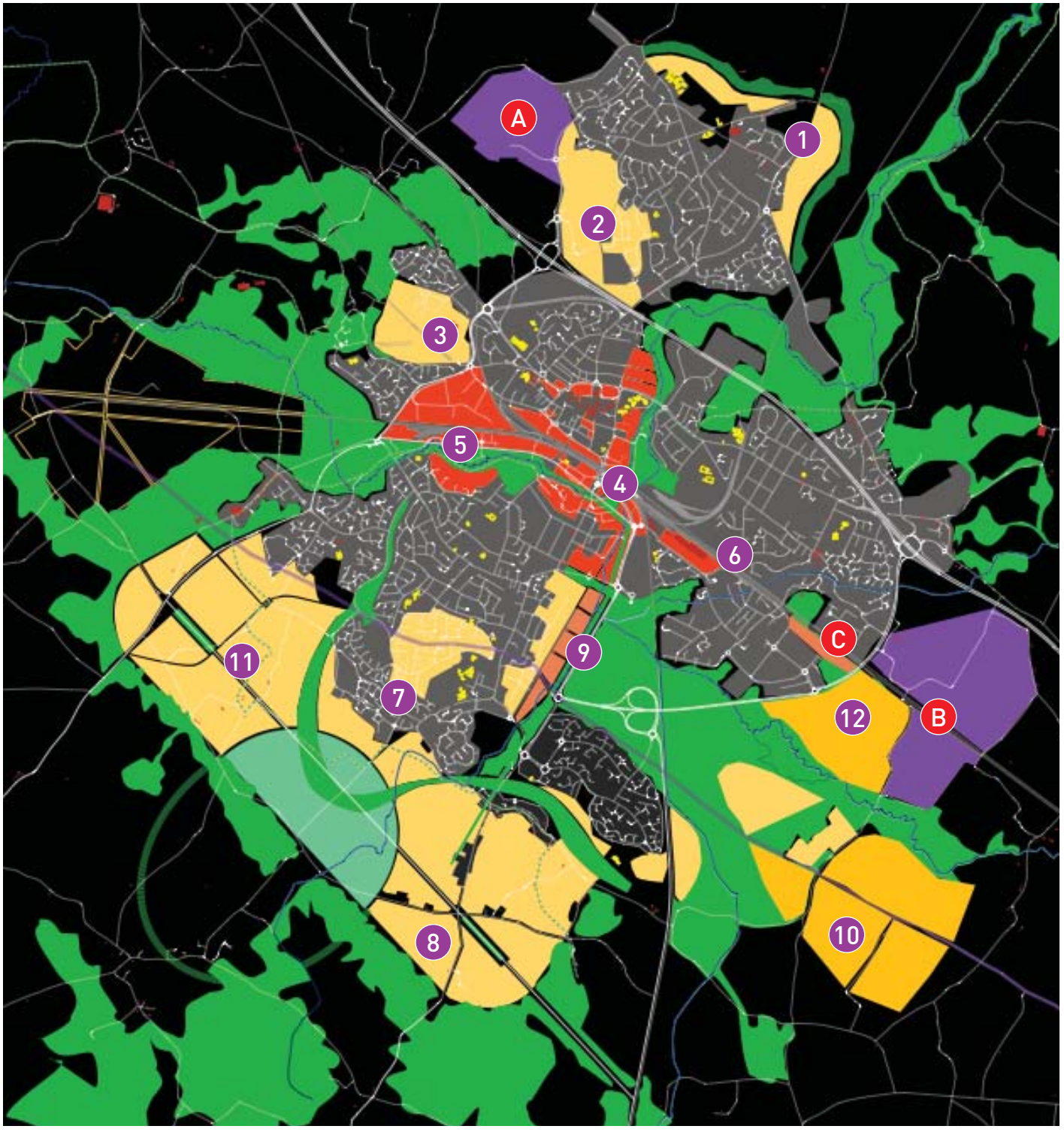
The extent of southerly development of the area south of Kingsnorth remained an issue with local people.

Residential Development

Implemented Development	Description	Total Units
Park Farm/Singleton/etc.	Built housing within the Local Plan period	**3090**
New/Committed Intervention Areas		
Kennington Circle	Major infill development along relief roads	400
Bockhanger/ Eureka/Bybrook	Intensification, infill and regeneration	600
Ashford Barracks	Committed (but unimplemented) development	1,350
Expanded Town Centre	Higher density, mixed use development	3,150
Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park	Regeneration of industrial estates/housing infill	1,450
New Town Works/Hunter Avenue	New mixed use, medium density development	550
Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park	Housing estate renewal/new development	9,50
		8,450
Neighbourhoods		
Kingsnorth	New neighbourhood to the south of Park Farm	6,150
Canal District	New mixed-use, residential district	2,200
Cheeseman's Green	New neighbourhood (incl. committed housing)	6,150
Chilmington Green	New neighbourhood south of Singleton	4,000
Waterbrook	New mixed use area	960
		19,460
	TOTAL UNITS	31,000

Jobs Allocation

Implemented Development	Description	Total Jobs
Orbital Park/Henwood	Jobs delivered within Local Plan period	**2,290**
New Employment Areas	**Description**	
Neighbourhoods	Small-scale local employment	2,000
Canal District	Medium-scale local/strategic employment area	750
Out-of Town Areas	Eureka/Sandyhurst and Junction 10/10a sites	7,870
Waterbrook/Orbital Park North	New mixed-use employment area	1,500
Intensified Central Areas	Cobbs Wood/New Town Works/Cheeseman's Green/etc	1,200
Town Centre	Including Town Centre South	12,390
		25,710
	TOTAL JOBS	28,000



Residential Development

1. Kennington Circle
2. Bockhanger/Eureka/Bybrook
3. Ashford Barracks
4. Expanded Town Centre
5. Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park
6. New Town Works/Hunter Avenue
7. Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park
8. Kingsnorth
9. Canal District
10. Cheeseman's Green
11. Chilmington Green
12. Waterbrook

Employment Areas

A. Eureka/Sandyhurst
B. Waterbrook/Sevington
C. Orbital Park North

Option 5: Reduced Canal District and enlarged Cheeseman's Green

Movement and Access

As work evolved from the July Workshop the movement and access diagrams have shifted emphasis away from a focus in the south-west to the south and south-east. The number of key movement and access principles were being developed for Ashford as a whole. This included layers of access relating to public transport, walking and cycling.

Strategic issues

There are a number of strategic movement opportunities for Ashford in a regional context that go beyond the scope of the GADF project, but could be explored in future detailed studies.

1. Ashford in the railway network. One of Ashford's main strengths is its location as a strategic railway hub. This competitive advantage could be improved if more direct rail services could be run from the town to other economic centres in the south-east, e.g. Reading and Brighton. Ease of interchange between services at the main station is also vital. There could be other strategic rail projects in the south-east that might improve the accessibility of Ashford on the rail network, such as the Heathrow to Feltham rail corridor, upgrading of the Hastings-Brighton line, Crossrail, Thameslink 2000, or even a future link from CTRL to the East Coast main line.
2. Freight movement in Kent. Currently, many lorries park around Ashford overnight on their way to and from the continent. These lorries are perceived to have little regeneration value and a significant environmental impact. A review of the freight transport corridor between the Dover area and the M25 is needed. The review should consider alternative sites for lorry parks (including Junction 11), and opportunities for lorries to 'piggyback' onto CTRL freight trains at night to other destinations such as Dagenham.
3. Lydd airport. There are expansion plans that could convey two million passengers and create 7,500 jobs within the next ten years. It is potentially about 15 minutes away by rail, and less than an hour away from London by rail. Although two million passengers may not be enough to justify upgrading the potential rail link, larger expansion in the future may facilitate this.
4. Expansion of Ashford for CTRL Domestic services. Ashford is in competition with the Medway towns for CTRL Domestic service routes. Ashford is the more attractive route in terms of journey time savings, but the Medway towns have a large established population. The attraction of Ashford for future CTRL routes will be strengthened by vigorous expansion of the town.

Movement Framework

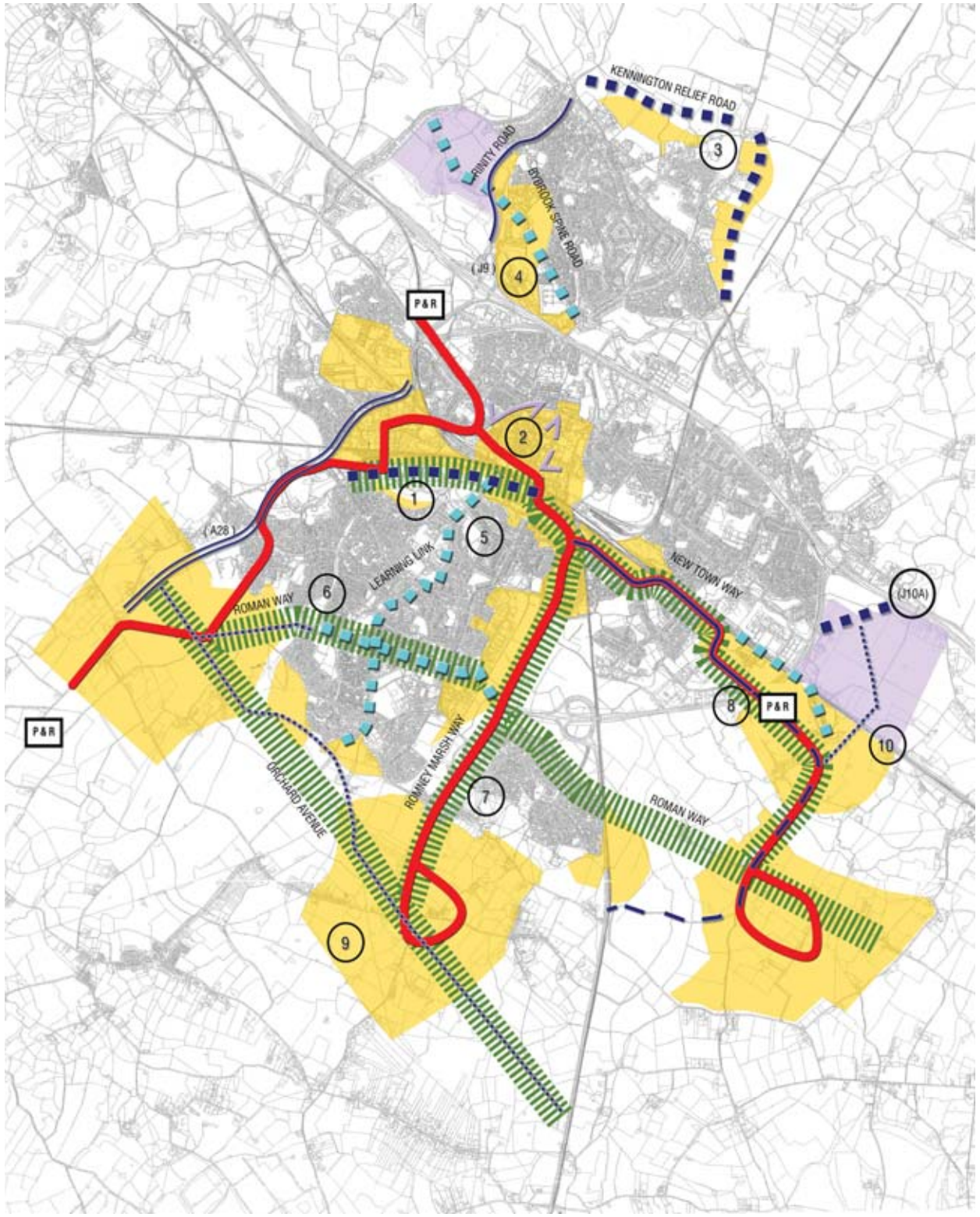
The work by Halcrow (2002) in the 'Ashford's Future Study' established the intention to shift the emphasis from the car to other, more sustainable modes of transport. A key objective was improving walking, cycling and public transport. This is manifest in the emerging transport proposals for the town, that are being planned in tandem with the land use framework. Particular emphasis is made on developing a framework that supports a commercially viable high quality public transport system.

This section presents the broad transport infrastructure believed to be necessary to deliver the Option. A strategy for identifying phasing and funding streams is currently under review with Kent County Council.

The broad transport infrastructure believed to be necessary to deliver Option 5 is outlined below. The framework for the expansion of Ashford creates a series of organising axes: Victoria Way, the Roman Way, Orchard Avenue, New Town Way and Romney Marsh Road. Most of these routes build upon existing roads and rights of way. This approach is designed to reduce the amount of new road building that is needed.

The key movement corridors proposed are:

1. **Victoria Way to Chart Road.** A highly developed urban avenue providing a new east west route to the south of the town centre removing strategic traffic from the ring road and Beaver Bridge. A second link across the Tonbridge railway line through Cobbs Wood area to the A28 is also envisaged.
2. **The Civic Cross.** This involves turning Station Road and Elwick Road into tow high quality town centre streets. Under these conditions both streets are downgraded and turned into two way operation with high quality pedestrian crossings at junctions. At the junctions new urban squares are created to give a new identity for Ashford.
3. **The Kennington Circle.** The comprises the introduction of new perimeter along the northern and eastern edges of Kennington, linking the Canterbury Road with Trinity Road and Kennington Road (linking to Junction 10). This measure will ease traffic pressure on radial roads and allow easier implementation of bus priority and environmental improvements on Canterbury and Kennington Roads.
4. **Bybrook Spine.** A new urban street to improve access to the regeneration area, and to serve the Sandyhurst development site.
5. **Learning Link.** Extending from the Town Centre to Discovery Park, this includes the replacement of the existing pedestrian bridge over the railway line to create a wider and easier transition from South Ashford to the Town Centre. This link will promote walking cycling and bus movement and assist in the re-development of the Stanhope estate.
6. **Roman Way.** An east west route through Stanhope, linking it to the wider area, but designed to discourage rat-running and severance. Further east, this becomes the new National Cycle Network Route 17 through Ashford also catering for walking and cycling trips from the Cheesman's Green development areas.
7. **Romney Marsh Way.** A major urban street based on the existing road to link the new Kingsnorth and Canal District development sites to the centre of town. This is an important transport corridor.
8. **Newtown Way.** This comprises a high quality public transport route from south of the station, through the New Town Works and along New Town Road across the north of Orbital Park, beneath the A2070, through Waterbrook to Cheesman's Green.
9. **Orchard Avenue.** A major new urban street to link large development sites on the south-west edge of the town and access the A28 and A2070. A branch of the new National Cycle Network Route 17 runs parallel to it.
10. **South East Access Road.** A major urban street to link large development sites to the A2070 and to the motorway via a new junction 10A.



- GUIDED BUS WAY
- UPGRADE EXISTING ROUTE TO MAJOR ROUTE
- DUAL EXISTING MAJOR ROUTE
- UPGRADE EXISTING ROUTE TO INTERMEDIATE ROUTE
- RECONFIGURE RING ROAD AS TWO-WAY
- RECONFIGURE RING ROAD AS TWO-WAY & DOWNGRADE
- NEW MAJOR ROUTE
- NEW INTERMEDIATE ROAD
- NEW, ENHANCED MINOR ROUTE & PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORRIDOR
- P&R NEW PARK AND RIDE SITE
- NEW TOWN AXIS
- DEVELOPMENT AREAS (ALLOCATED)
- DEVELOPMENT AREAS (EMPLOYMENT LAND)

1. VICTORIA WAY TO CHART ROAD
2. JUNCTION 10A
3. CIVIC CROSS
4. THE KENNINGTON CIRCLE
5. BYBROOK SPINE ROAD
6. LEARNING LINK
7. ROMAN WAY
8. NEW TOWN WAY
9. ORCHARD AVENUE
10. ROMNEY MARSH WAY
11. SOUTH EAST ACCESS ROAD

Option 5: Proposed Movement Infrastructure

Option 6: The Preferred Option

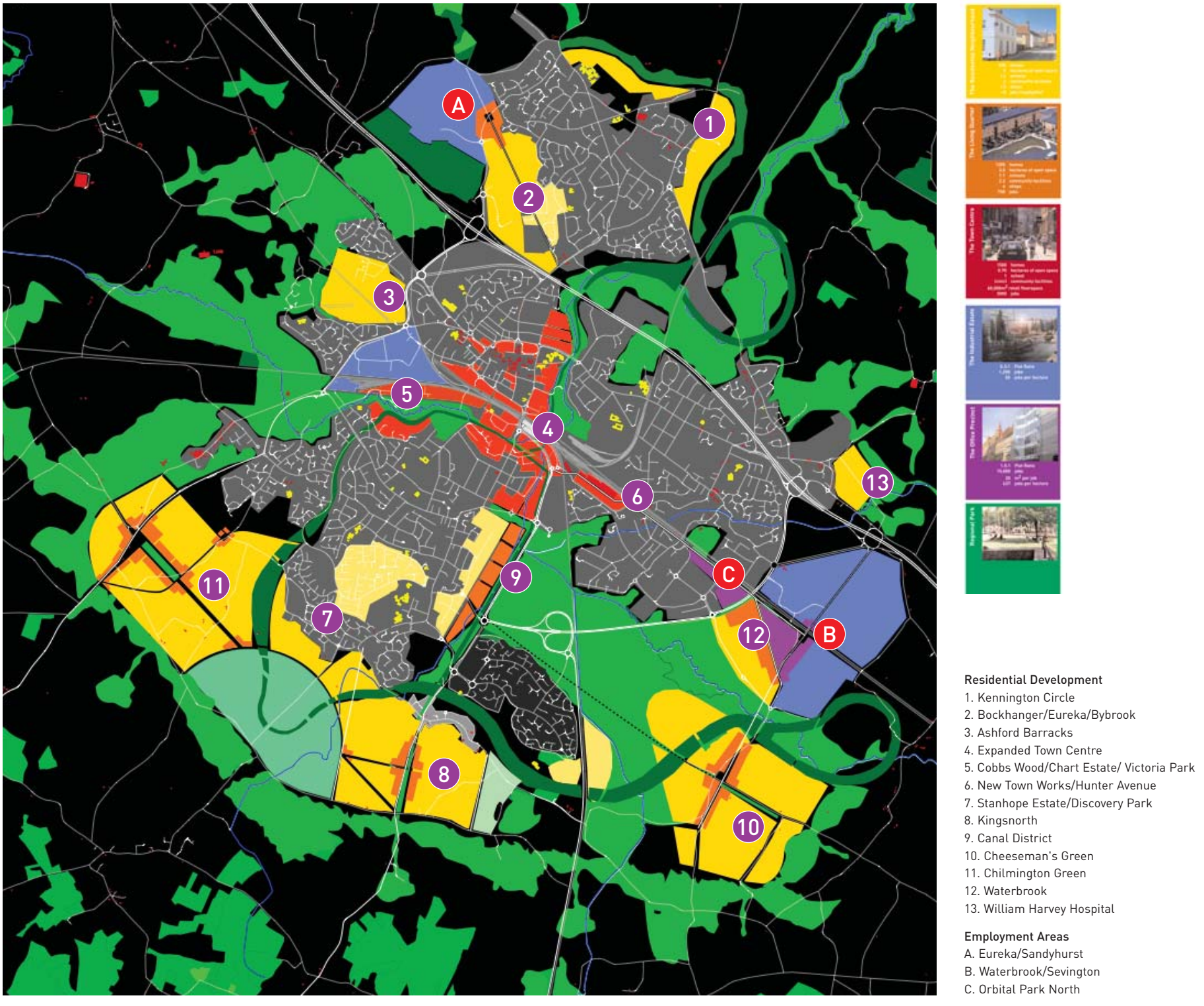
Option 6 derives from further consultation, technical testing and further refinement of the Plan. At meetings with the Ashford Futures Board, The Ashford Borough Councillors and the Parish Councillors in September and October, all five options were presented. Key issues arose from these meetings. These include:

- The role of the mixed-use neighbourhoods need to be strongly reinforced with a range of amenities and with a range of employment prospects. They need to be developed as areas in their own right as well as being well integrated to Ashford as a whole through a viable public transport network.
- The potential to provide a number of houses near the William Harvey Hospital for future growth of local affordable key worker homes, close to a major employer.
- The recognition that Waterbrook is an important district centre with the potential to support a wide range of jobs and homes, giving rise to the potential for a future station location.
- The need to keep development as far as possible to the north of Magpie Hall Road and reduce the importance of the strong axial link to the A2070.
- The potentially diminished role of Kingsnorth, alongside the diminished role of the Canal District. The implications are to decrease the size of Kingsnorth (from approximately 6000 units to less than 4,000 units). With Park Farm, this still represents a viable neighbourhood.
- Chilmington Green and Cheeseman's Green are now brought forward as earlier phases.
- During the same period the feedback from the Movement and Access workstream was that a strong public transport service would favour two primary legs. Thereby possibly reinforcing the route to Chilmington Green and to Cheeseman's Green as the two primary legs of the SMARTLINK public transport network.
- The eastern edge of Cheeseman's Green is defined by Collier's Hill and the existing allocated residential land is retained to the north-west of Captain's Wood, helping to form a relatively compact development based on the centre to the south east of Captain's Wood.

Option 6 has formed the basis of the 'Working Plan and developed in further detail in Chapter 7. The key findings of the transport work, the impact of the landscape analysis, timing delivery issues around primary infrastructure, and particular areas such as the delivery of the Reduced Canal District are all examined.

Schedule of Housing Units/Jobs: 2001-2031

Development Areas	Description	Units	Jobs
Completed Areas			
Park Farm, Singleton, etc	Built housing 2001-05 (estimate)	**3,270**	**2,000**
Allocated Areas			
Singleton	Part implemented	595	0
Brisley Farm	Part implemented	75	0
Park Farm Extension	Allocated but not yet implemented	780	0
Cheeseman's Green	Allocated but not yet implemented	1100	0
Ashford Barracks	Allocated but not yet implemented	1300	500
Orbital Park/Henwood	Industrial and business relocation	0	800
		3,850	**1,300**
Town Centre			
Town Centre	New town centre living	**3,150**	**12,000**
Town Centre Periphery			
Chart Estate/ Victoria Crescent	Intensification, mixed-use development	500	300
Cobbs Wood	Intensification, mixed-use development	450	300
New Town Works	New mixed-use, medium density	500	200
Hunter Avenue	New mixed-use, medium density	150	0
		1,600	**800**
New Districts			
Canal District (existing area)	Intensification, infill and regeneration	500	250
Canal District (new reduced area)	New mixed-use, medium density	1,300	500
Waterbrook	Jobs-led mixed use, medium-density	1,460	1,550
Bockhanger Wood	Intensification, infill and regeneration	1,000	1,000
		4,260	**3,300**
Urban Neighbourhoods			
Chilmington Green	New mixed-use neighbourhood	6,000	1,000
Kingsnorth	New mixed-use neighbourhood	3,500	325
Cheeseman's Green Extension	New mixed-use neighbourhood	4,500	1,000
		14,000	**2,325**
Urban Extensions			
Kennington	Infill along relief roads	450	0
William Harvey Area	Small scale infill	250	200
Discovery Park	Medium density forming edge to Park	750	125
		1,450	**325**
Out of Town Estates			
Orbital Park North	Commercial and business intensification	0	200
Sevington	Commercial and business uses	0	2,500
		0	**6,450**
	TOTAL UNITS/JOBS	31,580	28,000



Residential Development
1. Kennington Circle
2. Bockhanger/Eureka/Bybrook
3. Ashford Barracks
4. Expanded Town Centre
5. Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate/ Victoria Park
6. New Town Works/Hunter Avenue
7. Stanhope Estate/Discovery Park
8. Kingsnorth
9. Canal District
10. Cheeseman's Green
11. Chilmington Green
12. Waterbrook
13. William Harvey Hospital

Employment Areas
A. Eureka/Sandyhurst
B. Waterbrook/Sevington
C. Orbital Park North

Option 6: The Preferred Option

07 THE WORKING MASTERPLAN

This section deals with the further refinement of the Preferred Option 6. Although Option 5 and Option 6 represent the options that have undergone a greater level of testing and modelling during Stage 3 of the GADF work, both options have been designed to a schematic level. During the course of Stage 3 and Stage 4 it was necessary to undertake a far more detailed design exercise to test the principles of Option 6. This is what we refer to as the 'Working Masterplan'.

The 'Working Masterplan' addresses in greater detail issues relating to all workstreams in particular movement and access, the environment and economy. The 'Working Masterplan' also allows for the essential fixes of Option 6 or the primary structure to remain in tact, while the 'fine-tuning' of where and how the development occurs is adjusted to take in to account the findings of the various testing and modelling exercises and the further work undertaken by the workstreams.

07.1 THE CORE ISSUES

The Working Masterplan, shown opposite, represents the refinement of Option 6. It builds on the technical studies, further environmental studies, feedback from the Strategic Environmental Assessment and ongoing work on developing the Town Centre Action Plan. In doing so, it addresses the following core issues:

The Landscape and Environment

The unique qualities of Ashford's natural landscape need to be incorporated into a green framework for the Plan. The role of the primary green structure is to:

- reinforce the major natural systems (the primary river corridors, the flood areas, the natural drainage areas),
- define substantial areas for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and
- qualify the nature of the edge between urban development and the rural hinterland.

The more detailed aspects of the Ashford masterplan area that relate to smaller sites for conservation, protection and enhancement of areas of natural beauty will be integrated into the green structure in two central ways. The first is the constraints plan that indicates areas that should not be developed, and secondly areas that are valuable but if developed need to be replaced elsewhere.

The Working Masterplan indicates sites or buildings of particular cultural heritage value that need to be respected and if possible enhanced. Although the masterplan does not develop detailed design for areas and precincts, these smaller sites will be clearly acknowledged in the opportunity and constraints plans. The particular qualities and character of the green structure has been developed in the Design Codes document.

In addition a 'Landscape Character Assessment' has been developed, in which the range of landscape areas are considered in detail. The Landscape Character assessment together with the GADF masterplan are integrated to establish the key spatial background and informants for the Ashford Local Development Framework.

The viability of Public Transport

As the Working Plan develops a core component has to be the structure and distribution of settlement and how they assist in reinforcing the prospects of a viable public transport system and potentially a 'smart link' system with designated public transport routes. In order to substantially improve the possibility for an increased modal split in favour of public transport, the Working Plan seeks to address a number of factors:

- A focus on two rather than three primary public transport legs. At this stage the Plan is working on the basis that Victoria Way running from the Town Centre South to Chilmington Green will form the first leg, and Newtown Way to Cheeseman's Green will form the second leg. Modelling work has shown that a shorter and secondary SMARTLINK arm between the town centre and The Warren Park and Ride/Eureka is viable in the short term.
- A greater extent of mixed-use activity to be associated with the primary public transport routes.
- A greater extent of mixed-use activity within the three primary neighbourhoods, particularly at the interface of the public transport routes (with a greater emphasis on Chilmington/Singleton and Cheeseman's Green and a lesser emphasis on Kingsnorth).
- A greater extent of employment opportunities in these three neighbourhoods (the previous Options had approximately 5% in these areas and the latest Plan seeks to establish the optimal preconditions for 15% of the total jobs to be located in these areas.
- A phasing strategy that will align with the delivery of a public transport network.

The range of Employment Opportunities

The previous Option 5 plan had a distribution of employment where approximately less than 5% of the employment opportunities were located in the mixed-use neighbourhoods. This raised general sustainability concerns around the relative self-sufficiency of these neighbourhoods. It also raised real concerns around the need for the public transport network to be supported by mixed-use development in these areas. The 'workplace' and 'urban core' workstreams that deal with employment and property prospects respectively have developed an argument for the range of employment and the distribution of different types of jobs across the plan as a whole. This is clarified in Chapter 08.

While it is acknowledged that jobs and mixed-use activity and investment generally emerge rather than being absolutely planned and constructed, the Plan needs to show how it creates the right spatial and structural preconditions for growth. This is done firstly through the primary structure, tying together locational advantage, unique site characteristics, streets that support focused public transport and movement thresholds, and focus areas for investment in public resources and facilities.

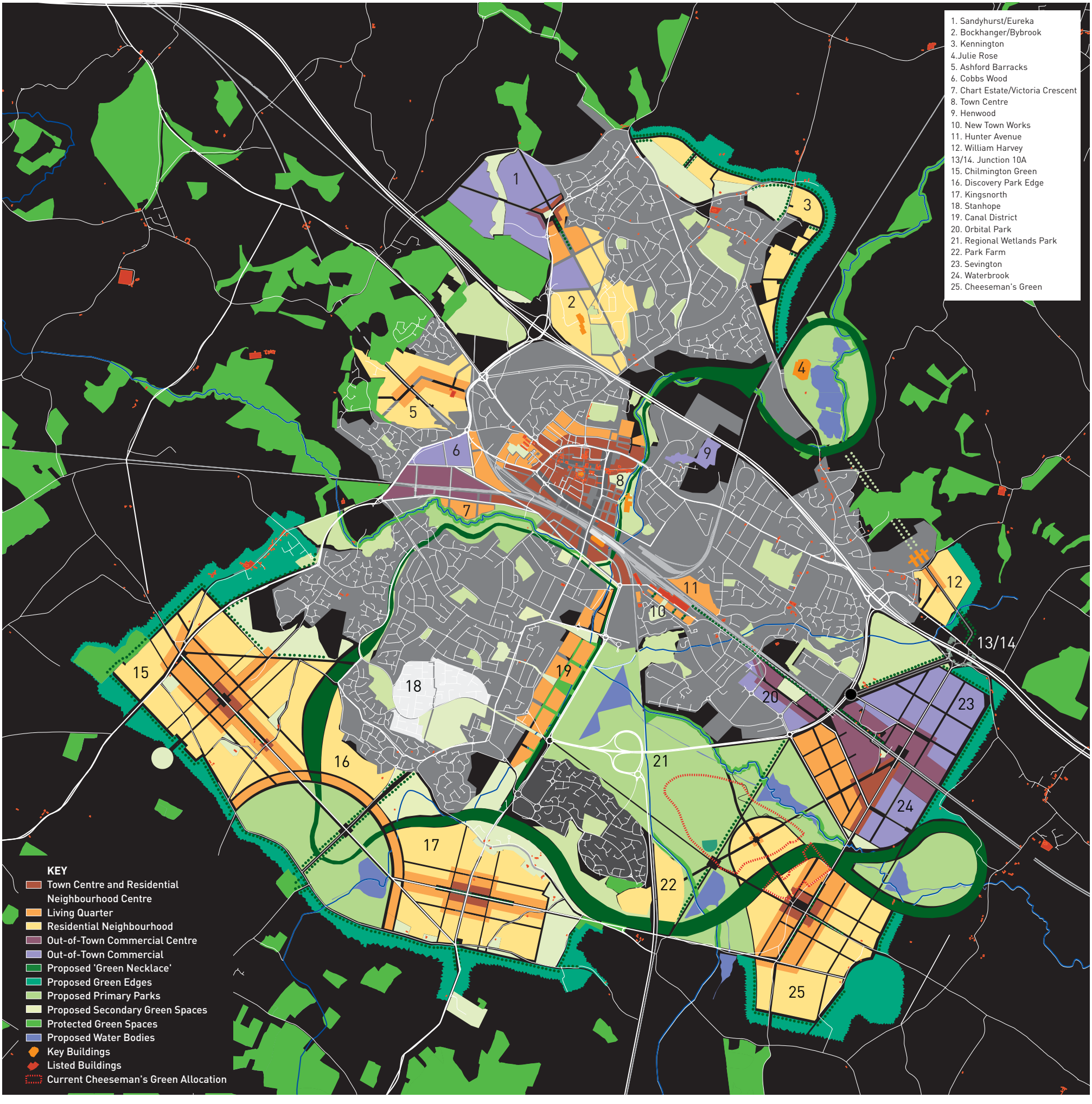
In addition the Design Codes qualify the nature of precincts and blocks. The codes will indicate how blocks of a certain scale, with particular access conditions can absorb and support various uses and activities over time.

The evolution of Cheeseman's Green

The masterplan proposes the reconsideration of Cheeseman's Green to move it from a smaller urban extension to a full urban neighbourhood. As previously stated, concerns exist over the ability of the committed scheme to make a viable connection into the SMARTLINK service. It is also unlikely that the area can sustain two local centres, given that the plan proposes a new neighbourhood centre to support a larger residential element to the east of the current committed scheme.

In doing so, it proposes the following:

- Retention of some 800 units on the north-western side of Captain's Wood to on the land currently committed for housing development. These units should be reconfigured to provide frontage to the new major wetlands park at South Willesborough.
- Relocation of the committed business park component at the western end of the site (shown dotted) to the Sevington area. This land will then revert to the major wetlands park. This move allows easier access for businesses to the M20 and provides the opportunity to create a new high profile 'gateway' to Ashford viewed from the CTRL corridor. Should the landowners still wish to pursue the option for the business park on the committed site, it will require a compensating loss of employment land to the south east of the town. It is not recommended that this employment site be reconsidered for housing purposes, as walkability to the proposed new neighbourhood centre would be a major concern.
- Long term access to Cheeseman's Green urban village from the A2070 should be via the Waterbrook area. The current committed site for an intermediate access to the first phase of development directly from a new A2070 roundabout.
- Access from Cheeseman's Green to the town centre is along the SMARTLINK corridor via Waterbrook and New Town Way.
- The plan shows a pedestrian route through Captain's Wood to link the first phase of development to the new neighbourhood centre
- The eastern extent of the new neighbourhood is fixed by the need to protect Collier's Hill.The phasing in Section 8 shows that the eastern and southern edges are in the last phase.



The Working Plan

07.2 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

This section develops the core components of the Working Plan, from the perspective of each workstream. Key issues are explored. Work currently being undertaken, or detailed work that needs to occur after the GADF project is identified. Delivery, implementation and phasing are developed in Chapter 08 of this document.

The need to establish a viable, transport system for Ashford has been a primary informant in developing the plan. The movement and access work has been shaped by key exercises:

- **The compact model**

Establishing how the new growth can incorporate more dense, mixed use development with thresholds to support a public transport system.The form of development also relates to how neighbourhoods are structured to promote a high level of accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. (Chapter 06 & 07)

- **The Movement Structure**

Establishing a network and hierarchy of streets and routes that link settlements to each other and to key resources. These streets are qualified not only by their role in connecting communities, but also by their capacity to support a mix of development to form active street edges. The network of links also relates to how people in Ashford will access the key green resources.

- **Modelling and testing**

Working with the plan to test the viability of delivering the access network and in particular a viable high quality public transport system.

- **Implementation, phasing and delivery**

Working with a phasing strategy to inform how the movement infrastructure will be delivered. (Chapter 08)

Movement and Access

Option 6 land use and infrastructure proposals have been informed by recommendations from modelling of earlier masterplan options. A key recommendation of this earlier modelling was the reduction of the SMARTLINK public transport route from a three armed service to two. This, amongst other factors, lead to the current land use configuration with development redeployed to concentrate onto the reduced SMARTLINK corridor.

The latest modelling will assess the effectiveness of the Working Plan in improving the performance of GADF relative to the AATS option as regards the performance of sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. This will include viability modelling of the current two-armed SMARTLINK proposal. The SMARTLINK viability modelling will be based on an assessment of revenue, infrastructure and operational costs. It will also assess the implications for service subsidisation during early phases of the masterplan.

Cycling and Walking

The proposed cycling network for Ashford aims to establish cycling a high profile mode of transport through the provision of direct, uninterrupted facilities along clear strategic corridors to the town centre and other important locations. Safe and convenient access to the strategic routes from homes and businesses will be via a series of local connections comprised mostly of dedicated facilities.

Proposals have been prepared in consultation with Sustrans to provide for the requirements of the existing National Cycle Route 18 and proposed route 17. This will include significant improvements to Route 18.

The strategic cycle routes, which includes the Green Necklace through the town, will connect existing local centres, the urban villages, and key movement generators (schools, hospitals, supermarkets) with the Town Centre and one another. Where appropriate they will link into the National Cycle Network, accommodating the existing NCN route 18 and the proposed NCN Route 17 with scenic or urban route options.

A secondary network of local connections will feed the strategic corridors. These might be comprised of either on or off carriageway facilities. New lower order links within the existing urban area are identified where required to connect existing routes. For the purposes of this plan local connections are not identified in the growth areas since this will typically occur during subsequent design stages.

Constraints such as roadside parking may occasional rule out the provision of direct facilities for cyclists in locations where they would otherwise be desirable. Elsewhere low traffic volumes and speeds may render them unnecessary. In such instances traffic calming measures and/or new signage are proposed to improve conditions for cyclists and maintain route coherency.

The strategic cycling corridors in the town centre will also form the backbone of a walking network with local connections.

Further development of a strategy for walking and cycling will be undertaken as the development framework plan is refined.

Bus routes

Discussions have been held with Stagecoach and this has indicated that existing routes should be retained and extended to serve new development areas with orbital services reduced. However, Kent County Council have indicated that they favour the provision of one or more inner/outer orbital services. Revised proposals have been drawn up and further discussions will need to take place as the development framework plan is refined and areas of development come forward. Upgrading of bus routes will be supported in the future by Quality Bus Partnerships.

SMARTLINK

Following recommendations of earlier modelling work, SMARTLINK has been reduced from a three to two armed service. The alignment, stops and locations are shown on the diagram overleaf.

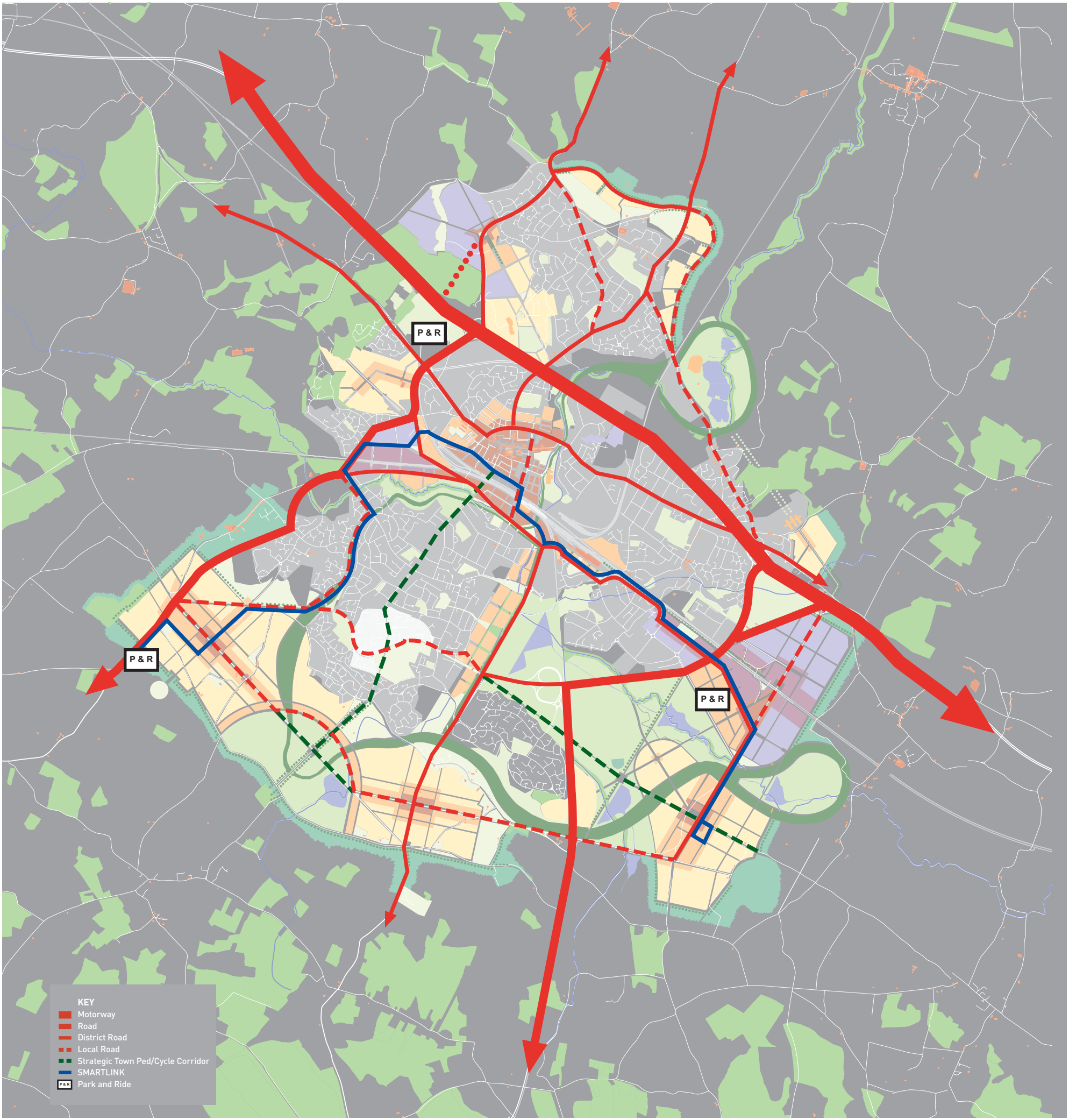
In summary, the proposals build on the earlier recommendations by focussing development on a two arm corridor running between Chilmington in the south west and Cheesman's Green in the south east. This runs via an expanded town centre via Romney Marsh Way to the east and Cobbs Wood Estate/Elwick Road in the west. Stops are limited, to be possibly interleaved with slower services on the SMARTLINK route. A Park and Ride site, to be served exclusively by SMARTLINK, anchors each arm.

Modelling work has shown that during the first stage of SMARTLINK operation a shorter and secondary SMARTLINK arm between the town centre and The Warren Park and Ride/Eureka is viable. This will effectively form a single arm running between the Park and Ride sites at The Warren and Waterbrook via the town centre.

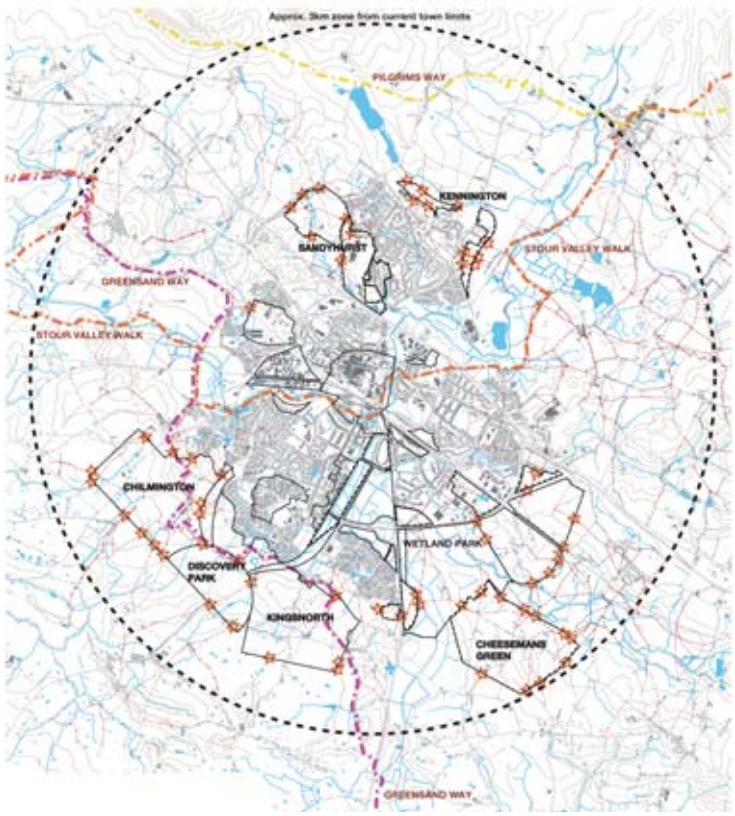
On the Chilmington / Singleton corridor, an internal alignment via Knoll Lane is preferred to use of the A28. Whilst the latter may provide savings on infrastructure costs by combining SMARTLINK implementation with other scheduled works, its limited catchment means the route through existing development is favoured.

Road Network

The hierarchy of roads has been devised concurrently with Design Code classifications. This highlights the strategic nature of roads that bypass the town and connect to the motorway junctions. Other urban routes are seen to be streets, rather than roads, and the design specification for these reflects this change of emphasis.



The Movement and Access Street Hierarchy



Rural Footpath/Bridleway Network

- Pilgrims Way
- Greensand Way
- Stour Valley Walk
- National Trail
- Bridleway
- By way
- Footpath
- Right of way meets expansion zone edge

Proposed Cycling Network - Joining up the routes

- PROPOSED STRATEGIC CORRIDOR (ANY COLOUR)
- OTHER PROPOSED STRATEGIC ROUTE
- PROPOSED GREEN CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS CYCLE ROUTE)

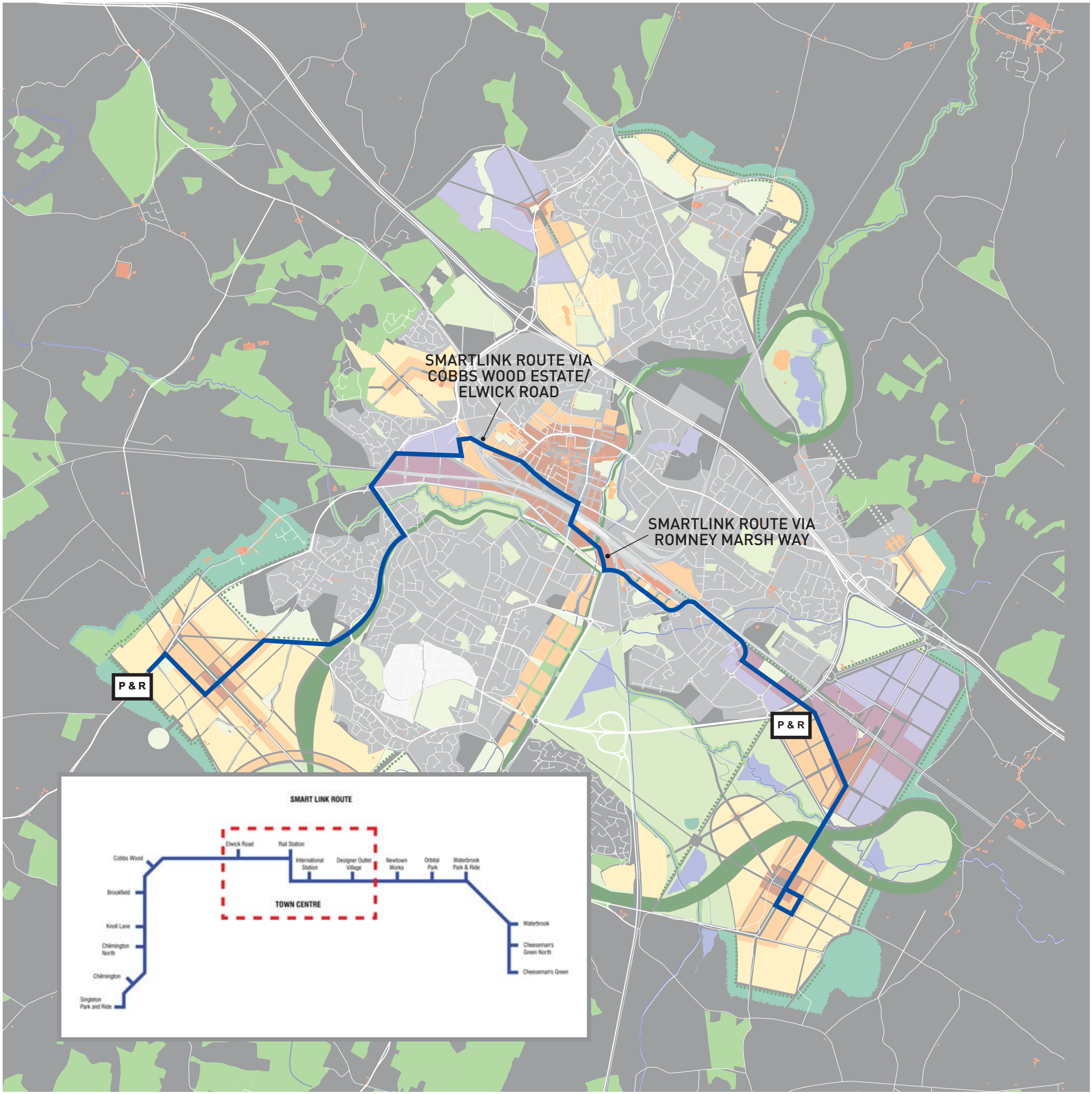
DEDICATED ON / OFF CARRIAGEWAY FACILITIES

- PROBLEMATIC SECTION OF PROPOSED STRATEGIC ROUTE (LONG TERM ASPIRATION TO PROVIDE DEDICATED FACILITIES)
- KEY PROPOSED QUIET LANE ROUTE

SIGNING OR TRAFFIC CALMING ONLY

- EXISTING LEISURE COMPLEX
- EXISTING SCHOOL OR COLLEGE
- EXISTING HOSPITAL
- EXISTING SUPERSTORES
- EXISTING SPORTS COMPLEX
- PROPOSED SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

- The idea is to create a network of walking and cycling routes in Ashford.
- Although many of the routes exist, they are largely fragmented, making it difficult to move across larger areas of Ashford by foot or bike.
- It will be critical to extend these networks beyond Ashford, this will provide the opportunity of linking in to national walking trails, heritage trails and areas of outstanding natural beauty, such as the North Downs.
- Development adjacent to these routes needs to enhance and front onto these routes, providing informal security and a greater sense of ownership



The SMARTLINK - the primary designated public transport route

07.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to meet both the growth challenge and the sustainability agenda, new approaches to infrastructure need to be considered. The requirements for infrastructure have been taken forward in a number of ways:

- The role of the Environment Agency

Ongoing discussions and work have occurred around the issue of flooding and flood modelling, as well as the Integrated Water Management Study, undertaken by Black & Veatch. While the report from Black & Veatch, which integrates the options, is programmed for 2005, a summary of flood risk modelling issues for Option 6 are summarised below.

The SEA Framework (Halcrow, 2004) sets out sustainability objectives and targets for a range of core issues. A preliminary approach to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), is outlined below. A developed approach and strategy for the provision of sustainable infrastructure needs to be commissioned to determine how this can enhance the proposals outlined in the GADF for a sustainable Ashford.

Summary of Flood Risk Modelling Issues.

1. The hydraulic model of the upper Stour, from which the section 105 flood maps have been produced, has been recalibrated by Black & Veatch as part of the Environment Agency's Integrated Water Management Study (IWMS) and subsequently reviewed by HR Wallingford on behalf of English Partnerships.
2. This review has concluded that the baseline model is now appropriate for GADF master - planning it generates conservatively high design water levels in the South Willesborough (Canal district) area.
3. Peter Brett Associates have prepared revised Section 105 maps for the defended and undefended floodplain extents, which also define the climate change impact and the margin of uncertainty in the baseline model. These are currently under review by the Environment Agency.
4. The flood modelling re-run by Black & Veatch on the updated baseline model using the level of development in GADF Option 5 shows the following:
   (i) The overall impact from the proposed level of new development on flood levels can be mitigated by appropriate use of SUDS and the provision of flood plain compensation areas, together with localised improvements to channels.
   (ii) The potential impact for climate change is significantly greater in terms of increased flood levels and flows than the impact from new developments and will be addressed on a catchment scale basis by the Environment Agency through the Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP).
5. The following has been agreed with the Environment Agency:
   (i) No further flood modelling work is required for GADF.
   (ii) Detailed modelling will be necessary as part of the Town Centre Development Framework for the Victoria Way corridor and areas South of the CTRL.
   (iii) The Canal District would need to proceed on the basis discussed at the recent meeting with ODPM, Defra and GOSE, namely to undertake flood plain compensation measures to enable development areas to be reclassified as being outside of the flood plain. This will require detailed study and modelling as part of the detailed masterplanning for the area and land ownership issues will need to be resolved.

SUDS

The Flood Risk Management (FRM) model has established that the use of SUDS will act to reduce the flood levels around Ashford. The assumption is therefore that SUDS of some form will integrated into the layout of development areas. The implementation of SUDS will depend on the local environments and geological conditions.

The geology around Ashford includes impermeable clays in the river valleys to the south of Ashford and permeable sands to the north. The flood plain areas are made up primarily of clay. The use of detention / retention SUDS techniques can be used for storage and conveyance within and around the southern development areas. Swales can act as a means of attenuation and conveyance as well as filtering out pollutants and nutrients. Basins and ponds canprovide storage and attenuation for storm water, the main difference between them being that basins only provide temporary storage, being free from water under dry conditions, whereas ponds can be utilised as wetlands, make excellent habitats and should be wet all year round. The planting in ponds can also create 'reed beds' that will filter pollutants and nutrients.

These techniques can be incorporated into the local landscape, indicatively shown on the phasing diagrams, forming a potential network of storage areas.

To the north of Ashford, where the ground is more permeable, infiltration SUDS systems can be employed. Filter drains and permeable surfaces can be used that have a volume of permeable material below ground to store surface water. This can then be conveyed along the length of the drain or allowed to permeate into the ground. Such devices can include soakaways, infiltration trenches, basins and ponds. These devices work by enhancing the natural capacity of the ground to store and drain water.

Sustainable solutions to infrastructure

All forms of infrastructure need to be reviewed from a sustainability perspective. The SEA framework sets out objectives and targets across a wide range of issues in the context of national, regional and local policy guidance. Halcrow's report (Jan 2005) has just been completed, and its conclusions in relation to GADF are being reviewed.

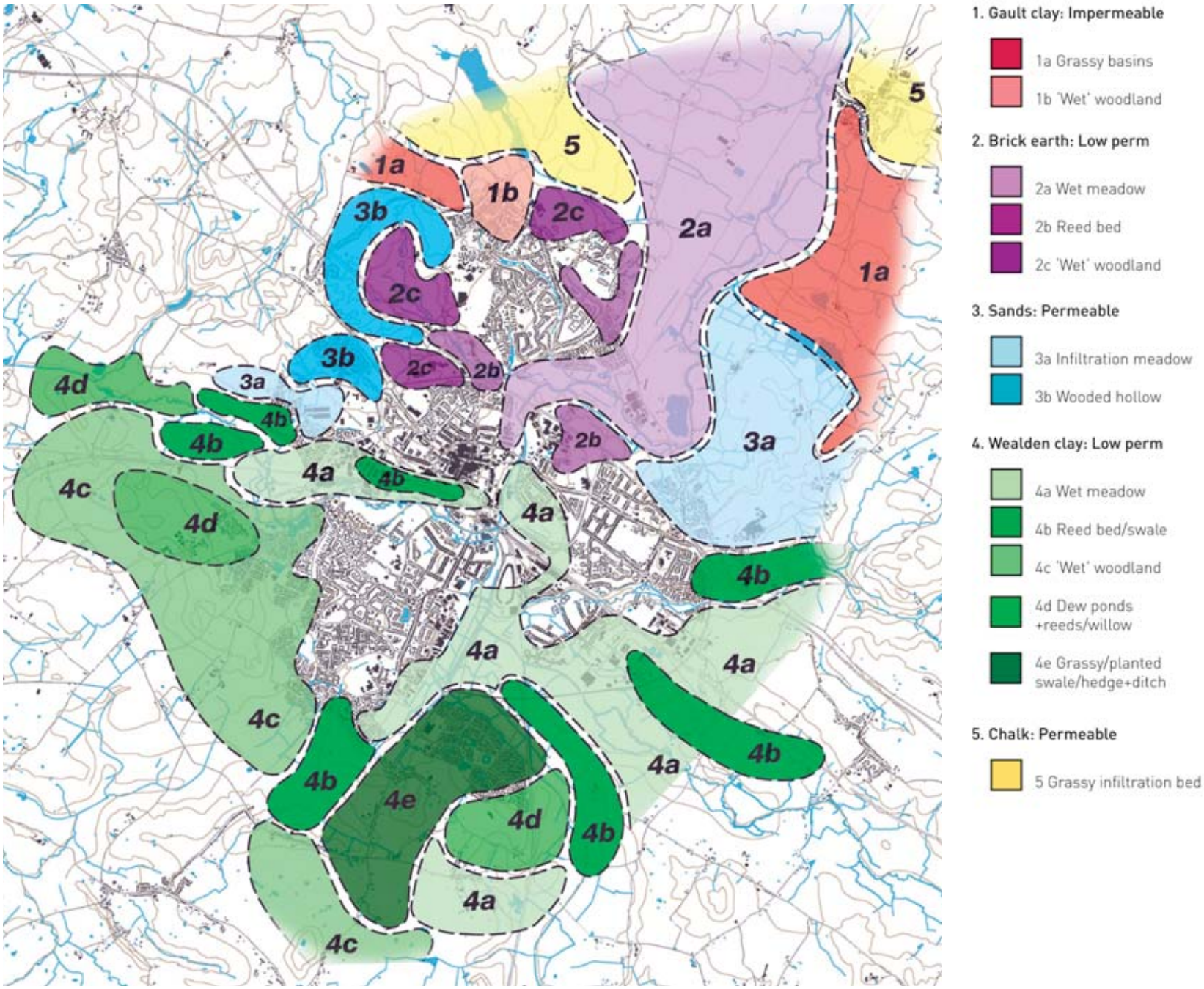
Traditional infrastructure solutions are insufficient. To meet targets set out in the SEA, the following measures need to be considered:

- Water demand management to maximise efficient use of potable water supplies, including the potential for grey water recycling. A detailed review of options is set out in Black and Veatch's IWMS: Interim report on system based strategies for mains water.
- Photovoltics for roofs, street lighting and other street furniture.
- Increasing use of renewable energy sources for electricity generation. EDF is proposing to reinforce the existing Ashford electrical grid with a new cable from Sellinge, but other 'green' solutions need to be employed to boost power to the grid.
- Micro CHP and DHP.

In terms of drainage and sewerage treatment there are many potential techniques available, from green roofs and rain water butts to attenuate water and potentially recycle it about the home to 'living machine' treatment systems where drainage water is cleaned and purified by natural processes rather than chemical treatments that, ultimately, find there way into the eco-system contaminating habitat.

The waste water treatment is evolving through the Integrated Water Management Study and environmental work stream to determine the hybrid mix of energy efficient centralised treatment, wetlands and other localised ecological treatment systems.

All sustainable forms of energy production and waste treatments are 'evolving technologies' and require detailed study.



The potential for a Suds network throughout Ashford

07.4 WORKPLACE AND URBAN CORE

Ashford has the unique opportunity to build on its strategic location in Kent, in the South East and on a major European transport corridor. The International Station represents its unique selling point and its importance cannot be underestimated.

The shift in Ashford's potential from a secondary town to a great place to live and work will however require a 'step change'. To attract new investment and increase the job opportunities in a highly competitive market with a range of growth areas and revitalisation projects all bidding for attention, is a significant challenge. Ashford's growth and change will need to be linked to a Development Plan and Development Strategy that is geared to delivering a great town and setting, with an appropriate range of choice to foster different investment potentials.

The development of strong economic prospects for Ashford has been explored through a number of exercises:

- **The role of the economic vision**

This work was undertaken by Ernst & Young (2004) and forms the basis for clarifying an economic vision for Ashford with related strategic objectives.

- **The role of different character zones and respective sectors**

This work connects the economic work to the Spatial Working Plan. The economic role of each respective character zone is outlined in this section. The more detailed aspects are developed through the phasing strategy (Chapter 08). Furthermore, the justification for an area-led, or precinct-led approach is developed in the Jones Lang Lasalle report (2004), with specific reference to the Town Centre. The promotion of principal sectors should be tied to the character zones. Work in the sector-based approach requires further development after the GADF process.

- **The role of transformational projects**

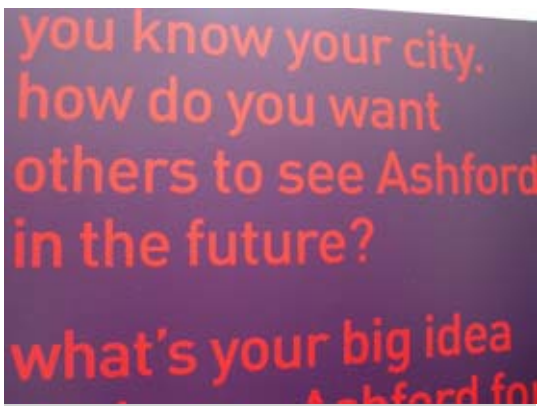
This is a key component of the work undertaken by the Economic Visioning Group. The role of early transformational projects is developed in the phasing strategy (Chapter 08).

- **The role of Communications and Place-making Strategy**

The GADF promotes a distinctive brand for Ashford which has established the core elements of The Great Town in the Great Setting, as described in Chapter 04 of this report. This needs to be substantially developed in terms of the economic prospects and is a specific area of work that still needs to be commissioned.

- **The role of a Delivery Strategy and Delivery Vehicle**

The need to provide the private sector with confidence in terms of clarity, certainty and a level playing field, as well as viability and the potential for adding and gaining value relates to the delivery issues associated with large scale growth and change. The Ashford's Future Delivery Board and Ashford Borough Council are working towards an appropriate delivery vehicle. Key delivery issues are outlined by the Ashford Borough Council in Chapter 09.



The Economic Vision

The Economic Vision for Ashford as established by the Ernst & Young report (2004) is:

"A strong, self-sustaining and growing town, recognised as a world-class exemplar location combining an environment rich in resources with a technologically enabled, knowledge based learning economy"

"Recognised for the excellence of its physical, cultural, economic and digital connectivity with its surrounding region, the UK, Europe and the wider world."

"The preferred location in the South East where, given the quality of the built environment and the quality of life, people of all ages aspire to work, study, live, relax and visit, and can fulfil their potential." (Ernst & Young, 2004)

"What the post-industrial society needs is good urbanism"

Derek Kemp, leading economist involved in the revitalisation of Urban Centres

The Economic Vision outlines 11 strategic objectives for Ashford to achieve sustained economic growth:

1. Leadership

To have in place strong political, community and business leadership to create an environment conducive to realising Ashford's vision.

2. Exemplary Infrastructure

To ensure that Ashford's infrastructure of road, rail and other physical as well as digital infrastructure is exemplary in order to support and drive forward growth.

3. Develop a cultural agenda

To retain a larger share of Ashford's 15-34 year old age group to live, work, study and pursue their careers within Ashford, and to attract members of that age group from outside by provision of education, leisure and employment opportunities.

4. Learning & Skills programme

To improve significantly the provision, uptake and completion of education, learning and skills programmes within Ashford.

5. Improve the property market

To improve the ability of property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs.

6. Focus on the Town Centre

To revitalise the town centre as a venue for living, retail, leisure, business and related activities.

7. Build a small business base

To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure, and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.

8. Develop the Ashford Brand

To develop a unique identity and brand that can be used to promote Ashford.

9. Quality Neighbourhoods

To identify and support initiatives to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in Ashford.

10. Support Community Developments

To grow Ashford as a community with active participation in creating the future, enabling all to take advantage of the opportunities offered by growth, ensuring that local transformations benefit all segments of the population, particularly those in greatest need of economic inclusion.

11. Reinforce regional relationships

To grow Ashford's economy in a way that considers the views of the existing community and is complementary to those of the surrounding towns and coastal areas, bringing benefits to the sub-region and region more broadly.

The Character zones and sector opportunities

This is an overview of the economic opportunities relating to GADF Spatial Plan. The assessment of the type of jobs and investment that can be promoted has been undertaken for each distinctive area or character zone, namely:

- **the town centre (approximately 50% of proposed employment opportunities)**
- **living quarter (5%)**
- **neighbourhoods (10%-15%)**
- **and the out-of-town industrial/business parks. (30%-35%)**

The purpose is to review how the different character zones or areas can meet the different range of opportunities for investment and employment in Ashford. This is done with direct reference to the Plan and how employment and property opportunities relate to elements such as public transport, green spaces, location of resources, different housing types and a distribution of a mix of uses.

Town Centre

Types of Employment

The Town Centre is viewed as the future focus for an intense and vibrant core to Ashford, that is well served by public transport, and underpinned by a great mix of public and private resources. The principal focus of employment growth in Ashford should be the Town Centre. The development of edge-of-town and out-of-town activities over the past twenty years in the form of predominantly single use retail and leisure activity has played a role in restricting the level of new investment and employment within the Town Centre. There are significant opportunities to redress this balance and capitalise on the role that a number of transformational projects and large-scale residential development planned for the Town Centre might play.

Due to the strong potential for a mix of uses within the Town Centre there will be an equivalent potential for a wide variety of employment sectors. The Jones Lang LaSalle Report (September, 2004) identifies three core areas where development should be focused which it calls precincts and related sectors:

- Vicarage Lane (Leisure led mixed use – 1 to 2 years)
- Elwick Road (Retail/Public Services led mixed use – 2 to 5 years)
- Dover Place/Tannery Lane (Office led mixed use – 3 to 10 years).
- In addition the prospects for a focus of cultural activity and learning and skills based activity will bolster the potential of the Town Centre.

In the short term the opportunities to develop the town centre retail and leisure offer are strong. The prospects for the office market are lower and a number of strategies will need to be adopted to attract significant B1 employment generating uses expected to be delivered within the Town Centre in the short or medium term. Within this context, the type of employment uses which could be generated in the town centre are essentially related to retail, leisure, office sector, public sector facilities and facilities relating to a cultural offer. These are developed further in Chapter 08 in the phasing strategy.

Rationale

a) Retail and Leisure

The retail and leisure markets offer the best commercial opportunities in the short term. Additional opportunities will arise in the town centre for both retail and leisure operators and therefore employment as the catchment population begins to swell with the development of town centre apartments for young professionals to take advantage of the CTRL link to London (to be established in 2009).

Early strategies to release key sites to develop the night time economy, to create a greater number of eating and drinking establishments and to support leisure and culture facilities are required. The young professionals located within the town centre would help to achieve this along with a more significant student population emerging from investment in the Learning and Skills Campus.

b) Office based employment

Office based employment can be developed in the town centre in the short term within the existing secondary office stock predominantly from micro and small businesses. To extend beyond this platform, the early quality of Town Centre development relating to the delivery of key infrastructure, key transformational projects and housing is essential. Marketing needs to be tied to the offer of urban quality.

In addition there maybe some employment opportunities within emerging markets such as Disaster Recovery operations within the financial services sector. Ashford, with its excellent connections to could be a suitable location, although the town faces fierce competition from other locations such as Croydon, Ebbsfleet and the Southampton / Portsmouth conurbation for these types of operations.

The other potential way to create employment is to intervene in the market through relocating a Government Department or EU affiliated organisation to the Town Centre. In the short term the objective should be to cluster public sector bodies within the Town Centre.

c) The Cultural Offer

In the longer term the business base needs to be stimulated by a strong cultural offer with a particular focus on learning and innovation. The Learning and Skills Campus is therefore vital to keep young people in the Ashford area, and develop the knowledge base and potential subsequent spin-out business activities. The positioning of the learning campus, which could be a branch of a University in Kent, but with potential affiliations to other Universities and technology colleges is important to provide the Research departments and courses best suited to developing the economy in Ashford. In the short term, the development of a learning campus/incubator appears to be essential. Employment will also be generated in related community facilities, such as the new Discovery Centre.

Initiation/Delivery

a) A Precinct Approach

The adoption of a 'precinct' approach to the development of the Town Centre as set out in the JLL report is critical as it promotes the opportunity to create focal areas within the Town Centre that could attract niche investment and promote development of distinctive identity and character.

b) Planning Policy and Strategy

To give the office market the best possible chance of developing, a planning policy/strategy should strongly encourage B1 office development in the Town Centre. In addition the delivery of early transformational projects needs detailed planning and coordination.

c) Delivery Vehicles and Joint Venture arrangements

A clear delivery mechanism needs to be adopted to provide investors with certainty and confidence around the development opportunities. Joint venture arrangements are required to bring forward a number of developments within the Town Centre with public organisations working with private developers.

Living Quarter

Type of Employment

The Living Quarter areas consist of a number of separate and distinct areas that radiate from the Town Centre along important existing or proposed transport corridors. They sit in key locations, in proximity to the Town Centre and include Newtown Works, Cobb's Wood Estate/Chart Estate and the Canal District. These key sites adjacent to the Town Centre offer opportunities for niche employment uses that can complement the employment uses and activities within the Town Centre. The type of employment that could be generated in the Living Quarter are as follows:

- Specialist creative industries relating in particular to the cultural and learning offer,
- Retained firms;
- Local shops and services that serve the immediate resident population.

Rationale

The Living Quarter should be an area where particular niche employment opportunities are promoted.

a) Mixed-use developments

The Cobb's Wood Estate/Chart Estate area is characterised by some existing industrial properties that over the lifetime of the Masterplan are likely to change. This area is also earmarked for a major transport route to link central Ashford (at Victoria Way) to Junction 9 of the M20. In this context, there could be some business relocations from the industrial estates in the short term to enable the road to be built out. The redevelopment of these estates for a greater proportion of mixed-use development could help to part fund the road. However, the site has good accessibility to Junction 9 and there may be some employment uses that could be retained within the two industrial estates and be allowed to grow in-situ.

b) Distinctive Cultural Offer

The New Town Works area is characterised by existing empty railway buildings with potential for refurbishment. Kier Properties have purchased the site with the intention of creating a mixed-use residential-led scheme with potential for refurbishing space within the redundant railway buildings for arts and crafts and other creative industries. This type of employment activity would complement the uses within the town centre and with good pedestrian and transport links, create a potential destination and attraction for the town.

c) Distinctive 'Landscape' Location

The Canal District area has flood risk issues that will limit development opportunities in the short term. However it has the potential to capitalise on the water theme and to create a development area with a unique identity in Ashford. There are opportunities for mixed-use residential development as well as working opportunities to capitalise on the location of the Canal District adjacent to the proposal Regional Wetlands Park.

Initiation/Delivery

a) Flexibility

The strategy for the Living Quarters should be both directive and flexible. Key sites such as Newtown/Klondyke could serve to promote a distinctive arts quarter for Ashford. At the same time the potential will also rest in the ability to foster an associated mix of uses, including residential components. Sites such as Cobbs Wood will change as major elements of infrastructure are delivered, such as the proposed bridge crossing. A flexible strategy will accommodate longer term opportunities to come forward as the Town Centre is regenerated and begins to establish a strong economic hub.

b) Promoting early wins

The Kier development could materialise as an 'early win' for the town creating employment and business opportunities, although the issue with Junction 10A is relevant as the site is within the 5-minute drive-time and could impact on the timing and delivery of development.

c) Land acquisition / land assembly and relocation

In terms of Cobb's Estate/Chart Estate, some land acquisition and assembly for the road is required. The process of relocating businesses over time from within these two Estates needs to be actively managed to ensure that these businesses remain within Ashford and have the opportunity to expand operations where feasible. Actions need to be taken from an early stage (e.g. site identification, developer liaisons) to actively facilitate a longer term relocation process.

Neighbourhoods (Urban Villages)

Type of Employment

The mixed-use residential neighbourhoods of Chilmington, Kingsnorth and Cheeseman's Green are anticipated to have significant numbers of housing and therefore residential population within them. The Masterplan indicates between 4,000-6,000 units per neighbourhood. These neighbourhoods are likely to be well served by public transport and characterised by a mix of housing types and densities. The level of population envisaged within the neighbourhoods offers opportunities to make these areas 'work harder' in terms of creating and sustaining a wide range of employment opportunities.

The type of employment that could be generated in the urban villages are as follows:

- New shops and retail services within the neighbourhood centres;
- Small legal and professional services located within the neighbourhood centres;
- Public sector services including health centres, education and other community facilities;
- Catering and leisure/sporting facilities;
- Self-employment opportunities, flexible home working arrangements and
- Small business units.

Rationale

a) Core public and private services

A number of jobs within the neighbourhoods will be created by the residential developments themselves and the need to provide services for the population of these areas in the form of convenience shopping and local services.

b) Small scale professional services

In addition to these core services, there is likely to be a small market for legal and professional services, such as solicitors and accountants, and estate agents driven by the resident population.

c) Leisure and recreation

In terms of leisure and recreation, there are opportunities to provide additional attractions at the proposed Discovery Parks and the Regional Wetland that will be attractive to residents across the whole town. The clustering of activities at Parks may also enable other developments to come forward such as hotels.

d) Self-employment

The urban villages offer opportunities for self employed people to work from home taking advantage of advances in ICT through cable or wireless technology, as well as office workers undertaking flexible home working.

With changing working practices increasing through changing organisational structures, advances in ICT, and the growth of the knowledge economy the trend for home working is increasing in the UK. The proportion of workers using their home as their base of work has increased every year over the past two decades. In 2002, it was estimated that one in thirteen employed people carried out their work in a variety of places using home as their base (Based on Labour Force Survey data, Felstead and Jewson 2003). Within the SE 390,000 residents in 2001 worked from home (10%), a significant increase from the 180,000 residents working at home in 1991. In addition the level of self employment within the UK has increased by 27% over the past 20 years (1983-2003). These trends support the need to provide a greater level of flexibility within the design of homes and neighbourhood centres.

e) Small 'niche' business' & unique settings

Small businesses seeking a high quality environmental setting such as the agricultural buildings that are located within the Urban Villages might provide a good resource to create small workspace schemes through conversions. There may be opportunities for small-scale workspace schemes to take advantage of the environmental setting of the, proposed Regional Wetland Park and Discovery Parks.

Initiation/Delivery

a) Primary neighbourhood centres and local hubs

A neighbourhood centre is envisaged for each of the Urban Villages. The clustering of retail, business uses, services and community facilities makes sustainable planning and commercial sense. The neighbourhood centres need to be highly accessible and visible to meet commercial operator requirements and should be located along a major transport corridor.

b) Creating the spatial and locational preconditions for mixed use

Flexible options for a range of investors seeking to invest in individual, small and medium offices as owner-occupiers or as developers of the wider neighbourhood centre scheme need to be promoted. Layouts should enable live/work units to be created within the neighbourhood centre but with the flexibility to adapt either component if the demand is low. To enable the flexible working arrangements within the urban villages, the latest ICT connectivity is required, be it through the laying of fibre optic cabling or the use of wireless technology into businesses and homes.

Out of Town Industrial/Business Parks

Type of Employment

The town has some existing industrial/business park sites such as Ashford Business Park, Orbital Business Park both located on the southern orbital road and Eureka Science and Business Park located close to Junction 9 of the M20.

The state of the commercial office market in East Kent indicates that the proposed sites at Sevington/Waterbrook and Sandyhurst at Junction 10 and Junction 9 respectively are likely to remain attractive mainly to local occupiers in the short to medium term. To shift the potential of these areas, it will be important to distinguish between the different roles and potential of these sites. The Sandyhurst Site is envisaged by the Economic Visioning Group as a primary Business Park with opportunity for B1 commercial use and mixed-use activities.

Although the obligation for developers to contribute towards the funding of the new Junction 10A provides a barrier to developing the Sevington Waterbrook area in the short term the real prospects for this area need to related to the benefits of the Junction 10 proximity, as well as its role as a major growth area in the GADF plan.

The type of employment that could be generated in the out-of-town industrial/business parks are as follows:

- Niche activities (for example high tech businesses)
- Local manufacturing firms, traders (such as builders merchants) and services such as vehicles repairs/sales seeking new higher quality space and potentially expansion space from existing sites within the town;
- Local firms seeking to expand in-situ, such as Eureka Science and Business Park:
- Businesses seeking 'move on' space from an incubator/innovation centre.

Rationale for these Employment Types

Although Ashford faces stiff competition for business park space in other parts of the South East there is an opportunity to redefine the nature of these out of town sites in Ashford, and link them into the potentials for large scale growth and change in Ashford.

a) Working with existing local businesses

With 1 million sq.ft. of space available at Phase II of Kings Hill and another 500,000 sq.ft. at Crossways coupled with an additional 8 million sq.ft. planned at Ebbsfleet/Eastern Quarry the opportunities for significant growth in Ashford will be more difficult to realise. It is therefore essential in the short term to build a competitive strategy that markets Ashford's unique selling points - at the same time work with the needs of local businesses in terms of expansions and relocations from older stock.

b) Developing the skills base

In terms of larger scale inward investment such as within the health and pharmaceuticals sector pricing is less of an issue and greater emphasis is placed on skills within the catchment area to service a purpose-built facility. Ashford does not have the skills base to support a regional facility at the present time. The development of skills through the Learning and Skills Campus and related facilities is critical for Ashford to compete for inward investment projects.

c) Incubators and Innovation Centres

The development of the market using 'bottom-up' mechanisms such as incubators/innovation centres should be an integral part of the economic development strategy for the town linked to the Learning Campus.

Initiation/Delivery

a) Developing a relocation strategy

We would expect local occupiers from in Ashford to be attracted to Sevington/Waterbrook possibly as part of the continued regeneration of the central area of Ashford with firms relocating from older industrial estates where appropriate. The mix of employment uses at Sevington/Waterbrook is likely to be wide, incorporating mainly B2 and B8. The connection of this area through new transport links to both Junction 10 and the Town Centre could also accommodate mixed-use potentials.

b) Promoting a high-quality business park

In terms of Sandyhurst, this site should be retained for a high quality business park development that can take advantage of a change in the employment profile of the town through the development of the Learning Campus and incubator/innovation centres. The development of skills and businesses within knowledge-based industries would help to offer opportunities for 'move on' space as well as increasing the profile of the town for potential inward investors.

Implications for Implementation

The key economic development tasks and actions requiring implementation over the GADF period up to 2031, is developed in Chapter 08. The comments on implementation and phasing will take into account the property market, the aims and objectives of the Economic Vision produced for Ashford's Futures by Ernst & Young and the Action Plan that is being formulated as part of the Ashford Economic Visioning flowing from the Ernst & Young Report.

07.5 CIVIC DOMAIN

The focus of the Civic Domain workstream has been to understand what kind of public resources and services Ashford will require as it grows. For Ashford to meet the sustainable growth challenge, there are significant implications for how public resources and services are defined and delivered. This will require innovation in three key respects:

a) Joint Working - The need to develop innovative forms of partnership working .

b) Co-location - The need to develop creative ways of defining in spatial terms how public resources best meet community needs, and relate to local places.

c) Building Communities – The need to ensure that the development of community spirit and social inclusion are accelerated.

This masterplanning and related civic domain exploration is an exercise in raising the stakes for social and community infrastructure. This will require service providers to reconsider the way they operate. This requires a greater focus on proactive, rather than reactive or 'predict and provide' planning, and delivery of new types of service.

The Civic Domain Group

The Civic Domain Workstream Group was set up in March 2004 and consists of representatives from a number of key groups:

- Health and Social Care
- Learning and Skills
- Community
- Sports and Recreation and,
- Arts and Culture

It was critical that a wide range of service providers worked, together to jointly define the vision and aspirations for the civic domain, key requirements in both quantitative and qualitative terms, as well as different strategies for meeting these aspirations and requirements.

Because the Civic Domain covers such an extensive range of public, community and cultural resources, distinctive areas of work have been developed, namely, 'The Cultural Agenda for Ashford' and the 'Role of the Voluntary Sector in Ashford'. While both cultural and community assets have been integrated into the Civic Domain work, key aspects of these two areas are also represented in this Report in their own right.

The Plan - The Role of the Civic Domain

The Spatial Plan, strategies and delivery mechanisms address a number of key issues:

- To establish the most suitable mix of shared uses and locations for the newly configured mix of proposed services proposed.
- To quantify the capital investment required for new facilities.
- To identify the most appropriate funding sources.
- To enhance the levels of community and voluntary sector support.
- To develop and implement a robust cultural strategy.

The Spatial Plan

The primary spatial plan for the distribution of Civic Resources (see page opposite) rests on creating a public resource network for Ashford as a whole, with a series of focal points or public resource hubs that need to meet a range of town wide as well as local needs.

i) Public Resource Structure – a "Capital Web"

The Plan shows a structure of key streets and green corridors, which act as town –wide connectors. The movement structure relating to great streetscapes and public transport is one key component. The green corridor, which winds through the town and ties into key parks is the other key component. At particular locations along the routes there are a series of nodes or sites for focused public and private investment. The integration of a town wide structure with key sites generates the framework for the location of public resources or a "Capital Web" for public investment over time.

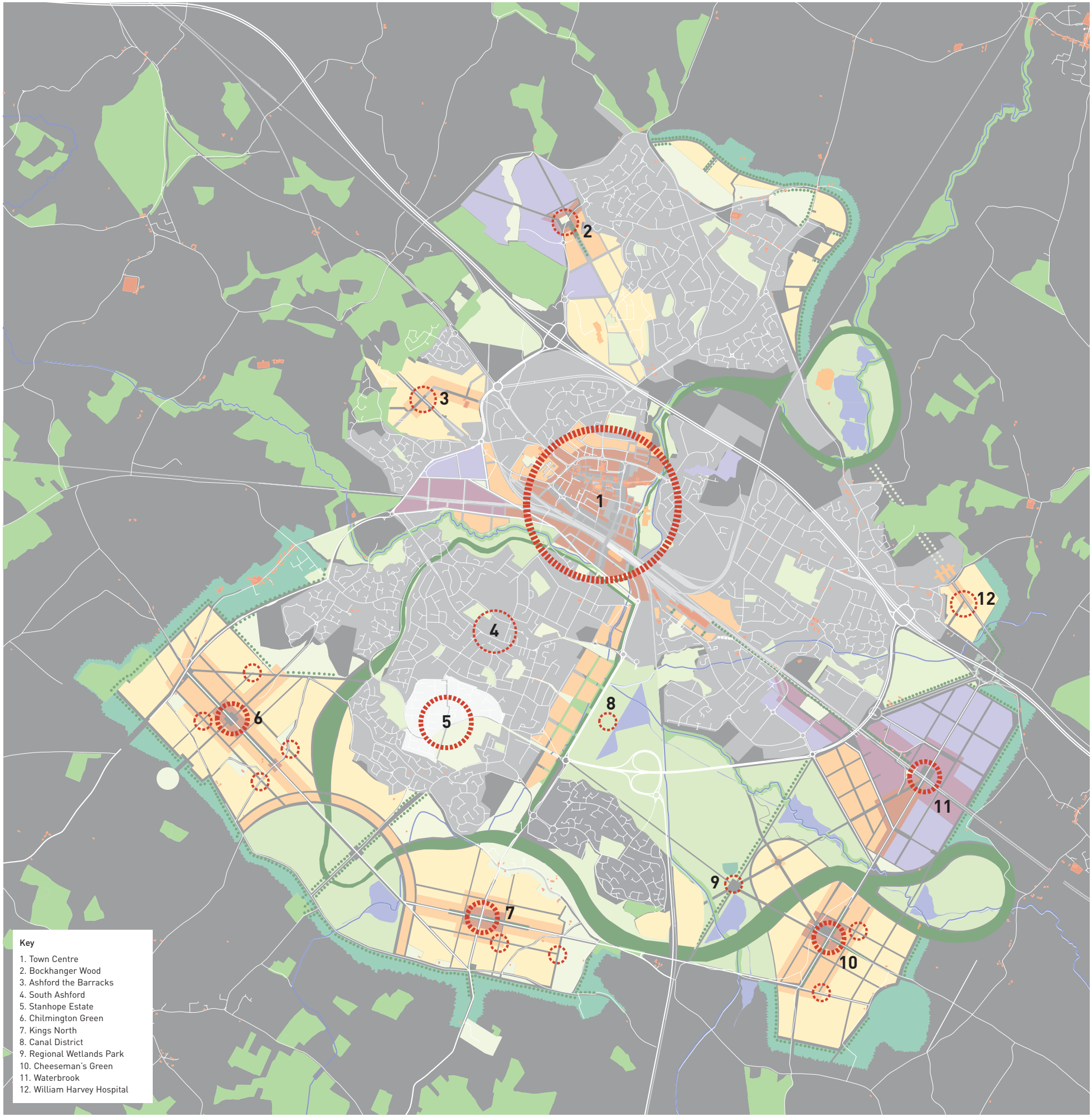
ii) Public Resource Clusters/Hubs – opportunities for co-location

The key locations or 'nodes' within the public resource structure allows for a hierarchy of sites to be developed. These sites relate to areas that are optimal for a range of public and private investment, accommodating the development of clusters or hubs of resources. The opportunity for resources to be located in direct proximity to each other and even co-location where components are shared between public resources has been a primary aspiration of the civic domain group. This work needs further exploration at the level of the individual site. The principles are developed in the Design Code document. The thinking around potential for co-location and the role of buildings and spaces concerned with learning and skills has been developed in a 'Learning and Skills' paper (Knowler.H, 2004). Importantly the paper raises the complexities of delivering and managing co-located resources.

The Delivery and Management Challenges - Joint Working

i) A Civic Domain reference group and working forum

The various groups within the Civic Domain including the variety of public service providers will need to continue to be informed about their respective needs, resource requirements and programmes if integrated planning and development is to occur. There is an expressed need that the Civic Domain group needs to be managed and supported so that input from its members continues to inform the development process to deliver timely, joined up, social and cultural facilities and services.



Key Locations for Civic Resources

ii) Overcoming existing policy and standards

Policy and standards constraints about where and how resources are delivered and managed exist. This relates to public resources generally being delivered in separate silos without reference to broader public service provision, demand or site specific conditions. In addition, particular standards, such as a the size of school grounds being the same irrespective of whether the school is located in a dense mixed-use environment such as the Town Centre, or whether it is located out in the mixed-use neighbourhoods is currently applied. These issues need to be taken up through a delivery vehicle/agency with respective service providers. At a more detailed level, the kind of detailed spatial relationship of public amenities to their context can prohibit positive opportunities for public interaction. While the Design Codes will establish some basic preconditions for how buildings relate to and support public space and are potentially central to their respective communities, this area of work requires a site-by-site review. This area of work needs to link to existing initiatives such as 'Schools for the Future'.

iii) Management of co-located resources

Although there was general consensus around the positive role of public clusters, it was simultaneously acknowledged that this will present real management challenges. The management of clustered and coalocated resources is an issue that clearly needs to be taken a lot further. The role for a coordinating delivery vehicle is critical. Possibly this area of work could be further investigated by the Delivery Board of the Ashford's Future's team.

iv) Upfront delivery

In order to establish a level of confidence in the new communities as well as attending to the community needs and the sustainability challenge, it will be necessary to deliver key resources and/or components of key resources alongside population growth. This also has implications for the role of communities in being directly involved with shaping their public environment. The role of the voluntary sector will be critical and capacity and resources need to be developed prior to developments being completed.

The Resource Matrix

During the course of Stage 2 and 3 the civic Domain group has developed and refined a matrix of resources. This includes new resource requirements for Phase 1 (up to 2011) and Phase 2 (from 2011 to 2021). For the existing resources in Ashford the OMAI work should be referred to (October,2004). Each group within the workstream has developed an estimate of what resources are required. This relates to two parallel exercises – the first is an estimate using basic standards relative to population figures. The second relates to 'aspirational opportunities' that relates to what kind of great civic and public resources should emerge out of the growth and change of Ashford. For example:

- Canterbury, Whitstable/Herne Bay has a combined population of 109,997. It supports a Cathedral, a Unesco World Heritage Site and a University with related tertiary Institutes and Schools.
- Maidstone with a population of 89,684 supports key public locations such as a hospital and a centre for KCC regional offices.

The role for more aspirational cultural projects and programmes is covered in the section on 'Culture' under the "transformational, transitional and everyday".

In the case of Health and Social Care, Education, Sports and Recreation, the 'Arts' and the Voluntary Sector, the matrix exercise has extended in varying degrees of detail to provisional budgets, possible funding sources and mechanisms, and strategies. These are currently available as individual packs from the Ashford PCT, Cultural Services (ABC) and Ashford's Future.

The public resource matrix on the following page shows the resources of each respective group as well as a 'hierarchy' of resources at three scales. These include the 'Higher Order' resources that tend to perform at a regional and/or town scale, the 'Ward/District' resources that are required for a collection of neighbourhoods, and the 'Local/Neighbourhood' resources that meet the needs of particular local communities. A key principle is to develop an integrated network that establishes relationships across service provider groups and across scales.

Civic Domain - Public Resource Base Matrix

	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	LEARNING & SKILLS	COMMUNITY	SPORTS & RECREATION	ARTS & CULTURE
HIGHER ORDER RESOURCES					(not defined in terms of Phase 1 & 2)
Phase 1 and early priorities (2001-2011)	- King's Avenue Site- possible location for tier 2 service - Unscheduled care at William Harvey - X1 Ambulance Station	- 1 children's Disability Centre - Learning and Skills Campus - Discovery Centre (library and research facilities)	- Gateway/Discovery Centre - Refurbishment of Centrepiece Church - St Mary's Church upgrade - CFH (Possible landswop) - Berwick House refurb - Y.M.C.A relocation - Ashford Community Enterprise premises - Voluntary Sector Resource Centre	- Julie Rose expansion (= regional water sports) - Stour Centre, Phase 2 - Discovery Park (Sport, recreation, education) - Skatepark & BMX park	- Culture & Creative Industries Centre (Klondyke) - Performing Arts Centre - Culture & Tourism Centre (Klondyke Site) - Ashford Discovery Centre, Gallery Space - Creation Centre (galleries, workshops, conference) - Public Realm Projects - Public Art Route Route Projects - Outdoor performance Space (Discovery Park) - Ashford School of Art & Design
Phase 2 (2011-2021)	- Vicarage Lane, Primary Care - Unscheduled Emergency Care Centre		- Youth Centre	- Stour Centre, Phase 2 - Regional Wetlands Parks	
WARD/DISTRICT RESOURCES					
Phase 1 and early priorities (2001-2011)	- X2 Primary Health Centre (1 per 10,000 –12,000 patients) - Sheltered Housing (325 beds) - Primary Health Care x2 (325 nursing home beds) - Extra Care Housing (40 units) - Westview Health & Social Care Centre (60 beds) - 2 Children's Centres (1 at Bybrook) - 3 new school based social work services - 2 Intensive Supported Housing (Adult Mental Health) (2x6 units) - 1 Crisis House (Adult Mental Health) (6 beds)	- Secondary School x1/2 - Review branch library provision - Cheeseman's Green, Kingsnorth & Chilmington provision - Mobile provision	- Bockhanger extension/refurb - Park Farm extend/develop - Ray Allen Centre extend/refurb - Stanhope refurb - Hunter Avenue community centre - Kennington Community Hall extension of facilities - 5 new church buildings + requirements for other faiths - Singleton Community Centre & Community Woodlands expansion - Templar Barracks Community facilities - New community centre, Willsborough - Cheeseman's Green library & community building - Kennington Spearpoint Pavilion	- Park Farm Sports facilities - Chilmington Green Sports Facilities (Discovery Park?) - Cheeseman's Green Park, Sports Facilities, Community Centre - Templar Barracks Sports Facilities - Singleton Hill Environment Centre - Rationalisation of sports pitches, redevelopment of Spearpoint - North School - redevelopment of sports/youth centre - Tower School sports centre refurbishment - Norton Knatchbull Sports Centre - Sports Hall in South Ashford (poss swimming pool)	- Cheeseman's Green (dance & performance space) - Singleton Environmental Centre - Participating art spaces (in community halls, health centres, schools)
Phase 2 (2011-2021)	- X2 Primary Health Centre (1 per 10,000 –12,000 patients) - Stepdown x3 - Primary Health Care (360 Beds nursing home) - 35 bed home - 24 bed home (EMI) - 3 Children's Centres - 2 Adult Resource Centres - 1 Intensive Supported Housing (Adult Mental Health) (6 units) - 1 Multi-Agency Family Support Centre - 2 new school based social work services - 1 Adults Resource Centre	- Secondary School x 1	- Bybrook Child Centre - New community halls - 5 new church buildings & requirements for other faiths	- Additional Sports and recreation facilities to be reviewed and where possible to be located adjacent to the primary adjacent to the primary	
LOCAL/NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES					
Phase 1 and early priorities (2001-2011)		- Review Primary/Nursery Centre - Nursery Schools x2 - Community SVCB in New Neighbourhoods - Additional mobile library stops - Chilmington, Kingsnorth & other locations - Access point in schools etc.	- Flexible community facilities in new neighbourhoods - Forge Lane Scouts Hall-refurb	- New Local Parks and Recreation Areas	
Phase 2 (2011-2021)		- Primary Schools x9 - Neighbourhood community libraries	- Flexible community facilities in new neighbourhoods		- Artist studio space as part of new development

Culture at the Heart of Ashford's Growth

Creating a Place for People

1. The Vision

Culture is what makes places distinctive and memorable

Future Ashford is a place designed around people and their cultural needs, a place where the built and green environments are celebrated and stimulating and where the best of the built heritage is enhanced by the best in contemporary architecture and design. Future Ashford welcomes people and encourages creativity, exploration and innovation. It is a place where creative people and businesses flourish alongside creative communities; a successful visitor economy attracting European and regional visitors on a regular basis. A place where leisure choices, whether as a participant, spectator or learner, are varied and inspiring. A place where young people choose to study and stay. A place that celebrates excellence, authenticity and the surprising. It is a growing place that doesn't stand still.

2. Background

This cultural chapter is founded on the principles of the Greater Ashford Development Framework and has been informed by research into other successful cultural locations of a similar projected size. It champions design quality and the public realm, links closely to the delivery of Ashford's economic vision and supports the creation of sustainable communities through education, health, environment and the quality of life. It highlights Ashford's lack of cultural infrastructure and comparative weaknesses in Kent and the region. The chapter has emerged as a distinctive theme from work originally undertaken by the Civic Domain workstream and builds on the existing local Cultural Strategy and Ashford's Moving Forward the concluding document of the Town Centre Design Workshop (October 2003). A consultative workshop with Regional Cultural Agencies and other partner bodies developed the core principles around which this chapter is built. New baseline research and comparative studies into the extent and range of the cultural infrastructure in selected towns of a similar size to the expanded Ashford has been completed. This provides underpinning evidence to the chapter which is supported by the Kent Economic Report 2004.

3. Definition

The term 'culture' is used to include visual arts and music, the performing arts, crafts, museums, libraries and archives, sport, tourism and the historic environment as well as creative industries such as advertising, architecture, design, publishing, television and radio, film and video, software and computer services and antiques.

It also encompasses:

- Shared memory, experience and identity;
- Minority as well as majority interests;
- The excellent as well as wider and more inclusive participation;
- Values the traditional as well as the experimental;
- Life long learning and releasing individual creativity;
- Cultural activity as fundamental to people's health, well-being and quality of life;
- A defined sense of place (with the historic environment making a significant contribution);
- A sense of belonging engendered by and for newcomers moving into an area.

Cultural activities are drivers of prosperity and social cohesion, not merely a consequence of this creativity. Within the growth area Culture stimulates inward investment and social well - being and contributes to a successful, healthy and vibrant community. Culture is at the heart of sustainable development. Cultural activities are as important for the self-image and confidence of an area, as they are for its public profile, prosperity and quality of life.

4. Why Culture Matters - Sustainable Growth

Culture is a pre-requisite of successful and sustainable growth. The role of culture is increasingly recognised as key to attracting people – as visitors, students and residents – and to attracting business. Cultural development contributes strongly to the economic success of towns and cities. It helps regeneration, and it is an important component in the growing knowledge economy. A vibrant culture encourages the growth of creative businesses and is important for attracting inward investment from forward-looking business sectors.

Culture is an essential component in successful place making. It is highly effective in creating successful brands and distinctive identities, exemplified by the transformation of Gateshead's image from a backwater of post-industrial decline to a national icon. Anthony Gormley's Angel of the North, the Baltic Art Gallery and the recently opened Sage Music Venue, have all helped to transform Gateshead.

Culture helps sustainable communities grow cohesively by enriching people's experience and helping them to enjoy active, creative and fulfilling lives. It supports learning and expression. A vibrant cultural offer is important in attracting and retaining young people. Equally, stimulating cultural and leisure opportunities are increasingly sought by the active retired who represent a growing demographic and economic force both in Ashford and the Region. Cultural facilities such as libraries, museums, arts centres, places for sport and play, the built and the natural environment are an essential part of good urban and rural fabric.

The contribution of culture is central to achieving Ashford's vision, economically, socially and aesthetically. Indeed it is difficult to imagine how such transformation can be achieved without the contributions culture can make.

5. Ashford's Cultural Offer – Infrastructure

Ashford enjoys excellent communications by road, rail and air. Yet in spite of the fast rail link to Europe via Ashford International, the convergence of five rail lines and two junctions on the M20, the immediate local cultural infrastructure is poor. As a significant town in the sub-region of Kent it provides remarkably few cultural attractions. The Kent Economic Report 2004 scores Ashford's amenities as joint lowest (with Swale) within Kent and Medway.

The wider borough of Ashford is set amidst beautiful countryside and picture-book villages that have strong cultural identities and with national attractions like Canterbury Cathedral and Dover Castle close by.

Ashford is part of two sub regional partnerships the Kent Channel Corridor upon which SEEDA's Area Investment Framework (AIF) is based and East Kent authorities partnership. Over recent years partnership working across East Kent has been actively encouraged by cultural agencies in order to strengthen a relatively weak infrastructure across the area. In planning for Growth in Ashford it will be important to consider its sub regional context and to plan for Culture in ways that add to, benefit from and complement neighbouring strengths.

There are some local strengths on which Ashford can build. The Julie Rose Athletics Stadium, a

successful designer retail development, a 12-screen cinema complex and access to areas of outstanding natural beauty. There are over 200 active voluntary sports clubs providing a range of participation activities from athletics and hockey, which utilise the existing quality facilities on offer, to basketball and netball that now require dedicated spaces. The new build facilities at Christchurch School in Ashford will improve much of the football, tennis, basketball and netball (in particular) sports offer and help to raise the profile of the nearby Mini Soccer Centre and its award winning coaching programmes. Other schools are equally keen to develop community sports provision and there is an ongoing programme of development including co-location of sports halls, gyms and centres of excellence in new community hubs. The Stour Leisure Centre redevelopment which will create a modern 25m leisure pool, sports hall and fitness suite is the type of major development needed to plug the cultural gap and project Ashford's image as a cultural centre. A major events programme will also be key to heightening our cultural profile.

While only the Kent & East Sussex Railway ranks amongst Kent's top ten paid attractions, when combined with the borough's fine villages, Ashford's 'out of town' attractiveness to visitors is significant. Tenterden has a unique appeal and cluster of visitor attractions, and elsewhere the borough's visitor attractions are based on its rural appeal such as Biddenden Vineyards & the Rare Breeds Centre, or on heritage and landscape such as Godinton House and Beech Court Gardens.

The town centre offer in terms of visitor attractions, events and public realm drivers, though is weak. A South East England Tourist Board (now Tourism South East) study (5) revealed that Ashford borough attracts nearly six million visitors a year, over five and a half million of which are day visitors. The McArthur Glenn Designer Outlet is the main draw for this surprisingly high level of visits and spends but almost all other visitor attractions are outside of the town itself. The hoped for spin off benefits of increased visits from the MacArthur Glenn outlet to the town centre have largely failed to materialise. The results of the tourist board survey confirm Ashford's accessibility and potential as a destination. Ashford's transport links are excellent and provide enviable access from Europe and parts of South East England. However unless attractions can be developed to hold the visitor and encourage return visits, the danger is that it will remain little more than a transit point to somewhere else.

Baseline evidence suggests the potential for a healthy and diverse music scene locally. The annual two week Stour Music Festival at Boughton Aluph is one of the country's longest running and leading Early Music events. It attracts musicians of international significance and regularly sells out. The 14th century church provides a charming setting but the festival's potential for attracting larger audiences is seriously constrained. There is evidence of a healthy independent contemporary music scene with both the Ashford Music Profile and the Tengo Collective making a significant contribution to both rock and electronic music performance across Kent. However, the lack of venues in Ashford itself is presenting a serious limitation to local development.

There is a marked lack of places for people to see and experience the visual arts, music, dance, comedy and theatre. Currently audiences from Ashford travel to venues elsewhere such as Canterbury, Maidstone and London amongst others. Homewood School's Sinden Theatre in Tenterden is the only purpose built facility in the borough which exists for the performing arts. The absence of such basic infrastructure is particularly marked in the town centre, which provides a stark challenge to the aims set out in the Cultural Strategy and the local AIF. The latter states the need for town centres to, "provide better retail, leisure and cultural facilities, improving the quality of life, retaining expenditure in the area and creating more jobs".

Ashford's Arts & Cultural offer is currently very limited and the amateur and voluntary sector is significant in delivering much of what currently exists and this deserves greater recognition and support.

Across the Channel Corridor area as a whole Ashford attracts less than a third of the total number of creative industry businesses in the area. However the proportion of those concerned with high value content origination appears to be slightly higher than either Maidstone or Folkestone (6). This is encouraging and requires additional study and support.

The visual arts appear poised for growth with the opening of the Ashford School of Art and Design. Ashford Visual Artist Group formed in 1999 is an association of professional local artists whose membership now stands at 40. With very few opportunities to show or sell work locally, Ashford artists are increasingly encouraged to market their work elsewhere.

6. A Cultural Vision for Ashford: Challenges and Opportunities

The essential challenge is for Ashford to become an attractive and well-loved regional cultural centre where people choose to live and visit and where businesses choose to locate. Achieving a dynamic, attractive and successful cultural life requires a confident, people-centred approach backed by timely investment. Demonstrating ambition, expertise and the ability to seize opportunities is key to attracting investment. Successful and sustainable growth on the scale envisaged will require a bold and attractive cultural offer which complements the existing and emerging sub regional picture.

Research was undertaken to identify two settlements of the size, population and cultural infrastructure to which Ashford can aspire. Reading and Exeter are two population centres with similar characteristics to Ashford and which are considered to offer a healthy and successful cultural profile. Both have undergone significant growth over recent years and currently sustain populations of a similar size to those projected for Ashford by 2030. Reading and Exeter provide valuable markers for the range and scale of development to which Ashford might aspire and serve to highlight the significant progress Ashford must make to address the cultural deficit that already exists:

Both Reading (pop: 143,124) and Exeter (pop: 111,110) demonstrate successful track records in attracting inward investment and identify culture and pride of place as central to this process. Both have successful Tourism economies and strategies that emphasise the importance of their location and the ease of access for visitors to their cultural offer. The Reading Festival and the World Music festival Womad, attract over 100,000 visitors a year. Exeter has actively developed a mixed contemporary cultural offer to build on its heritage attractions. Figures for 2000 showed that tourism contributed £89.7 million a year to the city economy and sustains over 2,800 jobs.

Exeter hosts an impressive array of arts, heritage and community festivals including specialist festivals of literature, film, comedy, animation, music, and theatre. In terms of venues it offers a choice of 11 art galleries, 2 museums, 3 theatres, an arts centre and two large-scale concert venues in addition to a number of other smaller music venues. A national standard athletics stadium, golf facilities, 3 leisure centres, 2 sports centres form part of its recreational offer. It has a good sports profile, fielding national league teams in football, rugby union, hockey and speedway racing.

Reading has a range of large-scale, multi-use cultural venues. These include the Hexagon, which hosts major events such as international snooker and presents a regular music and theatre programme. Rivermead Leisure complex has capacity to show major exhibitions and concerts and provides extensive facilities for racket sports, swimming, bowls, studios for dance, health and fitness and an extensive outdoor multi-sports area. In addition Reading FC's 24,000 seat stadium complex includes a hotel and conference centre. There are 3 museums, 7 art galleries, 3 cinemas, 2 theatres and a range of nightclubs and concert venues for live music in the town.

Both Reading and Exeter demonstrate the results of well-embedded and successful public art strategies. Reading's city centre regeneration programme has commissioned a range of art works, won a national architecture prize and received the backing of the Arts Council Arts at the Centre programme.

7. Achieving the Cultural Vision - Partnership

Growth areas present an unprecedented challenge in relation to the speed and scale of the targets they have been set. There is increasing encouragement, but little formal guidance and few mechanisms in place to support the process of embedding culture into growth. Ashford is attempting to lead this process. Our first challenge is to put into place the key cultural amenities that a borough of Ashford's existing size demands. Only then can we address the cultural needs of a growing community and economy.

Evidence from the studies in Reading and Exeter demonstrate that a mix of facilities, venues and events that build and cater to a broad consumer base across a range of cultural activity provides an attractive programme. Ashford's growth status provides opportunities for a sustainable mix of independent, commercial and partnership spaces and activities to transform the cultural centre which will help to retain and attract the 'missing generation' of 15 – 34 year olds and cater to the growing and economically significant older and retired population.

Essential to providing this infrastructure are

- the development of effective ways of embedding and delivering culture across the regeneration and planning process
- skilled leadership in joining up the work areas of various local, regional and national agencies
- the continued partnership and shared expertise of GOSE/DCMS, the regional cultural agencies, SEEDA, English Partnerships and KCC.

A strong example of building partnership is Ashford's Artist in Residence who was appointed through an Arts Council England grant to support the Ashford's Future master planning process. The Artist acts as an advocate for the arts within the planning process, working at all levels to ensure that the arts agenda is key in any future proposals for and interventions in the borough.

8. Key Delivery Proposals – Addressing Ashford's Cultural Deficit

The matrices on page ??? describe the proposed programme of cultural projects necessary for sustainable development. This programme presents key projects for Phase 1 and 2 and has been shaped to

- meet the pressing need for early demonstrations of imaginative high quality projects
- build market confidence
- begin to address the current acute cultural deficit for the borough's existing and new communities.

The key cultural projects and activities for early delivery fall into two distinct groups. First, Phase 1 culture projects that are already underway and helping, in part, to plug the existing gap in cultural facilities i.e. The Discovery, Stour Leisure, Environment and Netball Centres. Second, and of critical and strategic importance, are the priority projects that must be achieved to diversify the borough's cultural offer and achieve the cultural vision where creativity, exploration and innovation flourish. Without these projects Ashford's growth will not be sustainable.

The research and consultation undertaken so far has provided a strong steer to help prioritise these key transformational projects pointing up the need to develop a sustainable cultural and event venue within the town centre.

Three concepts underpin the cultural dimensions of growth and need to be employed in building a successful commissioning and delivery programme. These are the transformational, the transitional and the everyday.

Transformational projects bring about positive, accelerated change to the character, reputation, and use or take up of a site or locality. These can be large scale but equally may be relatively modest in size. Whether large or small they will carry impact beyond their direct purpose and will be symbolic of change and success. The modernisation of the Stour Centre and the building of the Discovery Centre are transformational projects.

Transitional is a process of making change from one state to another and is often a necessary part of transformation. It is likely to be temporary and provides opportunities for testing ideas, for learning, for building support and for the experimental. E.g. The creation of a youth forum as a catalyst for youth involvement and empowerment has helped to transform, develop and champion the youth agenda locally.

Everyday are those normal, popular and usual facilities and opportunities associated with a healthy and stimulating cultural life. The library, the football pitch, swimming pool, concerts hall and dance studio etc. The everyday is central to sustainable success, as it is in the quality of everyday life that will make Ashford a distinctive and sought after place to live, work and visit.

The Phase 1 programme of physical build projects is detailed on page ???. The programme of other activities is detailed on page ???. The strategic focus of the physical projects is mainly, but not exclusively, on Town Centre development whilst the activity projects describe largely GADF wide initiatives aimed at developing necessary capacity, expertise, information and mechanisms which will build the foundations for future success.

GADF Phase 1 Culture Projects - Implementation

	Key project	Outcomes		Tasks & Actions	Meeting strategic objectives	Key Partners
1	On going development of leadership and expertise	Provides Leadership and profile Provides development structure and expertise to steer the cultural programme over time. Develops partnership and co-ordinates input from Regional Agencies. Delivers enhanced expertise and capacity for LDV. Provide 'culture proofing' expertise for development plans and supports implementation of GADF Provides point of contact for cultural projects.	Transformational Develops capacity	Appoint Champion to report and account to LDV Board. Invite Regional Cultural Agencies and other partners to participate in Cultural Steering Group Appoint Co-ordinator To identify and develop a range of sustainable financing mechanisms for culture within the broader scope of Ashford's Growth Business Plan.	Supports the development and delivery of all key strategic areas. Communications and Sense of Place strategy for whole GADF area Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life)	ABC SE SEMS EH ACE KCC SEEDA GOSE CSE CABE
2	Independent Public Art and Architecture body for Ashford	Raise the quality of the Ashford's public realm through a concerted and curated process throughout the development plan area and over the whole period of the plan. Transform perceptions of Ashford Brings together expertise in architecture, planning, design and the visual arts. A policy for public art Commissions art works strategically and across the development area + involve local people in the changing nature of their environments Provides resources to support delivery of excellent design throughout the development including information and guidance for developers	Transformational Develops Capacity	Requires feasibility study and testing Funding delivered through mix public and private sector including % for art levy. Research feasibility of establishing endowment. Provide advice and specialist expertise to public sector agencies such including SEEDA, LDV and local authority and provide specialist advice and expertise to private sector investors. Identify programme of priority sites	To deliver a co-ordinated and excellent built and green environment for Ashford. Public realm enhancement. Communications and Sense of Place strategy for whole GADF area Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life) Cultural transformation	SEEDA CABE ACE ABC KCC Corporate sector Developers
3.	Wired Ashford	Encourage leading edge digital and electronic arts research and development, linking digital artists with foremost corporate digital business. Transform perceptions of Ashford Grows the economy	Transformational	Ensure the technology infrastructure is in place to support a wireless Ashford. Inward investment strategy to attract corporate digital sector. Marketing testing and action	Ensure that digital infrastructure is exemplary to support and drive forward growth.	SEEDA
4	Build an enhanced leisure offer for phase 2 and 3.	A plan to provide an enhanced leisure offer for delivery at a later phase in the plan and which meet the needs of growing population.	Everyday	Commission feasibility to investigate need for enhanced leisure offer to meet needs of new and existing communities e.g. dog track, ski slope, velodrome, tennis centre, ice rink, arts centre etc. Financing mechanisms to be considered. Potential developers and sites to be identified in Phase 2 and 3.	Cultural Strategy priority Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life)	ABC SE
5	Build an ambitious an attractive programmes of cultural activities	Transform perceptions of Ashford Contributes to identity and quality of life A year round programme of activity.	Transformational Develops capacity	Develop a pilot programme of events Develop infrastructure and delivery capacity Commission programmers to build a festival programme, develop a high profile outdoor music event and attract programme of major sports events. Develop necessary financing and funding packages including developer contributions	Cultural Strategy Priority Retaining young people Livability Developing Ashford's reputation as a place to visit Diversifying Transforms image of Ashford	ABC East Kent Cultural Consortium KCC ACE SE TSE Private sector Voluntary sector Cultural Practitioners
6	Create a distinctive and connected cultural offer in the urban villages and across Ashford as a whole.	A strategic plan for the dual use of school, community and health buildings to ensure mix of opportunities for a range of sports, arts and leisure activity. A mix of distinctive local facilities which complements town centre provision. Delivery of arts and recreational spaces as part of community halls, health centres, school to meet needs of new and existing communities. Adoption of high quality design in all aspects of the development from the town hall to dustbins and lampposts Artist commissions involving local people in the changing nature of their environments	Everyday	Commission strategic study. Produce detailed cultural plans for each of the urban villages to create a mix of distinctive and attractive living spaces and to improve quality, sustainability and usage of existing facilities Develop necessary financing and funding packages including developer contributions	Civic Domain priority Cultural Strategy Priority Livability KCC dual use priority Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life) Creating a distinctive cultural offer	Developers Sport England ABC ODPM KCC Big Lottery Developers Football Foundation CABE Public art and architecture agents

GADF Phase 1 Culture Projects - Physical

	Key project	Area	Outcomes	Transform, Transition, Everyday	Tasks & Action	Meeting strategic objectives	Key Partner
1	Develop mix of cultural venues	Town Centre	Describes a sustainable venue plan providing for a mix of audiences. Sustainable mix of performance, arts and leisure venues with studios and retail outlets in town centre. To develop and diversify use of Town Centre Develop market for live and electronic music Develop evening economy Creates jobs	Transitional Transformational	Feasibility study to assess and recommend the nature, mix and distribution of cultural venues and creative business space within the redevelopment of the Town Centre Audience Development research Business support grants and review licensing arrangements in town centre	Town Centre as a Transformational project Cultural Strategy Priority Retaining young people Livability Attracting Business Revitalise Town Centre Builds evening economy	SEEDA ABC ACE Developers
2	Discovery Centre	Town Centre	Landmark building, improves townscape and public realm Encourage use of Town Centre Provides access to a range of services and information, including, Tourist Information Centre Library Adult Education Gallery space	Transformational Transitional Everyday	Funding package to be finalised Commission artist to create temporary installations during construction phase which involve local people in the changing nature of their environments	Town Centre as a Transformational project Cultural Strategy priority Supports mixed use of public buildings Revitalises the town centre Provides enhanced culture space Symbol of Ashford's renewal Community Development Confidence building	KCC ODPM Artist in Residence/AC Developers ABC
3	Developmen t of creative industry incubators (linked to Learning Campus)	Town Centre	Supports start up and innovative business in creative industries.	Transitional	Commission feasibility	Supports Growth in key industries Signals Ashford as a good place to do business Retains young people Creates employment Supports small business development	LSC SEEDA LSC KCC Business Link Kent CIBAS
4	Major Public Art Programme (Ashford International Station)	Town Centre	Improve recognition of Ashford Enhance key Gateway site Presents a symbol of Ashford's change	Transformational	Identify potential sites Appoint commissioning body Identify funds – mix public sector and private	Town Centre as a Transformational project Communications and Sense of Place strategy for whole GADF area Improve attractiveness of the town to inward investment Improve connection between town centre and station	SEEDA Developer ACE
5	Offer affordable studios, artists and creative industries	Town Centre	Let redundant workspace to artists and designers on affordable short term lets. Sustains and create jobs	Transitional	test and develop the market for creative industries support start up and innovative business in creative industries	Cultural Strategy Priority Support development of distinctive small business economy Identifies Ashford as a good place to do business	SEEDA Developers CIBAS
6	Enhanceme nt and upgrade of Stour Centre, BMX and Skateboard Park	Town Centre	Provides distinctive contribution to excellent sports, recreation and leisure facilities within walking distance of town centre. Part 1 Stour Centre to includes artist commission to add distinction to the design of entrance and upgrade to leisure	Everyday	First phase of work scheduled for completion summer 2006. Funding and finance package to be identified. Establish independent Leisure Trust to lease and operate premises. ABC will deliver initial upgrade (BMX and Skateboard) and commission study to cost funding for a roof for the facility in stage 3	Cultural Strategy Priority Communications and Sense of Place strategy Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life) Youth Strategy	ABC Developer ACE/ Artist in Residence
7	Cultural and Creative Industries Cluster including Heritage Centre at Klondyke/ New Town Works	Town Centre	Mixed development combining units for making and retailing in creative industries and cultural resource Refurbishment of redundant space Improves town landscape Broadens economic base. Create jobs Create Community Archive /People's History resource, bringing together & celebrating Ashford's past & present (railways, markets, agriculture, Roman/CTRL artifacts) Living histories etc. Supports sense of place	Transformational	Feasibility study required	Cultural Strategy Priority Builds a strong base for small business and attracting more business to locate to Ashford Increases employment growth in key area Encourage Ashford's reputation as a good place to do business Meets ODPM sustainable development criteria	Developer SEEDA ABC SE Tourist Board ACE

	Key project	Area	Outcomes	Transform, Transition, Everyday	Tasks & Action	Meeting strategic objectives	Key Partner
8	Development of Julie Rose Stadium and Watersports Centre of Excellence	Connis brook	Leisure Complex and Watersports Centre at Connisbrook Lake demonstrating best practice for pay and play. Contributes to Ashford's visitor offer.	Transformational	Feasibility study required Funding package to be developed through combination of landsale, PPP/social enterprise.	Cultural Strategy Priority Regional Sports Strategy Regional Tourism Strategy Promotes economic diversity, growth and self sufficiency SEERA Regional Spatial Strategy Visitor attraction	ABC SE TSE
9	National Visitor Attraction, Plants and Food	Willesborough Dykes Wetlands	Identify strong idea and champion to develop a national visitor attraction	Transformational	Feasibility and scoping Market testing Attract developer/ cultural entrepreneur	Building on the theme of the Great Town in the Garden Links to tourism strategy and economic development Attracts visitors Transforms image of Ashford Creates jobs Communications and Sense of Place strategy for whole GADF area	Needs to be developer led KWT KCC ABC
10	Spaces for arts, sports and entertainment	Discovery Park	Outstanding design for 21st century park that meets local needs and attracts international attention Investigates market demand for development of outdoor arts, entertainments, sports venue to meet population growth requirements. Raise the profile of Ashford Enhance public realm	Transformational Everyday	Commission design study Commission feasibility study for entertainment, sports leisure and arts usage.	Build on the theme of the Great Town in the Garden Communications and Sense of Place strategy Transforms image of Ashford Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life)	ABC Regional Cultural Agencies KWT KCC
11	Opportunities for artists and public art	Hospital Extension	Enhance public realm Presents a symbol of Ashford's change Adds to Quality of life	Everyday	Feasibility study and scoping	Transforms image of Ashford Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life)	K&M Strategic Health Authority
12	Local spaces for participation and celebration and rationalise sports pitch provision	All Urban Village areas	Delivery of arts and recreational spaces as part of community halls, health centres, school etc A strategic plan for the dual use of school, community and health buildings and open space to ensure mix of opportunities for a range of sports, arts and leisure activity. Adoption of high quality design in all aspects of the development from the town hall to dustbins and lampposts Artist commissions involving local people in the changing nature of their environments Improve quality, sustainability and usage of existing facilities.	Everyday	Commission strategic study. Test current proposals for sports centre development at North School, Tower School and Norton Knatchpole School, Chilmington Green School. Test range of community and commercial sports facilities at Park Farm Sports Complex, Templar Barracks, Soth Ashford. Develop necessary financing and funding packages including developer contributions Results of Sport England funded Playing Pitch and Football strategy report awaited. Sites such as Spearpoint, Techpro, Cudworth Road/Swan Centre to be considered in the light of findings.	Civic Domain priority Cultural Strategy Priority Livability KCC dual use priority Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life) Creating a distinctive cultural offer	Developers Sport England ABC ODPM KCC Big Lottery Developers Football Foundation CABE Public art and architecture agents
13	Environment Centre	Singleton Community Woodland	New build community & education facility with artist in residences space operating arrangement with BTCV Promotes community involvement and volunteering Artist residencies	Transformational	Designs under commission Developer contributions in place	Cultural Strategy Priority ODPM Sustainability Criteria Supports community development, education and health (Quality of Life)	Developer BTCV ABC
14	Ashford Netball Centre	Christchurch School	Provides new and improved facilities for netball.	Everyday	New Build in process of being commissioned scheduled for completion March 2006.	Cultural Strategy Priority Development of netball league	Christchurch School Netball League SE ABC

9. Leadership, Funding, Implementation and Management

One of culture's greatest strengths is its ability to support the communication and delivery of ideas. A central challenge is to get Ashford noticed, to create a distinctive identity that will differentiate it from its competitors and brand it as a place that is attractive to investment. As Reading, Exeter and Gateshead demonstrate, cultural interventions could significantly change the image and expectations of Ashford and build confidence locally and externally.

The importance of wise and courageous leadership informed by expert and imaginative advice must not be underestimated and is key to success. In addition, whilst culture offers a fundamental driver for change with its capacity to build investor confidence, profile, and local identity, it also requires investment and the realities of financing cultural infrastructure must be addressed as a matter of urgency. At root a much greater synergy is needed across the planning picture which recognises and promotes culture as an essential element of infrastructure planning. None of this will be possible without clear and consistent political support backed by necessary levels of partner investment.

Options and opportunities will need to be considered through

- an infrastructure tariff to ensure that developer contributions are strategic and work harder to support culture. These should focus in the first instance on securing the high profile, transformational initiatives.
- schemes for establishing long-term endowment funds to support work that requires development over the long term or is required to be responsive to local need.
- lottery sources - useful in supporting special projects which meet the distributors' criteria.

In addition Government and other public agencies will need to look hard at adjusting their budgeting and spending over the period of the development in order to support Government's policy priority of building new and sustainable communities in Ashford.

In approaching a project of this scale it is important not to become stuck in the funding constraints of the moment and to move forward positively in the knowledge that different opportunities will present in the future.

The regional and government cultural agencies will continue to work with Ashford's Future and Ashford Borough Council to identify and develop a range of sustainable financing mechanisms for culture in recognition that different types of projects will require different financing methods. It is worth noting that the funding challenge facing cultural infrastructure development does not sit alone but must be considered within the broader scope of Ashford's Future Business Plan and the more detailed work on Economic Development.

The scale of the challenge suggests the need to establish a funding team whose task is to make application to public funding agencies and to build strategic relationships with private sector investors and landowners in order to increase investment in creating a buoyant and attractive town.

Given the base Ashford is starting from, it is essential to build capacity at all levels. Bold and ambitious leading-edge projects which raise Ashford's profile and stimulate confidence, must work hand in glove with capacity building initiatives to grow and strengthen local contributions. The people side of building culture is fundamental to success and the planning and economic agencies must recognise the need to include support through funding and development charges for :

- acquiring, developing, retaining and celebrating the necessary levels of talents, skills and expertise

as well as

- land acquisition
- feasibility studies

DCMS, the regional cultural agencies, SEEDA, English Partnerships and other key partners have demonstrated a strong interest in the development of a distinctive cultural theme within the GADF and will be important delivery partners over the period of the plan. The interest and involvement of a range of public, private and voluntary sector partners will be essential in bringing together the expertise and resources necessary to deliver the vision.

10. Conclusions

This chapter acknowledges critical deficits in the borough's cultural infrastructure. It promotes a bold and exciting vision of future Ashford as an attractive and well-loved regional cultural centre where people choose to live and visit and where businesses choose to locate. It also champions the importance of:

- leadership in promotion and delivery
- political commitment to the cultural agenda
- the necessary levels of investment and other interventions
- methodologies to embed culture in the regeneration and planning processes
- delivery of bold and ambitious leading edge projects which will raise Ashford's profile and stimulate confidence.

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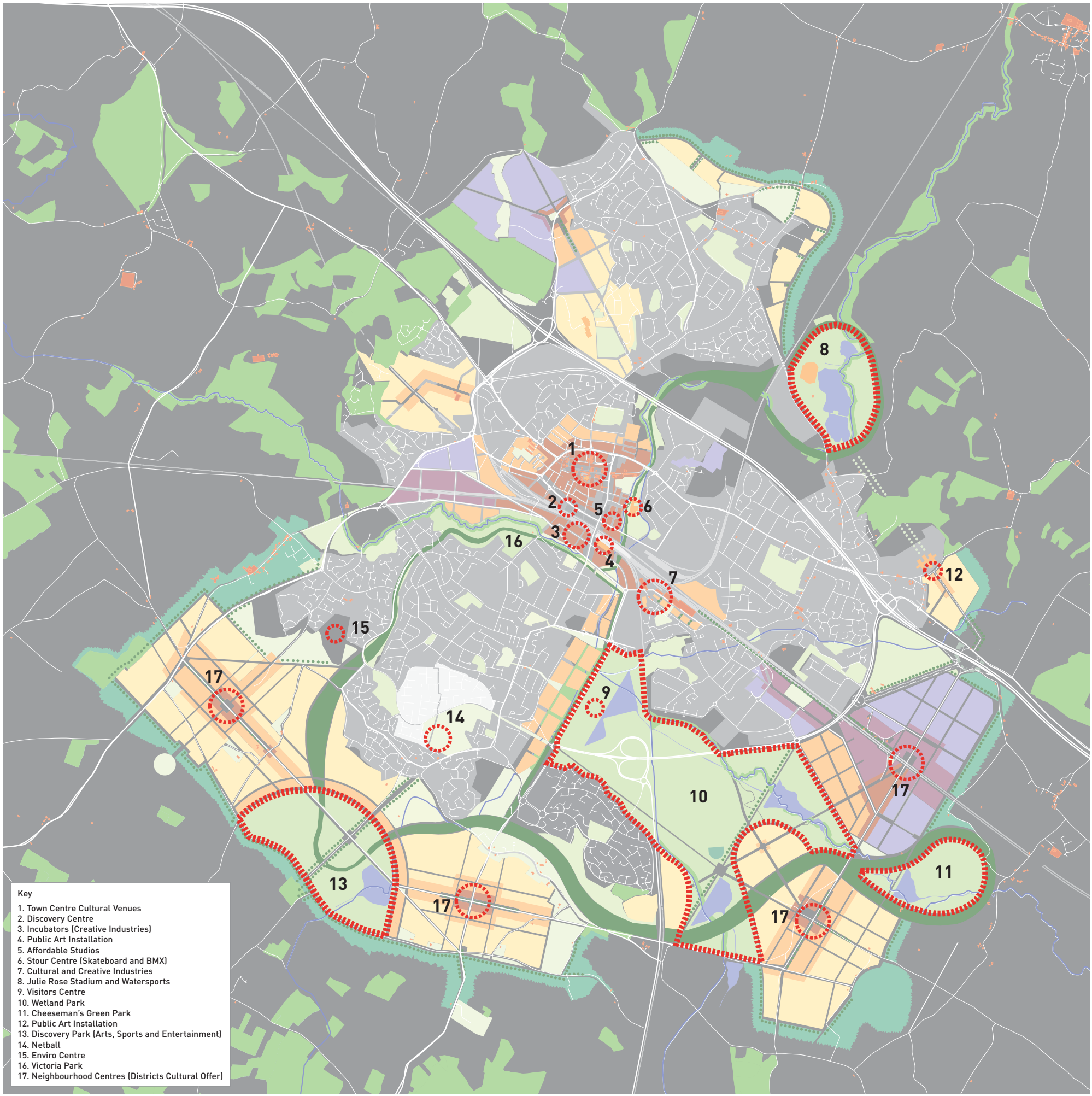


Key Locations for Cultural Resources

The Role of the Voluntary Sector

The full report entitled, 'Social and Community Infrastructure in Ashford – A Voluntary Sector Response', (Bannister.S. Jan 2005) can be sourced from Ashford's Future.

The purpose of the infrastructure template is to provide developers and the community with a firm plan of what social, transport and utility infrastructure will need to be provided in the town centre and new housing areas. This section has been developed following extensive discussions within the Ashford Community Network.

The guiding principle for these schemes is sustainable communities with an emphasis on social and cultural sustainability.

It is the intention to make Ashford a regional leader in voluntary and community sector support and provision. This will be achieved by improving the existing organisations and partnerships, and setting up a range of new social enterprises.

The four community/social elements that we are trying to insert into the first stage are provision for:-

- Indoor community spaces.
- Medium term revenue support for the community buildings.
- Community development workers.
- A contribution to build the capacity of the voluntary sector to offer improved services.

1. Community Spaces

The guiding principle for the early period of the growth of Ashford is 'mend it before we extend it'. For the development areas near the town centre (i.e. strategic, off-site,) there is a need and opportunity to establish and improve the community/cultural/artistic and leisure/sports facilities. These might include performance and exhibition spaces, workshops and outdoor areas. There is also the huge potential offered by the Discovery Centre.

One of the most important aspects of a successful mixed development in the urban villages will be a vibrant community hub. The primary hubs may contain larger community centres, secondary schools, health centres/surgeries, shops, employment units and possibly more. They will be large enough to develop social and economic 'critical mass', and be well connected to the public transport network.

The secondary hubs will be based around smaller roads, cycle-ways, paths and squares, and be readily accessible by pedestrians. There will also be some smaller retail/leisure uses, e.g. pubs and post offices.

The indoor community spaces should be flexible and multi use. There may be a hall for sports or larger gatherings, medium sized areas for meetings, storage, training, catering and clinics. There will be offices for administration and coordination. These facilities may be stand alone, but more likely co-located and shared with schools, libraries, health centres or provision for the elderly. Co-location offers significant opportunities to add value when compared with stand-alone facilities, benefiting from more intense use and economies of scale for management and utilities charges.

The community buildings and their environs must be of high quality design, both in terms of environmental impact and appearance. If it is to perform as a magnet for activity the citizens will want a building of which they are proud. The building will also need to be well related to all forms of private and public transport.

Sources of Capital

There are four principle sources of funding:

1. The on-site investment will probably be funded by way of a Section 106 agreement with the developer.
2. The off-site and larger shared facilities may be funded from the developer contribution standard charge.
3. Some projects may be funded by grants from Central Government or the Borough or County Councils.
4. There may be scope to bid for other grants, e.g. Big Lottery.

Ownership and Management

There are a number of options for the ownership and management of community facilities including:

- Management by Ashford Borough Council. Direct management by the Council is unlikely but could be undertaken by a trading arm, e.g. a trust.
- A housing association managing the facility as well as their housing stock. Associations so far consulted would be unwilling to manage facilities for more than a few years, so a long-term solution will need to be sought.
- Direct management by the private sector.
- Ownership and management by a social enterprise - the Ashford Community Enterprise (ACE).

The Ashford Community Enterprise would have a number of 'arms' and the property section would fulfil these functions:

- To implement and monitor the smaller scale elements of the Community Infrastructure Template with regard to the provision outlined in this paper.
- Take over the management of the community consultation process on the design/ placing/ mix of facilities.
- On completion of a new facility the ownership is transferred to the Ashford Community Enterprise, (ACE). A Service Level Agreement (or similar) would be agreed with the partners to cover the management and maintenance. (If, at a later date, the community developed the capacity they could take over the management themselves.)

(These agreements will rely on the statutory partners and developers having a high level of confidence that the Enterprise has a robust financial strategy and the qualified staff to carry out these functions in the long term.)

A robust business plan for each facility will be prepared that will ensure that it does not require long-term, ongoing subsidy from public funds. However it will be some years before financial sustainability is attained. It is proposed that each facility be endowed with a sum that will provide funds during this deficit period, to pay for caretaker, cleaners etc.

2. Community Development

Moving house, starting in a new job or school, getting to know a new area, parting from family and old friends, making new friends etc. is, without doubt, one of the most stressful periods in a person's life. During this period they are likely to need extra support if they are not to feel isolated and vulnerable. While communities tend to gradually gain cohesion over extended time periods, the issue of how to establish new communities on Greenfield sites is a major concern. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 'Sustainable Communities Strategy' and the Ashford Borough Council's plans both recognise the importance of creating cohesive communities. During this difficult period it is very important that the development of community spirit and social inclusion is accelerated.

i) Community development officer

He/she should be in place at the start of the estates occupation. They should develop a range of formal and informal initiatives which might include:

- Welcome pack – to include resources on education, health (including doctors), public transport, maps, leisure and cultural facilities and sources of advice and support from the voluntary sector. Any special needs e.g. disablement, could be addressed.
- 'Mutuality Compact.' Well-established communities have an informal support system for those suffering from family/health/employment problems. It is suggested that new occupiers be encouraged to enter into a mutuality compact whereby they agree to ask for and give support when needed.
- Small projects fund – this fund would be relatively easy to access by individuals and fledgling groups to improve leisure/care provision and funds to facilitate community consultation.

ii) Specialist community development officers

He/she would support the development of specialist provision by encouraging partnerships and assisting new organisations with business planning, governance, marketing, special events, etc. This might include:

- Pre-school provision
- Community safety e.g. Neighbourhood Watch
- Youth provision
- Special needs provision e.g. physical disability, mental health problems etc.
- Organising sports/cultural events – community art, carnivals etc.
- Developing community spaces – gardens, playgrounds, etc.

It is important that there are enough community workers to make a real difference. If their efforts are spread too thinly they will not be effective.

It is envisaged that new housing provision would need support for two years on a full time basis and then diminishing during the third year. Each worker would be expected to support approximately 1000 three bedroom homes, or equivalent.

3. Contribution for Capacity Building in the Voluntary Sector

The voluntary and community sector comprises hundreds of knowledgeable, energetic and enthusiastic groups. They provide a huge range of services for the urban and rural areas. There are playgroups for the very young, countless activity groups for school age children and many youth groups rely on volunteers. There are dozens of groups who help the aged, and those with health problems and disabilities. Many other groups offer support, counselling and advice, and still more run the hundreds of sports, leisure and arts clubs. The sector is a significant employer and the volunteers derive considerable self esteem from their socially vital activities. The statutory sector values their contribution, especially in assisting those 'hard-to-reach' and socially excluded groups. They are seen as innovative and can often offer sound advice on how to join up services and projects.

Over recent decades the number of voluntary groups in Ashford Borough and nationally has grown rapidly. The sources and amounts of grant funding have risen but are inadequate to deliver the services that the communities and Government expect. A detailed justification, with costs and outputs will need to be prepared. This will include an analysis of gaps in the breadth of provision and unmet need as well as the issues connected with the additional service requirements of the new households.The Ashford Community Network 'Community and Voluntary Sector Development Plan' identifies a range of costed initiatives that will build the capacity of the organisations to offer a comprehensive and accessible range of services to the existing and new communities in Ashford and the surrounding area. The statutory agencies all see benefits and challenges in co-locating with other service providers, including the voluntary sector. There will be opportunities for economies of scale and organisational synergy as new provision is developed.

Provision

The existing Council for Voluntary Service and the Volunteer Bureau will work alongside the new social enterprise (Ashford Community Enterprise). It will have a Social Enterprise and Voluntary Sector Business Support Unit, that will have the following functions to assist the improvements in infrastructure and service delivery:

- Strategic and business planning consultancy.
- ICT support unit
- HR and volunteering support
- Procurement, marketing and promotion
- Printing and publishing
- Legal/accountancy advice.
- Research, mapping and gap identification.

Initially the Unit will be wholly grant funded but will gradually move towards sustainability by charging for its services and receiving monies from the profit generating sections of the enterprise. It is anticipated that it will firstly operate in Ashford Borough, and then widen its service area. One of the objectives is to create a Social Enterprise Zone. The voluntary sector in Ashford is committed to achieving more financially sustainable methods of operation. These will include charging for services, and entering formal agreements with partners that are based on 'full cost recovery'. There will, however, be an ongoing need for funds to enable the voluntary sector to build its capacity to deliver services to the growing population. The Government is planning to increase its funding to implement the 'Change Up' agenda, but there will be a substantial shortfall in Ashford.

07.6 NEIGHBOURHOOD

Background

As the Plan develops key areas for a range of housing types have emerged. The types have developed in response to different areas or character zones including:

- the Town Centre,
- the Living Quarters,
- the mixed-use neighbourhoods, and
- regeneration of existing areas such as Stanhope and Bybrook.

The character zones and housing types also respond to:

i) Key elements of structure:

where higher densities tend to locate alongside key routes and streets, and lower densities tend to relate to primary green edges.

ii) The existing hybrid context:

which consists of an existing town centre and a town that extends some 3 kilometres out from the centre to the rural hinterland.

The qualities of these 'character zones' are outlined in Chapters 05 and 06 in this report. They are developed in greater detail in the Design Codes Document.

1. Design Requirements for Residential Neighbourhoods

The requirements for new housing development for both the affordable and market sectors are developed in the GADF masterplan and through the reference to the wide range of issues of housing design quality.

The recommendations set out below emerged from the RSL meetings and therefore start to establish a consensual view of housing requirements over the period of the Development Framework. The recommendations now require testing against deliverability criteria and are set in the light of other planning and design objectives – notably sustainability criteria. The Core Delivery Team is asked to review the recommendations and instruct on agreed requirements.

Final decisions on affordable provision levels cannot be made until a Housing Needs Survey is complete next year (2005). This is an essential piece of base evidence needed to support GADF and should include reference to wider context of housing market demand across all sectors.

Suitable mechanisms must be agreed to monitor and possibly revise affordable provision requirements during the life of the Development Framework.

The GADF plan identifies a series of areas for new residential neighbourhoods. The distinctive character of each area provides for a wide choice of housing type, size and development density. In addition, the GADF plan sets out the key areas of housing growth and identifies two areas of remedial housing regeneration (Stanhope Estate and Bockhanger/Bybrook).

The objective of creating sustainable neighbourhoods must include the following:

- Provision of a range of market opportunities including a range of distinctive places each with its own identity and phased implementation.
- Agreement on clear sustainability targets including building and environmental performance.
- Allow scope and encouragement for creativity and innovation in design, planning, delivery and management.

The following notes are set out to cover general requirements applicable to all residential development, followed by specific requirements for affordable housing. The notes identify key decisions required from the Delivery Team.

2. Design Requirements for all Homes

Choice and diversity

The GADF envisages creating a diverse range of housing opportunities by creating distinctive character areas.This approach, coupled with a phased programme for delivery is required to ensure a wide choice of available housing types and settings to meet all needs. This choice should include appropriate accommodation to meet different sizes of households including redressing the current under-provision for smaller households, a range of tenures and special provision for the elderly and those with mobility or other special needs.

Artist Impression of Chilmington Green Neighbourhood showing Discovery Park in the foreground

Meeting Sustainability Targets

Energy Standards

Eco homes 'excellent' should be benchmark for all homes including affordable.

The following measures should be encouraged:

- Water use reduction – Twin Flush System
- Insulation
- Cycle Storage
- Garden shed required

Wastewater recycling should also be encouraged but potential maintenance problems will require an effective management regime coupled with supportive residents/tenants for successful implementation.

The following measures should also be considered:

- Conservatories / winter gardens.
- Green roofs should be encouraged especially outside the town centre as part of a strategy to manage water more effectively.
- Renewable energy: 10% of energy use in new development over 10 homes should be produced from renewable sources
- Construction materials should increasingly be sourced from recycling and local areas.
- Sustainable sources of timber and non-polluting materials that can easily be recycled at the end of their life
- Refuse – Ashford Council provide separate collections but currently not up to Eco-Homes standard although this may be improved. Waste recycling measures should include:
- 'Blue Box System' for paper, tin and glass
- Porch location for bin storage with cycle store.
- Can crusher
- Energy serving and energy conservation measures should be encouraged to NHER 9 or 10 rating including measures such as combined Heat and Power (CHP). Extra funding may be available to RSLs.
- Building systems that utilise and train local labour

The requirements recommended above will form part of the core LDF Strategy and will be adopted by the council(s) and delivery partners over the next 5 years.

Creativity and Innovation

Ashford has set itself the challenge of raising standards of design and building performance. This will require innovative approaches, which at times may require an element of experimentation but in all cases, innovative architecture should respect the underlying principles of good urban form identified elsewhere. A willingness to innovate can help place Ashford as an exemplar for good practice. Innovation and creativity can be fostered through:

- A wide range of developers including smaller developer organisations with specialist or innovative approaches and self-build and other one-off developments.
- Establishing Quality Benchmarks including:
  - Design codes
  - Development briefs
  - 'Enquiry by Design' approach
  - Design competitions for key sites and spaces
  - Pilot projects to test new ideas.
  - The adoption of a Building for Life standard for all new development
  - Major new development to be subject to design quality review process by CABE and / or Kent Architecture Centre
  - Adoption of MMC where appropriate
- Management – Developers will be required to set up maintenance arrangements and these should include maintenance of affordable housing. Service charges should be set with regard to safeguarding the affordability of housing.

General Design Requirements

Parking

- Avoid large parking courts. Small car parking courts 10-15 cars with surveillance are recommended.
- Parking should be based on a mix of on-street and on-plot provision.
- On-street parking should be integrated with street design/public realm standards including street-trees, footway build-outs, pedestrian crossings, footways and crossovers.
- Allocated parking spaces may be required outside town centre.
- Basement provision only used in town centre, to be gated and naturally ventilated.

Cycle Storage

Bicycle stores should be required for blocks of flats: one locker per unit, and all work places.

Workforce

Local sourced labour to be measured and labour and training schemes promoted.

Utilities

In order to promote good visual appearance of the public face of new or refurbished housing, discrete, external locations should be provided for gas meters etc.

Private open spaces

- All homes must be provided with private external space
- Ground Floor units should have private gardens even when communal space is also provided.
- Houses and flats should be provided with discrete, external space for clothes drying preferably not on front of building.

Mobility Standard and Lifetime Homes properties

50% proportion of lifetime homes across whole development (market and affordable). Requirements for affordable provision are set out in Housing Corporation Publication. 10% of affordable to meet full requirements.

Allow flexibility for needs of all types of tenants e.g. shared ownership for elderly.

Disability/mobility provision should cover:

- Full provision of recommendations e.g. Kitchen Units.
- For wheelchair users (i.e. more than mobility standard)
- Wheelchair Storage / recycling covered car parts
- Disabled parking bays and location (covered)
- Mobility units should be ground floor garden flats with private open space; mobility units should ideally be on one level.

Mobility requirements will have cost/viability implications and therefore requirements in excess of statutory standards should be assessed as part of overall viability.

3. Affordable Housing Requirements

Affordable Housing Provision

Subject to review on completion of the Housing Needs Survey (see above), the following affordable housing requirements are anticipated:

- Provision level up to 30% Affordable Housing (except where subject to site development brief).
- All areas of Ashford have need for quality affordable development including areas of existing high concentration (e.g. Stanhope).
- Setting localised affordable provision levels potentially risks arguments over boundaries and a preferred approach is to establish Development Briefs for sites with specific requirements.
- Possible localised guidance required for mix of unit size/ key worker housing within affordable proportion.
- Affordable housing requirements to be reviewed every 2-3 years.

Integration of Affordable Housing provision

Management/maintenance requirements suggest optimum cluster size 5-10 units for houses. Maximum cluster size of 25 units could be considered for flats. Cluster should be suitably dispersed by market housing – say by an equal number of units or an equal length of street frontage.

Difficulties of integrating affordable provision.

- Maintenance
- RSL-led development
- What happens if developer goes bust

The threshold size of development at which an affordable housing component is required:

- 10 Units threshold for houses
- 15 Units threshold for flats

Affordable provision should be related to other benefits such that where a development is not required to provide affordable housing, then a higher infrastructure tariff could be imposed. The Delivery Team will need to advise on requirements.

Design

- Street elevations of affordable housing must be indistinguishable from the appearance of market housing.
- The Housing Corporation Scheme Design Standards (SDS) covers most design criteria for affordable housing developments.
- Layouts should avoid unsecured rear access to properties and buffer strips to adjacent development.
- Apply Secure by Design principles generally.

Mixed-use development

Mixed-use development is encouraged for both market and affordable housing. Design of affordable housing as part of mixed-use development should pay regard to:

- Integration rules
- Housing mix and type
- Use of Housing Corporation Scheme Design Standards

Modern methods of construction (MMC)

In line with current Government requirements, a minimum of 50% of government-subsidised housing should be MMC.

Consultees

Consultation involved representatives from the following organisations:

- Ashford Borough Council (Housing)
- Ashford's Future
- Southern Housing Group
- Places for People
- Downland Housing Association
- London & Quadrant Housing Trust
- Tower Homes
- English Rural Housing Association
- West Kent Housing Association
- Amicus
- Moat Housing
- Downland Affinity
- Hyde Housing Association
- Housing Corporation

08 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Phasing will be one of the most important aspects of delivering the quality and form of development that is enshrined within the Greater Ashford Development Framework. The viability of both public and private services that will be required to support the housing and jobs will be dependent upon land being released in a phased and logical way.

The phasing strategy explained within this section is based on the principles that underpin the masterplan as well as an understanding of the physical and economic constraints that will affect delivery.

Three primary phasing periods have been established to explore the phased delivery of the Plan. The phases are divided into three ten-year periods.

These include:

- Phase 1: 2001 – 2011
- Phase 2: 2011 – 2021
- Phase 3: 2021 – 2031

The figures generated in each table are indicative – they reflect the proposed distribution of houses and jobs over a 30-year period.

Implementation of GADF will require the delivery of a wide range of infrastructure projects and programmes, some of which are mentioned in this Final Masterplan Report. However, this report does not, and cannot at this stage, present a detailed and definitive list of such infrastructure needs. Ashford's Future will use this Framework, LDF policies which flow out of it, and other policy development work, to produce a Delivery Plan which outlines a more complete programme of infrastructure projects and investment needs. It is intended that this Delivery Plan will identify likely sources of funding, including where Developers are expected to make contributions to both site specific and more strategic infrastructure. It is intended that as far as possible a Strategic Tariff approach will be taken.

08.1 PHASE 1: 2001-2011

Core Objectives

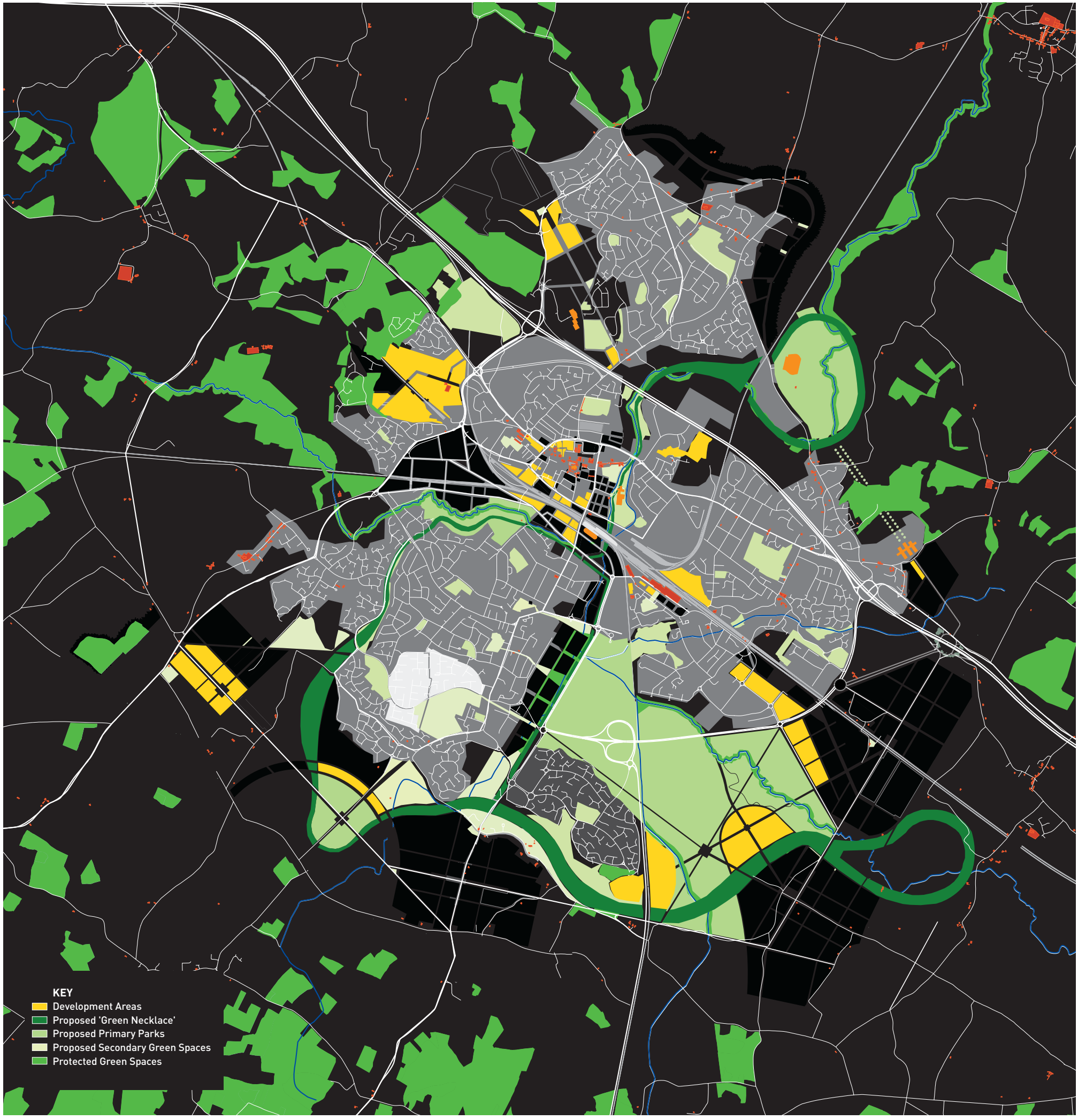
- The requirements to "mend it before you extend it" and the need for a step change for Ashford translates to the requirement to focus efforts on the Town Centre to make a step change for the town and its economy.
- Although primary focus is on brownfield sites, the market will require a range of development opportunities including the Town Centre, out of town sites as well as mixed-use neighbourhoods.
- Easy wins sites that will release development without substantial infrastructure investments such as Bockhanger Wood and intensification of Eureka represent good development opportunities.
- The expansion of the role of Julie Rose as a sporting resource of regional significance and a local resource in the north of Ashford needs to be taken forward.
- Existing committed areas such as Ashford Barracks and part of Cheesman's Green are important, although these areas should also respond to the broader vision of GADF.
- Development to the south could be initiated through public investment in Discovery Park that provides a distinctive environment for public resources, leisure and recreation and housing. Chilmington Green is also comparatively easy to start with as it is connected largely through existing movement networks. The early definition of long term development boundaries, urban edges and major parks provides long term certainty to the local community and new residents.
- The natural resources and landscape heritage need to be promoted. Aside from the major interventions at the Julie Rose and Discovery Park the primary green corridor that mostly exist in parts needs to be strengthened.

Constraints

- The infrastructure constraints effect building rates and housing growth is also linked to job growth
- The current role of the Town Centre is constrained by the Ring Road. Core infrastructure work to redress the nature of this Road needs to occur.
- Development to the south-east is constrained by the delivery of Junction 10A which will only occur by 2011/2012. This has particular implications for the early growth of Newtown, Cheesman's Green, Orbital Park, Waterbrook, Newtown and Sevington. This has led to the balancing of development along the complete Newtown/Victoria Way Corridor between Chilmington Green and Waterbrook/

Phase 1: 2001-2011 Schedule of Units/Jobs

Development Areas	Description	Units	Jobs
Completed Areas			
Park Farm, Singleton, etc	Built housing 2001-05 (estimate)	**3,270**	**2,000**
Allocated Areas			
Singleton	Part implemented	595	0
Brisley Farm	Part implemented	75	0
Park Farm Extension	Allocated but not yet implemented	780	0
Cheeseman's Green	Allocated but not yet implemented	700	0
Ashford Barracks	Allocated but not yet implemented	1100	200
Orbital Park/Henwood	Industrial and business relocation	0	600
		3,250	**800**
Town Centre			
Town Centre	New town centre living	**1,000**	**3,000**
Town Centre Periphery			
Chart Estate/ Victoria Crescent	Intensification, mixed-use development	0	0
Cobbs Wood	Intensification, mixed-use development	0	0
New Town Works	New mixed-use, medium density	200	100
Hunter Avenue	New mixed-use, medium density	150	0
		350	**100**
New Districts			
Canal District (existing area)	Intensification, infill and regeneration	0	0
Canal District (new reduced area)	New mixed-use, medium density	0	0
Waterbrook	Mixed use, medium-density	300	200
Bockhanger Wood	Intensification, infill and regeneration	200	500
		500	**700**
Urban Neighbourhoods			
Chilmington Green	New mixed-use neighbourhood	500	100
Kingsnorth	New mixed-use neighbourhood	0	0
Cheeseman's Green Extension	New mixed-use neighbourhood	0	0
		500	**100**
Urban Extensions			
Kennington	Infill along relief roads	0	0
William Harvey Area	Small scale infill	0	200
Discovery Park	Medium density forming edge to Park	200	0
		200	**200**
Out of Town Estates			
Orbital Park North	Commercial and business intensification	0	100
Sevington	Commercial and business uses	0	0
		0	**100**
	TOTAL UNITS/JOBS	9,070	7,000



Phase 1: 2001-2011 The Development of Areas (Indicated in yellow)

Transport and Services Infrastructure

Transport and services infrastructure will be a significant proportion of the overall costs of growth in Ashford. Option 6 aims, as far as possible, to make efficient use of the town's considerable existing transport infrastructure. However, upgraded and new transport and services infrastructure is still necessary to cater for the planned expansion of the town.

The key objective of phasing this infrastructure is to provide access to new growth areas whilst spreading major costs over the full growth period, so that costs and revenues can be balanced as far as possible.

Phase 1: Transport and Services Infrastructure

1A – Junction 9 Improvements (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

The scheme comprises signalisation of the existing roundabout beneath the M20 together with improved cycle facilities.

This is an existing roundabout that is likely to become more congested as the committed development at the Barracks progresses and the proposed development at Eureka, Bockhanger and Bybrook comes on line.

1B – Junction 10 Improvements (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises widening of roundabout arms, widening of Hythe Road, use of footways on the structure to add an additional lane to the circulatory carriageway and construction of a new bridge to provide pedestrian and cyclist facilities. The scheme facilitates growth in traffic arising from new development permitted under current Local Plan allocations.

1C – Victoria Way (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This comprises the creation of the missing link between the western end of Victoria Road and the western end of Leacon Road. Improvements to the Leacon Road/Brookfield junction and the Matalan Roundbout will also be required. The eastern most part of the link road will provide access to a proposed multi-storey car park south of the railway lines and adjacent to the Learning Link.

This scheme is an integral and vital part of proposals for achieving a step change in the character of the town centre in that it will remove some of the through traffic from the ring road and allow the Civic Cross scheme (1I) to be taken forward.

1D – Orchard Crescent (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

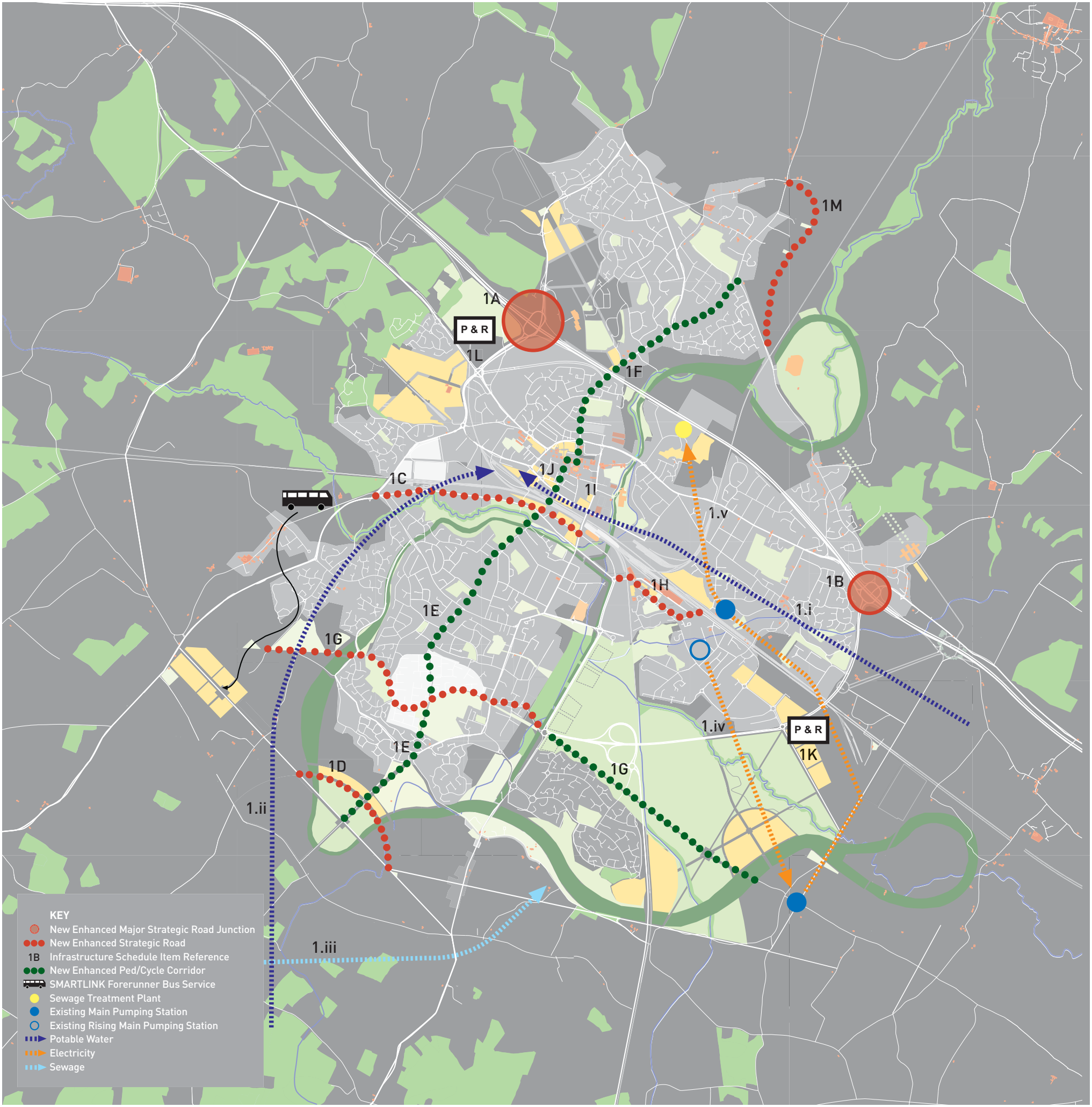
This scheme comprises the construction of a new local road fronting Discovery Park with a new junction on Long Length. This scheme is required to provide access to new development fronting Discovery Park and as such only needs to be provided once this development comes on line.

1E – Learning Link Corridor (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a package of pedestrian and cyclist improvements with some minor highways work. The link will improve public transport accessibility to Stanhope and allow for extension of bus services to the southern growth areas. The scheme is not directly linked to the delivery of specific areas of new housing but does have benefits for the regeneration and vitality of the Stanhope area.

1F – A28 Kennington/Bybrook Corridor(TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a package of pedestrian, cycle and bus improvements. The scheme comprises the construction of two new bridges alongside the existing motorway bridge to carry pedestrians. This will allow the carriageway to be widened to carry cycle lanes in both directions. Road alterations to the A28 Canterbury Road will allow extension of the existing bus lane by 300m with alterations to three traffic signal controlled junctions facilitating bus prirority. Road alterations to Faversham Road and Simone Weil Avenue will create new bus lanes.



Phase 1: Key Infrastructure

1G – Roman Way Corridor (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

The section of the Roman Way Corridor east of Romney Marsh Road comprises a cycle and pedestrian route only. The section to the west of Romney Marsh Road comprises construction of new link roads and improvements to existing sections of road. This section is important in providing an easterly access to the new development area at Chilmington Green.

1H – New Town Way Corridor (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises improvements to the road bridge (increased headroom) beneath the Hastings railway line and the creation of a signal controlled junction with Romney Marsh Road. This scheme is the first stage in the creation of the New Town way corridor along which SmartLink will run. This scheme will slightly improve the access between the Orbital Park North and Newtown works housing area and the town centre.

1I – Civic Cross (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises conversion of the ring road from one way to two way operation along with improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities. This scheme is important in changing the character of the ring road and in promoting significant mixed use development along this street. This scheme is important in signalling to the development market a change in the image and perception of Ashford.

The scheme may require some land take on the southern edge of Elwick Road.

It is likely that design and construction could be completed within a 5 year period.

1J – Town Centre Bus Hub and Bank Street Public Realm Works (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises improvements to the bus facilities in Bank Street and improvements to Bank Street from the High Street to Elwick Road and the Discovery Centre. This scheme forms an extension to the Learning Link and is important in integrating the historic core of the town centre with the expanding area around the County Square extension and the Discovery Centre.

1K & 1L – Park and Ride (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This comprises the establishment of initial park and ride services at both the Warren and Waterbrook. Five hundred spaces would be provided at each site. The schemes would require some bus priority measures. These schemes are important in starting to encourage a modal shift towards the use of buses.

1M – Kennington Circle East (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises the creation of a new link road between the Canterbury Road and the Willesborough Road. The scheme will contribute to relieving congestion on the Canterbury Road and provide access to new housing at Kennington. This scheme will be provided alongside construction of the new housing.

1i - Electricity

A new underground 133kV electrical cable from Sellinge is proposed to run to the existing transformer adjacent to Victoria Park. This cable needs to be installed at the start of Phase 1 to reinforce the existing Ashford grid. The route of the cable has yet to be determined. The cable will have to cross the CTRL and requires a maintenance easement width of 8m along its entire length.

1ii – Electricity

The existing overhead 133kV electrical cable feeding Ashford from the south east will need to be run underground wherever it passes over areas of development. Therefore approximately six kilometres of the existing overhead cable from the transformer and running south will need to be run underground in Phase 1 to prevent conflict with future phases. A maintenance easement width of 8m is required along its entire length.

1iii – Potable Water

A new water main from Bewl, in the south, needs to be run to the reservoir at Kingsnorth to sustain the water supply to Ashford through to 2020. The route for the main needs to be finalised but currently appears to bypass any of the Phase 1 works.

1iv - Drainage

New pumping stations and rising mains need to be constructed between Cheeseman's Green, Alsops Road and the treatment works at Bybrook. These enhancements are needed in Phase 1 to relieve the existing network and allow development to proceed. The route for the rising mains has yet to be determined although they will have to cross the East Stour and the CTRL.

Gas

There are no known major reinforcement works required for the Ashford gas supply network to accommodate the proposed expansion of Ashford. The only reinforcement necessary will be at a local level when development starts.

Phase 1: Workplace and Urban Core

Economic Prospects

In the short term, the economic prospects for Ashford are going to be shaped by the 'early win' opportunities that are coming forward through the development of key areas within the GADF area and the skills and knowledge base of the town's resident population.

The Economic Vision for Ashford produced by Ernst & Young identified the need to develop the employment base within the town through a series of actions and opportunities focusing on greater local access to education, especially FE/HE, encouraging 'bottom-up' embryonic new business start-ups, retaining and developing existing businesses and seeking to attract more 'top down' inward investment.

In the short term period up to 2011 we would anticipate employment to be generated as follows:

Town Centre

- Employment within retail, leisure, community and educational uses generated from key projects to be brought forward within the town centre;
- Potential to develop employment within B1 employment uses for small/start-up businesses within sectors such as ICT, business and professional services, creative industries etc. within the town centre.

Living Quarter

- Some employment opportunities within local shops and services and creative industries, as well as employment uses from selective redevelopment/intensification of older industrial estates such as Cobbs Wood and Chart Estate.

Northern Area

- Employment in health from extension to William Harvey Hospital;
- Employment in B uses in adjacent locations to the Hospital for commercial development.

Urban Villages

- Employment within retail, educational, health, community and professional services provided within the neighbourhood centres to be constructed.

Out-of-Town Industrial/Business Parks

- Employment within B1, B2 and B8 uses from additional expansion of predominantly local firms at Orbital Park, including relocations from older industrial areas within the town, such as Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate;
- Potential employment within B1, B2 and B8 uses at Sevington/Waterbrook for principally industrial and storage or distribution uses as a natural extension to Orbital Park to accommodate relocations and expansions;
- Potential employment within predominantly B1a offices and B1b research and development uses at Eureka Science and Business Park.

There are a number of barriers/constraints to bringing the number and types of jobs proposed to be created. The key barriers/constraints are as follows:

Property Market - DTZ and others (JLL and Roger Tym & Partners) have identified the constraints of Ashford's position within the Kent and regional commercial property market especially for attracting major office and R&D occupiers. The principal constraints on demand include the location of Ashford in east Kent, which is perceived by the market as a weaker business location in comparison to the west/north Kent market that includes locations such as Kings Hill, Dartford, Chatham Maritime and Ebbsfleet. At present there are no compelling USPs to attract occupiers to Ashford over the aforementioned locations in terms of accessibility, quality of the product, or quality of the labour market. Proposals in the development pipeline for additional commercial office development in the form of high quality business parks in west/north Kent will increase the competition for prospective occupiers, and therefore it is vital that Ashford puts in place a number of mechanisms now to create a 'step change' in the market in future years to develop the business base and compete sub-regionally and regionally for inward investment. One of the key drawbacks identified by local partners in competing with other locations in Kent is the lack of tangible product in the form of new offices to promote to prospective occupiers.

Labour Market – The Ernst & Young Economic Vision for the town identifies the key issues in regards to the existing labour market. These issues include the lower proportion of 16-24 year olds, the low skills of the current Ashford workforce, and low levels of educational attainment, including low literacy and numeracy skills. It is vital that Ashford starts to develop the knowledge base of the town, as future economic growth nationally will be driven by key sector such as ICT, business services, creative industries and specialist sectors such as advanced engineering, biotechnology and environmental technology which require both technical and professional expertise. Having the ability to offer an available pool of skilled workers is likely to be a core requirement for any prospective inward investor. In addition, a well-developed education and training base to include HE/FE has the potential to create spin-out entrepreneurial opportunities that can play an important part in developing the small business base (and the commercial property market) in the town.

Infrastructure – There are key infrastructure constraints that may impact on the timing and delivery of development over the GADF period. In particular, the planning obligation for developers to contribute towards the funding of the new Junction 10A may prevent development of employment uses at Sevington/Waterbrook and other locations (within the designated 5-minute drive time from the Junction) until after 2011. Highway Agency restrictions on road capacity may also limit development around Junction 10A up to 2011. The introduction of domestic train services to London along the CTRL route by 2009 should help to swell the resident population, particularly residents living in the town centre in the short term, which will help to support and sustain new retail and leisure businesses. However, both DTZ and JLL highlight that the CTRL route itself may not lead to any major inward investment into the town centre. The development of state-of-the-art connectivity across Ashford should be an essential part of the infrastructure strategy to enable small businesses to access high bandwidth in a variety of business locations, from the town centre to the urban villages.

Financial Viability – Related to the property market dynamics there are viability issues due to costs of site development and risks associated with developing commercial and industrial space for predominantly local firms, especially in regards to brownfield redevelopment in and around the town centre. The funding resources available to the public sector are key to assembling and preparing sites for the market and enabling new space to come forward in the short and medium term.

Key Projects

A number of projects have been identified to enable economic development across the GADF area to take place. These projects are set out in the projects and present the key actions and tasks required to implement the projects, together with the potential outcomes and delivery of strategic economic objectives and sustainability targets. In each case, the key partners to deliver each project are identified.

Within the list of short term projects there are six projects that have been identified as early 'transformational' projects i.e. those projects that are likely to have the greatest impact on the business and employment development of the town.

The six early 'Transformational' Projects are:

1. The Learning Campus (town centre);
2. Discovery Centre (town centre);
3. Station Plaza (town centre)
4. South Kent College Site (town centre);
5. Eureka Science and Business park (out-of-town);
6. Communications and Place Marketing Strategy (for whole GADF area).

The Learning Campus

The Learning Campus is viewed as an essential component of the town's socio-economic development over the GADF period up to 2031. The planning and construction of the FE/HE Learning Campus in the short term is required to put in place the vocational and non-vocational educational and training courses and programmes to ensure that the town can retain and develop its young people, as well as up-skilling existing local residents.

The development of partnerships and formal linkages to a University and other centres of excellence for teaching and R&D as specified in the Economic Vision, such as the land based economy at Wye, the science, technical and medical expertise at University of Kent and business and science and health at Canterbury Christ Church College, together with other centres of excellence in the region should be an important function of The Learning Campus. This could enable a wider choice of courses (e.g. through distance learning) to be offered to residents, as well as providing help and support to potential entrepreneurs through specialist incubation space located at Ashford.

The linkages with other Universities in the sub-region and wider region would help to strengthen access to learning and training throughout east Kent.

Discovery Centre

The Discovery Centre is designed to be a new-breed of library and information centre for the residents of Ashford and is likely to offer both library books/journals and on-line internet access, as well as exhibition space and opportunities for adult education courses.

The Discovery Centre will be implemented by Kent County Council and other partners and is a key community facility with opportunities to cluster more commercial activities around it to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre during the day and at night.

There may be an opportunity to accommodate some commercial office space within the building to help subsidise the costs of development.

The design of the Discovery Centre will also act as a symbol of the regeneration of Ashford and help to build confidence in the development market.

Station Plaza

The area around the domestic station in Ashford is viewed as a key gateway site for tourist, shopper and business visitors to the town and for potential investors. The redevelopment of the existing station buildings and forecourt in preparation for the 2009 CTRL domestic services to St Pancras would enhance the visual appearance of the Station, improve the on-site passenger facilities and act as an early symbol of Ashford's regeneration. Environmental improvements to the accessibility and public realm around International House and the Station entrance will help to create a better sense of place.

Work is required in the next couple of years (led by SEEDA and Network Rail) to formulate a suitable scheme that maximises private sector investment and redesigns the vehicle and passenger access arrangements to enhance linkages to key parts of the town centre. The proposed plans and timing for the town centre ring road improvements need to be taken into consideration in the design of Station Plaza.

The Station Plaza project also includes the high quality managed workspace scheme (to be implemented in the immediate short term) within International House. This will enhance the town centre's appeal as a business location.

South Kent College Site

The South College Site at the junction of Station Road and Elwick Road offers an early win new mixed-use scheme that can be brought to the market by the public sector to deliver residential, retail, leisure (hotel) and new office space.

Our market review of the town centre (as part of the ATCDF) identifies the risks associated for developers in building out new office schemes predominantly for local small occupiers seeking flexible lease terms. The opportunities to attract major occupiers appear to be slim in the short term, although the choice of available second hand stock within the town centre is limited to a few large buildings. The delivery of office stock through a mixed-used scheme to provide small self-contained, serviced offices or larger floorplates for a potential larger occupier appears to be the most suitable mechanism in the short term, as the residential and retail components would help to offset the weaker returns anticipated from the offices.

Ashford has experienced considerable growth in the stock of businesses between 1994-2003 of some 20%, which is higher than the rate for Kent (15%) and for the UK (11.5%). This indicates potential demand from new and growing businesses within the town.

Eureka Science and Business Park

To date, development at Eureka Park has been very slow due in part due to the existing planning permission (B1b research and development only) and the lack of a tangible product to market to prospective inward investors. Eureka has the potential to become a major business park of regional significance in future years, with potential to develop in approximately 1.18 million sq.ft. (110,000 sq.m.) on the 80 acre (32.4 ha) site. The total number of jobs that could be supported at Eureka based on an average job density is in the region of 4,000-6,000.

The weak level of development and take-up at Eureka reflects to some extent the perception of Ashford within the east Kent market which is located further away from key markets and pools of skilled labour than other business parks located in west and north Kent.

A high quality business park is an essential component of the economic development strategy for Ashford to enable new high technology sectors to develop in the town. The timing for delivering development at Eureka will be linked to the development of a highly skilled workforce through the growing population and The Learning Campus. Take-up at the business park may take a long time, although there is a pressing need in the short term to promote the business park regionally through potentially some speculative development pump-primed by the public sector. This initiative needs to be discussed with the developer – Quadrant.

The development of Eureka should benefit the economy of east Kent with the potential to create supplier links with businesses not only in Ashford but also in the wider area.

Communications and Place Marketing Strategy

A number of over-arching strategies are required throughout the short, medium and long term to provide business support and training and educational programmes that underpin the economic development objectives of the GADF. Examples of these are presented within the draft Economic Visioning Action Plan.

One of the key strategies to be formulated in the short term is a Communications and Place Marketing Strategy to promote Ashford as a business location. Locate in Kent, the lead partner responsible for the formulation of the strategy is to commission place marketing consultants to help develop a strategy that identifies and sells the Ashford 'brand'.

Property assets such as Eureka Science and Business Park and the potential town centre office sites at Dover Place/Tannery Lane will be key components of promoting the town to investors.

Meeting Strategic Objectives

The table below provides a summary of the key strategic objectives of the Economic Vision that the six transformational projects are anticipated to meet either directly or indirectly.

Six Transformational Projects - Meeting Strategic Economic Objectives

Strategic Objective – Economic Vision	Six 'Transformational Projects'					
	The Learning Campus	Discovery Centre	Station Plaza	South Kent College Site	Eureka Science & Business Park	Common. & Place Marketing Strategy
S01 - Strong Leadership						
S02 - Exemplary Infrastructure						
S03 - Retain 15-34 Year Olds	✔					
S04 - Improve Education	✔					
S05 - Improve property markets			✔	✔	✔	
S06 - Revitalise Town Centre	✔	✔	✔	✔		
S07 - Build Strong SME base	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
S08 - Develop a Brand for Ashford	✔		✔		✔	✔
S09 - Enhance Quality of life		✔				
S010 - Community Participation						
S010 - Bring benefits to sub-region/region	✔				✔	

Key Short Term Economic Development Projects 2005-2011

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Town Centre	Construction of the proposed extension to County Mall	• Improved retail offer • Jobs in retail • Improved townscape • Catalyst for additional schemes • Retain spend within the catchment area	• No specific actions for partners	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Target – Maximise the proportion of new retail floorspace and leisure development located in Ashford town centre, relative to other locations	ING Real Estate/ Debenhams
Town Centre	Potential redevelopment of Park Mall	• Improved retail offer • Improved townscape • Jobs in retail • Retain spend within the catchment area	• Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Target – Maximise the proportion of new retail floorspace and leisure development located in Ashford town centre, relative to other locations	UBS Asset Management/ABC
Town Centre	Construction of Discovery Centre	• Improved access to information • Improved townscape • Jobs in community/public services • Symbol of Ashford's regeneration	• Funding and delivery of project through public sector	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 9: To identify and support initiatives to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in Ashford	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets – Maximise the proportion of new retail floorspace and leisure development located in Ashford town centre, relative to other locations; To improve access to training and education	Kent CC
Town Centre	Construction of The Learning Campus	• Improved access to education • Enhancement of skills and training • Potential spin-out business activity • Jobs in education • Larger student population to help support town centre	• Site location and scale to be determined through GVA Grimley report	Strategic Objective 3: To retain a larger share of Ashford's 15-34 year old age group to live, work, study and pursue their careers within Ashford and to attract members of that age group from outside by provision of education, leisure and employment opportunities. Strategic Objective 4: To improve significantly the provision, uptake and completion of education, learning and skills programmes within Ashford. Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful brand that can be used to promote Ashford. Strategic Objective 11: To grow Ashford's economy in a way that considers the views of the existing community and is complementary to those of the surrounding towns and coastal areas, bringing benefits to the sub-region and region more broadly	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets – To improve access to training and education; DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Targets: Improved overall skill levels; Improved range of employment opportunities; Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ to 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020.	LSC/South Kent College/Kent CC/SEEDA

Key Short Term Economic Development Projects 2005-2011 (cont)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Town Centre	Development of Incubator Units	• Growth of key industries linked to Learning Campus • Increase in business survival/start-up rates • Increase in jobs within B employment uses	• Feasibility Study to assess demand/ timing/scale of development	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number of local start-ups by 5% every year and foster these to become established businesses (of 5 years or more); DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase the number and range of business clusters	SEEDA/ABC/Kent CC/South Kent College/ Business Link Kent
Town Centre	Redevelopment of domestic station and forecourt (Station Plaza)	• Enhancement of key gateway site • Improved townscape • Symbol of Ashford's regeneration • Some jobs created through redevelopment	• Detailed feasibility study to be commissioned to explore options and test viability • Development partnering with private sector	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.2: Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Target: Improved linkages between IPS and town centre	SEEDA/ Network Rail/ABC/ Private Sector
Town Centre	Provision of quality workspace at International House (Station Plaza)	• Growth of key industries • Increase in business survival/start-up rates • Increase in jobs within B employment uses	• To be implemented 2005/06	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase the number of local start-ups by 5% every year and foster these to become established businesses (of 5 years or more); DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy;	SEEDA/ABC/ Business Link Kent
Town Centre	Site Assembly/ Acquisition of sites at Tannery Lane/Dover Place (Station Plaza)	• 'Ready to go' sites to take to market • Prospect of medium term delivery	• Acquisition strategy • Identification of funding • To be promoted through the Communications and Place Marketing Strategy	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.2: Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Target: Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment	SEEDA/ABC/ private sector

Key Short Term Economic Development Projects 2005-2011 (cont)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Town Centre	Redevelopment of the South Kent College Site	• Improved retail and leisure offer • Improved townscape • Jobs in B1a employment uses, hotel and retail • Provide new office space for SME market in town centre	• Site preparation (demolition, clearance) • Development Brief • Development partnering with private sector • Detailed planning and design work	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets – Maximise the proportion of new retail floorspace and leisure development located in Ashford town centre, relative to other locations; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase number of hotel beds in Ashford by 5% by 2010	SEEDA, Kent CC/ABC and private developers
Living Quarter	Renewal of New Town Works Phase I	• Potential growth of creative industries sector through businesses and jobs • Broadening of economic base • Improved townscape	• Development Brief • Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Target: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number and range of business clusters Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	Kier Properties/ ABC
Living Quarter	Development of Cobb's Wood Estate / Chart Estate as part of road infrastructure improvements / mixed-use development	• Retention of local firms and potential future expansion within the town through relocation • Retention of jobs in B employment uses • Intensification or new employment uses as part of mixed-use proposals	• Initial stage of mapping of landownership details and expiry of leases • Acquisition Strategy including relocation packages • Identification of funding • Potential control of land to accommodate relocations • Development brief for Cobbs	Strategic Objective 2: To ensure that Ashford's infrastructure of road, rail and other physical as well as digital infrastructure is exemplary in order to support and drive forward growth. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.2: Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Target: Improve journey times between M20 and Ashford town centre	ABC /Landowners/ local firms
Living Quarter	Ashford Barracks	• Delivery of employment space and jobs • Jobs in education through Primary school • Jobs in health through new health centre • Jobs in leisure	• Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	Private developers/ABC

Key Short Term Economic Development Projects 2005-2011 (cont)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Northern Area	Extension to William Harvey Hospital	• Jobs in health • Additional small-scale B employment schemes	• Hospital extension plans are being implemented • Development brief for other sites to include employment uses	Strategic Objective 9: To identify and support initiatives to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in Ashford. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number of local start-ups by 5% every year and foster these to become established businesses (of 5 years or more); DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase the number of fringe farming initiatives Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	East Kent Hospital Trust/ABC/ commercial developers
Urban Villages	Development of neighbourhood centres at Cheeseman's Green and Chilmington	• Local services for residents • Jobs in retail, leisure, education, health, community and business and professional services	• Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	Private developers/ ABC
Urban Villages	Small-scale rural workspace development through conversions or new development, such as live/work	• Establishment of business areas in Urban Villages • Jobs in B Employment uses utilising ICT • Potential for homeworking or sustainable working • Promotion of farm diversification	• Investigation of potential funding or support to bring forward workspace schemes in the urban neighbourhoods ICT strategy • Positive planning policies within LDF for rural conversions and live/work units	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number of local start-ups by 5% every year and foster these to become established businesses (of 5 years or more); DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase the number of fringe farming initiatives	SEEDA/ABC/Business Link Kent, private developers

Key Short Term Economic Development Projects 2005-2011 (cont)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Out-of-Town Industrial/ Business Parks	Speculative development at Eureka Science and Business Park	• Tangible product to 'sell' to the market • Raise profile of Ashford to inward investment • Potentially attract and retain major occupiers • Diversify the economic base	• Resolve planning issues and investigate re-positioning of Eureka with developer to compete regionally • Give priority to Eureka in terms of junction capacity allowances • Explore joint venture with private sector to build spec. offices • To be promoted through the Communications and Place Marketing Strategy	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful economic brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number and range of business clusters; Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land; Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Targets: Improved overall skill levels; Improved range of employment opportunities; Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ to 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020	Locate in Kent/SEEDA/ABC/ Quadrant/private developers
Out-of-Town Industrial/ Business Parks	Development of Orbital Park with potential to bring forward first phase of development at Sevington/ Waterbrook	• Upgrading of stock by local firms • Release of older stock for redevelopment • Retention of jobs in the town • Increase market activity • Provide impetus for development of new industrial Park at Sevington/ Waterbrook	• Is likely to be part of the relocation package for occupiers from Cobb's Wood/Chart Estate • Feasibility study into need to bring forward Sevington/Waterbrook and how to combat issues around Junction 10/10A.	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business. Strategic Objective 11: To grow Ashford's economy in a way that considers the views of the existing community and is complementary to those of the surrounding towns and coastal areas, bringing benefits to the sub-region and region more broadly.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land	ABC/landowners/ local firms
Out-of-Town Industrial/ Business Parks	Development of neighbourhood centres at Cheeseman's Green and Chilmington	• Local services for residents • Jobs in retail, leisure, education, health, community and business and professional services	• Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	Private developers/ ABC

08.2 PHASE 2: 2011-2021

Core Objectives

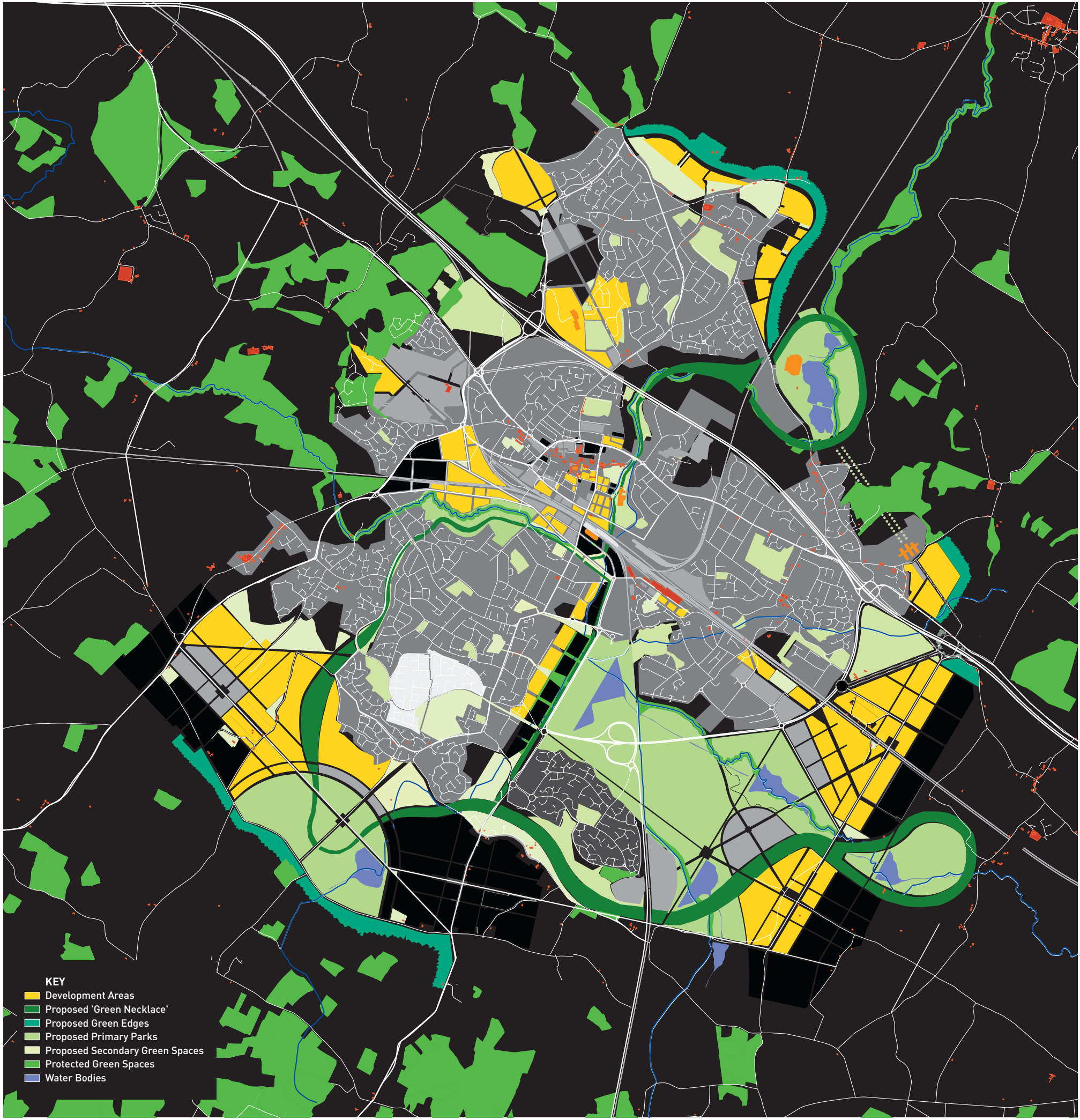
- The period up to 2021 constitutes the Local Development Framework Period.
- The continued focus on the Town Centre should occur. The expansion of the Town Centre to the South and the areas that include Chart Estate and Victoria Crescent are led by the extension of Victoria Way.
- By the end of Phase 2 the development sites in and nearest to the existing Town Centre should be substantially complete.
- A new bridge from Victoria Way across to Cobbs Wood and linking up to Junction 9 releases the potential for both Cobbs Wood and the Barracks site. Although this link will only be completed in Phase 2, it is likely to be required early on in this period. Given the timescales involved in procuring a new bridge, the planning and funding of this link will need to start relatively early in Phase 1.
- The completed improvements to Junction 10 release the potential for development at New Town Works, Orbital Park North (land to the north of the existing Orbital Park), Sevington and Cheesman's Green.
- Development to the south and east can be released. The extent of development in these areas will largely respond to market confidence. It is likely that Chilmington Green will be able to expand with limited requirements for major Infrastructure.
- It will be important to continue to invest funds into key resources and amenities that will define the quality environment and potentially unique characteristics to shape and drive development in the south and south-east. Continued investment in assets such as Discovery Park and the Regional Wetlands Parks needs to occur.

Constraints

- As the requirements for growth and expansion of the Town Centre increase it will be critical to have an alternative connection from the south to Junction 9. An additional bridge crossing from the south to the north is imperative to divert some of the traffic away from the Town Centre.
- Connections from the Centre to the east needs to be substantially made through a core infrastructure investment in Newtown Way. This will also assist in connecting Klondyke Newtown, Waterbrook and Cheesman's Green to a public transport system.

Phase 2: 2011-2021 Schedule of Units/Jobs

Development Areas	Description	Units	Jobs
Completed Areas			
Park Farm, Singleton, etc	Built housing 2001-05 (estimate)	**Complete**	**Complete**
Allocated Areas			
Singleton	Part implemented	Complete	0
Brisley Farm	Part implemented	Complete	0
Park Farm Extension	Allocated but not yet implemented	Complete	0
Cheeseman's Green	Allocated but not yet implemented	400	0
Ashford Barracks	Allocated but not yet implemented	200	Complete
Orbital Park/Henwood	Industrial and business relocation	0	Complete
		600	**Complete**
Town Centre			
Town Centre	New town centre living	**1,400**	**5,000**
Town Centre Periphery			
Chart Estate/ Victoria Crescent	Intensification, mixed-use development	300	200
Cobbs Wood	Intensification, mixed-use development	100	100
New Town Works	New mixed-use, medium density	300	100
Hunter Avenue	New mixed-use, medium density	Complete	0
		700	**400**
New Districts			
Canal District (existing area)	Intensification, infill and regeneration	500	250
Canal District (new reduced area)	New mixed-use, medium density	0	0
Waterbrook	Mixed use, medium-density	1,160	475
Bockhanger Wood	Intensification, infill and regeneration	600	1,600
		2,260	**2,325**
Urban Neighbourhoods			
Chilmington Green	New mixed-use neighbourhood	2,900	500
Kingsnorth	New mixed-use neighbourhood	0	0
Cheeseman's Green Extension	New mixed-use neighbourhood	2,150	800
		5,050	**1,300**
Urban Extensions			
Kennington	Infill along relief roads	450	0
William Harvey Area	Small scale infill	250	0
Discovery Park	Medium density forming edge to Park	550	125
		1,250	**125**
Out of Town Estates			
Orbital Park North	Commercial and business intensification	0	100
Sevington	Commercial and business uses	0	1,250
		0	**1,350**
	TOTAL UNITS/JOBS	11,260	10,500
	RUNNING TOTAL UNITS/JOBS	20,330	17,500



Phase 2: 2011-2021 The Development of Areas (Indicated in yellow)

Phase 2: Transport and Services Infrastructure

2A – Junction 10a (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises the construction of a new grade separated junction on the M20 together with a link road between the new junction and the A2070 (Ashford Southern Orbital). Delivery of the main Cheesman's Green development area is dependent on construction of the junction and link road. This is a major project involving significant land take and construction. The Highways Agency is the promoter for this scheme and it is currently in the TPI programme. It is expected that scheme will be partly funded from developer contributions but with the majority of the funding coming from central government. Therefore, the scheme will have to compete with others in the TPI programme for funding. Design development for the scheme is on going and it is expected that subject to completion of statutory procedures the scheme will be delivered during the early years of Phase 2.

2B – Orchard Way (East) Corridor (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises the construction of a Local Road access from Junction 10A. The scheme includes the construction of a new highway crossing of the Ashford Folkstone railway line. Delivery of the main Cheesman's Green development area (to the east of Captains Wood) is dependent on construction of this access.

2C – Roman Way Corridor (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises completion of the eastern and western sections of Roman Way. This will link Cheesman's Green into the pedestrian and cycle route and provide a route between the Romney Marsh Road and the A28.

2D – Victoria Way Corridor – North Extension (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises two elements: the extension of Victoria Way in a north west direction across the Ashford – Tonbridge railway line, through Cobbs Wood industrial estate to the A28 with capacity improvements to the Barracks Roundabout; the extension of Victoria Way in a south east direction between the north side of Victoria Park and Beaver Road. This will reinforce Victoria Way as a strategic relief to the town centre.

2E – Romney Marsh Road Corridor (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a package of junction improvements, bus priority measures, traffic management measures and cycle facilities.

2F – New Town Way Corridor (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

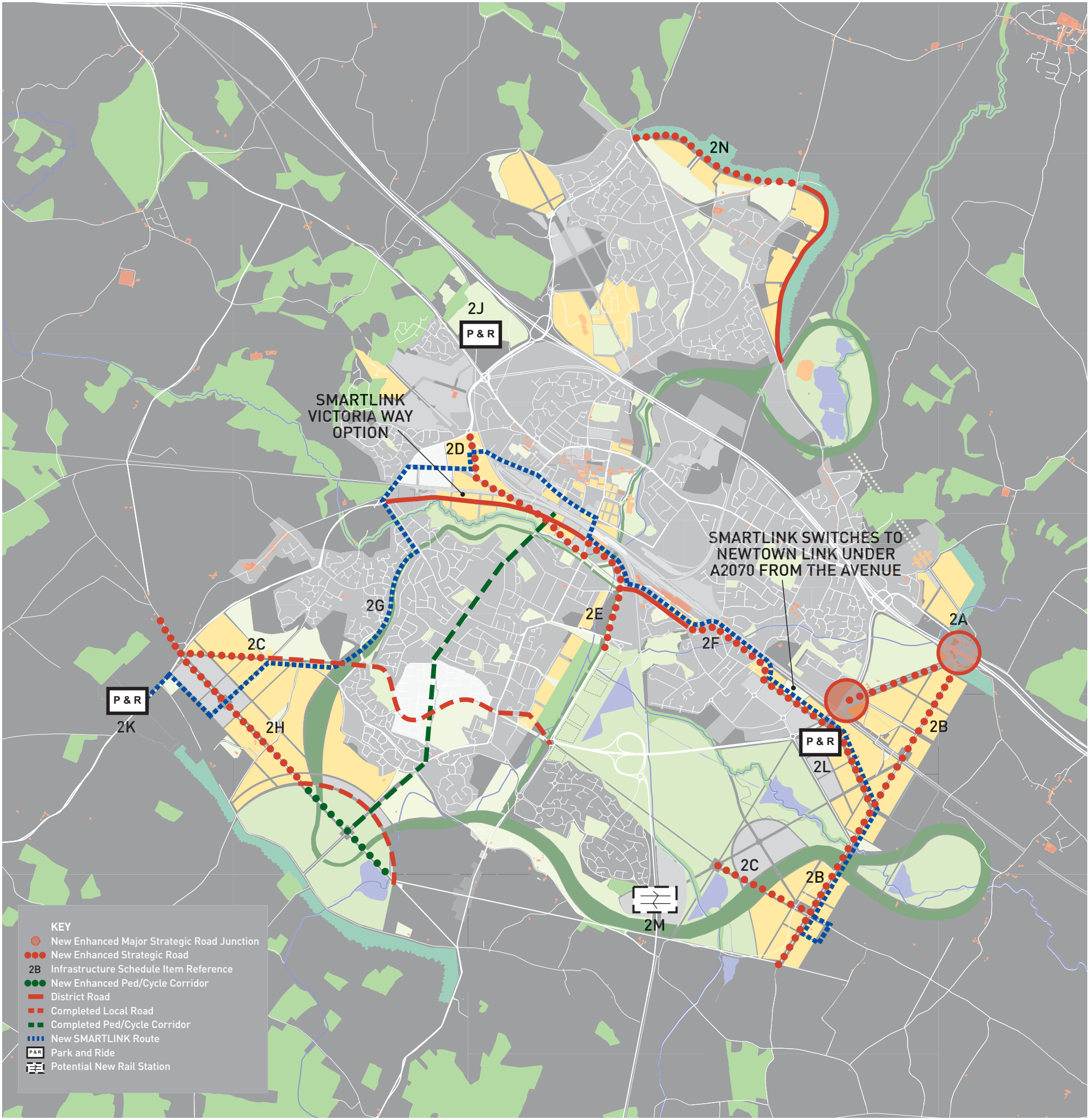
This scheme is the easterly extension of New Town Way from the Klondyke area through Orbital Park North to Waterbrook. The scheme includes an underpass crossing of the A2070. This will be the corridor for the eastern arm of SmartLink.

2G – Chilmington SmartLink Corridor (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a package of bus priority measures to establish a high quality bus route through south west Ashford.

2H – Orchard Way West (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a new route through Chilmington connecting the A28 with Orchard Crescent and Discovery Park.



Phase 2: Key Infrastructure

2I – Station Improvement Works (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises relocation of the domestic and international station entrances to a common point on Beaver Road Bridge. This is a major scheme that will require significant input from Network Rail, the Strategic Rail Authority and London and Continental Railways.

2J, K L – Park and Ride Sites – Warren, Singleton, Waterbrook (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises extension of the Park and Ride facilities at the Warren and Waterbrook (to 1000 spaces each) and the establishment of a further facility at Singleton.

2M– Park Farm Station (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises the installation of a new local rail station at Park Farm.

It is likely that design and construction could be completed within a 5-6 year period.

Upgrading of bus services would be a continuation of the improvements carried out in Phase 1. These improvements would be supported by a Quality Bus Partnership.

In Phase 2 the completion of key works along Newtown Way (2F), the introduction of bus priority measures through south west Ashford (2G) and increased volumes of development along the Chilmington/Singleton and Newtown/Waterbrook/ Cheeseman's Green corridors allows the introduction of the Smartlink service. It is likely that initially this would operate at half the eventual frequency for this service. SMARTLINK would service the Park and Ride facilities at Singleton and Waterbrook.

Phase 2 would see the substantial completion of public parking in the town centre being relocated outside the ring road. Private parking provision for new developments in the town centre would be restricted further, with the balance of demand met in public car parks if necessary. Towards the end of the period parking charges maybe structured to encourage a shift towards bus travel or Park and Ride.

The focus for cycling and walking during Phase 2 will be completion of strategic corridors and routes within the existing developed areas of Ashford and new facilities integrated as part of the development areas.

2N – Kennington Circle North (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises the creation of a new link road between the Canterbury Road and ultimately Junction 9 of the M20 via Trinity Road. The scheme will relieve congestion on the Canterbury Road and provide access to new housing development at Kennington.

Improvements to existing bus services have been discussed with the current operator Stagecoach. Many new developments in Phase 1 would be served by extending existing routes. A new route to Chilmington is recommended that would be the forerunner of the SMARTLINK service. Other new routes may be needed to serve Sandyhurst and Cheeseman's Green. These improvements would be supported by a Quality Bus Partnership.

The first phase of the town centre parking strategy would begin to see some public parking moved outside the ring road. A new multi-storey car park is proposed at the end of Victoria Road adjacent to the Learning Link and it is expected that this would become operational during Phase 1.

The focus for cycling and walking during Phase 1 will be the implementation of strategic corridors and routes within the existing developed areas of Ashford. This together with facilities integrated as part of the development areas will assist in raising the profile of these sustainable modes of transport.

Potable Water

A new pipeline from Broadoak in the north and a new fifteen mega-litre reservoir at Branbourne Lees are required. This reservoir is proposed to become the primary source of water for Ashford after its completion by 2020. The pipeline and reservoir are outside of Greater Ashford and would therefore not impact on development in Phases 1 and 2.

Drainage

New treatment works are to be constructed during Phase 2. The location for these works and their scale and type has yet to be determined. Options being considered are:

- An expansion of the existing works at Bybrook.
- A new treatment plant to the south of Ashford.
- Small decentralized local treatment plants.

The impact of the treatment works on phasing and development areas remains uncertain at this stage.

Electricity

There are no known major reinforcement works required for the Ashford electrical supply network in Phase 2.

Gas

There are no known major reinforcement works required for the Ashford gas supply network in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Workplace and Urban Core

Economic Prospects

In the medium term, the economic prospects for Ashford are dependent upon the successful implementation of projects within the short term to develop a more diverse economic base. The continuing development of the Learning Campus will play a central role in the growth of entrepreneurship and skills, especially in emerging innovative sectors during this period. The construction of managed workspace schemes and incubation space during Phase 1 should enable firms to become established with the prospect of demand increasing in Phase 2 for 'move on' expansion space. This should have the effect of improving property market conditions and providing new stock.

The continued housing growth in the town, especially with the introduction of the CTRL (2009) should increase the available pool of workers in the town and hopefully increase the general skills levels, with the potential of young professionals in particular attracted to new residential schemes in and around the town centre. The increase in the size and quality of the labour market may help to increase Ashford's competitive position in the sub-region as a location for inward investment.

In the medium term between 2011-2021 we would anticipate employment in Ashford to be generated as follows:

Town Centre

- Employment within B1a office use within the Dover Place/Tannery Lane area of the town centre to provide space for major occupiers in particular, which could include a Government department relocated as part of the Lyons Review following site assembly/preparation;
- Continued employment within retail and leisure sectors in the town centre as the catchment and expenditure swells;

Living Quarter

- Continued employment in creative industries with additional phases of New Town Works and B employment uses through the selective redevelopment/intensification of older industrial estates such as Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate within the Living Quarter area.

Northern Area

- Continued small-scale expansion of William Harvey Hospital providing additional jobs in health to cater for increased population.

Urban Villages

- Continued employment in a range of employment uses within the urban villages through homeworking, live/work units and small business units;
- Development of leisure employment through attractions and facilities, such as Discovery Park.

Out-of-Town Industrial/Business Parks

- Take-up of sites at Eureka Science and Business Park following speculative development in Phase 1 providing employment in B1 uses and growth of skills and the knowledge base in the town providing inward investment opportunities and potentially some local demand;
- The anticipated completion of plots at Orbital Park (north) following the relocation of businesses in and around the town centre should enable several phases of development at Sevington/Waterbrook to be completed, especially with the completion of improvements to Junction 10.

The particular constraints/barriers that may impinge on the development of employment uses in Phase 2 relate to the issues already referred to in Phase 1. These include:

- The continued need to develop the skills and knowledge base of the town to compete effectively with other locations for major occupiers and to help develop out Eureka Science and Business Park and the office quarter within the town centre;
- Road infrastructure issues to be overcome, such as the development of the west-east transport corridor and access to Junction 9 following completion of the new Victoria Way route. Improvements to Junction 9 may also dictate to some extent the pattern of development at Eureka.
- Continued funding to enable the public sector to pump-prime 'difficult' sites requiring site assembly and remediation.

Key Projects

The projects to be implemented in the medium term are presented in the following table.

Potential Key Medium Term Economic Development Projects 2011-2021

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Town Centre	Office development at Dover Place/Tannery Lane (Station Plaza)	• Improved townscape • Major occupiers in the town • Increase in jobs within B employment uses	• Development partnering with key occupiers/developers • Possible relocation of businesses from this area	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.2: Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Target: Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Targets: Improved overall skill levels; Improved range of employment opportunities; Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ to 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020	SEEDA/ABC/private developers
Town Centre	Sites adjacent to the Station for mixed-use development	• Potential Hotel use and conference facility • Office based employment	• Potential site acquisition/joint venture arrangement to bring site forward	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Target – Maximise the proportion of new retail floorspace and leisure development located in Ashford town centre, relative to other locations; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase number of hotel beds in Ashford by 5% by 2010	SEEDA/ABC/landowners/private developers
Living Quarter	New Town Works Phase II due to Junction 10 obligations	• Potential growth of creative industries sector through businesses and jobs • Broadening of economic base • Improved townscape	• Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Target: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number and range of business clusters Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	Kier Properties/ABC

Potential Key Medium Term Economic Development Projects 2011-2021 9 (cont)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Living Quarter	Development of Cobb's Wood Estate/Chart Estate as part of for mixed-use development	• Intensification or new employment uses as part of mixed-use proposals	• Implementation of Development Brief • Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number of local start-ups by 5% every year and foster these to become established businesses (of 5 years or more); DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase the number of fringe farming initiatives	SEEDA/ABC/Business Link Kent, private developers

Potential Key Medium Term Economic Development Projects 2011-2021 9 (cont)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Out-of-Town Industrial/ Business Parks	Additional phases of development at Eureka	• Jobs within medium and high technology sectors • Critical mass of development • Potential clustering opportunities	• Public sector to continue to work with the developers and landowners to maintain and enhance the business park in terms of a high quality environment, public transport links and services on site	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful economic brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number and range of business clusters; Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land; Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Targets: Improved overall skill levels; Improved range of employment opportunities; Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ to 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020	Locate in Kent/SEEDA/ABC/ Quadrant/private developers
	Additional phases of development at Sevington/Waterbrook	• Jobs in B employment uses • Expansion of local firms	• Public sector to work with private developer to create good quality design and consideration given to local services on site e.g. creche	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land	Private developer/ABC

08.3 PHASE 3: 2021-2031

Core Objectives

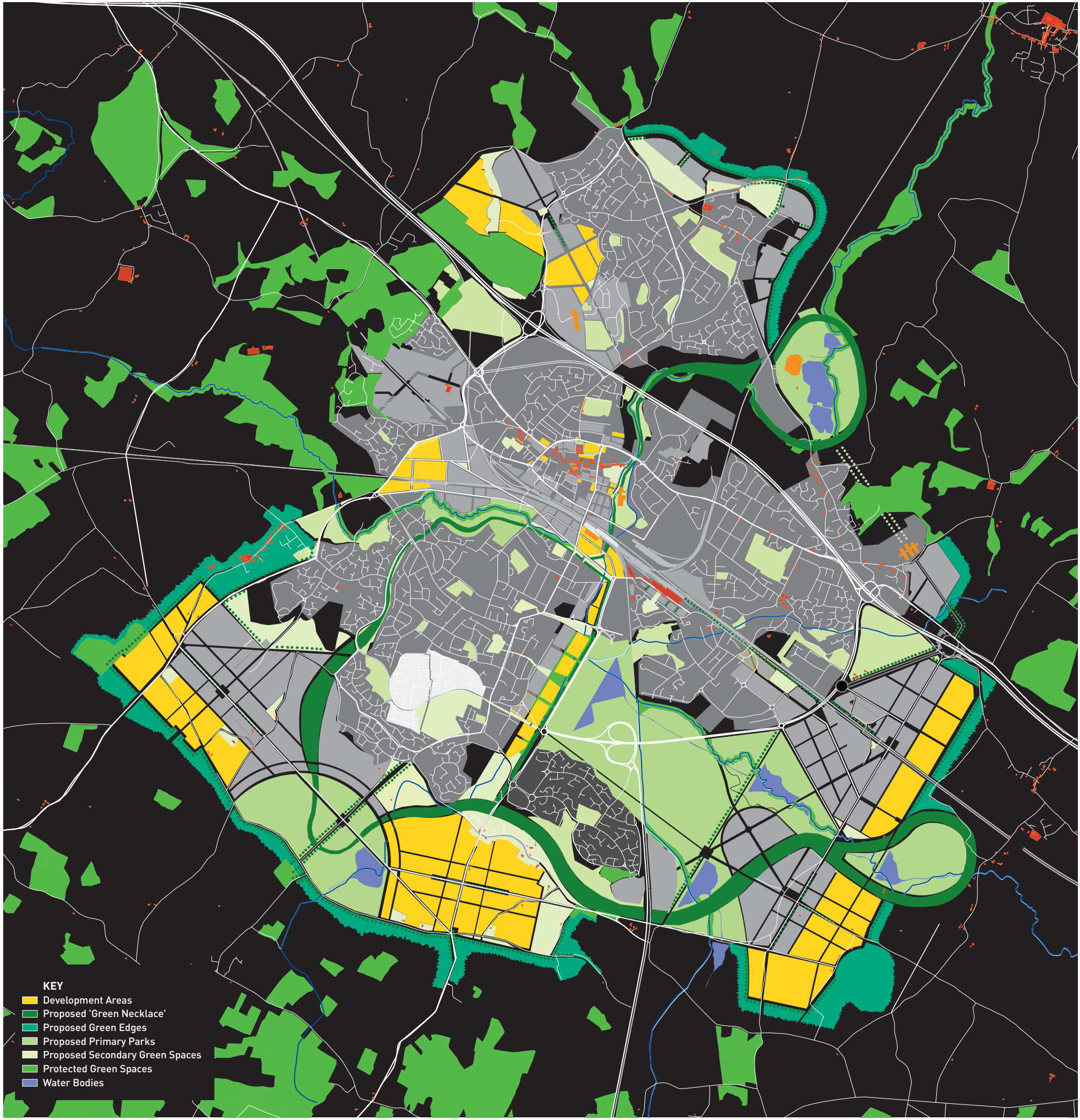
- In order to maximise the effectiveness of the SMARTLINK public transport corridor, Kingsnorth is held to the final phase. This recognises that a third arm of SMARTLINK is not viable and a lower order public transport corridor is needed to serve this corridor.
- The post 2021 growth occurs after the Local Development Framework Period, where the framework as a whole will be subject to review. Clearly all of the areas identified in this phase will be up for review. In this regard the previous phases have kept development away from the extremities of the town where it is more likely to have impacts on surrounding villages and natural environments
- The focus on the Town Centre and its expansion is likely to be ongoing.
- Development to the south and east should continue in both the Chilmington Green and Cheeseman's Green.

Constraints

- The development of Kingsnorth will go hand in hand with the development of the Canal District and the extent to which Kingsnorth develops will depend on to what extent the Canal District goes ahead in Phase 3. It will also depend on market confidence in Ashford as a growth area. If confidence is low development is likely to remain in the then established areas of the expanded Town Centre, Chilmington and Cheesman's Green. If confidence is high, there will be strong development pressures on the Kingsnorth area to grow.

Phase 3: 2021-2031 Schedule of Units/Jobs

Development Areas	Description	Units	Jobs
Completed Areas			
Park Farm, Singleton, etc	Built housing 2001-05 (estimate)	**Complete**	**Complete**
Allocated Areas			
Singleton	Part implemented	Complete	0
Brisley Farm	Part implemented	Complete	0
Park Farm Extension	Allocated but not yet implemented	Complete	0
Cheeseman's Green	Allocated but not yet implemented	Complete	0
Ashford Barracks	Allocated but not yet implemented	Complete	Complete
Orbital Park/Henwood	Industrial and business relocation	0	Complete
		Complete	**Complete**
Town Centre			
Town Centre	New town centre living	**750**	**4,000**
Town Centre Periphery			
Chart Estate/ Victoria Crescent	Intensification, mixed-use development	200	100
Cobbs Wood	Intensification, mixed-use development	350	200
New Town Works	New mixed-use, medium density	Complete	Complete
Hunter Avenue	New mixed-use, medium density	Complete	0
		550	**300**
New Districts			
Canal District (existing area)	Intensification, infill and regeneration	Complete	Complete
Canal District (new reduced area)	New mixed-use, medium density	1,300	500
Waterbrook	Mixed use, medium-density	Complete	550
Bockhanger Wood/Eureka	Intensification, infill and regeneration	200	2,650
		1,500	**3,700**
Urban Neighbourhoods			
Chilmington Green	New mixed-use neighbourhood	2,600	400
Kingsnorth	New mixed-use neighbourhood	3,500	325
Cheeseman's Green Extension	New mixed-use neighbourhood	2,350	200
		8,450	**925**
Urban Extensions			
Kennington	Infill along relief roads	Complete	0
William Harvey Area	Small scale infill	Complete	0
Discovery Park	Medium density forming edge to Park	Complete	Complete
		Complete	**Complete**
Out of Town Estates			
Orbital Park North	Commercial and business intensification	0	Complete
Sevington	Commercial and business uses	0	1,250
		0	**1,250**
	TOTAL UNITS/JOBS	11,250	10,500
	RUNNING TOTAL UNITS/JOBS	31,580	28,000



Phase 3: 2021-2031 The Development of Areas (Indicated in yellow)

Phase 3: Transport and Services Infrastructure

3A - A28 Chart Road Corridor (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises dualling of the existing A28 between Chilmington and Matalan Roundabout. Other more minor capacity improvements are expected along the more northerly sections of the A28 in earlier phases.

3B – Victoria Way – Southern Alignment (TOWN WIDE STRATEGIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises completion of Victoria Way between Romney Marsh Way (at the Designer Outlet Village junction) and Beaver Road. This will complete Victoria Way as a strategic route allowing through traffic to avoid the town centre.

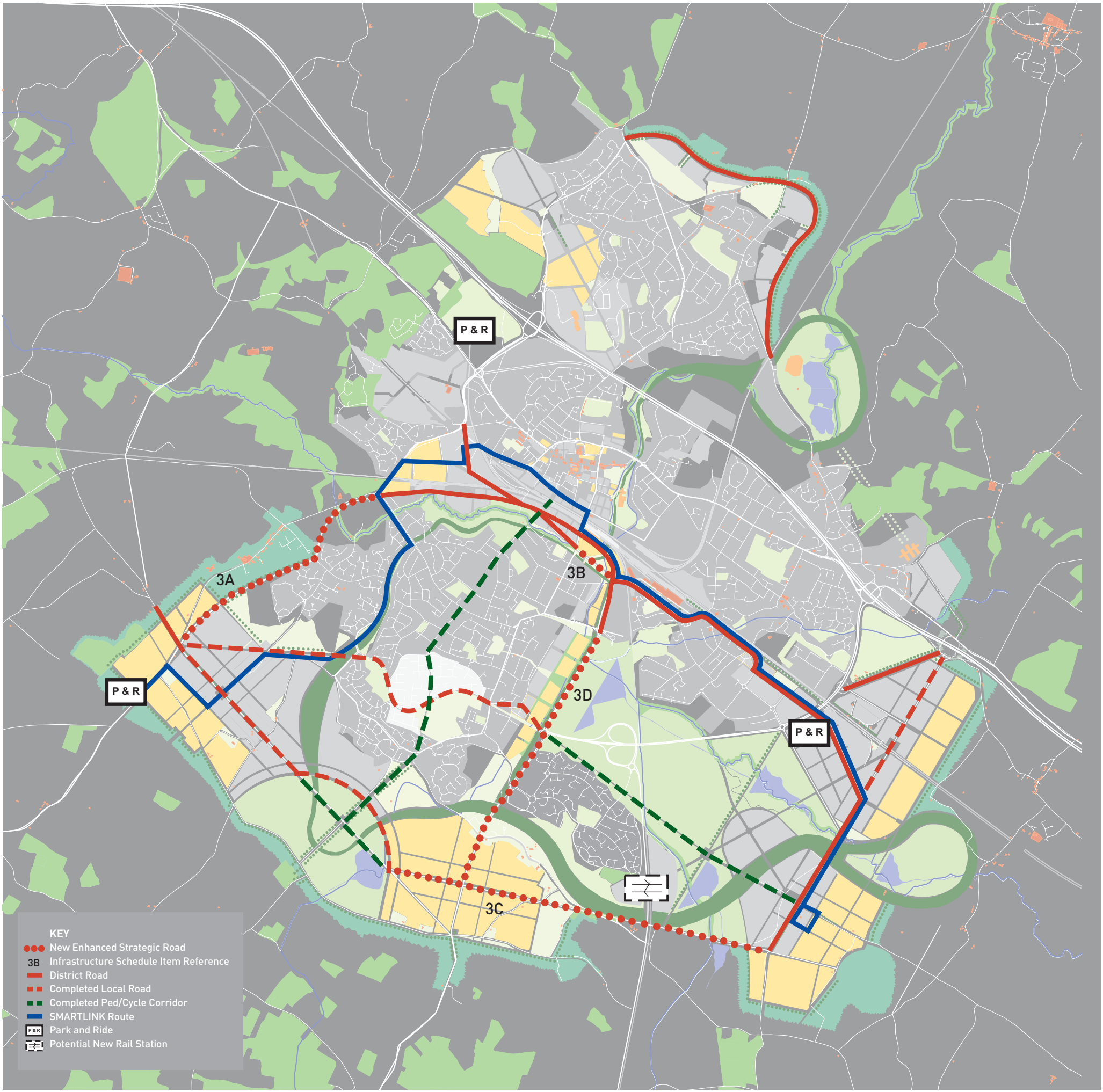
3C – Orchard Way South - (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a new route from the eastern edge of Discovery Park through Kingsnorth to Cheeseman's Green.

3D – Romney Marsh Way Environmental and Traffic Improvements (SITE SPECIFIC SCHEME)

This scheme comprises a package of environmental and traffic improvements on Romney Marsh Way. These would be implemented in conjunction with development of the Canal District.

The increasing level of development on the SMARTLINK corridors would allow this service to be upgraded in terms of frequency. Upgrading of bus services would be a continuation of the improvements carried out in Phase 2. These improvements would be supported by a Quality Bus Partnership.



Phase 3 : Transport Infrastructure

Phase 3 – 2021-2031
(Workplace and Urban Core)

Economic Prospects

In the long term, the economic changes that are anticipated to take place in the short to medium term should lay the foundations for a growing commercial and employment base with emerging critical mass of businesses and skilled workers.

Within Phase 3 Ashford has the potential to create the 'step change' in its economic base depending on the implementation of the projects within Phases 1 and 2 and the continued growth of FE/HE education with the establishment of innovation and R&D activities linked to key Universities and major businesses.

A number of sectors may develop in time, although we would not advocate the targeting of specific sectors within the short term.

Additional housing growth, such as at Kingsnorth and Cheeseman's Green will help to increase the labour supply within the town, as well as increasing the need for additional shops and services and providing additional home-working/flexible working (e.g. live/work) opportunities

In the long term between 2021-2031 we would anticipate employment in Ashford to be generated as follows:

Town Centre

- Continued creation of employment within B1a offices within the Dover Place/Tannery Lane area of the town centre to provide space for major occupiers in particular;
- Continued employment within retail and leisure sectors in the town centre as the catchment and expenditure swells.

Living Quarter

- Continued selective redevelopment/intensification of older industrial estates such as Cobbs Wood/Chart Estate within the Living Quarter area.

Northern Area

- Continued small-scale expansion of William Harvey Hospital providing additional jobs in health to cater for increased population.

Urban Villages

- Continued development of employment uses within the urban villages through homeworking, live/work units and small business units;
- Continued development of leisure employment through attractions and facilities, such as Discovery Park.

Out-of-Town Industrial/Business Parks

- Continued development of Eureka Science and Business Park for high quality employment uses with B1 offices, R&D, light industrial;
- Continued development of Sevington/Waterbrook for B employment uses to cater for local demand.

Specific constraints or barriers to long term employment are difficult to identify, although the continuing development of the town in terms of infrastructure, skills and added value business activities are likely to be key factors to create the 'step change' required to meet the target of 28,000 new jobs by 2031.

Key Projects

The projects to be implemented in the long term are presented in the following tables.

Potential Long Term Economic Development Projects 2021-2031

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Town Centre	Office development at Dover Place/Tannery Lane (Station Plaza)	• Improved townscape • Major occupiers in the town • Increase in jobs within B employment uses	• Development partnering with key occupiers/developers • Possible relocation of businesses from this area	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.2: Improving attractiveness of the town to inward investment Target: Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Targets: Improved overall skill levels; Improved range of employment opportunities; Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ to 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020	SEEDA/ABC/private developers
Town Centre	Sites in the town centre for retail and leisure development	• Improved leisure offer • Improved townscape • Jobs in leisure	• Development partnering with private sector • Detailed planning and design work	Strategic Objective 6: To revitalise the Town Centre as a venue for living, retail, business and related activities.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Target – Maximise the proportion of new retail floorspace and leisure development located in Ashford town centre, relative to other locations	SEEDA/ABC/private developers
Living Quarter	Continued Development of Cobb's Wood Estate/Chart Estate as part of for mixed-use development	• Intensification or new employment uses as part of mixed-use proposals	• Implementation of Development Brief • Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land	ABC/private developers

Potential Long Term Economic Development Projects 2021-2031 (cont...)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Urban Villages	Additional Small-scale rural workspace development through conversions or new development, such as live/work	• Establishment of business areas in Urban Villages • Jobs in B Employment uses utilising ICT • Potential for homeworking or sustainable working	• Monitoring business activity in Urban Villages and job creation • Planning of scale, uses and design through application process	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number of local start-ups by 5% every year and foster these to become established businesses (of 5 years or more); DF to include support services for local businesses including managed workspace facilities, training and skills development; Maintain a steady supply of premises and high levels of occupancy; Increase the number of fringe farming initiatives	SEEDA/ABC/Business Link Kent, private developers
Urban Villages	Discovery Park	• Jobs in leisure, sport and recreation/tourism • Improved facilities for residents • Improved quality of life • Potential events venue	• Development brief for the area • Feasibility work on scale/type of uses • Potential joint venture	Strategic Objective 9: To identify and support initiatives to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in Ashford.	Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Target: Improved range of employment opportunities	SEEDA/ABC private developers

Potential Long Term Economic Development Projects 2021-2031 (cont...)

GADF - Employment Growth	Key Projects	Outcomes	Tasks/Actions	Meeting Strategic Objectives of Economic Vision	Meeting SEA Targets	Key Partners
Out-of-Town Industrial/ Business Parks	Additional phases of development at Eureka	• Jobs within medium and high technology sectors • Critical mass of development • Potential clustering opportunities	• Public sector to continue to work with the developers and landowners to maintain and enhance the business park in terms of a high quality environment, public transport links and services on site	Strategic Objective 5: To improve the ability of the property markets: industrial, commercial, office and residential to support Ashford's future needs. Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business. Strategic Objective 8: To develop a unique identity and powerful economic brand that can be used to promote Ashford.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Increase employment growth in key sectors; Increase the number and range of business clusters; Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land; Undertake a programme of initiatives to market Ashford as a location for investment Objective 9.3: Maintain high and stable levels of income Targets: Improved overall skill levels; Improved range of employment opportunities; Increase proportion of workforce with NVQ4+ to 30% by 2010, and 40% by 2020	Locate in Kent/SEEDA/ABC/ Quadrant/private developers
Out-of-Town Industrial/ Business Parks	Additional phases of development at Sevington/Waterbrook	• Jobs in B employment uses • Expansion of local firms	• Public sector to work with private developer to create good quality design and consideration given to local services on site e.g. creche	Strategic Objective 7: To build on the strong base of small business, attracting more businesses to locate in Ashford, facilitating new firm creation through the provision of enabling infrastructure and encouraging the development of Ashford's reputation as the best place to do business.	Objective 9.1: Promote economic diversity, growth & self sufficiency Targets: Maintain a range and adequate supply of employment land	Private developer/ABC

09 THE WAY FORWARD

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

Parallel to this process are three vital aspects of work:

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

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

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

09.1 THE ONGOING DESIGN PROCESS

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

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

The Victoria Way/New Town Way Corridor

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

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

The Bockhanger Wood Corridor

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

The Canal District

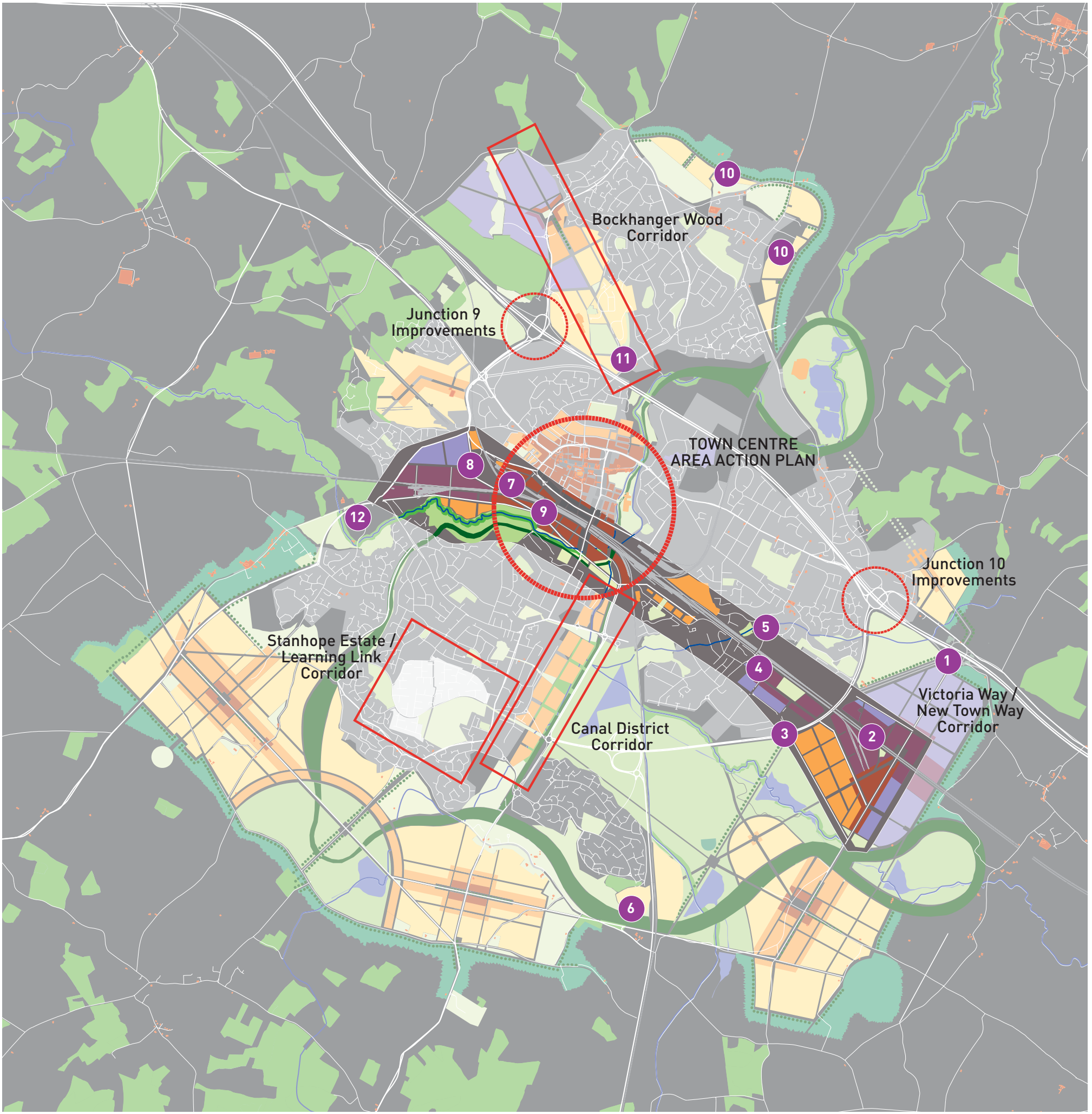
Although this is not a priority project, it has gained the support of a number of stakeholders in Ashford. With the latest moves from the Environment Agency to consider some element of development within the floodplain, it is recommended that further work be undertaken to move the project forward.

Detailed transport proposals

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

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

1. **Junction 10A.** Further design work will be needed to the new motorway junction close to Junction 10. It seems likely that current designs will have to be changed, possibly to create one large junction, or preferably, to disconnect Junction 10 from the motorway to separate local and strategic traffic.
2. **Sevington CTRL bridge.** In order to construct Orchard Way East from Junction 10A southwards to Waterbrook a new highway crossing of the CTRL will be required. Consideration should be given to the widening of the existing bridge to the west or using this as an interim solution.
3. **New Town Way/ A2070 connection.** It is assumed that the existing junction would be upgraded into a large at-grade signal crossroads, and that a new route under the A2070 would also be required. It is assumed that remodelling would take place at the same time as works to Newtown Road / Hastings railway line underpass below.
4. **New Town Road/ Hastings railway line underpass.** It is assumed that headroom would need to be eased to allow new accessible buses to use this route, by a combination of level reductions and reducing the structural depth of the existing railway bridge. The redundant railway bridge is assumed to be demolished. A greater width is needed for vehicles, and this may be possible by removing the existing footway and building a new adjacent pedestrian and cycle tunnel to the DOC centre.
5. **Crowbridge Road/ Aylesford stream crossing.** It is assumed that as part of future upgrading works to create New Town Way, the existing bridge would be reconstructed to widen and flatten the highway to create a standard width single carriageway (with a single footway).
6. **Routes between Kingsnorth and Cheeseman's Green.** It is intended to use the existing rural road from Cheeseman's Green to the Park Farm/A2070 area, with a new connection onto the A2070. However, west of the A2070, Orchard Avenue would be built as a new route between Church Hill and Magpie Hall Road.
7. **Victoria Way connection to Leacon Road.** It is intended to build a parallel future connection to the existing road in the later phases of development (the exact trigger point to be determined by transport modelling).
8. **Bridge link to Cobbs Wood.** The alignment of the bridge is intended to link directly into Brunswick Road, crossing the narrowest part of the railway line in the area. Routes through Cobbs Wood would follow existing roads.
9. **Learning Link.** It is assumed that parts of this link would be for pedestrians and cyclists only. However, a new vehicle route through Stanhope is preferred.
10. **Kennington Circle.** Kennington Circle East is a link road between the Canterbury Road and the Willesborough Road and primarily provides access to new housing at Kennington. Kennington Circle North is a strategic link road between the Canterbury Road and ultimately Junction 9 of the M20 via Trinity Road. The scheme will relieve congestion on the Canterbury Road and provide access to new housing development at Kennington. The AHTS modelling will identify flows on these roads and identify any requirement to modify the approach.
11. **Bockhanger access roads**. It appears that development can be served adequately with new access roads, without the need for strategic highway infrastructure. Further design development of this area is suggested.
12. **New town Road / Crowbridge Road / Godinton Road / Knoll Road / Carlton Road / Brunswick Road / Brookfield Road.** These are all existing roads on the proposed SMARTLINK alignment. It is assumed that SMARTLINK improvements will take the form of Bus Priority Measures, though the possibility of segregation should be further explored. This should inform the choice of Town Centre route.



Focus of early work

09.2 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

Flood Risk

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

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

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

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

Statutory Services

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

Sustainability

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

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

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

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

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

Funding Issues

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

UTILITY	REGULATOR	INVESTMENT PLAN		LICENCES	NOTES	IMPLICATIONS FOR GADF
		SHORT TERM	LONG TERM			
EDF Energy	OFFGEM	5 year plan 2005 - 2010	10 year plan 2005 - 2015	Unless revoked EDF's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked EDF need to be given 25 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on EDF before 2009.	• EDF plan for and submit a 10 year business plan to OFFGEM every 10 years. This is reviewed by OFFGEM & EDF Energy every 5 years • Infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer's bills. Local development (i.e. housing development) is funded by the developer	EDF have confirmed that there will be no costs associated with the strategic reinforcement of the existing Ashford grid. Secondary infrastructure costs to serve new development areas by GADF.
Mid-Kent Water	OFWAT	5 year plan 2005 - 2010	25 year plan 2005 - 2030	Unless revoked MKW's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked MKW need to be given 10 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on MKW until 2005	• Mid-Kent plan for 25 years but submit a 5 year business plan to OFWAT • Infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer billing. Local development is funded by developer • MKW also use a provision in the water act, where a developer is required to put in an oversized main to accommodate future development. Subsequent developers then reimburse the original developer	Mid-Kent Water have requested a 25% contribution towards the construction of the reservoir as part of the strategic reinforcement to supplies. Infrastructure costs to serve new development areas by GADF.
Southern Water	OFWAT	5 year plan 2005 - 2010	10 year plan 2005 - 2015	Unless revoked SW's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked SW need to be given 10 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on SW until 2005	• Southern Water usually plan for 10 years but submit a 5 year business plan to OFWAT • Large infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer billing (approved by OFWAT). Local sewers and small pumping stations are funded by developer contribution	Southern Water have confirmed that the strategic reinforcement works for the 2005-2010 will be funded by Southern Water. An outline proposal for the necessary strategic reinforcements during 2010-2015 has been submitted to OFWAT but will not be reviewed until 2009. Until confirmed there may be infrastructure costs to serve the new development areas by GADF.
Transco	OFFGEM	10 year business statement 2001 - 2010	As short term	Unless revoked Transco's licence is a rolling licence which will continue indefinitely. For their licence to be revoked Transco need to be given 25 years notice in writing. Notice cannot be served on Transco before 2009.	• Transco have a gas transporter's licence from OFFGEM • Infrastructure reinforcement is funded by customer billing. Local development is funded by the developer	Transco advise no strategic enhancements required. Infrastructure costs to serve new development areas by GADF.
British Telecom	OFCOM	tbc	tbc	See notes	• British Telecom do not require a licence to operate and do not have to submit a business plan to OFCOM • BT have a legal obligation, through OFCOM, to supply a service to anyone who requires it • BT are funded purely on their profits from customers • BT state their infrastructure is in place and expand only when required by development	BT will provide fibre optic cabling where demand requires. Costs for retrofitting existing areas would be by GADF

Statutory Services Provides

09.3 THE DELIVERY PROCESS

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

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

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

The Delivery Plan

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

Draft Circular 1/97

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

The Strategic Tariff

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

Ability to pay

- Landowner ability to contribute – crucial to understand capacity to pay without removing incentive to develop – the landowner cannot be a funder of the residual in the cost equation whatever that might be! The 'residual' is the extra gap funding, if needed, to balance the total cost package
- Turner Morum work – advise housebuilders generally and advising the Board on private sector ability to contribute to inject the realism needed in the delivery sums;
- Financing early investment remains a key issue – more important probably than the total funds needed is the timing of investment in key infrastructure;
- Banker role – public agency – such as EP; and/ or infraco providing an agreed package over the long term funded by institutional investors and secured against Govt commitment to fund certain elements and the 'income stream' from developer contributions
- Government commitment is the crucial element needed to make this work – in MK they are producing an agreement which will be a pilot for the PSA type model of Govt contract with delivery partners.

Major sites charter

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

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

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

Indicative Programme

REFERENCES

GADF – Summary of information reviewed

Following the initial inception meeting January 2004 between Ashford's Future and the Consultants team a range of information was provided by the steering group that was aimed at assisting the project team in understanding the context of the study. The following list highlights the documents which were reviewed. The principals of the proposals of the GADF are based on the guidance mentioned below.

European Planning Guidance:

- European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, EU, http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/consultations/habitats_dir/Annex-A-Habitats-Directive.doc
- European Directive for Strategic Environmental Assessments 2001/42, http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/full-legal-text/0142_en.pdf
- Water Framework Directive, www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/wfd/index.htm

National Planning Guidance:

- Sustainable Communities Plan, ODPM, 2003, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_communities/documents/page/odpm_comm_022208.hcsp
- PPS1 Creating Sustainable Communities, ODPM, 2003, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_027494.pdf
- PPG1 General Policies and Principals, ODPM, 2004, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606895.hcsp
- PPG3 Housing, ODPM, 2000, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606933.hcsp
- Planning for Economic Development: A scooping Study for PPG4, ODPM, 2004, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_028810.hcsp
- Consultation Paper on Draft PPS6 Planning for Town Centres, ODPM, 2003, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_026232.hcsp
- PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, ODPM, 2004 http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=5473&l=3
- PPG12 Development Plans, ODPM, 2004, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606929.hcsp
- PPG13 Transport, ODPM, 2001, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606896.hcsp
- PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment, ODPM, 2004, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606900.hcsp
- PPG16 Archaeology and Planning, ODPM, 2004, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606901.hcsp
- PPG17 Sports, Open Spaces & Recreation, ODPM, 2003, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606902.hcsp
- PPG25 Development and Flood Risk, ODPM, 2001, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_606931.hcsp
- A Better Quality of Life - a strategy for sustainable development in the UK, ODPM, 1999, http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/uk_strategy/content.htm
- Our Towns and Cities: the future- delivering the urban renaissance, ODPM, 2004, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_urbanpolicy/documents/page/odpm_urbpol_608358.hcsp
- Foresight – Flood and Coastal Defence, 2004, www.foresight.gov.uk/
- Making space for water: Developing a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England, 2004, www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waterspace/index.htm
- Directing the Flow - priorities for future water policy, Defra, 2002, www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/strategy/index.htm

Regional Planning Guidance:

- RPG9 South East, ODPM, 2004, http://www.go-se.gov.uk/key%20business/planning/downloads/final%20rpg9%20report.pdf
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