

Glebe House, there are a number of other significant heritage assets in the immediate location, including the Grade II* Listed 'Newhouse', which is a substantial property located on the opposite side of The Street. There are further associated assets of Gardeners Cottage and the original garden walls which are both Grade II Listed. However, there is already significant screening with mature trees and hedgerows between the site and these heritage assets, which must be retained and enhanced where possible. Development proposals for this site must ensure that the setting of these heritage assets is conserved.

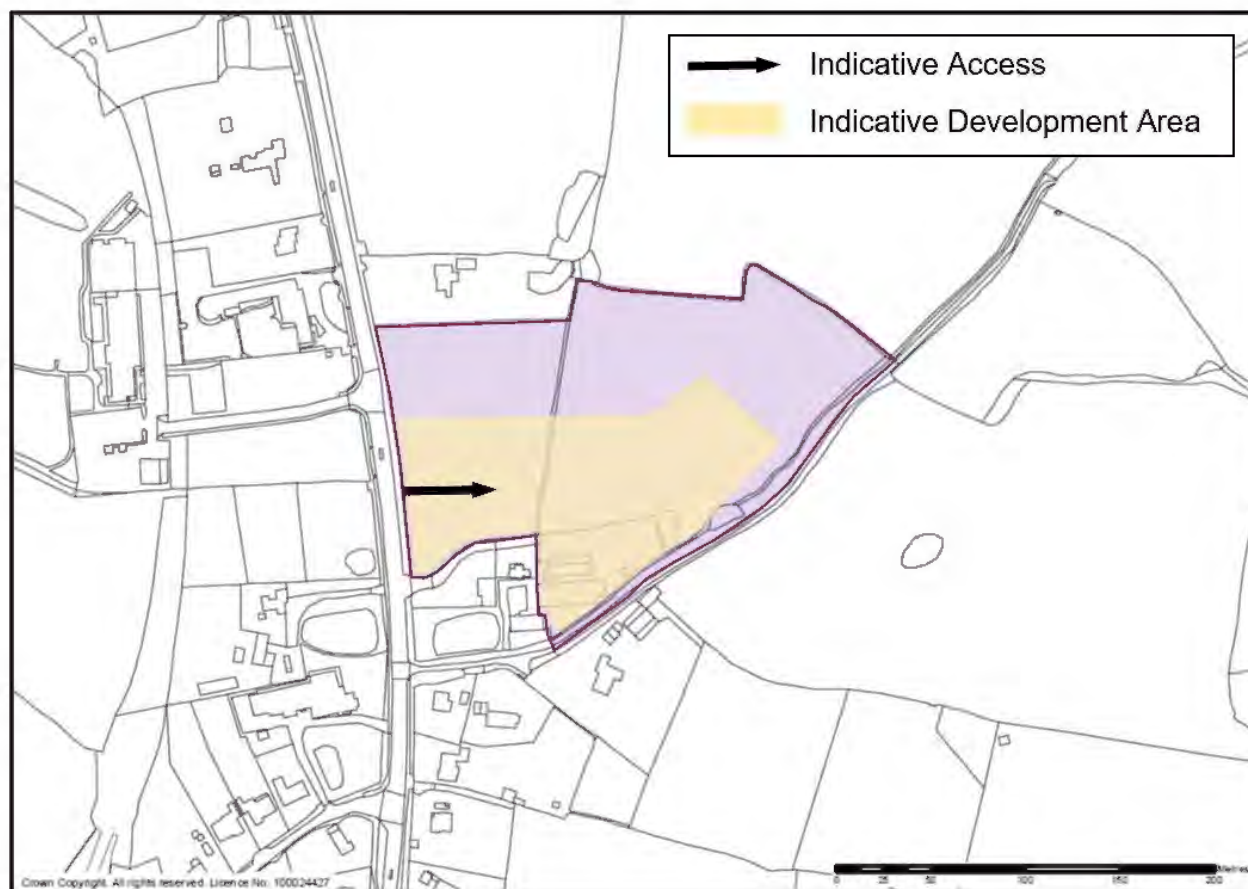
- 4.176 Given the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, countryside edge, Conservation Area location and the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings, a scheme of 2 storey buildings would be most appropriate here. The design and layout must take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and minimise views of the development with improved landscape screening, in addition to ensuring that the trees and ponds are retained within the layout of the development to create ecological corridors.
- 4.177 Due to the close proximity of the village recreation ground there is an opportunity to create footpath access to the adjoining recreation field and to consolidate connections to footpaths and cycleways on this site which would serve to improve sustainable overall connectivity within the village.
- 4.178 Southern Water's assessment has revealed that additional sewerage infrastructure would be required to serve the proposed development. The development will therefore be required to make a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network. Early liaison should take place with the service provider in this regard.

Policy S59 – Mersham, Land at Old Rectory Close

The site at Old Rectory Close is proposed for residential development with an indicative capacity of 8 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

- a) Ensure the design and layout of the development preserves or enhances the setting of listed buildings in the vicinity of the site and the character and appearance of the Mersham Conservation Area;**
- b) Be designed and laid out to take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Layout should take account of surrounding areas, marking a transition between open countryside and rural settlement;**
- c) Provide primary vehicle access on to the Old Rectory Close, as shown on the policies map;**
- d) Retain all mature trees on site, incorporating these into a coherent overall landscape design;**
- e) Provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development and connections to existing rural routes and local services; in particular provide an access through the site to the adjacent playing fields and then, in consultation with the Parish Council, a suitably surfaced footpath across the recreation ground to connect to Glebelands,**
- f) Ensure appropriate species and habitat surveys are carried out. Results will inform ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be provided on the site and proposals for implementation, maintenance and monitoring in accordance with Policy ENV1. Particular regard should be given to retaining the on-site ponds integrated into a coherent landscaping scheme that maintains and enhances habitat connectivity to the wider area for biodiversity benefit; and,**
- g) Provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, in collaboration with the service provider.**

St.Michaels, Pope House Farm



- 4.179 This site is located off the A28, Ashford Road, on the northern entrance to the built up settlement of St.Michaels (but within the Parish of High Halden). The settlement of St.Michaels contains a number of local services, such as schools, shops and good transport connections. The settlement also forms part of Tenterden, which is a main service centre in the Borough with a large number of services available.
- 4.180 The site is currently agricultural, with large buildings in place around Pope House Farm in the southern nib, and two fields making up the remaining area. These fields have a distinct north south boundary line in the centre, which is defined by a mature tree and hedgerow and also a natural drainage ditch. The boundaries of the site are also largely defined by tree and hedgerow boundaries and the site is flat with long views to the wider countryside.
- 4.181 The London Beach Golf Club and Hotel and Little Silver Hotel are situated to the west of the site on the opposite side of the A28, but are either well set back from the road frontage or well screened. There are also a number of large detached properties along Ashford Rd to the south, west and north of the site, with Sicklefield House, directly adjacent to the north. To the south of the site, is Pope Farm House, which is a Grade II Listed building and associated oast and other buildings of heritage importance. Beyond this is a narrow rural lane, Pope House Lane, which serves a few large properties to the south.
- 4.182 Parts of this site are considered suitable for a residential development of around 50 dwellings, depending on design and layout. The area suitable for residential development is broadly defined in shading on the policies map above, and is approximately 1.5ha in size. The area identified does

not include the northern and most easterly parts of the site which have the constraint of underground gas mains, or would cause a detrimental visual impact on the wider landscape.

- 4.183 The site adjoins the open countryside to the east and the adjoining residential areas to the south currently consist of mainly large detached properties, some of which are listed. Therefore the scale and density of new development in the eastern and southern parts of the site should also be relatively low. In the western area of the site, particularly along road frontage, slightly higher densities can be achieved but overall, the site is suitable only for net residential densities with an average of 30 dph.
- 4.184 The primary vehicle access will be provided directly on to the A28, as shown on the policies map. This will need to include a right turn lane for vehicles travelling from the south with a suitably designed pedestrian refuge island. The current access which serves the Pope House Farm and Oast House properties must be retained to serve these dwellings. A pedestrian footway connection must be made to the current network.
- 4.185 Due to the site's heritage and the features of the adjoining listed building and housing cluster around it, high quality design must be achieved within the new development, in addition to a suitable buffer area around this heritage cluster. However, development around this location also has the opportunity to provide an enhanced setting to the listed building with the removal of the large agricultural buildings which currently lie in close proximity.
- 4.186 The impact on trees and biodiversity must be assessed prior to any development as there are a number of mature trees and hedgerows and ponds and drainage ditches in and around the site boundary. These should also be taken into consideration in the design and layout of the site, and incorporated where possible to limit the impact of the built development on the wider landscape. Additional structural screening and planting will be required around the development, particularly on the north eastern boundary where the site is visible in the wider landscape.
- 4.187 The established hedgerow boundary on the road frontage should be retained where possible, where not impacted by the access arrangements. The northern areas of the site should be designed as natural open space areas with the potential to provide ecological zones.
- 4.188 Southern Water's assessment has revealed that additional sewerage infrastructure would be required to serve the proposed development. The development will therefore be required to make a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network. Early liaison should take place with the service provider in this regard.
- 4.189 Due to the location of this site, which is within High Halden Parish but adjoined to St. Michaels settlement (part of Tenterden Town), it is important that the scheme makes contributions to the appropriate local facilities. The scale of such contributions will be negotiated with the Borough Council in consultation with the two relevant Councils.

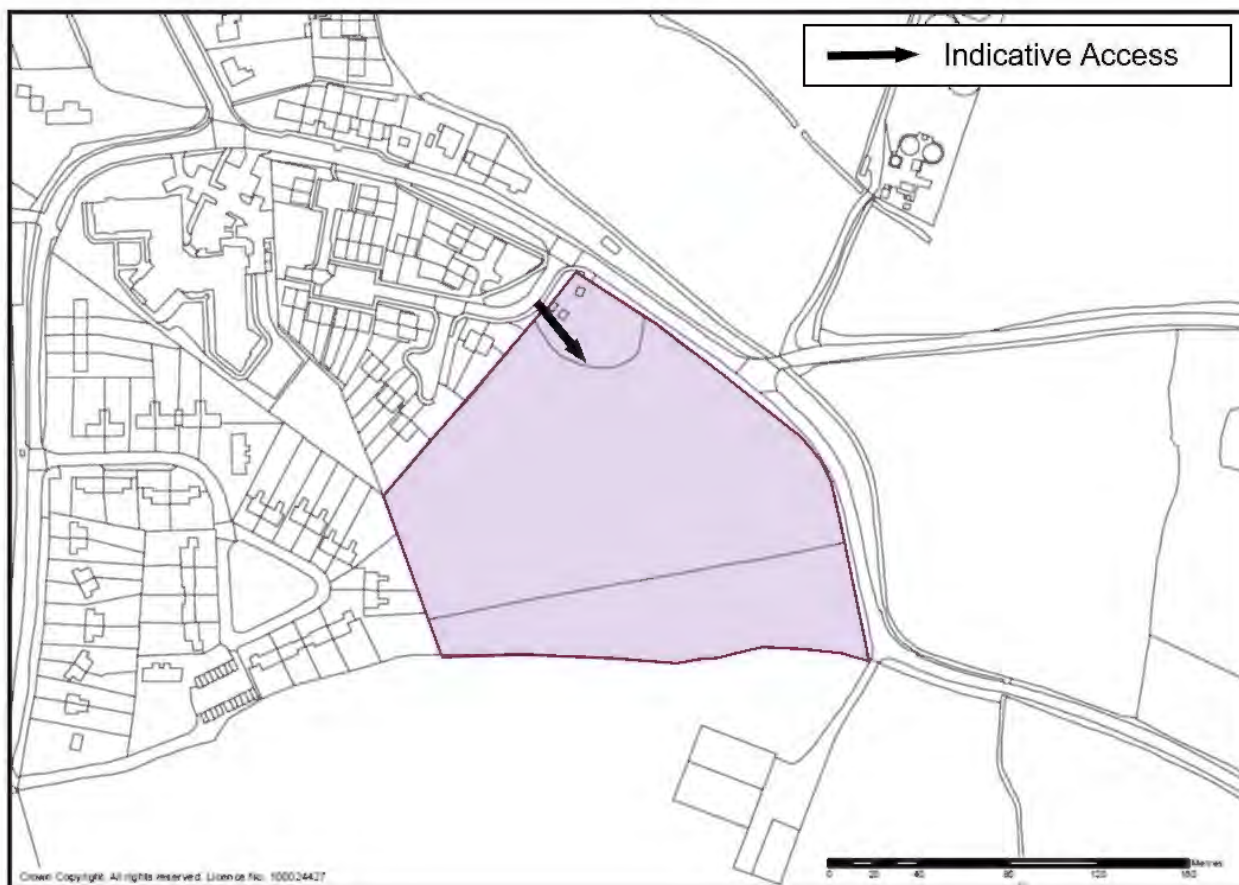
Policy S60 - St.Michaels, Land at Pope House Farm

The site at Pope House farm is proposed for residential development with an indicative capacity of 50 dwellings.

Development proposals for this site shall:

- a) Be designed and laid out in such a way as to preserve or enhance the character and setting of the adjoining listed building and associated properties. Particular attention also needs to be given to the eastern area of the site, where it adjoins the open countryside and is visible in the wider landscape. Densities should reflect the surrounding character of these locations and overall the site density should be around 30dph;
- b) Provide primary vehicle access from Ashford Road, including the provision of a right-turn lane with a pedestrian refuge island, as shown on the policies map;
- c) Provide new pedestrian routes throughout the development and connections to existing urban and rural routes and local services, with the potential of a pedestrian crossing explored with the Highway Authority;
- d) Retain the existing mature trees and hedgerow boundaries where possible and enhance the planting in the north eastern areas, to screen the development of the site from the wider countryside and create additional soft landscaping throughout the site to lessen the visual impact of the development;
- e) Ensure appropriate species and habitat surveys are carried out. Results will inform ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be provided on the site and proposals for implementation, maintenance and monitoring in accordance with Policy ENV1. Particular regard should be given to the provision of ecological corridors through the site and an area of open recreation space in the northern areas of the site which are not identified for residential development; and,
- f) Provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, in collaboration with the service provider.

Woodchurch, Appledore Road



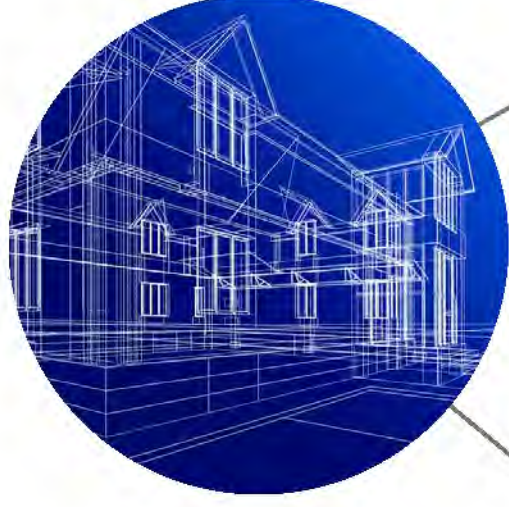
- 4.190 This site is located to the south east of the settlement of Woodchurch, adjacent to Bridge Close, with frontage onto Appledore Road. This is one of the main roads into the village and is also an important route between the larger settlements of Tenterden and Hamstreet (B2067).
- 4.191 The site is an agricultural field, currently used for grazing. On the north eastern boundary of the site is an agricultural vehicle entrance onto the main highway, and a small copse. Within the copse there appears to be building debris and sheds in disrepair and the area appears not to be maintained. There is a mature hedgerow boundary around the perimeter of the site.
- 4.192 To the south is a large double gabled corrugated iron farm building and beyond this, open countryside and farmland. To the north west of the site is a relatively recent local needs housing development, Bridge Close, with a large 4 storey care home beyond it which also fronts Appledore Road. To the south west is a residential close, Brattle, which is accessed on the opposite side of a 'loop' in the highway network. Development of this site would complete the current built form within the 'loop' and therefore is a natural extension to the settlement form in this part of the village.
- 4.193 At over two hectares in size, development of this site will provide around 30 dwellings. Development would be of low density (under 15dph), which reflects the location and adjacent countryside setting.

- 4.194 Given the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, a scheme of 2 storey buildings would be most appropriate here. The design and layout must take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site. The design of proposals coming forward should reflect the 'guidelines' set out in the Woodchurch Village Design Statement.
- 4.195 Access must be provided from Bridge Close, as shown indicatively on the policies map. This has been identified as a specific requirement by the Local Highway Authority due to the unsuitability of the Appledore Road entrance visibility and proximity of nearby junctions. Pedestrian footways should be provided throughout and link with existing footways in Bridge Close.
- 4.196 Vehicle access and the pedestrian footway may require removal of the copse, but there is an opportunity to improve the appearance of this area, whilst retaining some of the trees. There is one mature tree on the road frontage which must be retained as it is an important feature at the entrance to the village. The hedgerows around the site boundary must also be retained and enhanced where possible, to provide screening to the development. This should include the planting of some mature trees around the southern and eastern boundaries.
- 4.197 Southern Water's assessment has revealed that additional sewerage infrastructure would be required to serve the proposed development. The development will therefore be required to make a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network. Early liaison should take place with the service provider in this regard.

Policy S62 – Woodchurch, Appledore Road

The Appledore Road site is proposed for residential development with an indicative capacity of 30 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

- a) Be designed and laid out in such a way to reflect the edge of countryside location and take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site and rising land. Dwellings should be no more than 2 storeys and design of proposals should reflect the guidelines set out in the Woodchurch Village Design Statement;**
- b) Provide primary vehicle access from Bridge Close, as shown indicatively on the Policies map;**
- c) Provide new pedestrian footways throughout the development and connections to existing routes;**
- d) Retain the mature tree on the road frontage and the hedgerows around the site boundary and enhance where possible. This should include the planting of mature trees around the southern and eastern boundaries to create screening;**
- e) Provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, in collaboration with the service provider; and,**
- f) Provide future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

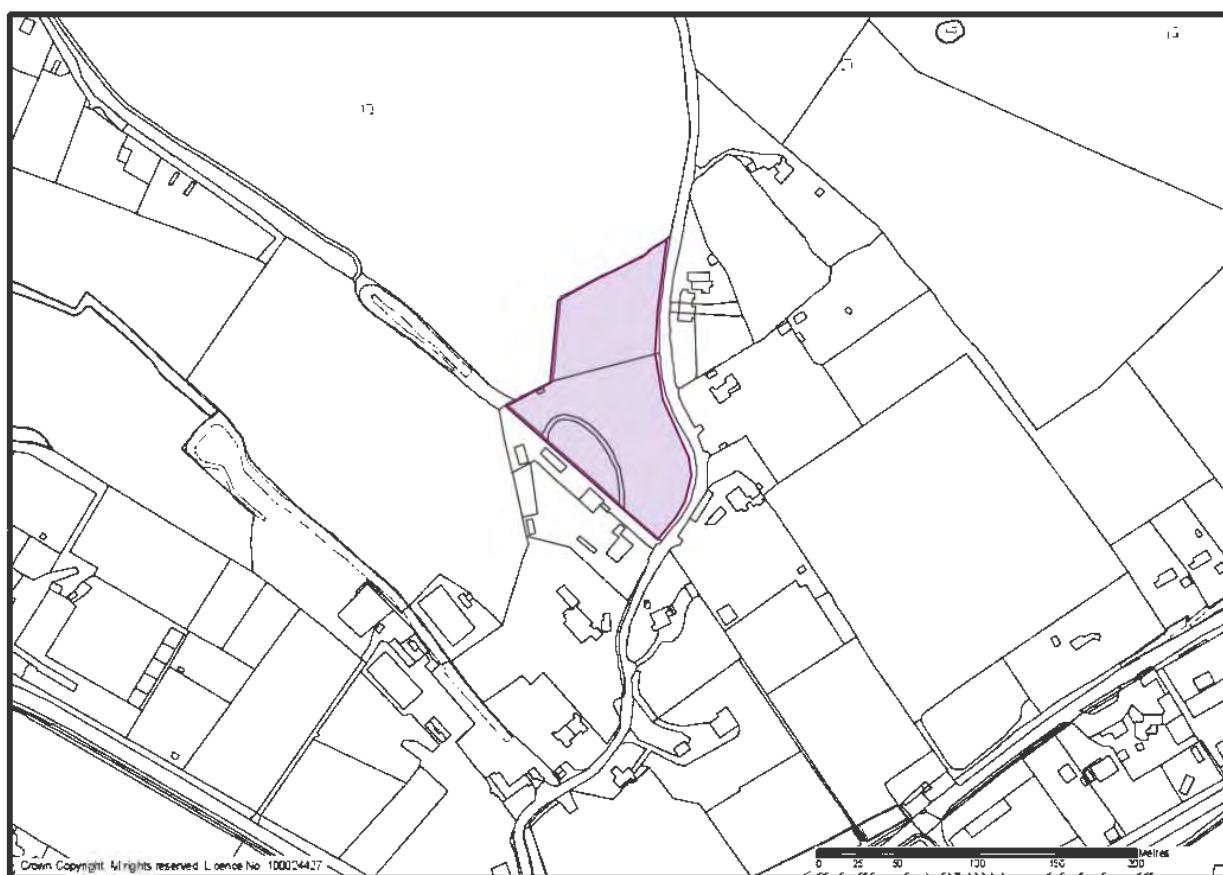


Chapter 5 Exclusive Homes and Traveller Sites

CHAPTER 5 – EXCLUSIVE HOMES AND TRAVELLER SITES

Exclusive Individually Designed Home Sites

- 5.1 Following the NPPF guidance which requires LPAs to promote a wide choice of quality housing, it is part of the vision of this Local Plan to provide a full range of housing that meets a wide variety of needs and choice of home for all residents. The opportunity for local need, affordable and starter housing for those not yet on the property ladder will be achieved through policies HOU1 and HOU2, and general market housing, of mixed sizes and varying locations, will be met through the wide range of site allocations within this plan.
- 5.2 However, there is also a need to provide opportunities for delivering housing which is of an ‘exclusive’ nature, at the top end of the housing market, and will cater for those people wishing to design their own, larger properties. Typically these are individually designed, extremely high quality buildings that exhibit the highest standards in architecture and design
- 5.3 To meet the requirements of the NPPF that all development should be sustainable, the council has assessed sites on the edges of settlement confines across the borough that would not be suitable for general market housing due to the location or other constraints, but could be appropriate for this type of extremely low density ‘exclusive’ housing. Two sites are identified for this particular type of use and the individual and specific design requirements for each site are indicated in each policy.

Chilham - Mulberry Hill

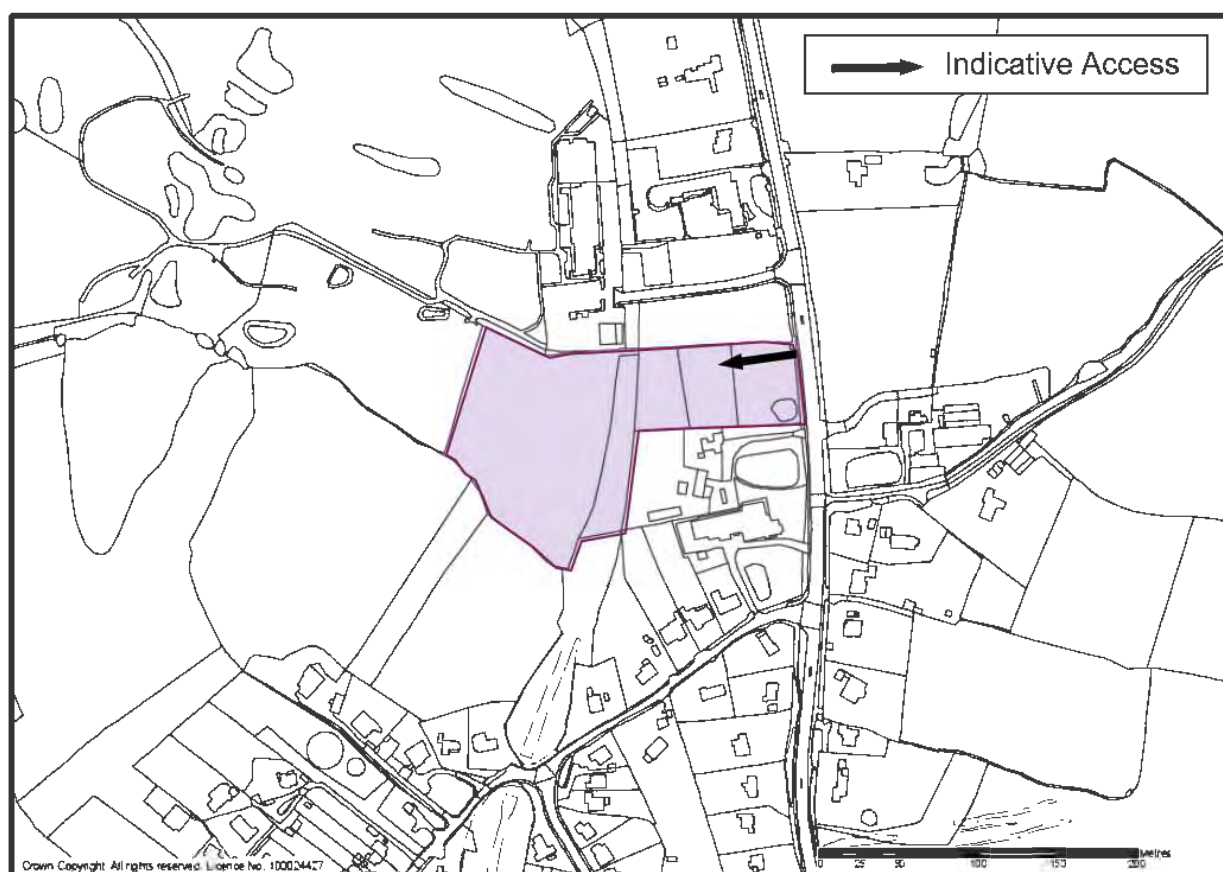
- 5.4 This site is located between the built area of Chilham village and the small hamlet of Old Wives Lees, on a connecting road between the two settlements. The road is a narrow rural lane, on a steep gradient, with limited vehicle passing places and no footpaths to either settlement. It is therefore unable to accommodate a large increase in vehicular traffic and would not be sustainable for general market housing due to the restricted access to services. However, there are a small number of large detached properties located around the site boundary.
- 5.5 The site is considered to be suitable for the provision of 2 low density 'high quality' detached dwellings.
- 5.6 The site is located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has views of the surrounding countryside setting. The high quality design of the 2 properties and the landscaping of the curtilage must make a positive contribution to the landscape setting and must have regard to the amenity of the neighbouring properties.
- 5.7 The buildings should be located on the eastern side of the site, a similar distance from the road to that of the neighbouring properties, to minimise views of the buildings from the AONB to the west.
- 5.8 The nearby village of Chilham is particularly important in heritage terms as it contains Chilham Castle and a large number of Listed Buildings within a Conservation Area which covers most of the settlement. There are also sites of archaeological importance in close proximity to the site. The design of the properties here must be sensitive to these defining heritage assets and characteristics of the local area. Design proposals coming forward must also indicate how the immediate setting could be enhanced.

Policy S41 - Chilham - Mulberry Hill, Old Wives Lees

Land on Mulberry Hill is allocated for 'exclusive' residential development of up to two dwellings.

Development proposals for this site must:

- a) Meet a high quality or innovative nature of design, which:**
 - **Responds to and is well integrated with the natural topography of the site**
 - **Pays particular regard to its setting, and utilises design to make a positive contribution to local character and that of the AONB**
 - **Uses locally appropriate materials**
- b) Retain and enhance the existing hedge and tree boundaries around the site to create soft landscaping along site boundaries;**
- c) Provide dedicated vehicular accesses for each dwelling; and,**
- d) Provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

St. Michaels - Beechwood Farm

- 5.9 This site is located on the A28, Ashford Road on the entrance to the built up settlement of St. Michaels, Tenterden. The London Beach Golf Club and Hotel is situated to the north of the site but is not visible, due to the set back nature of buildings. The site is overgrown scrub and contains a significant mature tree and hedgerow boundary, including a prominent Oak on the road frontage. There are views to the open countryside on the opposing side of the road and the housing directly to the south comprises detached dwellings in large curtilages, creating a rural setting.
- 5.10 The site contains many trees and hedgerows within and around, and a TPO protects high trees to the rear of the site. If these mature trees and hedges are removed it would significantly harm this rural setting and the character of the neighbouring properties and local area. The site is not suitable for average density, general market housing due to this impact, however, there is a footpath along the road towards the services in St. Michaels, and therefore the site is not considered to be completely 'isolated' in the countryside.
- 5.11 The site was submitted for low density 'high quality' detached dwellings and is considered suitable for such purpose, for up to 3 dwellings. This amount of development enables the retention of the mature trees and hedges, in particular the large Oak and retention of the pond that lies beneath it as suitable aquatic habitat.
- 5.12 The design of the properties here must be sensitive to characteristics of the local area and design proposals must indicate how they will work with the immediate setting and its topography. The buildings should be of innovative and high quality design and must not harm the immediate or wider setting. The properties should be situated away from the road frontage, in large plots, reflecting the built form of neighbouring properties to the south, and will share one access from Ashford Road as shown on the Policies Map.

Policy S42 - St. Michaels - Beechwood Farm

Land at Beechwood Farm is allocated for residential development of up to three dwellings.

Development proposals for this site must:

- a) Meet a high quality or innovative nature of design, which:**
 - **Responds to and is well integrated with the natural topography of the site; particularly the slope towards the west**
 - **Respects the particular landscape setting**
 - **Uses locally appropriate materials**
- b) Retain and wherever possible enhance the existing mature hedge and tree boundary around and within the site where possible to screen the development and reduce impacts on neighbouring properties;**
- c) Provide a singular vehicular access, as shown on the policies map; and,**
- d) Provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

Traveller Sites

- 5.13 The following two sites are specific allocations for sites for travellers in accordance with the need to plan for the housing requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is in line with government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and its companion document "Planning policy for Traveller sites".

Biddenden - Priory Wood



- 5.14 This existing gypsy and traveller site is located in the parish of Biddenden on the main Tenterden Road and within the Clapper Hill wooded farmlands landscape character area. It is located within a row of linear, low density development with a single access point provided between an extensive hedgerow. It is not visible from the road. The site currently has permission for one pitch which was granted in 2005. It is proposed that the area outlined above, which is only a small area of the overall site, has the capacity to provide for two additional pitches.
- 5.15 Due to the location of the site, the new pitches should be placed on the site where there is the least impact on neighbouring occupiers and any landscape views. This approach to caravan 'siting' could also be complimented with additional tree screening to lessen the impact. The 'siting' of the pitches and the need for any additional screening should be considered further at the planning application stage.
- 5.16 The wider boundary of the existing gypsy and traveller site is located directly adjoining ancient woodland to the south. However, the proposed position of the additional pitches is located 120m

from this woodland. Despite this distance from the ancient woodland the site for the new pitches does contain a number of trees and prior to the positioning of any static caravans or hard standing for touring caravans, a survey of the trees that could be impacted upon must be undertaken to identify trees that are of merit. If this is found to be the case, then new trees of the same species should be re-provided elsewhere, planting these on the wider site would be seen as an acceptable approach.

- 5.17 Finally, to ensure that the site can provide for the benefit of the wider Gypsy and Traveller community any pitches should only be occupied by those persons who meet the most current definition of Gypsies and Travellers.

Policy S43 - Biddenden - Priory Wood

Planning permission for 2 permanent pitches at Land at Priory Wood, as shown on the policies map, will be granted if the following criteria are met:

- a) The total capacity of the site does not exceed 3 traveller pitches;**
- b) Access to the site is via the existing access off Tenterden Road;**
- c) The additional pitches are sited in a location that provides the least impact on neighbouring occupiers and the landscape; and,**
- d) New trees are planted to replace any trees of merit that have been lost due to the development.**

Westwell - Watery Lane

- 5.18 This site is currently located on a parcel of land on the outskirts of the village of Westwell. The site is close to the M20 motorway to the north and is located adjacent to an agricultural field to the south, which itself is bounded by the railway line. The buildings of Sunnybridge Farm are located to the southwest, some 80 metres from the site entrance.
- 5.19 The overall site is located within an area designated as AONB. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty. Despite this designation the provision of a one pitch Gypsy and Traveller site in this location is considered acceptable, as this pitch is set at a lower level than the M20 motorway and is not visible from the wider area.
- 5.20 Due to the location of the site within direct proximity of the M20 motorway, the site would need to provide some form of acoustic protection on its northern boundary, to ensure the wellbeing of the residents that will reside there.
- 5.21 To ensure that the site can be provided for the benefit of the wider gypsy and traveller community, any personal permissions regarding parts of the site should be removed at planning application stage and the site shall only be occupied by those persons who meet the most current definition of Gypsies and Travellers.

Policy S44 - Westwell - Watery Lane

Planning permission will be granted for 1 pitch at Watery Lane, Westwell, if the following criteria is met:

- a) Noise mitigation measures are provided and maintained.**

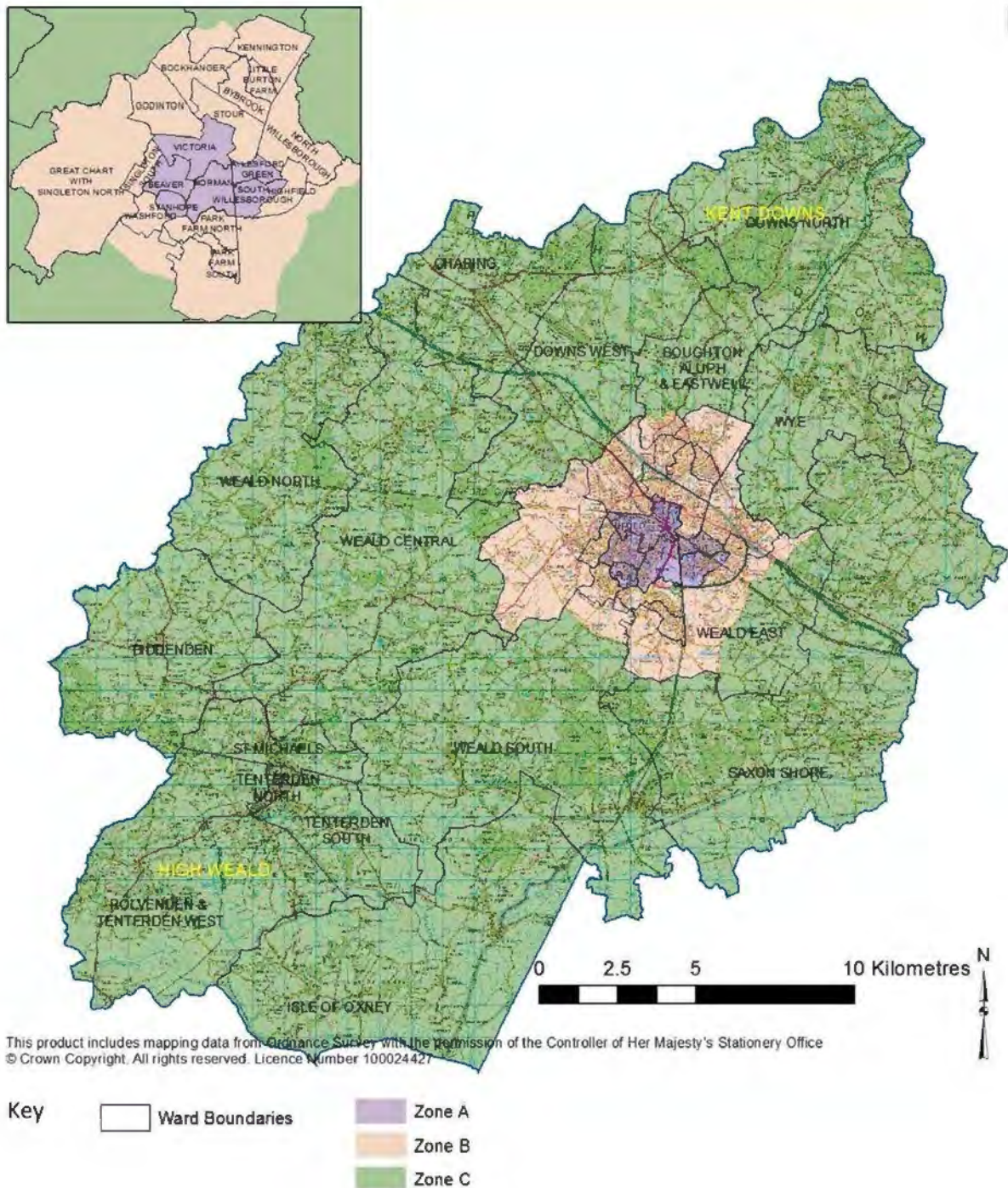


Chapter 6 Housing Topic Policies

CHAPTER 6 - HOUSING TOPIC POLICIES

Affordable Housing

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to ensure that Local Plans meet the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. Where there is an identified need for affordable housing, policies must be set to meet this need on site or where robustly justified through an off-site contribution of broadly equivalent value. The NPPF states that such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.
- 6.2 The Council's 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) establishes that around 50% of all future houses delivered in the borough should be affordable, in order to meet our 'full' objectively assessed housing needs. However it also states that this figure is unlikely to be delivered on the ground, mainly due to the housing market's inability to deliver it.
- 6.3 This conclusion is supported by whole plan viability testing that has been carried out in support of this Local Plan, which tested various levels of affordable housing requirements, including different thresholds and tenure mixes. The policy has been set at a level which is considered deliverable in terms of viability, when tested alongside all of the other policies set out in this Local Plan, balanced against the need to maximise potential affordable housing delivery to meet the identified need.
- 6.4 Affordable Housing for the purposes of this policy includes affordable/social rent, and affordable home ownership products which includes starter homes, rent to buy and shared ownership products.
- 6.5 The provision of affordable home ownership products set out in this policy has been set in line with the government's current position in that all sites of 10 units or more (or 0.5 ha or more in size) will provide for a minimum of 10% of such dwellings. The policy also seeks a minimum requirement for shared ownership and affordable/social rent products specifically, reflecting the requirement to meet local needs in the borough, balanced with what development can afford to deliver.
- 6.6 The viability evidence demonstrates significant variation in the viability of residential development across the Borough, which is mainly due to variations in sales values. The requirements for affordable housing have therefore been set at different levels across the value areas of the Borough in order to ensure development is viable and can be delivered. These areas are shown on map 2 below.
- 6.7 The implications of any subsequent boundary changes at ward or parish level on the implementation of this policy will be considered in an updated version of the Affordable Housing SPD.

Map 2: Affordable Housing Viability Areas

- 6.8 Ashford Town area covers the wards of Victoria, Aylesford Green, South Willesborough, Norman, Beaver and Stanhope. The viability evidence shows that developments in this area can only deliver 20% affordable home ownership products. As an exception to this, higher density flatted development is not viable at this level of starter home provision, and it is therefore proposed that such development will not be required to provide any affordable housing.
- 6.9 In a case of flatted development which is being promoted as Build to Rent, consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis, through the provision of independently verified viability evidence,

to its ability to deliver affordable private rented housing, up to a maximum of 20% of total dwellings.

- 6.10 Ashford Hinterlands area covers the wards of Godinton, Bockhanger, Stour, Bybrook, Little Burton Farm, Kennington, North Willesborough, Highfield, Park Farm North, Park Farm South, Singleton South, Washford, Great Chart with Singleton North, the southern area of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, the northern part of Weald South and the eastern area of Weald East. In this area, development can support up to 30% affordable housing, with 2/3 of this provided as affordable home ownership products, and 1/3 affordable/social rent.
- 6.11 Rest of Borough includes the villages and rural area covering the wards of: Saxon Shore; Wye; Downs North; Downs West; Charing; Weald North; Weald Central; Biddenden; Rolvenden and Tenterden West; Tenterden South; St Michaels; Tenterden North; Isle of Oxney; the northern area of Boughton Aluph and Eastwel; the western area of Weald East and; the southern area of Weald South. This area has the potential to support higher levels of affordable housing, and it is proposed that development within this area will provide a minimum of 40% affordable housing, with 3/4 of this provided as affordable home ownership products, and 1/4 affordable/social rent.
- 6.12 In line with national policy, the provision of affordable housing will normally be expected to be provided on-site. Where this is not possible, specific justification will need to be provided.
- 6.13 Given that this Plan has been subject to much more stringent viability testing than previous ones, and the policy has been framed from this evidence, it is expected that the number of applications where viability issues are identified should significantly reduce, and it will certainly not be expected as the norm.
- 6.14 Site specific circumstances will need to be clearly set out in any case being put forward. This will not include where land has been purchased speculatively above realistic threshold land values.
- 6.15 Whilst the viability testing has considered impacts of changing market conditions, it is impossible to predict what may happen within the housing market in the future. Should market conditions shift dramatically from those assumed within the viability assessment, flexibility in provision of affordable housing will be allowed for these reasons.
- 6.16 Where the requirements of this policy are proposed not to be met, viability evidence will be required to be submitted in support of an application and will be rigorously tested by independent advisors, paid for by the applicant. In these circumstances the Council will consider on a case-by-case basis flexibility in the provision of affordable housing, including: whether changes are needed to the tenure mix or the overall level of affordable housing; whether a financial contribution is justified to provide equivalent provision elsewhere or; whether the application of the Council's deferred contributions policy (Policy IMP2) is justified.
- 6.17 The following policy seeks to maximise the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs, taking into account the government's proposals for affordable home ownership products, whilst ensuring the requirements do not put the delivery of the Local Plan at risk as a whole.

Policy HOU1 – Affordable Housing

The Council will require the provision of affordable housing on all schemes promoting 10 dwellings or more (and on sites of 0.5 hectares or more), with provision being not less than the area specific requirements set out in the following table. All proposals are expected to meet their full affordable housing provision on-site.

Area*	Affordable/Social Rented requirements (% of total dwellings)	Affordable Home Ownership Products (% of total dwellings)	Total affordable housing requirements (% of total dwellings)
Ashford Town (Zone A)	0%	20% (including a minimum of 10% shared ownership)	20%
Ashford Hinterlands (Zone B)	10%	20% (including a minimum of 10% shared ownership)	30%
Rest of Borough (Zone C)	10%	30% (including a minimum of 20% shared ownership)	40%

All proposals will be expected to meet their full affordable housing provision on-site except in the following circumstances:

- 1. In the Ashford Town area*, flatted development (including the proportion of flats provided on a mixed flat and housing scheme) will not be required to provide any form of affordable housing. In the case of flatted development which is being promoted as Build to Rent, consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis, through the provision of independently verified viability evidence, to its ability to deliver affordable private rented housing, up to a maximum of 20% of total dwellings.**

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2. Should independently verified viability evidence establish that it is not possible to deliver the affordable housing as required by this policy, and the viability position is agreed by the Council, the Council will consider on a case-by-case basis flexibility in the provision of affordable housing, including through the consideration of the following options:

- a. Change in the tenure mix required,
- b. Reductions in the overall proportion of affordable housing,
- c. Provision of an off-site financial contribution in lieu of affordable housing provision on site, to secure the equivalent provision of affordable housing off-site,
- d. A combination of the above,
- e. Deferred contributions in line with policy IMP2.

If a site comes forward as two or more separate schemes, of which one or more falls below the appropriate threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of affordable housing on each part to match in total the provision that would have been required on the site as a whole.

**As shown on the policies map, with extract provided on Map 2 above*

Local Needs / Subsidised Specialist Housing

- 6.18 This policy applies to the delivery of local needs housing and subsidised specialist housing schemes. These are defined as:

Local needs housing: *Subsidised 'affordable' housing for people who have a genuine need and local connection to the area, as per the Council's housing procedure note.*

Subsidised Specialist housing schemes: *A specific type of subsidised housing accommodation (self-contained or communal) to cater for more vulnerable local residents who have a genuine need and local connection to the area. It allows certain residents to live a higher quality of life near to where they have support or are where they are familiar with their surrounding area.*

- 6.19 Both these types of housing are normally delivered on sites that would not normally be permitted for housing development because they are subject to planning policies of restraint. Therefore a specific exception sites policy for promoting their delivery is required in the Local Plan.
- 6.20 The NPPF supports this position by setting out under Para 54 that LPA's should '*be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate.....(and) should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.*

Local Needs Housing

- 6.21 Ashford Borough Council, working with Housing Associations and Parish Councils has an excellent record of local needs housing delivery. Over 300 local needs homes have been completed since the 1990s and this has been achieved through various iterations of Local Plan

policies where 100% of local needs housing is delivered on 'exception' sites.

6.22 In order to qualify as a local needs housing scheme, a proposal will need to meet all of the following criteria in that:

- it meets an identified housing need in the particular parish that cater for people who have a genuine local connection, in line with the Council's Rural Local Needs Housing Guidance Note,
- it provides local needs housing that is appropriate in terms of its tenure, type, size and cost to meet the needs identified,
- the local need housing element is conditioned so that subsequent occupancy of the dwelling will be controlled by a binding agreement to ensure the property remains available to meet local needs in the future and does not only benefit the first occupier.

6.23 In practice this type of development is normally brought forward by a Housing Association working in close liaison with the relevant Parish Council and Ashford Borough Council. Given that the specific need to be catered for is a local issue, the Parish Council should be well placed to provide a robust view on the need for the development. The Council therefore considers the Parish Council's views in relation to the need for the development particularly important in determining the acceptability of the proposal. It is expected that the Parish Council will play an integral role in the development of such proposals prior to it being submitted as a planning application; including involvement with the local needs survey. The requirements of a variety of groups of people that will be considered when assessing local needs is set out under the Council's Affordable Rural Local Needs Housing Guidance note.

6.24 The scale of any proposal for local needs housing will need to take account of:

- what affordable housing provision is planned nearby (on sites with planning permission or sites allocated in this Local Plan, including potential future starter homes) that could play a role in meeting some of the need identified and,
- its sustainability in planning terms with regards the impact on the character of the area, the landscape setting, the local road network and the amenity of existing residents.

Subsidised Specialist Housing

6.25 The Council recognises that some residents within the rural areas require specialist accommodation to enable them to live a certain quality of life and where moving away to a more urban area is not always appropriate.

6.26 Where an identified need for specialist accommodation from a Parish or a group of Parishes that share a common need for such accommodation is identified, the Council will consider the use of exception sites to bring forward carefully planned and designed schemes that meet the needs of a specific client group from within the local area. Where applicable, this could also involve specialist accommodation needs from outside the borough boundary where these are linked with the needs from parishes within the borough.

6.27 Such schemes could be brought forward for a range of vulnerable people. This varies from main local needs (as set out above) in that any proposals will be developed for a specific client group whose needs may require a degree of communal facilities incorporated together with the provision of self-contained accommodation.

- 6.28 The Council will support and encourage Parish Councils to work collectively to identify specific needs, appropriate sites and delivery partners to bring forward specialist housing to serve residents of rural communities in the Borough.

Delivery of Local Needs / Subsidised Specialist Housing

- 6.29 It is expected that local needs/ subsidised specialist housing schemes are delivered without any cross subsidy from the market being required. This approach has been the mainstay of the Council's policy in the past and has not, in the large majority of cases, adversely affected the delivery of local needs housing coming forward.
- 6.30 However, the Council accepts that in light of the reduction in government subsidy for Registered Providers (e.g. Housing Associations) and the requirement within the NPPF to provide a flexible policy approach to assist delivery, there may be occasions where cross subsidy might be needed to bring 'local needs' schemes forward. In this context there are several similarities with other issues of viability referenced in this Local Plan.
- 6.31 Any viability case will be rigorously tested by independent advisors for the Council. Where issues of viability demonstrably exist, the Council will adopt a hierarchical approach (as set out in the policy below) with regarding the nature of any cross-subsidising market housing.
- 6.32 Any enabling element of a scheme that is needed should fall within two targeted sectors of the housing market – starter homes and custom/ self-build properties. The merits of these schemes, and the desire for the Council to deliver these types of properties are set out under policies HOU1 and HOU6 within the Local Plan.
- 6.33 Focusing on these sectors of the housing market boosts their potential delivery and also maintains an element of 'affordability' to the overall approach which is consistent with the overall aim of this policy, even though these particular types of houses can't be conditioned to remain for local people in perpetuity.
- 6.34 Proposals which promote general market housing as a means of enabling the identified need element of a scheme will not normally be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding planning benefit from its delivery (this includes where it is required to deliver a specialist housing scheme)* or where there is no other cross subsidy solution. This is to avoid general market housing in the countryside in unsustainable locations – a key spatial aim of this Local Plan.

** For specialist housing schemes on exception sites where it has been demonstrated to not be viable to deliver 100% affordable housing, an element of open market sale could be incorporated in order to cross-subsidise the development as these schemes do not tend to lend themselves to starter home or custom / self-build housing. For example an extra care scheme for older people developed as a scheme with shared communal facilities and support services.*

Policy HOU2 - Local Needs / Subsidised Specialist Housing

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for local needs / subsidised specialist housing within or adjoining rural settlements identified under policy HOU3a as ‘exceptions’ to policies restraining housing development provided that all the following criteria are met:

- a) The local need or requirement for specialist housing is clearly evidenced;**
- b) The development is well designed, would not result in a significant adverse impact on the character of the area or the surrounding landscape and is appropriate to the scale and character of the village; and,**
- c) There would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers.**

It is expected that all local needs/ specialist housing schemes will be delivered without the need for any cross market subsidy.

Where this is not the case a proposal will need to be supported by robust and transparent viability evidence that will be independently verified by the Council. Should a viability case be proven, the Council will accept an enabling amount of starter homes and /or custom build/ self-build plots as a means of providing the necessary subsidy to allow the identified need to be delivered, providing the proposal remains in accordance with criteria b) – c) above.

Proposals which promote general market housing as a means of enabling the identified need element of a scheme will not normally be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding planning benefit from its delivery and that there is no other cross subsidy solution.

Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements

- 6.35 Residential development which comes forward on sites outside of those allocated in the Local Plan are known as housing ‘windfalls’. Historically, the Borough has had a strong tradition of delivering housing windfalls and they will contribute towards meeting our objectively assessed housing needs (see Strategic Policies chapter 3).
- 6.36 In line with the NPPF and supporting PPG, it is important that suitable development opportunities for housing within the built-up confines of particular settlements are allowed to come forward. The scale and quantity of housing development proposed should not be out of proportion to the size of the settlement concerned and the level of services present.
- 6.37 This allows for a sustainable pattern of development across the Borough and avoids the environmental, social and economic impacts that typically occur where development is proposed that is out of scale with the settlement. This approach is consistent with the strategic distribution of allocated sites, identified under policy SP2 of this Local Plan.
- 6.38 Ashford is the largest settlement in the Borough and is clearly the most sustainable location, enjoying access to good transport links and a range of services, facilities and shops. Although there is currently limited available land in the urban area to develop that has not been allocated

in this plan or is not already subject of a planning approval, it is likely that there will be opportunities for new development or infilling to come forward over the plan period.

- 6.39 The NPPF and PPG require that Local Planning Authorities promote sustainable development in rural areas to support the vitality of rural communities. Blanket policies restricting housing development in settlements should be avoided unless clearly supported by evidence.
- 6.40 New housing can enable rural communities to retain their existing services and community facilities and help to create a prosperous rural economy. However, a balance must be achieved between allowing new housing with the need to protect the character, form, heritage and attractiveness of the settlements themselves and the surrounding countryside.
- 6.41 In addition to Ashford, across the borough there are a number of rural settlements which play a service centre role in that they contain a number of services such as a primary school; a GP service; a community venue (such as a pub or a village hall); shops which are able to meet a range of daily needs and a commuter-friendly bus or train service. These locations are considered suitable for infilling and edge of settlement growth which is of an appropriate scale in relationship to the settlement size and availability of services and are included in both policies HOU3a and HOU5 below.
- 6.42 There are also a number of rural settlements which are smaller and play a more 'secondary' role, yet they still have a limited number of community facilities and services. These settlements often rely on the services of the nearby primary settlements or the town of Ashford and are therefore relatively 'accessible' in a rural context. Within these settlements, appropriate smaller scale development is acceptable in principle although this should also take account of the cumulative effects of any allocated sites and any other developments with extant planning permission in the area. Due to the more limited access to services and settlement patterns, some of these smaller settlements are not considered suitable for edge of settlement growth and are only included in policy HOU3a as suitable locations for growth within the built up confines.
- 6.43 The Borough's remaining rural settlements not mentioned in policy HOU3a or HOU5 below are not considered to play a service centre or secondary role on account of their small size and their lack of services and facilities (or proximity to these services/facilities). The built form of the settlement is also an important factor when determining whether they are suitable for growth as many are smaller hamlets or linear settlements and do not have opportunity for infilling within their settlement pattern. Residents of these settlements are typically reliant on the private car to meet all of their everyday needs. These settlements are considered to be countryside for the purposes of determining planning applications.

Important Considerations

- 6.44 In order to ensure that windfall schemes are integrated properly within an existing settlement, all development proposals will need to show how they can complement the existing settlement character in terms of their layout, design, scale and appearance.
- 6.45 Many rural settlements include important green spaces or gaps within the built up confines that contribute to the form and attractive character of the settlement and any harm or loss of these areas should be avoided. Proposals promoting the development of residential garden land must also meet the requirements of policy HOU10 of this Local Plan.
- 6.46 Development proposals must also avoid causing significant harm to nearby local heritage assets

and take into account environment, biodiversity and landscape considerations. Where proposals fall either within or within the setting of an AONB then the high level status of the intrinsic landscape value of the area will be an important material consideration.

- 6.47 Where proposals fall within an area that has an adopted village design statement that is supported by the Parish Council, schemes should be designed in accordance with the key principles contained within them.
- 6.48 Windfall residential opportunities within the rural area should focus on sites that are not in active use, particularly where those uses are contributing to the vitality of the area by providing employment or community facilities.

Settlement Confines

- 6.49 The traditional approach taken to defining settlement confines in the Borough has been to rely on a written definition, rather than a boundary line drawn on a map. This can provide a more flexible approach to assessing windfall developments, particularly given the number of settlements within the Borough and given that the built-up confines may change over time in response to development coming forward.
- 6.50 This approach has been largely successful in controlling the release of sites for windfall residential development, and over time the built up confines have become well established.
- 6.51 Therefore, for the purposes of this Plan, the built-up confines of a settlement are defined as:

'the limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (e.g garden areas)'.
- 6.52 This definition may, however, include sites suitable for 'infilling' which is the completion of an otherwise substantially built-up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap, usually capable of taking one or two dwellings only.
- 6.53 Some communities have defined a 'village envelope' through the Neighbourhood Plan process, whilst mapping a settlement's built-up confines can also be achieved informally by Parish Councils through undertaking a 'village envelope' exercise working with the Borough Council and the local community. On satisfactory completion of this exercise, the Borough Council will informally endorse the defined village envelope and will treat this as a material planning consideration for the purposes of determining relevant planning applications.

Policy HOU3a - Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements

Residential development and infilling of a scale that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement will be acceptable within the built-up confines of the following settlements:

Ashford, Aldington, Appledore, Appledore Heath, Bethersden, Biddenden, Boughton Lees, Brabourne Lees/Smeeth, Brook, Challock, Charing, Charing Heath, Chilham, Egerton, Egerton Forstal, Great Chart, Hamstreet, Hastingleigh, High Halden, Hothfield, Kenardington, Kingsnorth, Little Chart, Mersham, Newenden, Old Wives Lees, Pluckley, Pluckley Thorne, Pluckley Station, Rolvenden, Rolvenden Layne, Ruckinge, Shadoxhurst, Smarden, Stone in Oxney, Tenterden (including St Michaels), Warehorne, Westwell, Wittersham, Woodchurch and Wye.*

**Existing Kingsnorth village*

Providing that the following requirements are met:

- a) It is of a layout, design and appearance that is appropriate to and is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area;
- b) It would not create a significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents;
- c) It would not result in significant harm to or the loss of, public or private land that contributes positively to the local character of the area (including residential gardens);
- d) It would not result in significant harm to the landscape, heritage assets or biodiversity interests;
- e) It is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network;
- f) It does not need substantial infrastructure or other facilities to support it, or otherwise proposes measures to improve or upgrade such infrastructure;
- g) It is capable of having safe lighting and pedestrian access provided without a significant impact on neighbours or on the integrity of the street scene; and,
- h) It would not displace an active use such as employment, leisure or community facility, unless meeting the requirements of other policies in this Plan.

Where a proposal is located within, or in the setting of an AONB, it will also need to demonstrate that it is justifiable within the context of their national level of protection and conserves and enhances their natural beauty.

Policy HOU10 will also be applied to relevant garden land applications.

Housing Development Outside Settlements

- 6.54 In addition to residential windfall schemes within settlement confines, new housing outside settlement boundaries may also make a positive contribution to meeting housing needs across the borough. The NPPF is clear in its desire to promote sustainable development in general within the wider context of boosting housing supply, meeting a range of housing needs and using development as a means of improving the quality of a place and / or its setting.
- 6.55 In nearly all cases, isolated or remote sites in the countryside (especially on greenfield sites)

will not be sustainable in NPPF terms and para. 55 of the NPPF specifically advises against permitting new dwellings in isolated locations unless it meets one of the specified exception criteria.

- 6.56 However, for proposals that adjoin or are close to existing settlements, it is necessary to consider the relative social, economic and environmental advantages and disadvantages of a scheme as these are the 3 dimensions of ‘sustainable development’ described in para. 7 of the NPPF.
- 6.57 In assessing proposals, the scale of a development will be a major factor to bring into this equation. For larger schemes, the importance of good accessibility to local services and facilities will be of particular importance taking account of the quality and number of such services and the ability to either benefit or be accommodated by such services. The cumulative effects of windfall schemes on local services and facilities, having taken account of the impacts from any allocated sites in the area and any other developments with extant planning permission, will need to be considered, including whether existing services may readily absorb (or benefit from) the additional demand placed on them as a consequence. This should include reference to the availability of primary school places and GP provision at the nearest available facilities alongside the scale and quality of local community facilities. This may also include any supplementary effects on existing residents, for example as a result of reduced school catchment areas.
- 6.58 Although some reliance on the private car is inevitable in rural locations, the availability of good public transport links, cycling and walking routes can help to reduce that reliance and enable better accessibility to services that may only be available in higher-order rural settlements or Ashford itself. Basic day to day services such as a grocery shop, public house, play / community facilities and a primary school should be within a generally accepted easy walking distance of 800 metres in order to be considered sustainable, although the specific local context may mean a higher or lower distance would be a more appropriate guide.
- 6.59 The impact of a scheme on the character of a settlement or rural area can be harder to quantify and, in essence, relates to the inherent qualities that help to define what makes a place and gives it an identity. This will vary from settlement to settlement taking account of its history and heritage and how it has grown over many years within its landscape setting. For example, larger-scale modern extensions to small rural villages have not traditionally been the means by which those villages have grown, especially those in locations away from the main local highway or public transport network.
- 6.60 This policy therefore does not include some of the smaller settlements, which may only be suitable for minor development and infilling in accordance with Policy HOU3a.
- 6.61 A proposal for residential development must also demonstrate that it (and its associated infrastructure) is well designed and sited in a way that can: sit sympathetically within the wider landscape; enhance its immediate setting; be consistent with any prevailing character and built form, including its scale, bulk and the material used; does not harm neighbouring uses or the amenity of nearby residents.

Isolated Residential Development

- 6.62 The NPPF clearly states that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided, unless there are special circumstances. Para. 55 of the NPPF lists a number of exceptions to the general

rule of restraint and these are replicated in the policy below, alongside proposals for replacement dwellings. In considering applications for the re-use of redundant or disused buildings, proposals will need to demonstrate that the existing buildings have been on site for a number of years and are no longer needed for their current or previous use. The building shall have been appropriately maintained and not allowed to fall into disrepair as a prelude to suggesting an enhancement to the setting of the area.

- 6.63 Proposals for exceptional dwellings under the second part of policy HOU5 shall be subject to a rigorous and independent assessment of their design quality. The views of the Ashford Design Panel will need to be sought and, where necessary, proposals amended to ensure their views are reflected. The architecture of a proposal and how that responds to the landscape character and setting of the site will be fundamental in establishing whether the scheme is genuinely exceptional or not.

Policy HOU5 - Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside

Proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines of the following settlements will be acceptable:

Ashford, Aldington, Appledore, Bethersden, Biddenden, Brabourne Lees/Smeeth, Challock, Charing, Chilham, Egerton, Great Chart, Hamstreet, High Halden, Hothfield, Kingsnorth*, Mersham, Pluckley, Rolvenden, Shadoxhurst, Smarden, Tenterden (including St Michaels), Wittersham, Woodchurch and Wye.

**Existing Kingsnorth village*

Providing that each of the following criteria is met:

- a) The scale of development proposed is proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day to day service provision currently available and commensurate with the ability of those services to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in this Local Plan and committed development in liaison with service providers;**
- b) The site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement, and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;**
- c) The development is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area;**
- d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;**
- e) The development must conserve and enhance the natural environment and preserve or enhance any heritage assets in the locality; and,**
- f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design and meets the following requirements:-**
 - i) it sits sympathetically within the wider landscape,**
 - ii) it preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement,**
 - iii) it includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside,**

Continued...

- iv)** it is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used,
- v)** it does not adversely impact on the neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents,
- vi)** it would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and / or adjoining area and not adversely affect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENV1.

Residential development elsewhere in the countryside will only be permitted if the proposal is for at least one of the following:-

- Accommodation to cater for an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- Development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- It is the re-use of redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting;
- A dwelling that is of exceptional quality or innovative design* which should be truly outstanding and innovative, reflect the highest standards of architecture, significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area;
- A replacement dwelling, in line with policy HOU7 of this Local Plan;

Where a proposal is located within or in the setting of an AONB, it will also need to demonstrate that it is justifiable within the context of their national level of protection and conserves and enhances their natural beauty.

****These proposals will be required to be referred to the Ashford Design Panel and applications will be expected to respond to the advice provided.***

Policy HOU10 will also be applied to relevant garden land applications.

Self-Build / Custom Build Development

- 6.64 The Council will support the principle of Self and Custom Build development as an opportunity to bring choice to the housing market as well as enabling local people to design and build their own home that will meet their bespoke needs.
- 6.65 The NPPF makes it clear that LPAs should identify and make provision for the housing ‘needs of different groups in the community such as people wishing to build their own homes’. ‘Self-build housing’ is identified by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations as a dwelling built by (or commissioned by) someone to be occupied by them as their sole or main residence for at least three years. Custom-Build homes encompass self-build but tends to be where individuals work with specialist developers to build their home.
- 6.66 This policy will contribute towards the availability of self and custom build plots enabling local residents to deliver high quality homes, as well as supporting the local economy providing work for builders and associated trades.
- 6.67 The establishment of a Right to Build Register and evidence gained from future SHELAAAs and SHMAAs has and will continue to help inform the level of need for Self Build. Based on current

numbers on the Ashford Self and Custom Build Register, plots on allocated sites have the potential to meet a reasonably high proportion of demand, but the Council will continue to explore complementary delivery mechanisms which could include windfall proposals for self and custom build (in line with other policies within this Plan).

- 6.68 The Council will also support qualifying bodies in taking forward local self and custom build projects through the neighbourhood planning process, subject to the wider planning considerations within the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

Policy HOU6 - Self and Custom Built Development

The Council will support self and custom build development by requiring all sites within and on the edge of the towns of Ashford and Tenterden delivering more than 40 dwellings to supply no less than 5% of serviced dwelling plots for sale to self or custom builders.

In the villages and rural areas sites delivering more than 20 dwellings must supply no less than 5% of serviced dwelling plots for sale to self or custom builder.

The following criteria must be met:

- a) Where this equates to more than 5 custom build dwellings on a single site a Design Brief should be submitted and agreed with the Council prior to the application being submitted;**
- b) Where plots have been prominently marketed for sale to self or custom builders for at least 12 months, and have not sold, the plot can return to the developer to be developed and/or sold as open market housing; and,**
- c) Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to sustainable development.**

Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

- 6.69 Proposals involving the replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside need careful management in order to protect the character and integrity of the rural landscape of the borough. Given that such forms of development encompass isolated new dwellings, which are an exception to the other policies of restraint, together with the protected status of much of the borough's countryside, design issues are of particular importance when proposals of this kind are considered. Developments, in particular, will need to ensure that any replacement dwellings sit sympathetically with the existing character and appearance of the local area in order to prevent overbearing and bulky replacement dwellings, whatever their scale or increase in footprint or mass.
- 6.70 Applications will therefore be required to justify: the design approach to the replacement dwelling; its proposed scale, bulk and materials; its siting in relation to the surrounding built form, character of the street scene or the position in the landscape; highway access details; the impact on any neighbouring uses and residential amenity and; any resultant implications for the extent of residential curtilage. In certain circumstances there may be a need to focus on scale, as a point of principle. These circumstances are likely to manifest themselves particularly in sensitive locations within the borough, such as the Kent Downs and the High Weald AONBs,

Conservation Areas or where a dwelling would be clearly prominent in the landscape. Here, scale might need to be restricted to respond to these particular sensitivities.

- 6.71 Usually the replacement dwelling will be required to be sited on, or adjacent to the site of the existing dwelling. However, where there is an opportunity to achieve a development with a reduced visual impact on the landscape or a reduced impact on neighbouring uses or occupiers by changing the siting of the dwelling, then this will be encouraged. In such circumstances, where the replacement dwelling is sited differently to the existing, the Council will seek through condition or agreement the demolition of the existing dwelling within 3 months of the occupation of the replacement, in order to prevent two dwellings remaining on site in contravention of policy restricting additional residential development in the open countryside.
- 6.72 Although the ability of the planning system to control larger extensions to properties has been much reduced in recent years, the importance of maintaining a housing stock comprised of a wide choice of properties catering for the needs of different groups in the community, remains enshrined in the NPPF (paragraph 50). To this end, replacement dwellings that are larger than the existing dwelling will usually only be granted planning permission subject to a condition withdrawing permitted development rights for residential extensions, in order to maintain the integrity of the policy's intentions and bring future alterations to the scale and nature of the new property within the control of the planning system.

Policy HOU7 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

Proposals for a replacement dwelling will be permitted provided that the proposal:

- a) Is replacing an existing individual dwelling that has a lawful residential use;**
- b) Is designed to ensure it does not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the area taking into account the surrounding built form and the existing street-scene;**
- c) Is suitable in terms of its scale, bulk, massing and the materials used;**
- d) Can be suitably accessed; and,**
- e) Would not materially harm any neighbouring uses including the living conditions of nearby residents.**

Where a replacement dwelling is proposed in a Conservation Area or a visually prominent position in the landscape, or within or in the setting of an AONB, proposals will be required to address the specific sensitivities that are prevalent in these areas. Particular consideration will be given to the scale and wider impact of a replacement dwelling in these locations.

Where planning approval is given, planning obligations/conditions may be applied to:

- remove 'permitted development' rights where a replacement dwelling has increased the floorspace of the existing dwelling and where a further increase in floorspace may make the development unacceptable with regards to criterion b, c and e above, and**
- ensure that the existing dwelling is removed within 3 months of the occupation of the replacement dwelling (where an alternative location is proposed), to prevent isolated development in the countryside which does not meet the requirements of Policy HOU5.**

Residential Extensions and Standalone Annexes

- 6.73 The enlargement of dwellings to accommodate additional living space is important in ensuring that the existing housing stock is suitable for the current and future residents of the borough. By modernising, adapting or enlarging an existing dwelling its life can be significantly extended, which in turn, contributes to the future sustainable development of the Borough. Small scale extensions and alterations to properties have in recent years often become categorised as 'permitted development' under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015.
- 6.74 Where an extension requires permission, the Council requires that the scale and visual impact of such development is appropriate in relation to both the existing dwelling and the surrounding area and that the living conditions of neighbours are not adversely affected. To this end, alterations and extensions should be designed to complement the scale, massing and materials of the existing building, preserve features of architectural interest, provide a satisfactory relationship between the old and new fabric and not lead to overlooking, overpowering or overshadowing of neighbouring properties. Therefore, when assessing proposed extensions, account will be taken of the potential impact of the extension on the living conditions of any neighbouring occupiers and on any other adjacent uses, its impact on the character of the existing dwelling and its setting in the landscape, including its contribution to the street scene.
- 6.75 In AONBs and Conservation Areas, particular attention will be paid to the size and design of extensions. In these protected locations it is more likely that only smaller extensions which clearly present as subordinate to the main dwelling will be acceptable. Applications will need to demonstrate that particular attention has been paid to the design of extensions to the roofspace, which should be kept as simple as possible. Throughout the borough, where very small rural dwellings are proposed for extension, the standard of the existing accommodation will also be taken into account.

Policy HOU8 - Residential Extensions

Proposals for extensions to dwellings will be permitted if each of the following criteria is met:

- a) The existing dwelling* enjoys a lawful residential use;**
- b) The proposed extension would not materially harm any neighbouring uses including the living conditions of adjoining residents;**
- c) The proposed extension is suitable in size, scale and materials to the existing dwelling to which it should be physically linked, also taking into account the existing standard of accommodation for extensions to smaller rural properties; and,**
- d) The proposed extension is designed to ensure it does not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the area taking into account the surrounding built form and /or street scene.**

Where an extension is proposed in a Conservation Area or a visually prominent position in the landscape, or within or in the setting of an AONB, proposals will be required to address the specific sensitivities that are prevalent in these areas. Particular consideration will be given to the scale and wider impact in these locations.

**The term 'existing dwelling' is defined as the property at the time of the planning application*

Annexes

- 6.76 Annexes which are physically linked to the main dwelling will be determined against Policy HOU8, including in schemes where they contain all the facilities essential for independent residential occupation.
- 6.77 Standalone annexes can serve a number of functions - for example to provide a home for elderly or infirm relatives unable to live independently, or for staff accommodation and will be supported where the annexe is sited appropriately and that it has a real and functional relationship between the occupation of the main dwelling and the annexe. It is unlikely that a standalone annexe located outside the curtilage of the main dwelling, or without a demonstrable functional relationship with the main dwelling, will be supported in principle.
- 6.78 Annexes within the curtilage of listed buildings or buildings that are a historical asset or are located within a conservation area, which have particular character, are likely to be difficult to achieve in terms of satisfactory design. Where these proposals cannot be sited in an acceptable way beyond the curtilage of these buildings, such proposals will not be supported.
- 6.79 For all annexe schemes (attached or standalone) any planning permission is likely to be conditioned so as to ensure that the annexe remains used for its intended purpose. This is to avoid an annexe becoming an independent and separate residential unit at some point in the future without planning permission.

Policy HOU9 - Standalone Annexes

Proposals for detached annexe accommodation to residential property will be permitted where:

- a) The existing dwelling* enjoys a lawful residential use;**
- b) The proposed annexe would not materially harm any neighbouring uses, including the living conditions of nearby residents;**
- c) The proposed annexe is suitable in size, scale and materials and clearly ancillary and visually subordinate to the principal dwelling;**
- d) It is sited to achieve a clear dependency is retained between the annexe and the main building at all times and;**
- e) The annex is sited to ensure a clear dependency is retained between the annex and the main building at all times;**
- f) The proposed annexe is designed to ensure it does not result in significant harm to the overall character and appearance of the surrounding area taking into account the surrounding built form and street scene.**

Where an annexe is proposed in a Conservation Area or a visually prominent position in the landscape, or within or in the setting of an AONB, proposals will be required to address the specific sensitivities that are prevalent in these areas. Particular consideration will be given to the scale and wider impact in these locations.

****The term 'existing dwelling' is defined as the property at the time of the planning application***

Development of Residential Gardens

- 6.80 Much of the character and attractiveness of the borough's towns and villages is derived from private garden areas. Residential gardens provide important breaks or gaps in built up frontages and in overall built massing, play an important amenity role by providing private recreational space for residents and providing important wildlife habitats and green networks particularly where the gardens are well established. Biodiversity levels in residential gardens are often cited as being higher than those in agricultural use. The Council is keen to reflect the value it places on such areas in policy.
- 6.81 Para 53 of the NPPF states that Councils should consider providing a policy framework to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, although such an approach needs to be balanced against the objectives of sustainable development and of encouraging development in the first instance on land that was previously developed. Recent court rulings have supported the exemption of private residential gardens in built up areas from the definition of previously developed land.
- 6.82 The uncontrolled loss of residential gardens can lead to a piecemeal and inappropriate pattern or style of development being delivered. This can individually or cumulatively erode openness, disrupt wildlife corridors, and harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Policy HOU10 - Development of Residential Gardens

Development proposals involving the complete or partial redevelopment of residential garden land will be permitted provided the proposed development complies with the Council's external space standards as set out in Policy HOU15 and;

- a) Windfall Housing Policy HOU3a or HOU5 (as relevant);**
- b) It does not result in significant harm to the character of the area including the surrounding grain and built pattern of development, the prevailing building density, line, frontage width, building distance from the road, existing plot sizes and visual separation between dwellings; and,**
- c) It does not result in significant harm to wildlife corridors and biodiversity habitats.**

Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 6.83 Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are properties which are occupied by unrelated households that share one or more facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen. HMOs can provide useful accommodation, but in many cases the property was not originally designed for such intensive residential use.
- 6.84 In 2010 the government introduced a new use class (C4), which covers small shared houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities. Planning permission is generally not required for a change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to C4, as it is permitted under the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO). Large houses in multiple occupation (those with more than 6 people sharing) are unclassified by the Use Classes Order, and planning permission is required for a change use of from a C3 or C4 to a large house in multiple occupation.

- 6.85 The Council subsequently approved an Article 4 direction so that planning permission would still be required for a change of use from C3 to C4 in specific wards in Ashford. A loss of control over such changes is considered to harm the sustainability of neighbourhoods within Ashford over the long term. An increase in concentrations of HMOs in an area alters the population mix, impacting on the facilities and services that can be supported, as well as affecting residential amenity and social cohesion. It can give rise to noise, nuisance, more callers, a higher parking requirement and visual deterioration of buildings and gardens. These issues cannot be addressed successfully by neighbourhood management measures alone. In recent years HMOs have encroached into areas traditionally characterised by family housing.
- 6.86 The problems associated with high concentrations of HMOs have been recognised nationally, by residents and organisations, the press and by the government. The study 'Evidence Gathering-Housing in Multiple Occupation And Possible Planning Responses' carried out by Ecotec for the government in 2008 summarises the impacts as including:
- antisocial behaviour, noise and nuisance
 - imbalance and unsustainable communities
 - negative impacts on physical environment and streetscape
 - pressures upon parking provision
 - increased crime
 - growth in private rented sector at expense of owner-occupier
 - pressure upon local community facilities, and
 - restructuring of retail, commercial services and recreational facilities to suit the lifestyles of the predominant population.
- 6.87 In Ashford, the principal impacts have been from noise and disturbance, impact on the environment from neglected gardens, litter, overflowing bins, and pressure on parking due to more people living in an HMO than would generally live in the same size house. The principal areas of concern in Ashford, and where the Article 4 direction has been put in place are:
- South Ashford where there has been a concentration of conversion to HMO of three storey properties in Beaver Ward. Some also have the ground floor garage converted into a separate flat. This has resulted in issues of noise, antisocial behaviour and parking pressures.
 - Bushy Royds and Little Burton Farm where there has been increased pressure on parking on street,
 - Drummond Grove, Adams Drive, Billington Grove, Rayworth Court and Stroudly Close where there is potential for the above mentioned impacts if additional HMOs are created.
- 6.88 Consideration of the impact of traffic in relation to HMOs should be qualitatively different from that for residential (C3) uses outlined in Policy TRA3a. HMOs can make efficient use of existing housing stock, thereby contributing to sustainable development, but are seldom constructed as new builds, and therefore it would not be effective to establish a one size fits all approach establishing specific parking standards. Furthermore, since HMOs are frequently situated within walking distance of local amenities and transport links, often a lower level of parking provision would in theory be appropriate than for suburban or rural properties.
- 6.89 The main issues when HMOs do not provide on-plot parking is the knock on impact on local amenity and on highway safety that can result. Applications for HMOs should consider the likely impact of non-provision of on-site parking on highway safety, including visibility,

potential for obstruction, increased congestion and, if relevant, economic impact on local business. These should be considered on a local case-by-case basis, and any design and access statement should outline how these issues have been considered and, where necessary, mitigated. In certain cases, for example in town centres with a range of transport options, it is likely that on-site parking could be superfluous and will not be required.

- 6.90 The following policy sets out the criteria which will be considered when determining applications for new HMOs or when deciding whether to take enforcement action.

Policy HOU11 – Houses in Multiple Occupation

Proposal for Houses in Multiple Occupation (small or large) will only be permitted where the proposed development, taken by itself or in combination with existing HMOs in the vicinity of the site, would not result in an unacceptably harmful impact in respect of any of the following:

- a) Residential amenity, caused by increased noise and disturbance;**
- b) Highway safety, caused by insufficient onsite parking provision thereby resulting in an unacceptable increase in on street parking; or**
- c) Visual amenity, including that from inappropriate or insufficient arrangements for dustbin storage.**

Permission granted will normally be subject to a condition that restricts the number of occupants allowed to reside at the property as their main residence.

Residential Space Standards (internal)

- 6.91 The Council's supplementary planning document entitled 'Residential Space and Layout' adopted in 2011, provided guidance to support the Core Strategy 2008 Design Quality policy CS9. In part (g), policy CS9 requires flexibility, adaptability and liveability as aspects of the design quality. The Local Plan 2030 provides an opportunity to include detailed requirements concerning these aspects of design quality.
- 6.92 The Government has introduced a set of Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure consistency of approach across the sector and invited Local Planning Authorities to consider including them in their Local Plans. The national space standards cover internal space only and rather than return to a position of having no minimum space standards, the council considers that new developments should meet at least the national standards if design quality, flexibility, adaptability and livability standards are to be maintained.
- 6.93 The national space standards are based upon the areas required to accommodate essential furniture and storage items and the need for the occupants to be able to circulate around them. Good practice would be to exceed these standards where practical in order to provide a good range of accommodation.
- 6.94 The space standards help to ensure that new homes have sufficient space for the number of occupants they are designed to accommodate including storage of functional and personal items. Minimum bedroom sizes, floor to ceiling heights and storage space are included in the standards set out in the policy below.

- 6.95 The amount of space for cooking, living and eating is not defined in the new standards. The rooms used for those purposes are important areas for families to interact and usually include areas for play, study and storage as well as the basic functions of each of these areas. Although one large room is sometimes provided to accommodate all of these functions in homes designed for one or two people, this is not usually an appropriate layout for family occupation. At least two separate rooms, rather than one large room, should therefore be provided to accommodate cooking, eating and living in homes suitable for family occupation with three or more bedrooms. Provision of a separate room does not necessarily require any increase to the gross internal floor area.
- 6.96 In line with the provisions set out in policy IMP2 of this Local plan, the Council accepts that it may, on occasion be necessary to make an exception to development (as a whole or in part) meeting the national minimum standards. Such exceptions could relate to issues of viability or the feasibility and/or practicality of implementing the standards. These proposals will need to provide strong justification as to why the standards are not able to be met.

Policy HOU12 - Residential Space Standards (internal)

All new residential development, including dwellings created through subdivision or conversion, shall comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards set out in the table below.

Table 1: Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²)

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bedspaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Build-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37)*			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	2.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4
	8p	125	132	138	

* Where a 1b1p has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m², as shown bracketed.

Accessibility Standards

- 6.97 Local Planning Authorities are required by the NPPF to plan to create safe, accessible environments and promote inclusion and community cohesion, to take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and plan to meet this need.
- 6.98 In order to help to fulfil this requirement, a proportion of all new dwellings created as ‘new build’, should be built to comply with a minimum of ‘level 2’ access (building regulations part M4 (2)). The Council had a good record of ensuring delivery of Lifetime Homes, the standards of which are now broadly reflected in the M4 (2) requirements, and houses built to this standard are designed to meet the needs of occupiers throughout their lifetime. Level 2 accessibility is intended to allow a home to be accessible by providing facilities such as space to manoeuvre a wheelchair, the availability of an entrance level WC with shower drainage and enough space for an entrance level bedspace. Level 2 homes are also built to adaptable standards so that additional facilities such as a stair lift or hoists can be easily fitted without major cost and upheaval.
- 6.99 The features of a level 2 home help to provide a safe, accessible living environment to those with reduced mobility due to accident, illness or age. Homes with this degree of accessibility can extend the period of independent living, reduce the length of a hospital stay and allow people to be cared for in their own home if the need arises. For those with permanent mobility problems, more specialised wheelchair accessible accommodation provides greater freedom for independent living. Larger room sizes are required to enable greater ease for wheelchair dependent occupants.
- 6.100 In early 2017 the Council’s Housing Register revealed that 7.5 percent of those requiring accommodation required dwellings built to M4 (3b) standard. For this reason, the provision of homes to this higher standard will be set as the maximum benchmark for the affordable rented element of a development.
- 6.101 In addition parking spaces provided in connection with M4 (2) and M4 (3) dwellings may need to be larger to facilitate the increased access requirements, as per the current building regulations.

Policy HOU14 - Accessibility Standards

Accessibility in compliance with building regulations part M shall be provided as follows:-

- a) At least 20 percent of all ‘new build’ homes shall be built in compliance with building regulations part M4 (2) as a minimum standard; and,**
- b) In ‘new build’ properties which are affordable, a proportion of wheelchair accessible homes complying with building regulations part M4 (3b) will be required. The number of homes built to M4 (3b) standards will be dependent upon the number of households on the Council’s housing waiting list requiring wheelchair accessible homes and the suitability of the location for wheelchair users, and should be provided within the affordable rented element of the scheme, capped at a maximum of 7.5%.**

Private External Open Space

- 6.102 Ashford Borough Council's Residential Space and Layout SPD adopted in 2011 included guidance for providing residents with a private area of external space. The need for private outdoor amenity space as suggested by the Council's SPD was supported at appeal in 2015. The main issues in the appeal were considered to be harm to the character and appearance of the area and the unsatisfactory living conditions of future occupants in relation to the provision of private amenity space.
- 6.103 Outdoor private space is highly valued and it is important for both children and adults to have access to some private, or at least semi-private outdoor space for play and relaxation as well as more practical requirements. In the case of non flatted developments, this can most easily be provided in the form of a private enclosed garden. The provision of a garden also makes it easier to provide outside covered storage for items such as bicycles, garden tools, garden furniture and outdoor toys.
- 6.104 In the case of flats, balconies or terraces/roof gardens may take the place of a garden. Easily accessible communal areas may be acceptable but lack the element of privacy, which is important for relaxation. Lack of outdoor private space will therefore only be acceptable if there are particular design features which mitigate against this lack of provision.
- 6.105 A private outdoor space is one which is not overlooked from the street or other public place. For a house or ground floor flat a garden with direct access is the best solution. It should accommodate an area for drying washing, for garden furniture and play space as well as planted areas to provide an attractive environment for residents. In order to accommodate these elements in a private garden attached to a house, a minimum area based on the 10m long 'rule of thumb' multiplied by the width of the dwelling provides a helpful starting point. The first 5m of this space should not be overlooked by surrounding properties. Another advantage of the 10m minimum depth is that it imposes a reasonable separation distance between properties where the rear windows face one another. However, where overlooking is not an issue, the standard can be flexible providing it can be adequately demonstrated that alternative solutions provide a sufficient area of usable private outdoor space.
- 6.106 A balcony or terrace on flatted developments can provide space for outdoor relaxation with the benefits of privacy, fresh air, extra living space and growing plants. The size of a balcony or terrace should reflect the number of occupants and in the case of a balcony should be at least 1.5 metres in depth in order to accommodate a small table and chairs. The value of a balcony or terrace is partly dependent upon its aspect, privacy and outlook. A balcony close to a heavily trafficked road, with no sunlight and a poor outlook is of little or no value to the occupants. Lack of privacy and exposure to noise and fumes would also deter its use. A balcony should be easily accessible from the dwelling and preferably from a dining or living area.
- 6.107 In the case of private gardens attached to a house, a minimum area based on the 10m depth x the width of the dwelling (m) provides a helpful starting point. This calculation—resulting in a square metre figure—provides a very modestly sized garden but in most cases can accommodate a sitting out area, clothes drying area, small shed and area of play as well as space to plant shrubs and small trees. The benefit of a garden is undermined if it cannot comfortably accommodate these important functions.
- 6.108 However, the Council realises this standard requires an element of flexibility depending on factors such as the size and type of the dwellings proposed, the character, design and layout of

the development and the shape and topography of the site. This could result in the requirement either for a larger or a smaller area in order to achieve a space that can accommodate those elements outlined above.

- 6.109 Furthermore, any proposal affecting an existing dwelling will be refused unless its private external open spaces are retained in accordance with the standards set out in the policy.

Policy HOU15 - Private External Open Space

Unless drawings indicate alternative provision of private useable external open space, new dwellings, whether created as ‘new build’, subdivision or conversion shall be provided with an area of private open space. Unless demonstrably unfeasible, this should not be overlooked from the road or other public spaces.

For flats, a minimum of 5m² of private outdoor space should be provided for 1 or 2 bedspace dwellings, and an additional 1m² should be provided for each additional bedspace. The minimum depth and width for all balconies and other private external spaces (e.g. roof garden, patio) should be 1.5m.

For houses, as a starting point, the private garden area should be calculated as the width of the dwelling (m) x 10m. This standard can be flexible providing it can be adequately demonstrated that alternative solutions provide a sufficient area of usable private outdoor space which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area and ensures a high standard of living conditions can be achieved.

These standards also apply to any proposals which result in the loss of private external space to existing residential property.

Traveller Accommodation

- 6.110 The need to plan for the housing requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller population is in line with Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its companion document ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’. These documents ensure that everyone, including members of the travelling community has the opportunity of living in a decent home.

National Policy

- 6.111 The ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ (PPTS, August, 2015) sets out the Government’s planning policy specifically relating to Travellers and this document has the main overarching aim: “to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community” (paragraph 3). It requires that Local Planning Authorities assess their own levels of need and plan positively in managing Gypsy and Traveller development.
- 6.112 The 2015 PPTS² redefined those who qualify as a ‘travellers’³ as follows: “Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to

² In accordance with PPTS, Annex 1 (4), the term “travellers” refers to “gypsies and travellers” and “travelling showpeople”

³ Ashford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update Paper – Post PPTS (Aug 2015)

travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such". Permissions for Gypsy and Traveller sites will be subject to conditions limiting their occupation to those who meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as defined in planning policy.

Objectively Assessing Local Traveller Need

- 6.113 In order to achieve the overarching aim of Government policy the Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in 2013, which provided an Objectively Assessed Pitch Need (OAPN) in the borough. Then following the publication of the new PPTS the Council undertook a piece of work⁴, re-assessing the travelling habits of travellers using the GTAA raw data. This piece of work removed any travellers that no longer travel, to ensure that any future need is consistent with the requirements of the PPTS policy.
- 6.114 The 2013 GTAA outlined a pitch requirement of 57 pitches for the 15-year period 2013 - 2028. However, following reassessment to align the analysis with the 2015 definition, a new OAPN requirement of 48 pitches between 2013 and 2028 has been established. As the Local Plan runs to 2030, on a pro rata basis this would result in an OAPN of 54 pitches by 2030.

Pitch Provision to Date

- 6.115 The Council has a good record of delivering Traveller pitches on appropriate sites and since the GTAA was published 31 pitches have received full planning permission.
- 6.116 Using the new OAPN target above, this leaves a residual need to provide at least 23 pitches by 2030.

Delivering the Objectively Assessed Pitch Need (OAPN)

- 6.117 The council has considered whether all 23 pitches should be provided through site allocations to ensure the OAPN has been achieved from the outset. Due to the current lack of suitable, available sites, it has not been possible to deliver a sufficient numbers of pitches required to meet the need. To deliver the remaining need, the council has adopted a staged approach. In the first instance, this plan seeks to deliver sites through allocations and a windfall policy. The Council is proposing to provide 3 pitches through site allocations in this plan, see policies S43 and S44 with the remaining 20 pitches to be delivered through a 'windfall policy'.
- 6.118 Whilst this approach offers an appropriate interim measure, it is the intention to deliver the remaining need through site allocations. For this reason, the Council is in the process of delivering a separate Development Plan Document (DPD) to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople. The DPD will identify additional sites to meet the need identified in the GTAA. The timescale for the adoption of the DPD is set out in the Local Development Scheme (March 2018) and adoption is anticipated in summer 2019.

Traveller Windfall Policy

- 6.119 To deliver pitches in the period up to the adoption of the DPD, the council will implement a windfall policy. Ashford has a long history of delivering Traveller accommodation, especially through the provision of 'windfalls'. 31 pitches have been provided through this means since

⁴ See ABC update paper (June 2016)

the publication of the Borough's GTAA

- 6.120 A specific, clearly worded windfall policy enables the Council to deal with planning applications for Traveller sites on a site by site basis and would allow suitable sites to continue to be permitted until the DPD is adopted, provided they meet criteria set out in the policy. To this end, suitable sites, which are well-related to existing and proposed services and facilities and which would not adversely impact on a protected landscape (including internationally protected sites, AONBs or their settings, National Nature Reserves, SSSIs, Ancient Woodland, local wildlife sites and nature reserves), that may previously not have been identified have the opportunity to come forward in the plan period. In addition, development should not adversely impact on the key characteristics of Landscape Character Areas.
- 6.121 The 'windfall' policy below sets out a threshold to provide for additional small sites in the borough. This approach is consistent with the approach set out in the PPTS (Paragraph 10d), which states that in producing Local Plans, Local Planning Authorities should 'relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density'.
- 6.122 Local evidence, identified from the bi-annual gypsy count⁵ suggests that Travellers in Ashford tend to reside on small sites which accommodate their immediate and extended family. Coupled with the lack of available land identified in the GTAA and the long standing issues managing larger sites, a number of smaller sites spread throughout the district would be a more effective means of providing sustainable and flexible accommodation to meet the need. For example, the Council owned site at Chilmington Green, which has 16 pitches, often has empty and long standing vacant pitches, with Gypsies and Travellers stating themselves that they would rather live with their extended family than on a site which supplies pitches on the open market.
- 6.123 Finally, the impact of new traveller accommodation on existing communities and how well proposals can be integrated is an important consideration in the determination of applications for Traveller provision. New applications will need to adhere to the criteria in Policy HOU16 below to ensure that this impact is mitigated.
- 6.124 Permissions for Gypsy and Traveller sites will be subject to conditions limiting their occupation to those who meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers as defined in planning policy.

⁵ See ABC update paper (June 2016)

Policy HOU16 - Traveller Accommodation

Planning permission for the expansion to existing sites or new sites to accommodate Gypsy and traveller accommodation or accommodation for travelling showpeople, will only be permitted outside of allocated sites if the following criteria are met:

- a) The proposals cannot be accommodated on an existing available site or allocated site;**
- b) The site would not accommodate more than 5 pitches or make an existing site exceed 5 pitches in size;**
- c) The site would provide a good living environment free from the risk of flooding and risks to health through contamination, noise or pollution;**
- d) Local services and facilities – such as shops, public transport, schools, can be readily accessed from the site;**
- e) The site is capable of being provided with on-site services such as water supply, sewage disposal and power supply;**
- f) The form and extent of the accommodation does not adversely affect the visual or other essential qualities of the AONB and its setting, SSSI, Ancient woodland, international, national or local nature reserve or wildlife site;**
- g) Access to the site which does not endanger highway safety for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided;**
- h) Proposals incorporate a landscape strategy, which will be required by use of planning conditions, where mitigation of the impact on the landscape is necessary to protect the quality of the surrounding landscape;**
- i) The scale and siting of the site, along with its design, layout and any boundary treatments, should take into account the key characteristics of Landscape Character Area within which it is located; and,**
- j) New sites or enlargement of existing sites are of a scale appropriate to their surroundings and would not individually or cumulatively dominate the nearest settled community, cause significant visual harm to an area and its landscape, or unduly impact on the capacity of local services.**

Safeguarding Existing Traveller Sites

- 6.125 It is important to protect existing Traveller sites from being developed for alternative uses whilst there is a need for such sites, as currently demonstrated by the GTAA (Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment). It is also important to safeguard these sites for future generations of Gypsies and Travellers. In particular it is important to safeguard the traveling showpeople site in Ashford as there is currently only one site in the Borough and the GTAA has established that no further sites are required at this time.
- 6.126 Therefore, any sites with existing lawful use as a traveller site should not be lost to an alternative use, unless an alternative replacement site has been identified. Sites that have been granted a personal permission, to be inhabited by a named family, will not be safeguarded under this policy. Any new traveller sites granted planning permission and implemented shall also be safeguarded under the provisions of this policy as long as the need for traveller accommodation within the Borough remains.

Policy HOU17 - Safeguarding Existing Traveller Sites

Existing permanent authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites and sites for travelling showpeople shall be retained for the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers and for travelling showpeople as defined in the relevant national planning policy document.

Any new sites granted permanent planning permission shall also be safeguarded under the provisions of this policy. This policy may not apply if the site will be replaced by a site of similar proportions in an appropriate location which complies with the criteria listed in policy HOU16.

Providing a Range and Mix of Dwelling Types and Sizes

- 6.127 The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows that a range of house types and sizes are required to meet the Borough's housing need throughout the plan period. Delivering a range of house types and sizes also helps to create and foster sustainable communities, provides resilience to the housing market, increases choice and widens the opportunities for home ownership.
- 6.128 Therefore, proposals for ten or more dwellings will be required to provide an appropriate range and mix of dwelling types and sizes. The Council will work with applicants to determine the correct mix to be provided, based on the context of the site, design considerations and local need. Proposals will therefore need to have regard to:
- the Council's relevant and most up to date housing strategies, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Housing Strategy and any relevant surveys on local housing need,
 - the areas key characteristics and how any proposal will complement the existing built form and/or add variety where necessary,
 - the Council's policy on residential space standards, as expressed under policy HOU12,
 - the Council's guidance on the layout and design aspects of new dwellings, as expressed through the Residential Space and Layout SPD.
- 6.129 Proposals for a standalone older persons housing scheme, and flatted proposals will be exempt from providing a range of dwellings types. However, the proposed mix of sizes and tenure (where relevant) of these dwellings will need to be supported by evidence, as set out above.
- 6.130 The Council's starting point is that all proposals for 10 or more dwellings will deliver an appropriate mix and range of dwellings types and that older persons schemes and flatted proposals will deliver an appropriate mix of sizes and tenures.
- 6.131 However, exceptional circumstances may dictate that an alternative approach is required. Such circumstances include:
- where a proposal is located in a highly sensitive location, such as within or adjoining a conservation area which dictates that a concentration of certain housing types is needed in design terms,
 - where locally specific evidence has been produced, such as an assessment by the Parish Council, which justifies that a specific housing type or mix is required to meet an identified local need,

- where delivering the aspirations of Policy HOU18 would render the scheme unviable. In these circumstances compliance with Policy IMP2 of this Local Plan would need to be demonstrated by the applicant to justify their case. Should this position be supported by the Council, then a degree of flexibility could be applied

Policy HOU18 - Providing a Range and Mix of Dwelling Types and Sizes

Development proposals of 10 or more dwellings will be required to deliver a range and mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs. The specific range and mix of dwellings to be provided should be informed by proportionate evidence that is robust, up to date and provides an assessment of need.

Development proposals for standalone older persons housing are exempt from this requirement and will be supported in principle where the need has been identified by extensive and robust evidence, and where they can be located in a suitable and sustainable way.



Chapter 7 Employment and the Local Economy

CHAPTER 7 – EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- 7.1 Providing for employment and the local economy is a critical part of the overall strategy set out in this Local Plan. The strategic approach to employment delivery has been set out in policies SP3 and SP4. The following sections support the approach and includes detailed policies for the consideration of proposals for new B class employment uses in the towns, villages, and rural areas, as well as those which result in the loss of employment premises.
- 7.2 The development of the town centre is an integral part of the economic strategy of this Plan, as set out in Policy SP5. This section also includes detailed policies in relation to retail, leisure and other town centre uses. The NPPF requires local authorities to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based upon a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages and to set policies making it clear what uses will be permitted. This section also covers issues in relation to the sequential test for town centre development, as well as supporting and protecting local and village service centres.

New Employment Uses

- 7.3 The provision of new employment space is critical to the delivery of employment and jobs in the Borough. Policy SP3 sets out the strategic approach to the delivery of employment and identifies the strategic sites which are allocated for employment purposes. Other specific sites for employment development are identified with site policies in this Plan.
- 7.4 There are also other existing employment sites including those identified in the Employment Land Review 2016, which have not been specifically allocated, but which may provide potential for redevelopment, enhancement and reconfiguration. There may also be opportunities for employment development which have not been specifically identified and are not located in existing established employment locations.
- 7.5 It is important that new employment development occurs in locations which provide suitable access to the local road network, and can also be accessed by a range of means of transport. The following policy seeks to support such proposals, provided they are in sustainable locations, create additional employment and do not have any other adverse impacts. It is essential that appropriate provision is made to access the site and that sufficient car parking is provided.
- 7.6 The NPPF makes it clear that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas and the Council's Rural Economic Assessment 2014 concluded that the current policy approach has been successful in delivering substantial rural employment opportunities. The study indicated that it could be possible to allocate additional sites but that a continuation of the current flexible policy approach that enables the market to determine the optimum location of additional employment space on an ad hoc basis regulated by planning generic policies is appropriate.
- 7.7 Hence, a suite of criteria based policies for new employment space provision, retention of employment space and extension of employment premises, provides a flexible and responsive approach to the delivery of appropriately-scaled employment opportunities in rural areas.

- 7.8 New employment development should be provided at a scale that is appropriate to the existing settlement, without detriment to its amenity, character or setting. All new development should be of good design as required by Policy SP6.
- 7.9 It is important that the rural road network that supports new development is suitable for the scale and type of vehicle movements associated with new employment proposals. For example, significant numbers of HGV movements are unlikely to be appropriate along quiet rural lanes or in historic environments. Similarly, developments that would generate large amounts of traffic per se may be better suited to more sustainable locations where alternative means of transport may be more readily available.

Policy EMP1 – New Employment Uses

Provision of new employment premises, and the redevelopment, enhancement and reconfiguration of existing employment premises will be permitted within the built-up confines of Ashford, Tenterden and the rural settlements listed in policy HOU3a, or adjoining settlements listed in policy HOU5, provided that:

- a) The character and appearance of the settlement or surrounding landscape is not damaged significantly by the form of development proposed by virtue of its layout, building design and scale, the level or type of activity it generates, and the functional and visual relationship it has with adjoining uses;**
- b) There would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers;**
- c) Appropriate provision can be made for parking and access; and,**
- d) The impact upon the local road network as assessed in terms of policy TRA7, can be mitigated. In the rural settlements, it must be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it.**

Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises

- 7.10 The Council acknowledges that the changes that have been made to permitted development rights have meant that some buildings can be converted from a commercial use without the need for planning permission. Nevertheless there is still a requirement to retain, where possible, existing employment generating uses and to maintain the existing policy approach that has been in place for some time.
- 7.11 The NPPF stresses the importance of identifying a range of sites to facilitate a broad range of economic development, including mixed use development. The council believes it is necessary to make specific policy provision for the retention of the existing stock of employment premises in the town to complement the strategy of identifying areas for employment development.
- 7.12 With Ashford already home to approximately 53,700 jobs (BRES 2014), an important aspect of achieving the growth in jobs within the town will be the facilitation of growth in existing companies alongside new investment. The safeguarding of existing employment sites (B1- B8) within the urban area is important to retain a good supply and range of units in size, type and cost to enable local companies to continue to prosper. Smaller sites and units continue to be the most vulnerable premises to competition from higher value land uses that do not create

employment for the area.

- 7.13 The Employment Land Review 2016 includes an assessment of existing employment estates in the borough.
- 7.14 In a few exceptional circumstances, the continuation of an employment use on a site may be inappropriate by virtue of, for example, an impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, or an unsafe vehicular access. However, this judgement should be based upon the impact of a range of potential employment generating uses on the site and not solely that of the previous or most recent operations at the site.
- 7.15 Otherwise, for proposals involving the loss of employment floorspace, either an equivalent amount of floorspace must be provided at a suitable site elsewhere in the Ashford urban area, or it will be necessary for developers to provide robust evidence that the premises have been marketed unsuccessfully for a substantial period of time on reasonable terms. Whilst each proposal will need to be treated on its own merits with the context of the prevailing market conditions, as a guide, appropriate marketing of at least 6 months is likely to be considered necessary. Evidence should be provided that the terms compare with other similar premises and locations being let or sold for B-class employment uses within the local area. The extent of the marketing carried out will be an important factor in the weight given to the evidence. Marketing should also extend to the potential use for other suitable employment generating uses for which the particular location and premises may be suitable. These uses might include, for example, trade counter uses, motor dealerships, education and training facilities, or small scale leisure facilities not suitable for town centre locations.
- 7.16 Where mixed use redevelopment proposals involving an element of residential development are proposed on an existing employment site, these will only be acceptable if they retain at least the equivalent amount of employment floorspace within the redevelopment scheme as was available on the existing site or otherwise meet one of the criteria in Policy EMP2 below.

Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises in the Rural Area

- 7.17 Whilst there is a considerable supply of employment space in the rural areas, much of this tends to be in relatively remote locations and opportunities in and around the villages are generally limited. Whilst it is important to retain existing employment sites, a balance may need to be struck between the viability of the existing employment space and the continuing need for employment in the local area.
- 7.18 It is desirable to enable jobs to be provided locally to cater for the needs of residents in the Borough's rural areas and to avoid unsustainable patterns of commuting. Hence, in general, proposals for the loss of existing employment sites in or adjoining the more sustainable rural settlements will not be supported. However, the Council recognises that there may be two circumstances where a different approach can be justified.
- 7.19 As a main objective of the Council's policy is to retain local job opportunities, the replacement of an employment use with new employment space elsewhere that is of the same size or larger may be an acceptable mitigation to the loss of an employment site. However, in order to retain the link between the employment use and local residents, it is likely that only employment uses that are relocated within or adjacent to their existing rural settlement or the nearest rural service centre will be acceptable and only if it can be demonstrated that development of the selected site will not have a detrimental impact on any existing uses, the quality of the landscape or the

character of the area. This will also help to deliver a more sustainable form of development by limiting the need to travel longer distances to employment locations.

- 7.20 When considering an application for the loss of an employment site, an assessment will need to be made as to the viability of the existing use or an alternative employment use. In order to demonstrate that a site is no longer viable for an employment use, the application must be supported by robust evidence that the premises have been marketed unsuccessfully for both the existing use and any alternative suitable employment use for a period of at least 6 months on terms that should compare with other similar premises and locations being sold or let for employment purposes. The extent of any marketing carried out and the prevailing market conditions will also be material considerations in the Council's assessment of viability evidence. Marketing should also extend to the potential use for other suitable employment generating uses for which the particular location and premises may be suitable.

Policy EMP2 -Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises

In the Ashford Urban Area:

Proposals for the loss or redevelopment of existing employment sites or premises (outside the town centre) will not be permitted unless at least one of the following criteria applies:

- a) The site is no longer appropriate for the continuation of the previous or any other employment use in terms of its serious impact on the neighbouring occupiers or environment;**
- b) It has been shown that the unit has remained unlet or for sale for a substantial period for all appropriate types of B class employment uses or other suitable employment generating uses, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let or sell it on reasonable terms; or,**
- c) The premises are replaced with similar facilities within the existing site or elsewhere in the Ashford urban area, providing at least the overall amount of developable B class employment floorspace that would be lost to redevelopment.**

Within Tenterden and the villages:

Proposals for the loss or redevelopment of existing employment sites or premises within the confines of Tenterden or the villages listed in Policy HOU3a, or adjoining/close to a settlement listed in policy HOU5 will not be permitted, unless one of the following criteria apply;

- aa) The site is no longer appropriate for the continuation of the previous or any other employment use in terms of its serious impact on the neighbouring occupiers or environment;**
- bb) The premises are replaced with the same-sized or larger sites or premises within or adjoining the same rural settlement, or at the nearest rural service centre, or;**
- cc) It has been shown that the unit has remained unlet or for sale for a substantial period for all appropriate types of B class employment uses or other suitable employment generating uses, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let or sell it on reasonable term.**

- 7.21 The NPPF indicates that Plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and in line with the conclusions of the Rural Economic Assessment 2014, the Council will, in principle, encourage and support proposals for extensions to existing employment sites within or adjacent to Tenterden and other rural settlements.
- 7.22 Proposals for extensions to existing employment premises in the countryside will particularly need to demonstrate that they would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the landscape. In both cases, extensions to existing employment sites should demonstrate that they will have no individual and cumulative impact on the rural environment, either visually or in terms of traffic and overall activity levels that will be generated.
- 7.23 In exceptional cases, where a business is located as part of a well-established collection of industrial or business premises, and is accommodated in a converted building whose character would be unacceptably affected by a physical extension, new floorspace may be accommodated in a new freestanding building that is designed and sited so as not to compromise the character of the existing building or group of buildings or wider landscape.

Policy EMP3 - Extensions to Employment Premises in the Rural Area

Proposals to extend existing employment premises in the rural areas will be permitted, provided that the following criteria are met:-

- a) The development can be integrated sensitively into its context, respecting the character of the landscape, existing historic and or architecturally important buildings and sites of biodiversity value;**
- b) The proposal does not involve an extension to a previously converted building where that building has character that would be seriously affected;**
- c) There would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers; and,**
- d) It can be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it.**

Conversion of Rural Buildings to Non-Residential Uses

- 7.24 Many agricultural and other rural buildings may no longer be suitable for their original purpose or be surplus to requirements as farming practices change. Both individual and groups of rural buildings can play a valuable role in creating the character of the countryside in a positive way.
- 7.25 The NPPF supports the conversion of rural buildings to support sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. The Council supports this approach in principle as this stock of buildings can provide a useful and viable means of enabling the local rural economy to evolve and diversify without requiring new buildings to be developed in sensitive rural locations. It is acknowledged that recent changes to permitted development rights mean that in some cases the change of use of agricultural buildings does not require planning permission.
- 7.26 Not all buildings in the rural areas are suitable for conversion because of their design for a

particular purpose and / or their condition or location. Buildings must be realistically capable of conversion from their existing state and not require complete or substantial reconstruction. If this issue is in doubt, applicants must be able to produce adequate supporting information, usually a survey report and associated drawings, to illustrate the existing condition of the building.

- 7.27 Where a rural building is proposed to be converted for employment, non-residential tourism (i.e attractions), leisure or community related purposes, the Council will normally be supportive of such schemes, particularly where they are located adjacent to Tenterden or another rural settlement. However, for this to be the case, the building to be converted must be of a permanent and substantial construction. It will also be important to consider the specific impacts of the proposal in respect of the proposed use(s). For example, in locations not within or adjacent to existing settlements, the scale and nature of the use proposed in terms of its floorspace and consequential potential trip generation should be limited according to the suitability of the local rural road network that serves the site, taking account of the nature of the vehicle movements that would result. In locations adjacent to settlements, a greater trip generation potential may be acceptable subject to the quality of the surrounding road network and any impacts on local residential amenities.
- 7.28 The Council has adopted supplementary planning guidance on the re-use of agricultural buildings which gives clear guidance on the design of building conversions. This guidance will continue to apply to proposals for conversions to ensure that the integrity and character of the existing building is retained where applicable. When planning permission is granted for a conversion, the Council may remove permitted development rights to extend the building or erect additional buildings within its curtilage.
- 7.29 For the avoidance of doubt, proposals for additional shopping and service provision which are supported by Policy EMP4 are exempt from the requirements of Policy EMP9.

Policy EMP4 - Conversions of Rural Buildings to Non-Residential Uses

Proposals to convert rural buildings to employment, non-residential tourism, leisure or community-related uses will be permitted subject to meeting all of the following criteria:-

- a) The building does not require complete or substantial reconstruction;**
- b) The building is of a permanent and substantial construction;**
- c) The building is to be converted in a way that preserves its integrity and character;**
- d) It can be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it; and,**
- e) The scale and nature of the proposed use would not result in any significant adverse impacts on the character of any settlement or buildings, the surrounding landscape, its biodiversity value or the amenities of local residents.**

New Employment Premises in the Countryside

- 7.30 New employment premises (i.e. not conversions) in the countryside (i.e. the areas not covered by Policy EMP1) will not be permitted unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to set aside the normal presumption against such developments. Such circumstances may include the functional need for a countryside location, such as the processing of local agricultural products. New employment sites in the countryside will need to have regard to the need to protect countryside sites with specific landscape, biodiversity or historic qualities.

Policy EMP5 - New Employment Premises in the Countryside

Proposals for employment development on new sites in the countryside will not be permitted unless the following criteria can be met:-

- a) It is essential to be located in the countryside;**
- b) Development can be integrated sensitively into its context respecting the character of any important existing buildings, the landscape setting and sites of biodiversity value;**
- c) There would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers; and,**
- d) It can be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it.**

Promoting of Fibre to the Premise (FTTP)

- 7.31 The e-technology sector is undergoing major changes and the Government - through Broadband Delivery UK⁶ - is supporting investment to:
- provide superfast broadband coverage to 90% of the UK by early 2016 and 95% by December 2017,
 - provide access to basic broadband (2Mbps) for all from December 2015,
 - explore options to provide superfast coverage to the hardest to reach parts of the UK.
- 7.32 At the local level, the availability, reliability and speed of broadband provision is now a key consideration for house buyers and many view it as essential as the standard utilities. Similarly, it is also a key concern for the business sector.
- 7.33 Planning policy can play a role in helping to achieve the transformation in broadband. The NPPF clearly recognises this and supports the delivery of advanced, high quality communications infrastructure and the expansion of high speed broadband where possible.
- 7.34 Ashford has long been ahead of the national agenda in this regard. In 2008, the Core Strategy took proactive steps to prioritise communications infrastructure by ensuring that duct space was provided for fibre cabling on each new development in the urban area. In the 8 years since this policy approach was developed the fibre network in Ashford has received significant private and public sector investment and the fibre footprint in the Ashford borough has spread significantly. All of Ashford's exchanges are now fibre enabled.

⁶ The Government department charged with delivering superfast broadband

- 7.35 The policy below builds upon this pioneering approach and challenges the market yet further to require fibre to the premise (FTTP) for most new developments. In doing so, the approach underpins one of the key principles of this Local Plan with regard to the utilisation, enhancement and expansion of existing infrastructure wherever possible.
- 7.36 FTTP is recognised by the Government and European Commission as a ‘Next Generation Access (NGA) technology’⁷ and have prioritised investment accordingly. While superfast speeds can be achieved on current generation copper networks it is widely accepted that NGA technologies should be prioritised. By seeking FTTP, the Council is aiming to provide a futureproof solution for broadband delivery within the Borough.
- 7.37 Adopting this approach will prevent the need for fibre retrofitting programmes in the future which has significant cost implications and often results in attaching fibre to existing copper networks resulting in a less than optimum solution when compared to new fibre networks being delivered.
- 7.38 In the urban area, where the fibre network now exists, the cost of installing FTTP in new developments is considered to be relatively small particularly during the build phase of the development. Any costs (above BCIS assumptions) must also be balanced with increased sales values that are likely to be achieved on account of fast and reliable broadband speeds being available. Based on these factors, policy EMP6 requires that all residential and employment development within or adjoining the urban area of Ashford, including on site allocations promoted in this Plan that adjoin the urban area of Ashford shall deliver FTTP
- 7.39 In the rural parts of the borough, there has been significant investment in rural broadband which has resulted in the fibre network stretching further into the rural area than ever before. As in the urban area this creates an opportunity for developments to utilise this asset to deliver FTTP in new developments.
- 7.40 However, the Council recognise that there can be more challenges in the rural area to the delivery of FTTP. With this in mind, the policy approach is to target development that is of a scale and/or type that will, in most circumstances, be able to deliver FTTP. For residential development, EMP6 shall apply to those schemes promoting 10 residential units or more in the rural area. For employment development (B classes), EMP6 shall apply to those schemes which provide 10 full time jobs or equivalent in the rural area. The assumption as to the number of jobs to be created should be based on the national Employment Densities Guide produced by Government.
- 7.41 However, developments that fall below these thresholds will, nevertheless, still be encouraged to provide FTTP to assist in ensuring that the Borough’s fibre network is delivered to its maximum capacity.
- 7.42 By implementing this policy approach, the Council is seeking to ensure that future developments remain at the forefront of advances in broadband technology, allowing Ashford to be a market leader and remain a highly attractive location for businesses and residents alike.

⁷ Next Generation Access Networks: wired access networks which consist wholly or in part of optical elements and which are capable of delivering broadband access services with enhanced characteristics (such as higher throughput) as compared to those provided over already existing copper networks.’ Commission Recommendation 2010/572/EU of 20 September 2010 on regulated access to Next Generation Access Networks (NGA)

This aspiration is a central component of the Council's Five Year Corporate Plan.

- 7.43 However, in order to be consistent with the provisions in the NPPF, the Council recognise that there may be schemes that come forward which cannot be consistent with policy EMP6. In such cases, evidence will be needed from the applicant to demonstrate that a departure from policy is justified. Such evidence could include (but is not limited to) issues of viability, the ability to dig the appropriate physical trench and proximity to the nearest breakout point on the fibre network. They may also be circumstances where the operators themselves have concluded that servicing the site is not practical.
- 7.44 Where a FTTP solution is not deemed possible provision of technologies capable of providing speeds in excess of 24Mbps should be delivered instead.

Implementation

- 7.45 The intention of Policy EMP6 is not to require developers to deliver FTTP solutions themselves. Instead, it focuses on the need to conduct early dialogue with telecom providers in order to best understand what their infrastructure specifications are and how these can be accommodated as part of the new development.
- 7.46 To facilitate this, the Council requires that an application for a qualifying development is supported by an "FTTP Statement". This will provide details of dialogue with the telecom operators and establish how FTTP will be provided to serve the development and that it will be engaged upon first occupation. This statement will need to be agreed between the applicant and the Council and it is likely that conditions will be applied to any subsequent permission, to ensure that FTTP will be secured as envisaged by the statement.
- 7.47 For outline proposals, the "FTTP Statement" may be more limited on specific details relating to the imminent implementation of FTTP. In these circumstances, a commitment to supply the specific details at a later date, including how and when the telecom operators will be consulted, will need to be provided and agreed by the Council.
- 7.48 More detailed guidance about the implementation of EMP6 will be provided through a future SPD.

Policy EMP6 - Promotion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

The Council considers that FTTP is essential infrastructure and vital to the delivery of sustainable development. Therefore, all qualifying development shall deliver FTTP. Qualifying development includes:

- **All residential and employment schemes proposed in, or adjoining, the urban area of Ashford, including on those sites allocated in this Local Plan on the periphery of the urban area of Ashford,**
- **Residential schemes promoting 10 dwellings or more in the remaining parts of the Borough,**
- **Employment schemes promoting 10 or more jobs (FTE) in the remaining parts of the Borough.**

Proposals for qualifying development will be required to be supported by an FTTP Statement, to be agreed by the Council. This statement will establish how FTTP will be provided to serve the development and that it will be engaged at first occupation.

Exceptions to the approach outlined above could be justified in circumstances where it is not practical, viable or feasible to deliver FTTP. In such cases, evidence will be needed from the applicant to demonstrate that a departure from policy is justified.

For other residential and employment schemes, FTTP will be encouraged by the Council as a means of expanding the local fibre network.

Where FTTP is not delivered, non-Next Generation Access technologies that can provide speeds in excess of 24Mbps should be provided as an alternative.

Retail, Leisure and Tourism

Ashford Town Centre Primary and Secondary Frontages

- 7.49 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes.
- 7.50 The existing hierarchy of centres in Ashford Borough is set out below. It is proposed that through this Plan the existing hierarchy will be supported and maintained.

Ashford Town Centre – primary regional centre that serves the Borough’s administrative area. As the largest service centre within the Borough it plays a key role as the commercial centre for the town and the surrounding rural area. It attracts visitors from across the Borough and beyond.

Tenterden Town Centre – secondary retail centre that offers a smaller range of shops and services to Ashford, but nonetheless attracts visitors from a wider area.

Wye, Charing and Hamstreet – village/local service centres, which perform the role of serving the day-to-day service top up shopping and leisure needs for local catchment areas.

Local Centres – there are a number of other local centres, mainly rural village centres, across Ashford, which generally provide more limited day to day top-up shopping provision.

- 7.51 Ashford Town Centre also fits within a wider retail hierarchy, and faces strong competition from centres outside of the Borough, particularly Folkestone and Canterbury. This reflects the more limited range, choice and overall quality of the town centre’s comparison goods offer compared to the competing centres. One of the main challenges for Ashford town centre will be to maintain and strengthen its market share in the face of competition from out of centre facilities, larger neighbouring centres and the internet.
- 7.52 The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based upon a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and to set clear policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.
- 7.53 The primary and secondary frontages have been defined following an assessment of the characteristics of Ashford Town centre, including an audit of existing uses within the town centre, taking into consideration recent trends and committed and future development proposals.
- 7.54 Ashford is focused around a compact core. The primary shopping street of the town centre is the traditional High Street, where retail uses are focused, and around 80% of existing units are occupied in retail use. The two shopping centres of Park Mall and Country Square shopping centres front directly on to the High Street, to the north and south respectively. These centres are dominated by A1 retail uses, and County Square is the main focus for major national multiples and Class A1 retailers in the town centre.
- 7.55 Secondary areas of Ashford Town Centre, which have a lower proportion of A1 uses, and are dominated more by service uses such as A2 uses, include the western end of New Rents, Bank Street and North Street.

- 7.56 With a cinema, restaurants, retail and hotel development under construction on Elwick Road in the southern part of the town centre, Bank Street will become an important pedestrian route linking the proposed leisure-led scheme and the High Street. In this respect, it is proposed that once this has been completed it will become part of the Primary Shopping Area, and designated as primary shopping frontage.
- 7.57 In the past, frontage policies for Ashford Town Centre have restricted the amount of non-A1 uses within the primary shopping frontages, and the amount of A2 uses within the secondary areas of the Town Centre. With the introduction of more relaxed permitted development rights there is much more flexibility around proposed uses, and planning permission is not required for changes between different class A uses.
- 7.58 Town centres are changing and will no longer be solely supported by traditional retail development, having to expand their offer to wider uses in order to maintain their vitality and viability. Ashford Town Centre is no different. Recent trends show that the proportion of Class A1 within the primary frontage of Ashford Town Centre has fallen, which reflects national trends and a more flexible and pragmatic policy approach to the definition of the primary and secondary shopping frontages is required.
- 7.59 It is therefore not considered necessary to restrict particular percentages of retail uses in certain areas. It is considered that the primary shopping frontages will remain the predominant area for class A uses, and that the secondary frontages will have a broader range of uses. The approach recognizes the role of Ashford Town Centre as a primary shopping centre in the Borough, but understands that the future success of the town centre cannot solely rely on its function as a shopping destination. The town centre should be a place that residents and visitors want to visit, whether for shopping or for other purposes, such as business, leisure or entertainment.
- 7.60 The Council recognizes that the flexibility provided by the current permitted development rights for commercial uses means that some changes of use would not require planning permission. Where planning permission is required the policy will apply.
- 7.61 The policy requires proposals to maintain or enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. For proposals within the primary shopping frontage, the Council will take into account a range of factors in determining whether the proposals would achieve this. Some of these factors will apply only when considering applications for change of use that would result in the loss of A1 units, others would apply in all cases. Proposals will be determined on a case by case basis taking into account the following relevant factors.
- 7.62 The Council will take into account whether a particular unit has been vacant and the benefits of bringing that unit back into use. Consideration will be given to whether the proposal can add vibrancy, activity and pedestrian footfall to the area, and this is particularly important during daytime hours. It is also important that the unit has an active shopfront and is immediately accessible by the public from the front, which will ensure that it would be compatible with the nature of a retail area, and that it creates footfall and activity within the publically accessible areas of the town centre.
- 7.63 Where the proposal would result in the loss of A1 retail units, consideration should also be given to whether or not the proposal would result in an accumulation of non-A1 uses along a particular frontage as this could in some cases have a harmful impact upon the retail function of that part of the frontage and therefore be harmful to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The size and form of the unit may also be relevant, for example the loss of a larger or

anchor A1 retail unit, which would normally be attractive to multiple retailers, could be more harmful than the loss of a smaller A1 unit.

- 7.64 Within the secondary shopping frontage, the main issue that will be considered in determining whether the proposal is acceptable is whether the proposed use would attract pedestrian activity and footfall to the town centre, thereby supporting its vitality and viability.
- 7.65 Residential development plays an important role in the vitality and viability of a town centre, bringing people into the town at different times of the day, increasing footfall and supporting a more vibrant evening and night time economy. Residential development will therefore be supported in the town centre in suitable locations. However residential development on the ground floor within the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage would be harmful to the economic health of the town centre. Proposals for change of use to residential on the ground floor within this area will therefore be resisted when considering applications for prior approval.
- 7.66 The following policy and extract from the Policies Map at Map 3 (overleaf) defines the locations of the primary and secondary shopping frontages in Ashford Town Centre, as well as the Primary Shopping Area, and sets out what uses will be permitted in such locations.

Policy EMP7 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage in Ashford Town Centre

Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages and the Primary Shopping Area are defined for Ashford Town Centre as set out on the Policies Map.

Within the Primary Shopping Frontages, permission will be granted for development falling within Use Class A1. Uses Classes A2, A3, A4 and A5 will be permitted subject to the proposal maintaining or enhancing the centre's vitality and viability, taking into account the following factors, where relevant:

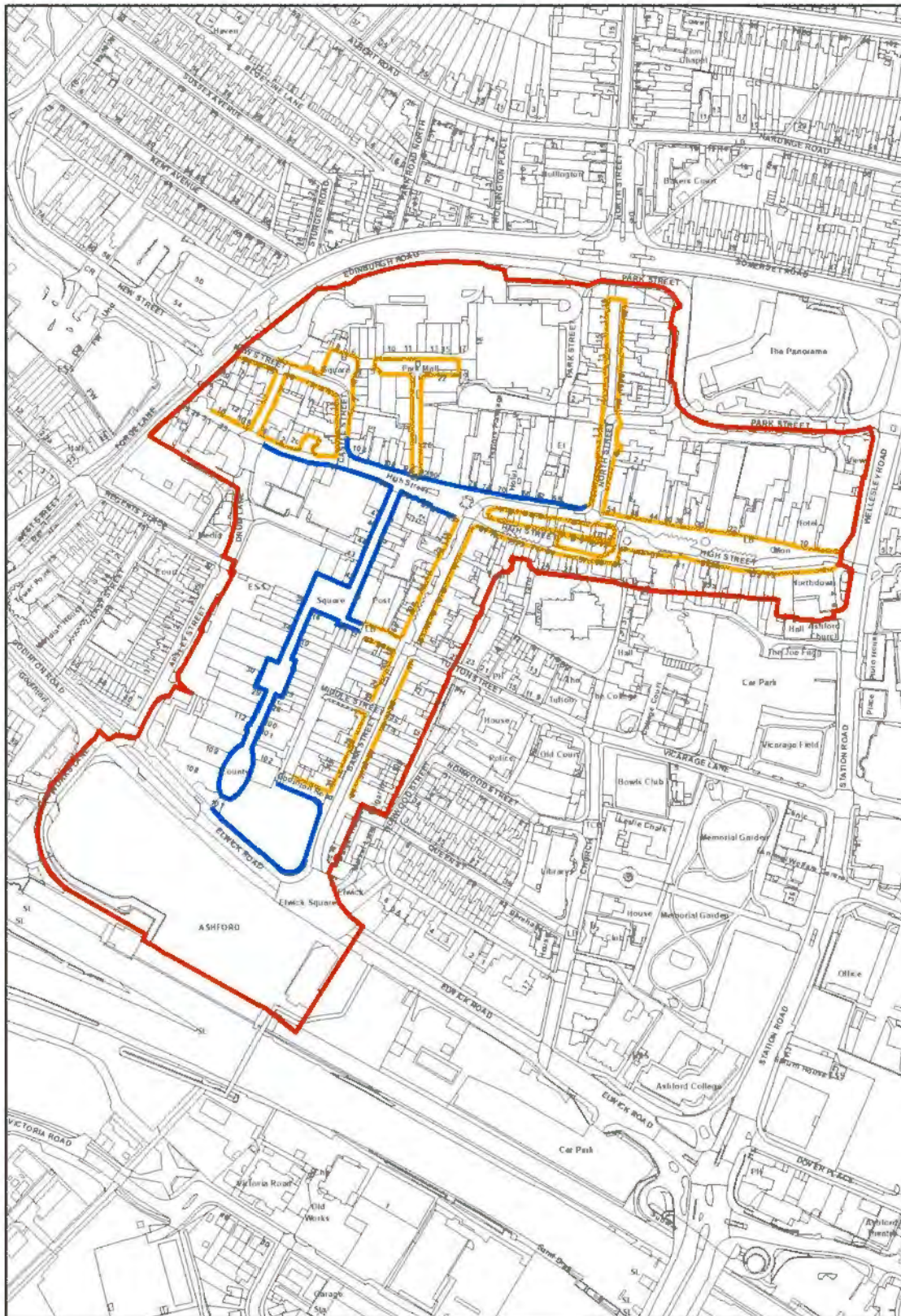
- a) The impact the proposal will have on long term and persistent vacancy and the continued suitability and viability of the unit for A1 retail use;
- b) The ability of the proposal to attract vibrancy, activity and pedestrian footfall to the town centre during the daytime;
- c) Whether the proposal is compatible with a retail area in that it includes an active shopfront and is immediately accessible by the public from the front;
- d) The accumulation of non-A1 uses in parts of the frontage, which would significantly erode the retail function of the frontage; and,
- e) The loss of a large or anchor A1 retail unit.

Within the Secondary Shopping Frontage, proposals for all main town centre uses will be permitted, subject to the proposal maintaining or enhancing the centre's vitality and viability by attracting pedestrian activity and footfall to the town centre.

The Council will support proposals to bring underused upper floors back into beneficial use, including residential and office use.

Residential development will not be permitted on the ground floor within the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage.

Map 3 – Shopping Frontages in Ashford Town Centre



- Key
- Primary Frontage
 - Primary Shopping Area
 - Secondary Frontage

Tenterden Town Centre Primary and Secondary Frontages

- 7.67 Tenterden town centre is characterised by an attractive historic environment, and serves a sizeable rural catchment. Its shopping, leisure and service provision is focused around its historic linear high street, which has approximately 70 retail, leisure and service outlets. Its offer is distinctly different to Ashford and comprises a good mix of independent and specialist businesses trading alongside some high street brands. The good choice of high quality specialist shops in the town reflects its important role as a tourist and visitor destination, as well as serving its local population.
- 7.68 Tenterden also benefits from two food stores, which both help to underpin Tenterden's vitality and viability, by generating linked trips, footfall and expenditure to other shops and businesses in the town centre. It is therefore important for the role, attraction and trading performance of these two key anchor stores to be maintained.
- 7.69 The main shopping area is located along the traditional high street, on both sides of the road. It runs from Bridewell Lane to Recreation Ground Road on the south side of the High Street, and from Station Road to East Cross on the north side.
- 7.70 The current mix of uses within the centre makes for a well-functioning and vibrant centre, and it is therefore important that the policy framework protects and enhances this. As with Ashford town centre, it is recognised that permitted development rights provide more flexibility without the need for planning permission, but in cases where planning permission is required, it is important that the Council can consider the impact of proposals on the vitality and viability of the centre. Previous policies for Tenterden Town Centre have aimed to maintain a high concentration of A1 uses, by restricting proposals that would result in more than 35% of the length of particular primary frontages becoming non-A1 uses. However it is considered that, as with Ashford, a more flexible and pragmatic policy approach is appropriate, given the changing role of town centres. The policy identifies the primary shopping frontage for Tenterden town centre and is supportive of all main town centre uses, subject to the proposal maintaining or enhancing the centre's vitality and viability, taking into account a range of factors. In addition to those factors identified above in relation to Ashford town centre, for Tenterden the impact of the proposal on the character and function of the Tenterden town centre, as the Borough's main rural service centre and tourism destination, will also be taken into account.
- 7.71 No Secondary Shopping Frontage is proposed for Tenterden Town Centre. Due to the particular characteristics of the town centre, the Primary Shopping Frontage already contains the full range of town centre uses.
- 7.72 The following policy and extract from the Policies Map at Map 4 (see overleaf) defines the locations of the primary shopping frontages in Tenterden Town Centre, as well as the Primary Shopping Area, and sets out what uses will be permitted in these locations.

Policy EMP8 - Primary Shopping Frontage in Tenterden Town Centre

Primary Shopping Frontages and the Primary Shopping Area are defined for Tenterden Town Centre as set out on the Policies Map.

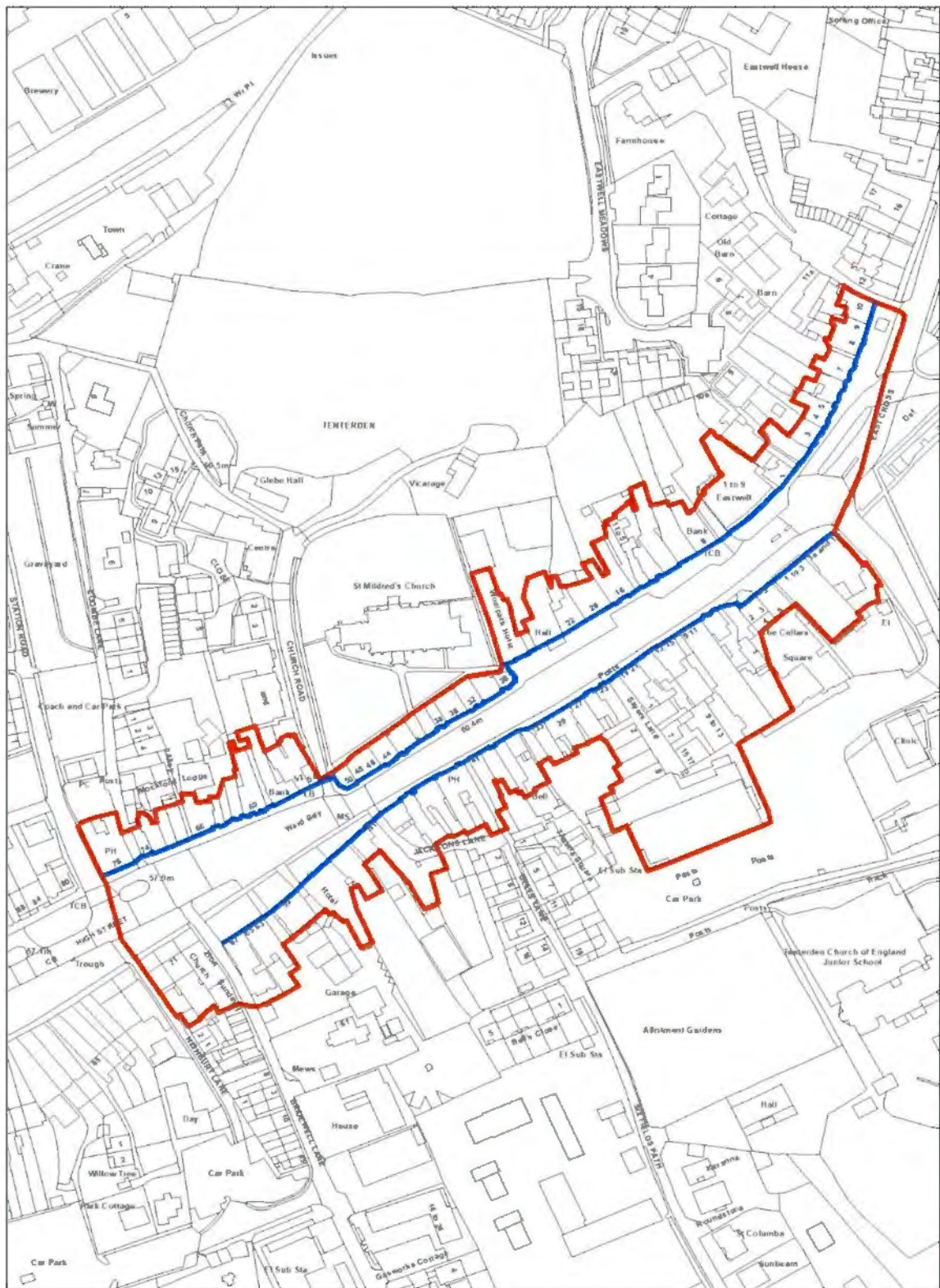
Within the Primary Shopping Frontages, permission will be granted for development falling within Use Class A1. All other main town centre uses will be permitted, subject to the proposal maintaining or enhancing the centre's vitality and viability, taking into account the following factors where relevant:

- a) The impact the proposal will have on long term and persistent vacancy and the continued suitability and viability of the unit for A1 retail use;**
- b) The ability of the proposal to attract vibrancy, activity and pedestrian footfall to the town centre during the daytime;**
- c) Whether the proposal is compatible with a retail area in that it includes an active shopfront and is immediately accessible by the public from the front;**
- d) The accumulation of non-A1 uses in parts of the frontage, which would significantly erode the retail function of the frontage;**
- e) The loss of a large or anchor A1 retail unit; and,**
- f) The impact of the proposal on the character and function of Tenterden town centre as the Borough's main rural service centre and tourism destination.**

The Council will support proposals to bring underused upper floors back into beneficial use, including residential and office use.

Changes of use to residential will not be permitted on the ground floor of any unit, within the Primary Shopping Frontage.

Map 4 – Primary Shopping Frontages in Tenterden Town Centre



- Key**
- Primary Frontage
 - Primary Shopping Area
 - Secondary Frontage

Sequential Assessment and Impact Test

- 7.73 Both Ashford and Tenterden Town Centres are potentially vulnerable to increasing competition from out-of-centre retailing and the growth of internet shopping. There is a concern that existing retailers in the centres, particularly Ashford, could choose to take space in larger more modern units in out-of-centre locations. The loss of existing major retailers in the town centre would be significantly detrimental to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The provision of additional out-of-centre retail has the potential to have significant negative impacts on the town centres, further reducing the towns' market shares.
- 7.74 Local planning authorities are required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. The NPPF requires proposals for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, or if no suitable sites are available, then in edge of centre locations. Only if no sites are available, should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale.
- 7.75 The NPPF requires local plans to set policies for the consideration of proposals which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres. This policy sets out two key tests, sequential and impact test, which proposals for town centre development, located outside of the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), as defined in Policies EMP7 and EMP8, will need to meet in order to be considered acceptable.
- 7.76 The NPPF defines edge of centre locations as, for retail purposes, a location that is well connected and within 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside of the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. It states that local circumstances should be taken into account when determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre.
- 7.77 For the avoidance of doubt Policy SP5 does not over-ride the need for development proposals to accord with the following policy.
- 7.78 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides advice in setting locally appropriate thresholds for impact assessments. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment concludes that impact assessments will be required for proposals for retail developments which are greater than 500 sqm. Other town centre uses will be required to carry out impact assessments where their size is greater than those standards set out in the NPPF.
- 7.79 The scope of the Sequential Test and Retail Impact Assessments which are required to be submitted in support of planning applications should be discussed and agreed between the applicant and the Council at an early stage in the pre-application process. The level of detail included within the assessments should be proportionate to the scale and type of retail floorspace proposed and shall be determined on a case by case basis. National Planning Practice Guidance sets out detailed requirements for carrying out such assessments. The Council will impose conditions on planning permissions where this is necessary to appropriately control the impact of a particular use.

- 7.80 The following policy sets out the requirements for consideration of applications for retail development which are located outside of identified primary shopping areas, and other main town centre uses that are not proposed in existing town centre boundaries and are not supported by other policies within this Local Plan. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy does not apply to small scale retail and service provision, which is permitted in accordance with Policy EMP10 of this Local Plan or to conversions of rural buildings to employment, non-residential tourism and leisure uses permitted by Policy EMP4.

Policy EMP9 - Sequential Assessment and Impact Test

Proposals for retail development which are not located in the Primary Shopping Areas, or for other ‘main town centre uses’ which are not located within the boundaries of Ashford or Tenterden Town Centres (as defined in Policy SP4, EMP7 and EMP8 and set out on the Policies Map), and are not supported by other policies in this Plan, will only be permitted if all of the following criteria can be met:

- a) **A sequential assessment has been carried out that demonstrates that no suitable sites are available, firstly in the primary shopping area for retail, or the town centre boundary for other town centre uses, then edge of centre locations. Only if no sites are available in these locations should out of centre locations be considered. Preference will be given to sites that are well connected to the town centre; and,**
- b) **The proposal, either by itself, or in combination with other committed development proposals, will not have a significant adverse impact on investment or the vitality and viability of a town centre, or any significant adverse impact upon the town centres can be adequately mitigated. Proposals for retail development which are greater than 500 sqm, will be required to carry out an impact assessment. Other main town centre uses will be required to carry out impact assessments in line with the requirements of the NPPF.**

Local and Village Centres

- 7.81 Local centres in the towns and villages play an important role in providing for local shopping needs, especially for convenience goods, and other local services. They help reduce the need to travel. They also provide an essential service for those with restricted mobility and are often a focal point for the community.
- 7.82 Within the built-up area of Ashford, there are a number of local centres which provide such services to local residents. Many of the villages in the Borough have shops which serve the village community and in the case of the larger villages, such as Wye and Charing, serve the surrounding smaller villages and hamlets as well.
- 7.83 The Council would like to see as broad a range of local shops and services as possible, including some non-A1 uses such as banks (A2), cafes (A3), take-away restaurants (A5) and public houses (A4). The Council aims to resist the loss of shops and services and to preserve the character of the local centres, especially the retention of key units so that they remain compact centres, although the effects of increased permitted development rights on changes of use should be acknowledged. Where planning permission is required for the change of use or loss of an existing service or facility, this will only be granted where there is alternative provision within reasonable walking distance or the unit is no longer viable for that purpose or an

alternative local service. Reasonable walking distance is defined not only by distance, which is considered to be within the region of 800m, but also factors such as the condition of the footpaths and local gradients. In order to demonstrate that the facility is not viable it must be demonstrated that it has remained vacant for a substantial period of time, despite genuine and sustained attempts to occupy it on reasonable terms. What constitutes a 'substantial period of time' and 'reasonable terms' will depend on prevailing market conditions, but as a guide less than six months is likely to be inappropriate and the terms on offer should compare with other similar premises and locations being let or sold for that purpose. The extent of marketing carried out will be an important factor.

- 7.84 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the community right to bid, which gives local groups a right to nominate a building or other land for listing by the local authority as an asset of community value. This allows town and parish councils and local community groups a fairer chance to make a bid to buy the asset on the open market. The Council's current list of assets of community value contains mainly public houses and shops located in the villages of the Borough.
- 7.85 Areas of new residential development in Ashford have in the past been required to make provision of local shops to meet the needs of the new community. Where new local centres are required to support new development in this plan, this will be set out in the site policy.
- 7.86 The following policy seeks to maintain and enhance the provision of local centres in the built-up areas of the Borough.
- 7.87 For the avoidance of doubt, proposals for additional shopping and service provision which are supported by Policy EMP10 are exempt from the requirements of policy EMP9.

Policy EMP10 - Local Centres and Villages

In local centres and villages, planning permission will be granted for additional shopping and service provision, where proposals are of a scale appropriate to the particular centre.

Proposals that result in the loss of shops and services will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) There is alternative provision for a similar use within reasonable walking distance; or,**
- b) The unit is no longer viable for that purpose, or an alternative local service, and that it has remained vacant for a substantial period of time, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let it on reasonable terms.**

Tourism

- 7.88 Tourism is a term covering a wide range of activities, including travel and visits for business, professional and domestic purposes, as well as for holidays and recreation. Tourism helps to create and support employment; generate local income; and also to enhance the image of an area as a place to live, work and invest.

- 7.89 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to plan for tourism development and specifically supports the role of sustainable rural tourism and leisure development that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.
- 7.90 Ashford's Corporate Plan (2015- 2020) identifies one of its key priorities is to have a borough that recognises the value of tourism and the benefits it brings to our towns, villages and the borough as a whole.
- 7.91 The Council's Tourism Review revealed that the Ashford Borough in relation to other Kent districts continued to perform well in terms of visitor numbers, spend and tourism related employment.
- 7.92 Trends in tourism constantly change, but if new tourism development is to have a positive overall impact, it needs to be properly managed and planned for. More 'sustainable tourism' can only be achieved by making sure that new initiatives respect the character of an area and major development is located where there is public transport access. Poorly controlled tourist development can damage the character of the environment that attracts tourists in the first instance.
- 7.93 Ashford has the benefit of a good accommodation base in terms of range and quality of bed spaces and is ideally located to attract both UK and overseas visitors. The proximity of the Channel Tunnel and the location of the International Station, with its high speed links to the continent and London, means that Ashford is uniquely placed to benefit from an increase in overseas and domestic visitors. The fact that Canterbury, Rochester and major attractions such as Leeds Castle and Sissinghurst Gardens are nearby also mean that Ashford is a natural centre for tourism. Ashford's unspoilt 'Garden of England' countryside with its picturesque villages, large number of listed buildings, its small, but important range of museums, its quality attractions, and cultural heritage assets and the 'honeypot' of Tenterden, add to the appeal. The urban areas of Ashford and Tenterden Towns, as well as the large areas of surrounding countryside make a valuable contribution to the current tourism offer in the Borough, as well as providing for future opportunities to expand and enhance the offer.
- 7.94 The Council is therefore supportive of tourism development, including a range of new tourist accommodation, in appropriate locations, with more major tourism development being promoted in Ashford and Tenterden towns. Rural tourism development is also encouraged in order to take advantage of the Borough's large areas of attractive countryside, where this would not be harmful to the character of the environment that attracts tourists in the first instance.
- 7.95 There are a number of planned tourism facilities proposed in Ashford Borough, which will continue to improve Ashford's attraction as a tourist destination. For example, planning permission has been granted for an International Model Railway Exhibition Centre, and Chapel Down Winery is planning to open a state of the art brewery and visitor attraction on Victoria Road in Ashford.
- 7.96 The following policy seeks to retain existing facilities and support the development of new tourism facilities in appropriate locations.

Policy EMP11 -Tourism

The Council will support the retention of existing tourism facilities and encourage sustainable growth of tourism through the provision of a wide variety of new facilities in appropriate locations across the borough.

Proposals for new hotel and B&B development will be permitted in locations that are accessible by a choice of modes of transport and will be particularly encouraged in the Ashford and Tenterden urban areas.

Proposals for conference and exhibition facilities in Ashford town centre, potentially in association with a hotel development, will be supported subject to other Local Plan policies.



Chapter 8 **Transport**

CHAPTER 8 - TRANSPORT

- 8.1 Ensuring that an effective and sustainable transport network is delivered and maintained in the Borough is important in an environmental, economic and social context and is a key objective of this Local Plan. As part of its preparation, the Council have liaised with Highways England, the County Council and bus operators. Continued liaison will be needed throughout the life of the Plan to ensure that a joined up and holistic approach is achieved.
- 8.2 The Council understands that private cars are and will remain an important and necessary part of everyday life in the Borough and this is reflected in car ownership levels - levels which are expected to increase over the next few years and beyond. This is particularly a factor for the Borough given its large and rural nature. Significant traffic movements are also generated by workers, either through commuting to their jobs or travelling as part of their jobs and also by those visiting the town centre to cater for their everyday retail and leisure needs.
- 8.3 The future development levels as set out in the Local Plan will further add to traffic movements on the road network. This will require interventions on the strategic road network to make sure that it has capacity and the overall flow of movements is maintained and also policies to ensure that the range of small local roads and lanes that form much of the Borough's attractive rural character are protected from too much or unsuitable traffic movements. Increased levels of development also necessitate a need to deal with issues of public parking.
- 8.4 This overall approach needs to be balanced with one that also encourages alternative modes of travel wherever possible. Public transport in the form of rail and bus travel can significantly reduce carbon emissions and ease congestion on the road network, whereas cycling and walking achieves this aim with the added benefit of promoting a healthier lifestyle.

M20 Junction 10 / 10a

- 8.5 For many years, the availability of junction capacity at this key node on the strategic highway network has been a constraint on delivering the full potential for growth to the south and east of Ashford. The need for additional capacity was highlighted in the South of Ashford Transport Study (SATS) in 1999 with a programme of measures including an interim improvement to Junction 10 and, subsequently, a new 'Junction 10a' forming part of a strategic solution.
- 8.6 The existing M20 Junction 10 was improved in 2007 to provide some additional junction capacity that has enabled development to be released over the last 10 years but even the upgraded junction does not have sufficient capacity to serve all committed and planned development to the end of this Plan period. Over the last decade, the Council has controlled the release of new developments in this area to ensure that the existing junction does not become at risk of over-capacity with consequent queueing back along the slip roads onto the live motorway.
- 8.7 This constraint has been recognised in the Core Strategy (2008) and the Urban Sites & Infrastructure DPD (2012) and has informed the Council's approach to the allocation and phasing of development sites, but it is accepted that the delivery of new junction capacity is fundamental to the realisation of the Council's growth strategy as set out in this Local Plan.
- 8.8 To this end, Highways England (HE) has developed a scheme for a new all-movements, grade separated motorway junction site 700 metres east of the existing Junction 10 with a link road back to the existing A2070 Bad Munstereifel Road.

- 8.9 In December 2017, the Secretary of State granted a Development Consent Order for the Junction 10a scheme and construction commenced in early 2018, leading to the scheme being scheduled to open to traffic in August 2019. Completion of the junction and associated link road will resolve any strategic junction capacity constraints on proposed allocations in this Plan but prior to this time, the management of development releases by the Council will need to continue.
- 8.10 In this respect, the Council proposes a pragmatic response based around a realistic assessment of the risk of the existing Junction 10 interchange becoming severely overloaded.
- 8.11 Initially, this will be based on the amount of committed and proposed development assumed to be accommodated by the existing Junction 10 that would not be likely to be occupied by the expected opening date of Junction 10a. It will also take into account the likely traffic generation at junction 10 given the distribution of trips on the strategic network and realistic modal split assumptions contained within individual site Transport Assessments.
- 8.12 This approach shall also take account of the practical likelihood of development being able to be occupied prior to the completion of Junction 10a given the presence of other infrastructure constraints, market conditions and development lead-in times in order that any available capacity is utilised by developers most able to construct and occupy. The Council will impose appropriate Grampian-style conditions on grants of planning permission for relevant sites to ensure development occupations are controlled prior to the opening to traffic of Junction 10a.

Developer Contributions to M20 Junction 10a

- 8.13 The funding package for the Junction 10a scheme includes £16m of ‘developer funding’ (of a total of c.£100m). In recent years, the Council has levied proportionate developer contributions to a package of transport-related measures in the south Ashford area through Section 106 Agreements based on SPG6 (Providing the Transport Needs arising from South Ashford Study) which was most recently updated in 2004. This has included an element of funding to be used for the delivery of a future ‘Junction 10a’ scheme.
- 8.14 The bringing into force of the S106 pooling restrictions in the CIL Regulations in April 2014 now means that the Council cannot use Section 106 Agreements as a mechanism for levying future developer contributions for Junction 10a, so instead it is proposed that, where new developments meet the qualifying tests in SPG6, contributions based on the SPG6 formula will be levied through a Section 278 Agreement between the developer and HE, unless the regulations are amended.
- 8.15 However, once Junction 10a has been completed, the opportunity to levy contributions from new S278 Agreements will cease. At this stage, should further contributions be required to make up the £16m developer funding target, a proportion of CIL receipts from new developments will be utilised for this purpose. This scenario is likely to trigger a formal review of the Council’s CIL Charging Schedule.
- 8.16 In order to ensure full funding is in place in advance of delivery of the scheme, Homes England has agreed to forward fund the full £16m developer contribution element on the basis that this is repaid from developer contributions over the Local Plan period.
- 8.17 Several strategic sites allocated in this Local Plan will be expected to make financial contributions to the delivery of the Junction 10a scheme and this is reflected in the site specific policies. The nature of the contribution will be determined by whether planning permission is granted before or after the completion of Junction 10a.

Other Strategic Projects

M20 Junction 9 / Drovers Roundabout

- 8.18 On the western side of Ashford, M20 Junction 9 provides access from the motorway network to a number of strategic development sites in the town. Both Junction 9 and the nearby Drovers roundabout that provides access into the town centre and to the A20 and A28 were recently upgraded in 2011 through forward funding by the HCA (SEEDA at the time) to create additional capacity to serve the proposed Chilmington urban extension to the south-west and other future development opportunities in this part of the town.
- 8.19 Some Section 106 Agreements have been secured for developer contributions to refund the expenditure on these improvements but there is scope for the proposed allocation at Eureka Park in this Plan to also make a proportionate financial contribution to aid this repayment. The Council will also consider whether any further significant development proposals that would rely on the capacity at Junction 9 and / or the Drovers roundabout should also make a proportionate financial contribution.

Pound Lane Link Road

- 8.20 The broad location of the Pound Lane Link Road is shown on the Policies Map as a new strategic, single-carriageway link road from Pound Lane to the roundabout at the entrance to the Park Farm development. The creation of this link road may be needed to facilitate the full delivery of the proposed allocation at Court Lodge (policy S3) but will also provide the opportunity for an additional strategic vehicular link for traffic from the Chilmington urban extension (to the west) to the A2070 trunk road and M20 Junction 10/10a.
- 8.21 The delivery of this link road would provide relief from existing and future traffic generation from the Chilmington development on parts of the rural road network (notably Magpie Hall Road) and existing local residential estate roads in the Knights Park and Brisley Farm areas.
- 8.22 The proposed Link road crosses the functional floodplain in parts and full liaison with the Environment Agency will be needed to ensure that full mitigation is delivered as part of the scheme design. The Council owns land in this area and it would be physically feasible to construct the link road on land within the Council's ownership, although this would result in a sub-optimal scheme in terms of highway design and impact on neighbouring residents. Consequently, third party land is ideally required to deliver this scheme recognising that such land has minimal development value given its floodplain status.
- 8.23 The Council, in association with KCC, would seek to acquire the necessary rights to deliver the preferred route of the Link road although the option to use Compulsory Purchase powers if necessary could be entertained.

A28 Dualling and Chart Road Improvements

- 8.24 The A28 dualling and Chart Road improvement scheme includes changing the A28 into two lanes of traffic each way between the improved 'Tank' and 'Matalan' roundabouts, and will also provide for improvements to junctions on to this new strategic corridor. The scheme will cater for the development at Chilmington Green, providing for improved capacity and safety in this area and relieve congestion and journey times.
- 8.25 The business case was approved at the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's board in

February 2016 and Local Government Funding of £10.2 million has been approved for release. The remaining £23m funding cost of the scheme is being provided for by Kent County Council and the development consortium for Chilmington Green. The outline design is now complete with minor work being carried out on issues raised through public engagement.

Ring Road Junction Improvements

- 8.26 In response to various current residential and commercial development proposals within the Town Centre area, a series of improvements to the junctions around the former Ring Road are needed. KCC has designed a scheme of highway mitigation which provides confidence over scheme funding and future implementation as local developments will make proportionate contributions towards the key junctions either side of the Beaver Road Bridge. The highway improvement will facilitate the release of new developments that are fundamental to the growth and development of the town centre and its attractiveness as a location for new investment.

Rail Infrastructure

- 8.27 The Council acknowledges the significance of the railway to the borough, and to Ashford town in particular. Rail plays a key role in supporting economic development in the borough, and the High Speed service has been a key driver for employment growth as a result of the 38-minute journey times into London.
- 8.28 Ashford International has become a central staging post, with the aforementioned High Speed line and further links through Kent and into Sussex and continental Europe. During the lifetime of this Plan, the busy transport interchange on the northern side of the station will need to be enhanced to provide for the changing needs of the Borough, ensuring that an effective and sustainable interchange provides for more integrated journeys, supporting onward bus, cycle and pedestrian connectivity. This should be delivered as part of the suite of works associated with the development of the Commercial Quarter, and with involvement from the Council as landowner of International House.
- 8.29 In addition to Ashford International, there are a further six railway stations within the Borough – Appledore, Charing, Chilham, Ham Street, Pluckley and Wye. The priorities for these are to improve cycling facilities and customer information systems, and the provision of waiting shelters. Additionally, in the case of Appledore station, there is an opportunity to enhance pedestrian and cycling routes between the station and the village. Contributions may be sought via Section 106 agreements to contribute towards these improvements.
- 8.30 The key rail-related priorities in the Borough at the current time are as follows:
- Ashford International Rail Connectivity Project (Spurs): an EU and SELEP-funded project to upgrade signaling at Ashford International to European Train Control System (ETCS) standard, allowing the continuation of international stopping services at the station.
 - Ashford – Hastings Line upgrade: project to deliver an extension of High Speed services to Hastings and Bexhill via Ashford International, to include electrification of the line between Ashford and Ore.
 - High Speed Capacity: catering for increasing demand and growth in Ashford town in particular, to include the lengthening of trains and provision of additional services at peak times.

- 8.31 In addition to these, other priorities include the retention of services at their current frequency at more rural stations to ensure the accessibility and vitality of these villages; provision of renewed rolling stock consisting of more sustainable low emission trains; and the enhancement of station accessibility. While the Council is not responsible for rail services and infrastructure, it will work with relevant service providers and authorities to bring projects forward that facilitate sustainable development within the Borough.

Policy TRA1 - Strategic Transport Schemes

The Council will seek the implementation of highway and other strategic schemes that will remove serious impediments to growth and/or secure important environmental benefits. These include a new motorway junction (Junction 10a), the Pound Lane link road, the A28 dualling and Chart Road improvements and measures to improve the former Ring Road junctions.

Where development of a site includes part of an identified strategic scheme, land will be reserved for the route of facility as part of the design of the proposal. Proposals which undermine the delivery of a strategic transport scheme will not be supported

Public Parking Facilities Serving the Town Centre

- 8.32 The availability of publically available car parking has a major influence on the means of transport chosen and is also recognised as being crucial to ensuring new development is successful. The Commercial Quarter (policy S1) in particular envisages a significant amount of new office space which requires adequate parking nearby to ensure commercial terms can be achieved and space can be successfully let, at least in its initial stages.
- 8.33 The Parking Study that supports this Local Plan set out the need for new town centre parking to partly replace existing car parks and partly to cater for additional demand from new development (some of which relates to development that is subject to extant planning approval).
- 8.34 The Study highlighted that the town centre currently has enough vacant car parking spaces to cater for current and future demand. However, this position was caveated in that not all of these spaces are truly available in practice as many are located on the periphery of the town centre in relatively inaccessible locations and therefore it is questionable how attractive these spaces are for short stay users. Also, a number of vacant spaces are also housed in either car parks that are privately run, meaning the Council has little control over operations, or at Edinburgh Road and Vicarage Lane Car Parks - publically owned car parks which have the potential to be suitable locations for redevelopment in the longer term but which play a key role in supporting the town centre at the current time.
- 8.35 In light of the above, the Study recognised that a flexible approach to parking was needed, one which can best respond to development as it comes forward in a way that caters for both the needs of long stay and short stay users. This strategy is very much part of the overall spatial aspiration for Ashford Town Centre, providing a net increase in parking provision, in the right places and with the avoidance of further land-take, while providing opportunities for the redevelopment of less sustainable public parking land.

Elwick Place

- 8.36 Elwick Place will become a significant new retail and leisure destination in the Town Centre through the delivery of a new multi-screen cinema and hotel and a number of new restaurants. A new public car park that will provide for an additional 280 car parking spaces has been delivered. Not only will this car park cater for the retail and leisure development at Elwick Place, it will also become a key facility that supports growth in the wider town centre and also provide flexibility in the parking stock.

Multi-Storey Car Parks

- 8.37 In Ashford town centre, delivering new multi-storey car parks (MSCPs) has been a long held aspiration of the Council and it remains a valid one. New MSCPs will provide the opportunity to redevelop some of the Town Centre's existing surface level car parks - highly accessible and sustainable brownfield sites - through the decanting of spaces to new MSCPs while obtaining a net gain in useful spaces. In order to be successful, MSCPs generally need to be located in accessible locations near to shops and leisure facilities and in doing so tend to cater for the shorter term parking demand. They also need to be clean, attractive and provide a sense of safety for their users.
- 8.38 Additional car parking facilities of between 700-900 spaces are estimated to be required in the town centre over the Plan period in order to accommodate the levels of growth envisaged in this Plan and support the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 8.39 Surface car parking is recognized as being relatively land-hungry and therefore MSCP provision is still seen as an important component of meeting parking needs in the longer term to respond to development coming forward, and remains a key Council aspiration. To avoid excessive land-take in the town centre for parking related to new development, it may be possible to deliver additional parking space (e.g. that required in TRA3b) by extending or decking existing public car parks, subject to a proportionate financial contribution (as per Policy IMP1). Early engagement with the Council should be a priority when considering any development in the town centre that is likely to require parking. Similarly, there may be an opportunity for joint working to deliver a MSCP as part of redevelopment proposals in the town centre.
- 8.40 Although MSCPs tend to best serve short stay users, it is highly likely that they will also partially meet long stay demands, especially as new commercial development starts coming forward in the town centre, until such time that a new park and ride facility is viable which can cater for this demand in a more sustainable way.
- 8.41 Should a MSCP be delivered, the Council may then wish to pursue the redevelopment of some its existing car parking stock in the town centre. These proposals will need to demonstrate that there is spare capacity in existing public parking stock serving the town centre, that is currently operational or which will be provided elsewhere as part of the redevelopment.

Future Capacity Options

- 8.42 The Council retains the view that Park and Ride is a component of its longer term parking strategy, particularly to support new office development in the town centre. In light of this, a Park and Ride facility is safeguarded at Chilmington Green through the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (not superseded by this Local Plan) and will continue to be reserved until it is decided that the facility is no longer required.

- 8.43 In the medium to longer term, it is anticipated that the new office sector in the town centre will thrive and in doing so become a less risky and more desirable investment for the market. In such circumstances, the values secured through the delivery of office accommodation in the town centre will rise substantially and this will result in Park and Ride becoming a more desirable and cost effective option of securing parking space to support new development. In turn this will drive demand and patronage that would financially underpin the operation of a Park and Ride service.

Policy TRA2 - Strategic Public Parking Facilities

The Council will prioritise an aspiration for the delivery of two new multi-storey public car parks in Ashford Town Centre, one of which will have an indicative capacity of 300 spaces, and the other with an indicative capacity of 400 – 600 spaces.

Proposals which would enable the delivery of these facilities on the site of an existing town centre car park in a sustainable location and on a viable basis will be supported. Likewise, major town centre development requiring parking in line with Policy TRA3b may be required to provide proportionate financial contributions towards the delivery of these facilities. Such provision could be in-lieu of on-site parking provision for a proposed development.

Proposals which would involve the removal or capacity reduction of a publically available car parking facility in the town centre, or which prejudice the ability to deliver multi-storey car parking will be refused unless it has been agreed with the Borough Council that the facility is either no longer required or the alternative provision of the same amount of parking spaces can be delivered in a suitable location.

Residential and Non-Residential Parking Standards

Residential

- 8.44 The NPPF allows Local Planning Authorities to set their own parking standards, providing that issues of local car ownership levels, accessibility, the nature and type of the development and the desire to reduce carbon emissions are taken into account.
- 8.45 Ashford is a large and diverse borough with extensive rural areas in addition to Ashford town itself which has seen significant expansion over the last decades. A single approach to the provision of car parking is not appropriate for all developments coming forward across the Borough during the plan period. This 'zonal' approach to parking standards has been part of the Council's approach for a number of years and has proved useful, robust and clear for all parties and has helped to deliver adequate parking spaces to support development in a way that delivers better quality places and environments which is a key aspiration of the Local Plan. As part of the preparation of this Local Plan the Council has revisited the standards in its Residential Parking and Design Guidance SPD 2010 and revised them slightly in the 'suburban' and 'rural' areas by supporting slightly higher minimum parking standards for certain types of residential uses. This better reflects a more realistic approach considering car ownership levels.
- 8.46 For the town centre area (as identified under policy SP4) - and within the central areas of larger developments - a more significant change is now proposed. Here the Local Plan now advocates

a minimum parking standard of 1 space per residential unit. This standard takes account of local circumstances including car ownership data (and future assumptions), historic problems of insufficient parking facilities in central areas and ensures that sufficient parking spaces are delivered to support development in this location.

- 8.47 For the avoidance of doubt, the policy below supersedes the standards set out in the 2010 SPD, with the key exception of the design and layout guidance contained within the existing SPD which remains valid and should be reflected in proposals coming forward.
- 8.48 Care should be taken to ensure that parking is well-designed, easily accessible and is sympathetic to the surrounding environment. Unallocated parking spaces, including those required for visitor parking in residential areas, should be seamlessly integrated into the public realm to reduce the visual impact, and be suitably located so that they do not cause obstructions to the highway.

Non-Residential

- 8.49 For non-residential development the Council has, in common with other Local Planning Authorities in Kent, relied on the advice of Kent County Council and the maximum standards contained in KCC SPG4. These standards have generally proved appropriate for this Borough. However, local instances of residential areas being used as overflow car parks for adjoining employment uses are of concern. It is therefore considered important that the policies of this Local Plan do not, as far as is possible, cause a repeat of such problems, which are, on the whole, connected with insufficient provision of parking for the operational stages of commercial developments, and the levying of charges on employee parking. In addition, the expansion of Permitted Development Rights for premises in commercial use and the impact of changes of occupiers, with resultant different staffing and operational arrangements, has exacerbated such problems.
- 8.50 To ensure the delivery of maximum parking provision in new non-residential developments in the Borough over the Plan period, and to reduce opportunities for commercial developments to deliver fewer spaces than the maximum, Policy TRA3(b) brings forward the standard of SPG4 as the minimum standard for non-residential development in the Borough. Controlled Parking Zones are also supported as an option for the Council to address specific problems with overspill commercial car parking into residential areas should these occur.
- 8.51 Both residential and non-residential parking standards are included within the Policy itself to provide clarity.
- 8.52 With all parking standards it is important to allow for flexibility in their application in order to allow for site specific issues to be taken into account. The policy below therefore provides clarification as to circumstances where departures from the proposed standards could be justified.

Policy TRA3 (a) - Parking Standards for Residential Development

Proposals for residential development within the town centre area identified on the Policies Map or within 'central areas' of larger developments shall deliver a minimum parking standard of 1 space per residential unit on average. It is expected that all of this provision should be delivered on-site.

Proposals for residential development elsewhere shall achieve the following minimum parking standards:

	Suburban and Rural locations
1-bed dwelling	1 space per unit
2-bed dwelling	2 spaces per unit
3-bed dwelling	2 spaces per unit
4-bed house	3 spaces per unit

Visitor parking should be provided primarily off-plot in short stay car parks where available OR on-plot at 0.2 spaces per dwelling in major residential schemes where layout permits.

Parking to support residential development within the Borough shall follow the design, layout and accessibility guidance contained within the Council's Residential Parking and Design Guidance SPD.

Policy TRA3 (b) - Parking Standards for Non Residential Development

Proposals for non-residential developments within the Borough shall provide parking facilities to at least the following parking standards:

A1 Food retail up to 1,000m²	1 space per 18m²
A1 Food retail of 1,000 m² and over	1 space per 14m²
A1 Non-food retail	1 space per 25m²
A2 use class	1 space per 20m²
A3 use class	1 space per 6m²*
A4 use class	1 space per 10m²*
A5 use class	1 space per 8m²*
B1 office use (up to 500m²)	1 space per 20m²
B1 office use (up to 2,500m²)	1 space per 25m²
B1 office use (2,500m² and over)	1 space per 30m²
B1 High tech / research/light industrial	1 space per 35m²
B2 use class	1 space per 50m²
B8 Storage and distribution	1 space per 110m²
B8 Wholesale Trade	1 space per 35m²
Hotels	1 space per bedroom

These use classes are also required to deliver 1 space per 2 staff in addition to the standard set out above.

All floorspace references in this table refer to gross external floorspace.

Continued....

Proposals not falling within the above use classes, including *sui generis* uses, should provide a level of parking proportionate to its activity, and be agreed with the Local Highway authority and the Council.

In exceptional cases, proposals may depart from the standards in policies TRA3 (a) or TRA3 (b) if any of the following apply:-

- a) In order to take account of specific local circumstances that may require a lower level of parking provision, including as a result of the development site's accessibility to public transport, shops and services, highway safety concerns and local on-street parking problems;**
- b) Where an operator or potential occupier requires fewer parking spaces to cater for their specific operational needs, such requirements can be clearly evidenced and where their presence has wider planning benefits;**
- c) Where the proposed use can reasonably rely on the availability of public off- street car parking spaces that are nearby;**
- d) To ensure the successful restoration, refurbishment and re-use of listed buildings or buildings affecting the character of a conservation area;**
- e) To allow the appropriate re-use of the upper floors of buildings in town centres or above shop units; and,**
- f) Should independently verified viability evidence demonstrate that achieving the minimum parking standard identified would render the scheme unviable and that there are overriding planning benefits to justify that the development should proceed.**

Where appropriate, the Council will pursue the use of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) to support the wider strategy for the management of on-street parking, in line with the approach outlined in this policy.

Bus Provision

- 8.53** Providing a frequent, fast and high quality bus service can greatly improve bus patronage and in turn provide a viable service. In the past the Council - in liaison with the County Council and bus operators - has been successful in leveraging funds from the developers to support local bus provision.
- 8.54** In the urban area, the bus service is relatively frequent and efficient, connecting the outskirts of the town with the town centre. However enhancements will be necessary to this network to ensure that it continues to offer a realistic alternative to private car trips where possible. Particular enhancements will be targeted towards key projects in and around Ashford town centre or on the key radial routes into the town centre, as this remains the key destination of the local bus network and where investment should therefore be prioritised.
- 8.55** In the rural area, the bus service is less frequent which reflects both its size and nature but also the difficulties in providing a viable service here. However this provision provides a vital service for many residents in the rural area who do not have access to a car. Therefore, proportionate enhancements should be secured to deliver the most sustainable service possible in this location.
- 8.56** Applicants will be required to consider the potential for bus patronage as part of development

proposals, thus contributing to modal shift. This may be through the supplementing of existing services or the setting up of additional ones in liaison with the provider, depending on the location of the site and the scale of the proposal. Where transport assessments are required as per Policy TRA8, the ability to demonstrate how the scope for additional bus patronage can be achieved through either existing bus services or improvements to those services will be important in assessing the sustainability of a proposal.

- 8.57 The enhancements needed will be determined in agreement with the County Council and bus operators and will be secured either through S106 contributions, where they relate to more localised projects, or site specific enhancements, or CIL monies where they relate to more strategic enhancements. The scale and timing of any contribution will be agreed between the relevant parties with a view to ensuring that the attractiveness of the bus service is maximised where possible.
- 8.58 The enhancements that will be sought will be proportionate to the scale and location of the development but could include the delivery of bus priority measures, the provision of new or alteration/expansion of existing routes and services, contributions towards bus-related infrastructure and operational subsidy for the service in the early years of a development.
- 8.59 The Infrastructure Plan that supports this Local Plan identifies bus priority measures necessary to deliver better access for bus services to the town centre. However, it is recognised that as new schemes come forward over the Plan period, new projects will be identified in order to ensure that a sustainable bus network in the Borough is maintained, as far as is practical. S106 contributions will be secured to help deliver these projects as appropriate.

Policy TRA4 - Promoting the Local Bus Network

The potential for bus patronage should be considered as part of any proposal for new residential or commercial development. Applications should demonstrate whether modal shift in favour of public transport can be achieved through existing bus services or improvements to the network as a key determinant of the scheme's sustainability. This should be demonstrated through a Travel Plan, Assessment or Statement (submitted under Policy TRA8).

Enhancements could include the delivery of bus priority measures, the provision of a new service or the alteration/expansion of an existing service, contributions towards bus-related infrastructure and operational subsidy for the service in the early years of occupation of the development.

Where S106 contributions are sought, their scale and timing shall be agreed by the Borough and County Councils following consultation with relevant bus operators, prior to the granting of planning permission.

Pedestrians

- 8.60 The ease with which people can move in and around places is an important part of promoting non-car based travel and also supporting local shops and services. This can give a place a sense of vibrancy and establish its character. Delivering safe and accessible pedestrian routes within new developments and between new developments and existing facilities is also important for people's wellbeing and promoting healthy lifestyles.

- 8.61 More strategic pedestrian routes including the use of existing public rights of way should be retained where possible and the opportunities to deliver better linkages around Ashford and from the periphery to the town centre will be explored.
- 8.62 KCC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, (currently entitled the Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan) assesses the opportunities for pedestrian journeys in Kent provided by local public rights of way (PRoWs), noting the potential of these routes to stimulate journeys on foot as opposed to by the private car, and for leisure, promoting Active Travel. ABC supports this approach and any opportunities to enhance and regularise PRoWs and other pedestrian routes to encourage journeys by foot.

Policy TRA5 - Planning for Pedestrians

Development proposals shall demonstrate how safe and accessible pedestrian access and movement routes will be delivered and how they will connect to the wider movement network. Opportunities should be proactively taken to connect with and enhance Public Rights of Way whenever possible, encouraging journeys on foot.

Cycling

- 8.63 The Council is committed to increasing cycle usage in the Borough as a sustainable means of transport that also contributes to healthier lifestyles.
- 8.64 Ashford has a well-developed network of cycleways that run through the town that have been delivered over recent years many of which link to the quiet rural lanes around the town and in the rest of the Borough that are suitable for cycling. In addition, sections of off-road cycleway have been provided in the rural area, notably at Godmersham to Chilham and in Tenterden. Recent monitoring indicates that the use of the routes for cycling in the Ashford urban area has increased significantly, particularly as a means to access the domestic and international railway stations.
- 8.65 The network has been delivered principally via the following means:
- The National Cycle Route 18 has been designated and runs through the urban area and links with the wider county wide strategic cycleway network; and National Cycle Route 17 (the Pilgrims Way Cycle Trail) provides a strategic link to Eureka Park;
 - The green corridor network in the urban area provides a comprehensive, primarily riverside, set of cycleway routes that converge in the town centre and provide a direct access to the railway stations. The long-standing green corridor policy has helped to deliver improvements to the cycleway network through the delivery of specific green corridor projects and via the requirement that developments adjoining the green corridor are required to make a contribution to improvements within the green corridor;
 - The Council's Cycling Strategy was approved in 2011 and sets out a series of network improvements projects to be delivered over the lifetime of the Strategy. The Council is committed to reviewing and revising that Strategy;
 - New developments have been required to deliver cycleways within the development areas and to make links to the wider network in the town;
 - Substantial improved cycle parking provision has been provided at the Ashford domestic railway station

- 8.66 KCC recently consulted on its Rights of Way Improvement Plan, (currently entitled the Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan), which sought to promote journeys by bicycle in Kent along hospitable routes, noting the potential of these routes to stimulate journeys by bicycle as opposed to by the private car, and for leisure uses, promoting Active Travel. ABC supports this approach and any opportunities to enhance and regularise cycle connections.

Policy TRA6 - Provision for Cycling

The Council will seek to improve conditions for cyclists through the following measures:-

- Promoting and developing a Borough-wide network of cycle routes;
- Developments should, where opportunities arise, include safe, convenient and attractively designed cycle routes, including, where possible, connection to the Borough-wide cycle network.
- Promoting and providing cycle parking facilities in town centres, at railway stations and at major public buildings, and requiring new development to provide cycle parking facilities in agreement with the Council;
- Taking opportunities to consider active travel when designing new routes and establishing connections with existing routes, encouraging journeys by bicycle.

Cycle Parking shall be provided at a minimum as per the following:

A1	< 1000m ² – 1 space per 200m ² < 5000m ² – 1 space per 400m ² > 5000m ² – min 12.
A2/B1/B2/B8	Short/Medium Term (collection/delivery/shopping) – 1 space per 1000m ² Medium to Long Term (meetings/workplace) – 1 space per 200m ²
A3/A4/A5	1 space per 10 seats (min 2 provided)
C1/C2	1 space per 10 beds/units/pitches or 1 space per 5 students
C3	1 space per unit (flats/maisonettes) (it is expected that sufficient accommodation will be provided in any case for houses)
D1	Schools – as per current KCC requirement Medical centres/surgeries – 1 space per 2 consulting/treatment rooms Others – 1 space per 50 seats or 100m ²
D2	Leisure & entertainment – 1 space per 300 seats Sports facilities & venues – 1 space per 10 participants/members/staff
<i>Sui generis</i>	Case-by-case basis

Impact on the Local Road Network

- 8.67 The roads within the Borough can be classified as follows:

Primary routes: These roads form the primary network for the Borough as a whole. All long distance vehicle movements between the main settlements in the Borough and beyond the Borough should be targeted towards these routes as they have the most capacity and have been designed to accommodate proportionately more traffic movements than other routes.

Secondary routes: These roads distribute traffic within residential and commercial areas of the Borough's settlements and include many rural roads which link some of the smaller settlements to the primary network. Much of the borough is made up of these routes which greatly contribute to its attractive and rural character.

Local distributors: These roads distribute traffic within neighbourhoods. They form the link between secondary distributors and access roads.

Access roads: These roads give direct access to buildings and land within neighbourhood.

- 8.68 Roads are not only important as an engineered product of the highways system but can have important multiple functions in the remit of landscape character (see Policy ENV3a), rural character (see Policy ENV5) and cultural heritage (see Policy ENV13). Routeways have for centuries provided connections for non-motorised forms of traffic and the identity of many of Ashford Borough's rural areas and communities have been shaped by these routes.
- 8.69 Many of these former 'sunken tracks' or 'drovers routes' now form important functions in the highways network that were never envisaged previously, and care is needed to ensure that the multifunctional personality of these routes is not sacrificed either through degradation through overuse and congestion, or insensitive upgrading but with an imperative to maintain and, wherever possible, to enhance the safety of all road users.
- 8.70 Within the context of the NPPF and its desire to deliver sustainable development, most of the traffic generated by development should be targeted towards the primary and secondary route network in the Borough. Other routes should not be subject to inappropriate levels of traffic generation or unsuitable traffic movements.

Policy TRA7 - The Road Network and Development

Developments that would generate significant traffic movements must be well related to the primary and secondary road network. New accesses and intensified use of existing accesses onto the road network will not be permitted if a clear risk of road traffic accidents or significant traffic delays would be likely to result.

Proposals which would generate levels and types of traffic movements, including heavy goods vehicle traffic, beyond that which local roads could reasonably accommodate in terms of capacity and road safety will not be permitted.

Applicants must demonstrate that traffic movements to and from the development can be accommodated, resolved, or mitigated to avoid severe cumulative residual impacts. In some cases, this may require exploring the delivery of mitigation measures prior to the occupation of a development. Consideration of mitigation and impact will be assessed through the fulfilment of the requirements of Policy TRA8.

Assessing Transport Needs

- 8.71 Travel plans, assessments and statements are all ways of assessing and mitigating the negative transport impacts of development in order to ensure that sustainable development is delivered. The Council will seek to promote public transport and other non-car based modes of travel within the Borough.

- 8.72 The Planning Practice Guidance effectively sets out that there is a hierarchy of evidence that is needed to support a planning application, depending on its scale and likely transport impact. Transport Statements should be used where development has a limited transport impact. Transport Assessments should be used where more impact is likely and that mitigation measures are probably needed. Travel Plans are required when long term management strategies are needed to deal with significant transport impact. For development that has no significant transport impact in that they won't generate significant amounts of movement then no statement, assessment or plan is required.
- 8.73 Where appropriate, the Council will liaise with the relevant transport authorities in relation to what sort of evaluation is needed when a planning application is submitted. Should a proposal fall within a designated neighbourhood plan area then liaison with the relevant neighbourhood body will also take place.

Policy TRA8 - Travel Plans, Assessments and Statements

Planning applications will be supported by either a Transport Statement, or a Transport Assessment depending on the nature and scale of the proposal and the level of significant transport movements generated. Where appropriate, the Council will liaise with the relevant authority in relation to what sort of evidence is required. The recommendations of these studies, including Travel Plans, will be required to be delivered prior to or as part of the development and will be secured through condition or S106 agreement.

The Approach to Heavy Goods Vehicles

- 8.74 The Borough lies in a strategic position in the South East of England and the town of Ashford lies at the confluence of key railway routes and the main highway route to the Channel Tunnel and Dover - the busiest ferry port in the UK. This, combined with the increase of more distribution reliant industries means that the movement of lorries will increase over the Plan period.
- 8.75 In response, the Local Plan provides a policy framework to cater for this increase in movements so they can be suitably planned for, where those issues are relevant to planning and where the Council remain the determining authority for planning applications. Specifically, this Local Plan allocates provision for a doubling in size of the existing overnight lorry park at Waterbrook (Policy S16) to around 600 spaces.
- 8.76 Otherwise, proposals that generate significant HGV parking shall be expected to take into account the location, the nature of the proposed use and the impact on the local road network.
- 8.77 Existing Vehicle Standards previously produced by Kent County Council and utilized in Ashford Borough have proven themselves effective over a number of years in managing parking provision related to different use classes. Those standards are brought forward in this Plan for general parking provision in Policy TRA3b, while provision specifically for those use classes requiring particular accommodation for HGV parking provides the focus of Policy TRA9.
- 8.78 Proposals will need to be supported by evidence which can demonstrate that the scheme provides HGV parking to at least meet the number of spaces required as established through

longstanding guidance and reflected in the policy below or, if greater, the latest physical requirements to accommodate HGVs as average sizes increase, with sufficient spacing for parking, manoeuvring and turning. These should be provided on-site or in any communal HGV parking area. Parking on the public highway will not be regarded as a means of meeting HGV parking standards.

- 8.79 To this end, it is expected that only certain classes of development will give rise to the need for HGV parking, and the provision required for a development is usually based on the floor area, the number of staff, the seating capacity or the number of visitors. However, employment-generating development will still be expected to provide for deliveries. Unless otherwise stated, the floor space to be used in applying the standards is the gross floor area based on the external measurement over each floor of the building with corridors, stairwells, etc. included in the measurement.
- 8.80 It is important that the size of the site is large enough to cater for the HGV movements envisaged, including space for loading and unloading and adequate turning circles on site so that the public highway is not needed to serve these functions as this can lead to unnecessary congestion and safety issues.
- 8.81 Furthermore, movement and operations of any HGVs should be limited to suitable times so as not to negatively impact the amenity of residents along distribution networks.
- 8.82 The Council will liaise with the relevant highway authority to ensure that the measures put in place at the planning application stage are adhered to. Where needed, the Council will use its enforcement powers should there be any breach of planning permission.

Policy TRA9 - Planning for HGV Movement

Proposals which generate significant heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements will only be supported where the use is acceptable in planning terms, and:-

- a) The size and layout of the site is sufficient to accommodate HGV manoeuvring and parking in a way that does not lead to the public highway being used for either purpose;**
- b) HGV movements are limited to appropriate times of operation given the context of the site; and,**
- c) Sufficient HGV parking spaces are provided at a level commensurate with use, at not less than the following levels, unless exceptional circumstances dictate a departure from these standards in line with policy TRA3(b) above:**

A3 (Transport Café)	1 space per 5m²
B1 Business (high tech/research/light ind)	1 space per 200m²
B2 General Industrial	1 space per 200m²
B8 Storage and Distribution or Wholesale	1 space per 300m²



Chapter 9 The Natural and Built Environment

CHAPTER 9 – THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 9.1 This section of the Local Plan provides the policy framework for the promotion, enhancement and protection of both the natural environment, including its biodiversity and geological interests, landscapes, green corridors, informal open space, water resources and opportunities for harnessing renewable energy, and the heritage of the borough, including its wealth of listed buildings, conservation areas and heritage assets. The section is split into three topic areas; biodiversity and landscape, water and climate change and the historic environment.
- 9.2 *Biodiversity and Landscape:* Green infrastructure plays an important role in supporting other policy areas of this Plan. By helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors it can drive economic growth and regeneration, deliver quality of life benefits and enhanced opportunities for recreation, social interaction and play in new and existing residential areas. Well-designed and managed green infrastructure can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, assist in halting the decline in biodiversity and mitigate the impact of climate change. In England, green infrastructure issues are dealt with through a combination of the planning system and legislation (European and national⁸).
- 9.3 The conserving and enhancing of the natural environment is one of the ‘core planning principles’ of the NPPF (para 17). It encourages (para 109) the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils. It also seeks to minimise the impact on biodiversity and encourages net gains in biodiversity through the establishment of coherent ecological networks wherever possible.
- 9.4 Formal open spaces (such as sports pitches) also contribute to the wider 'green' offer within the borough and are covered in the community infrastructure section of this Plan.
- 9.5 *Water and Climate Change:* The NPPF expects a pro-active approach against climate change and states that adapting to, and mitigating against, the effects of climate change are core planning principles.

The NPPF identifies expectations to improve energy efficiency in new development in terms of decentralised energy and sustainable design, and ways of increasing the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. It stresses the importance of addressing longer term factors such as flood risk, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.

- 9.6 This section of the Local Plan includes policies which will contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change, including through dealing with flood risk and water resources, requiring new development to incorporate sustainable design and mitigation measures, and promoting the use and development of renewable energy.
- 9.7 *The Historic Environment:* Ashford Borough has a rich and varied heritage, with evidence of human settlement dating back to the Neolithic period. More recently, the long distance drovers and pilgrimage routes of the early medieval times, the Royal Military Canal of the Napoleonic

⁸ Birds and Habitats Directives and Ramsar Convention (EU) / Water Framework Directive (EU) / Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 / Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 / Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 / Climate Change Act 2008 / The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 / Flood and Water Management Act 2010 / Localism Act 2011

period and the high speed national and international railway heritage of the 19th-21st centuries, are evidence of the key role that the location of the Borough, at the convergence of strategic communication routes, has played in shaping its identity. The character and appearance of the Borough has also been strongly influenced by agriculture and by its rural setting, with a rich heritage of attractive villages, the market towns of Ashford and Tenterden, as well as distinctive oast houses, historic houses and gardens, many fine parish churches, water and windmills.

- 9.8 The Borough is home to over 2,300 listed buildings, the highest number among local authorities in Kent, and a significantly higher number of Grade I and Grade II* buildings than in other Kent districts. In addition the Borough has 43 Conservation Areas, 42 Scheduled Monuments and 6 Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, as well as a number of areas of known archaeological potential. Such buildings and areas of architectural and historic interest make a valuable contribution not only to the built and natural landscape but also to the leisure, education, tourism and economic vitality of the Borough and provide welcome opportunities for place-making and for guiding and stimulating regeneration.

Biodiversity and Landscape

Biodiversity

- 9.9 Ashford Borough enjoys an attractively diverse natural environment, and has a green infrastructure network which supports significant areas of biodiversity interest and which delivers a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. It comprises a wide variety of landscapes and different geologies which extend from the North Downs to the Romney Marsh, with the Greensand Ridge, the Stour river valleys and extensive areas of the Weald in between. A significant proportion of the Borough is comprised of parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the Kent Downs and the High Weald, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
- 9.10 The Borough is home to two designated sites of international significance for biodiversity, the Wye and Crundale Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site – the latter extends into an area in the south-eastern corner of the Borough between Appledore and Hamstreet. A small part of the recently extended Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) borders the borough boundary in the vicinity of Stone in Oxney. Under European legislation, the Council has a duty to ensure these sites are maintained in favourable conservation conditions and that they are afforded the greatest level of protection.
- 9.11 Where likely significant effects cannot be excluded, then an Appropriate Assessment prepared in accordance with the Habitats Regulations will be required. Where adverse effects on the site cannot be ruled out, and no alternative solutions can be identified, then the project can only then proceed if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.
- 9.12 Nationally designated sites in the Borough include two National Nature Reserves, at Hamstreet Woods and Wye and Crundale Downs, and 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), comprising 57 SSSI units, which are of national importance on account of their biological or geological interest. These sites are legally protected by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These sites are therefore afforded a high level of protection in this Plan.

- 9.13 The Borough is also home to 83 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, identification of which is overseen by the Kent Nature Partnership. In addition, there are 3 Local Nature Reserves, the Ashford Green Corridor, Hothfield Common and Poulton Wood, Aldington. These sites are important elements of the borough's biodiversity assets and contribute to the promotion, conservation, restoration and re-creation of ecological networks. The Council therefore expects that they will be conserved and enhanced in new development that arises during the lifetime of this Plan. All the national and locally important biodiversity sites are listed in Appendix 4 of this Plan.
- 9.14 Recent years have seen a recognition that the planning system should, in addition to the conservation of individual sites and species, move towards a more integrated landscape scale approach to improving biodiversity. In this regard, this Local Plan supports the aims and objectives of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy as they relate specifically to the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) of this Borough, to ensure that the priority habitats and species of each BOA are conserved and enhanced in new development. Ashford Borough encompasses parts of 8 of Kent's BOAs, a reflection of its particularly diverse natural environment. A map of these BOAs is below.
- 9.15 These BOAs, together with the international, national and locally designated sites listed above and in Appendix 4, in addition to the Green Corridors and other natural spaces such as woodlands and open spaces, form the strategic Green Infrastructure Network of the Borough.
- 9.16 Alongside the conservation of existing habitats and species, the enhancement and integration of appropriate biodiversity into new developments can aid both the environmental sustainability of the scheme and deliver places which are more attractive in which to both live and work. Biodiversity measures may include the provision of open watercourse drainage systems, planting of native hedgerows, trees and woodland and the provision of bat and owl boxes and underpasses for mammals. These can provide important stepping stones for wildlife and ecosystems, as well as contributing to coherent ecological networks which can help to combat a decline in biodiversity.
- 9.17 In designating appropriate areas for development, the Local Plan has ensured that areas of international and national importance for their quality of biodiversity and landscape will not be directly adversely affected. The council will expect, and will work to ensure that all new development coming forward in the Borough will conserve or enhance local biodiversity and that unacceptable, harmful impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment will be avoided. Where this cannot be achieved to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority then appropriate mitigation measures will be required to be implemented.

Policy ENV1 – Biodiversity

Proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported. Proposals for new development should identify and seek opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity. In particular, development should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks.

Proposals should safeguard features of nature conservation interest and should include measures to retain, conserve and enhance habitats, including BAP (Priority) habitats, and networks of ecological interest, including ancient woodland, water features, ditches, dykes and hedgerows, as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife.

Development that will have an adverse effect on the integrity of European protected Sites, including the Wye and Crundale Special Area of Conservation and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar and SPA sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not be permitted. Any proposal capable of affecting designated interest features of European sites should be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment screening.

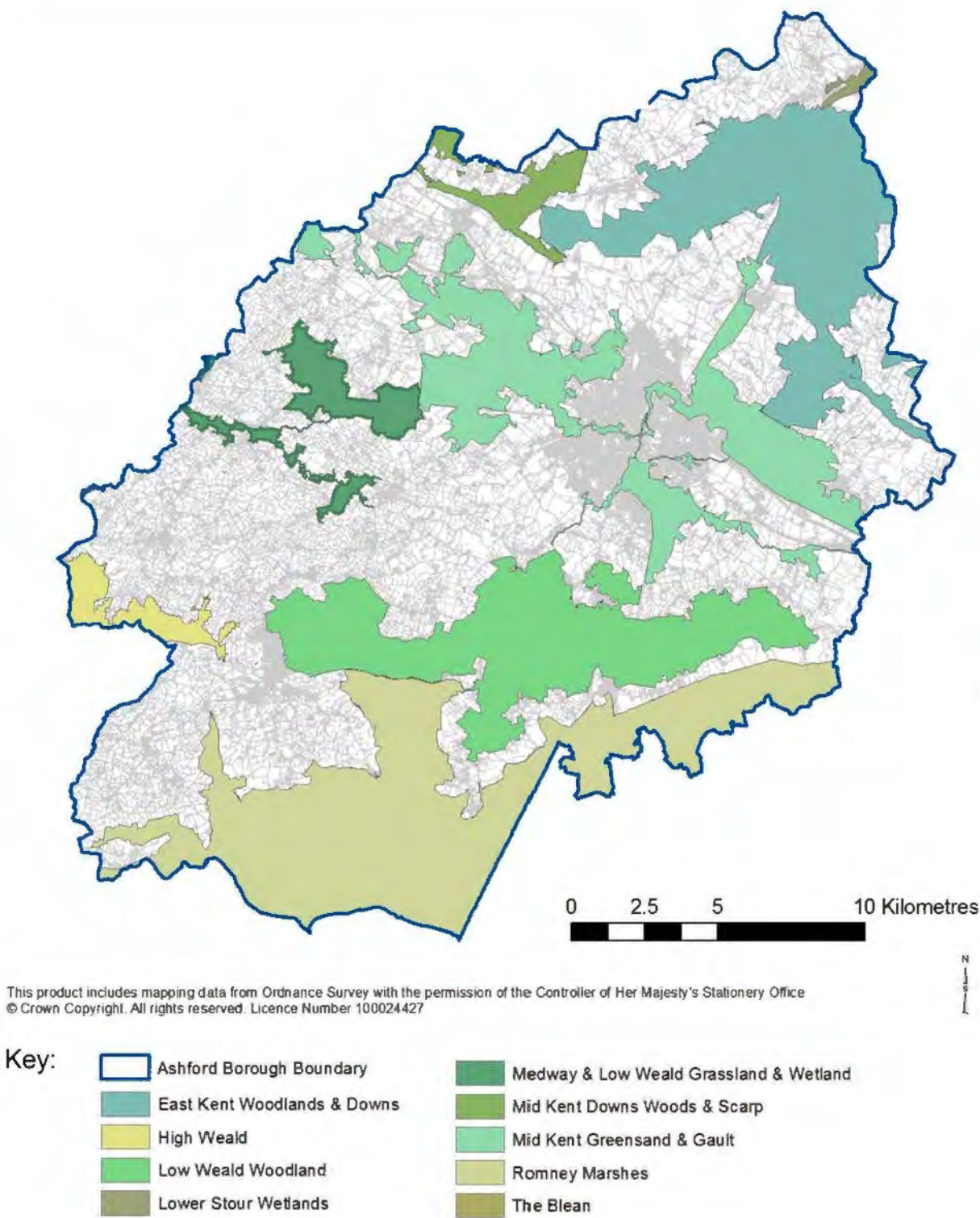
Development that will have an adverse effect on nationally designated sites, including the borough's Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves, will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives including overriding public interest, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution.

Development should avoid significant harm to locally identified biodiversity assets, including Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and the Ashford Green Corridor as well as priority and locally important habitats and protected species. The protection and enhancement of the Ashford Green Corridor is one of the key objectives of the Plan and therefore all proposals coming forward within or adjoining the Ashford Green Corridor should comply with Policy ENV2 in the first instance.

Where harm to biodiversity assets cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation will be required in line with a timetable to be agreed with the Local Authority. Normally any mitigation measures will be required to be delivered on-site, unless special circumstances dictate that an off-site model is more appropriate. A financial contribution - in lieu of on-site mitigation - will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances and where it is demonstrated that the proposed mitigation is deliverable and effective.

Opportunities for the management, restoration and creation of habitats in line with the opportunities identified for the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) and targets set out in the Kent Biodiversity Strategy will be supported.

Map 5: Ashford Biodiversity Opportunity Areas 2015



Green Corridor

- 9.18 The Green Corridor designation has been central to Ashford's planning strategy and approach to green infrastructure since it was adopted in the 1994 Local Plan. It comprises a connected network of largely green open areas that are predominantly located alongside the Great and East Stour rivers, the Aylesford Stream, and other watercourses which flow through Ashford's urban area. These riverside areas are largely undeveloped, due to being within the flood plain, and provide a unique opportunity for improving the quality of the urban environment. Visually, the Green Corridor provides welcome breaks in the built up areas from the Town Centre and through the urban areas of Kennington, Willesborough, Kingsnorth, Singleton and South Ashford into the countryside beyond.
- 9.19 In addition to the rivers and riversides, the Green Corridor includes woodlands, orchards, ponds, lakes, nature reserves, meadows, play, leisure and recreation spaces. It is a core element of Ashford's Green Infrastructure and offers multi-functional uses which create a number of environmental and quality of life benefits to the local community.
- 9.20 The Corridor promotes health and wellbeing, with a variety of open spaces for active sports, gentle recreation and relaxation, and children's play. There is an excellent network of footpaths and cycleways throughout, including national cycle route 18, which are not just for recreational purposes but make a crucial contribution to day to day travel and transportation needs of commuting residents as most link to the town and train station. These movement networks provide safe, traffic-free routes and also reduce pollution.
- 9.21 As much of the Green Corridor is located within the flood zone, it also acts as flood plain and water storage which prevents flooding, as well as being an important habitat for biodiversity. All along the green corridor highly valuable habitats for wildlife are found, providing an important network for the movement of wildlife through the urban areas, between designated nature sites and out towards the countryside. The Green Corridor falls within the Mid Kent Greensand and Gault Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). Much of the Green Corridor is also designated as Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and includes a number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
- 9.22 Protection and enhancement of the Green Corridor is a key objective of this Local Plan. New development on land within the corridor will be strictly controlled to ensure that it retains the aspects that create the functional networks and other health, well-being and amenity benefits detailed above, and which will assist in delivering the targets for the Mid Kent Greensand and Gault BOA set out in the Kent Environment Strategy. Proposals within the Green Corridor that are directly related to, or ancillary to, the existing principal use of that section will be permitted, for example, where they enhance or improve an existing recreation, amenity or leisure use.
- 9.23 Development proposals that do not directly relate to the existing principal use but that would enhance the Green Corridor in other ways will be considered favourably, particularly if they are on brownfield land, are in accordance with a site specific policy in this Local Plan, or have been identified as a key project or opportunity area in the Green Corridor Action Plan. Proposals within the Green Corridor that create overriding planning benefits will be considered on their own merits.
- 9.24 The Green Corridor Action Plan 2017, which supports this Local Plan, provides a detailed description of the value of each area of the current Green Corridor Network and identifies new areas for extension to the designation and proposes opportunity areas to be considered in the

future for extensions (see map below). The action plan outlines future enhancement projects and recommended maintenance, and provides information on priorities and estimated costs of the enhancements. Development proposals on land within and/or adjoining the Green Corridor should provide evidence that the development proposals have considered the Action Plan. Early liaison with key stakeholders such as the Environment Agency (where development is in close proximity to the rivers), Kent Stour Countryside Project (KSCP), who manage many of the Green Corridor projects and coordinate local volunteers, and other relevant local nature or transport groups/organisations is recommended for all proposals within or adjoining the corridor.

- 9.25 All development proposals on land within or adjoining the Green Corridor designation must demonstrate that the proposal would not harm the overall environment, biodiversity value, visual amenity, movement networks or existing functions of the Green Corridor. All proposals within must make a positive contribution to the Green Corridor in respect of its environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning. Development on sites adjoining the corridor must also take into account its impacts on the setting as design of these sites can have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the Corridor. Positive enhancements in this regard, along with improvements to the movement network and other key functions will be encouraged.

Policy ENV2 - The Ashford Green Corridor

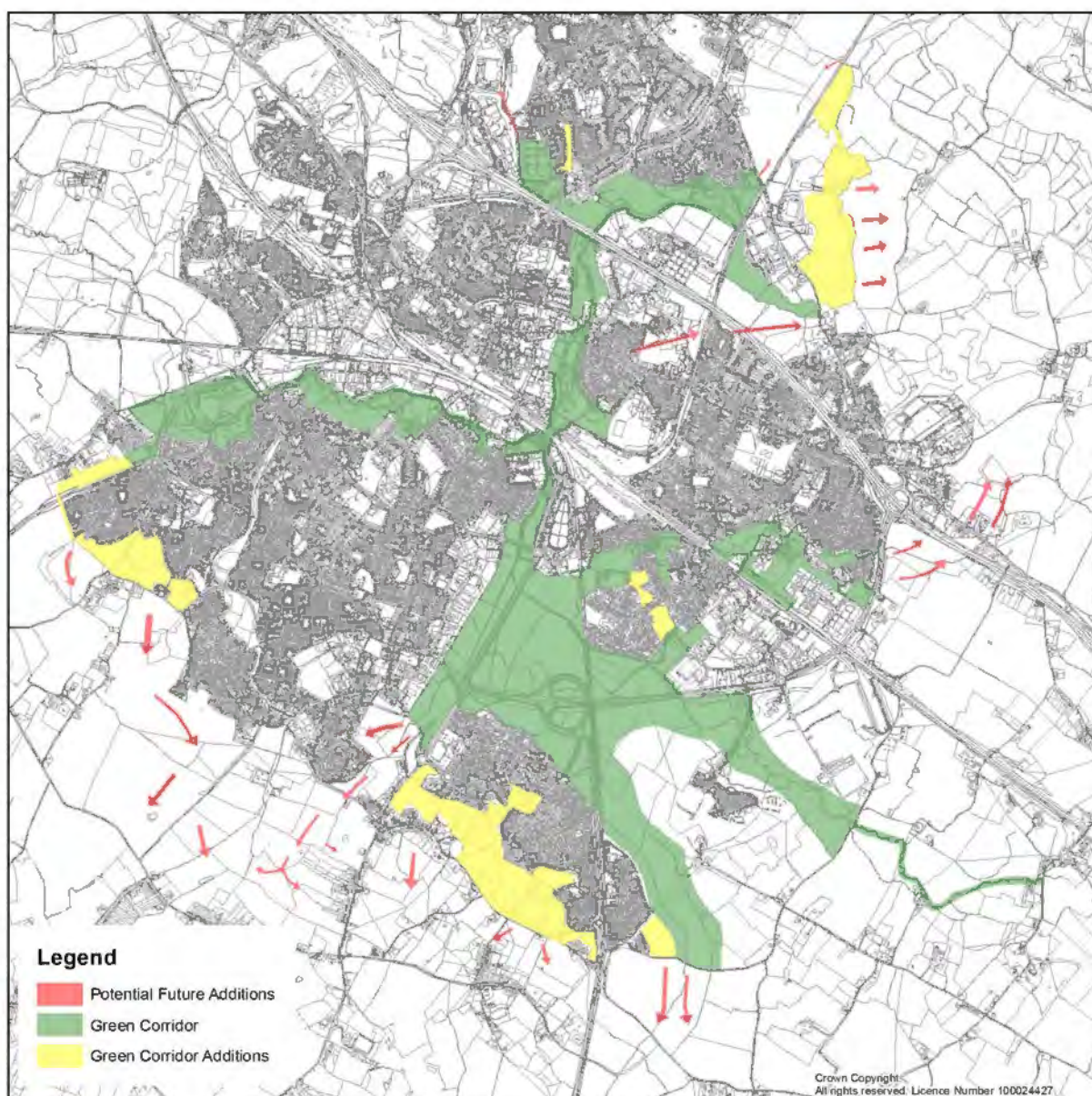
The protection and enhancement of Ashford's Green Corridor is a key objective.

Development proposals within the identified Corridor designation (and proposed extensions) will be permitted, providing that it is compatible with, or ancillary to, their principal open space use or other existing uses, and it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not cause significant harm to the overall environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning of the Green Corridor.

Other forms of development proposals within the Green Corridor will not be permitted, unless it would be in accordance with a site specific policy in this Local Plan; or where it relates to a) the redevelopment of a suitable brownfield site or b) delivers overriding benefits, and in either scenario, that it can be demonstrated that there would be no significant harm to the overall environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning of the Green Corridor.

Development proposals on land adjoining the Green Corridor shall provide suitable access and links to the existing movement networks of the adjoining Green Corridor wherever possible. They must not cause significant harm to any of the key features and functions, and should make a positive contribution to the Green Corridor in respect of its environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning and its setting.

Development proposals must take into consideration the appraisals, projects and management recommendations set out for the specific areas in the Ashford Green Corridor Action Plan, including the identified proposed extension areas to the designation.

Map 6 – Ashford Green Corridor

Landscape Character

- 9.26 Ashford Borough enjoys a rich variety of landscapes from the North Downs to the Romney Marsh with the Greensand Ridge, the Stour river valleys and extensive areas of the High Weald and Low Weald between. These provide important recreational resources for both residents and visitors, as well as forming the attractive setting for the towns and villages that make the Borough a special place to live.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 9.27 Large parts of the Borough lie within two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Kent Downs AONB and the High Weald AONB. The distinctive landscapes of these AONBs play an important role in defining the overall character of the Borough. The Council has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of these designated landscapes. The NPPF requires that great weight (paragraph 115) is given to the conserving of the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs and so, in accordance

with paragraph 116 of the NPPF, major developments in these designated areas will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. All proposals within the AONBs must take account of the landscape character areas and policies of the appropriate AONB Management Plan and other relevant AONB Guidance.

Landscape Character Assessments

- 9.28 Where development is considered appropriate in principle it will be required to be designed in a way which complements the particular type of landscape in which it is located. Key characteristics and features that shape landscape character include:
- 9.29 **Landform, topography and natural patterns of drainage** - the way in which development fits within the landscape can be determined by its relationship with the natural topography of the area. Particular landform features that contribute to the character of the landscape in that area (and their setting) should be protected. Views into and from a site will be a relevant factor in assessing the impact of a proposal. Developments should be planned around natural patterns of drainage and minimise the need to divert or block these.
- 9.30 **The pattern and composition of trees and woodlands** - trees and woodlands often constitute valuable features in a landscape by giving it definition and legibility. These features should normally be retained and protected. Similarly, the nature of the woodland may be a relevant factor in assessing the impact of a development on the character of the landscape.
- 9.31 **The type and composition of wildlife habitats** - the presence of wildlife itself within a landscape area can often contribute towards its attractiveness and its character by giving it activity and vibrancy. The identification and protection of habitat should be part of development proposals.
- 9.32 **The pattern and composition of field boundaries** - the size and definition of field boundaries may be a significant factor in giving a landscape its character. Development proposals should retain existing hedgerows and maintain the prevailing pattern of field boundaries and where appropriate the council shall seek the repair or replanting of damaged field boundaries.
- 9.33 **The pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths** - The form and pattern of built development within the landscape provides the contrast with the natural countryside which together creates the overall character of the area. This may have evolved over many years or may be more recent, but in either case should be considered as a relevant factor in assessing the impact of development proposals.
- 9.34 **The presence and pattern of historic landscape features** - heritage landscape features are likely to play an important role in defining the character of the landscape. These features and their setting should be protected from new development that would adversely affect their integrity or views to or from them.
- 9.35 **The setting, scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings and other traditional man-made features** - the landscape character can also be defined in part by the local character of individual or groups of buildings. Where such buildings play an important role in the identification of landscape character, new development should take account of their scale, design and detailing.

Setting of the AONB

- 9.36 Ashford benefits from two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) within its area – the Kent Downs and the High Weald. AONBs are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of our finest landscapes are conserved and enhanced. In planning policy terms they have an equivalent status to National Parks, and are to be given the highest level of landscape protection. Section 82 of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 confirms that the primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.
- 9.37 Where appropriate, local authorities are required to take into consideration the setting of an AONB when determining planning applications, in accordance with duties under Section 85 of the 2000 CROW Act. Section 85 places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities requiring them to have regard to the statutory purpose of AONBs when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities relating to, or affecting land within these areas.
- 9.38 Although the NPPF does not specifically refer to setting in the context of AONBs, the Planning Practice Guidance explains the legal duties of local planning authorities in relation to AONBs as per the above. Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 8-003-20140306 adds:
- “The duty is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, the statutory purposes of these protected areas.”*
- 9.39 The Kent Downs and High Weald AONBs have precise geographical borders based on an assemblage of unique landscape character. In addition to this, the settings comprise land adjacent to or within close proximity of the AONB boundary, which is visible from the AONBs and from which the AONBs can be seen. The setting may be wider in certain circumstances, for example when affected by features such as noise and light. In some cases the setting area will be compact and close to the AONB boundary, perhaps because of natural or human made barriers or because of the nature of the proposed change.
- 9.40 Generally speaking, the settings of AONBs within the borough are of a high scenic quality, are of importance for rarity, tranquillity, representativeness and variety of local landscapes, and are unspoilt by large-scale intrusive development. Their characters are common with the AONBs, including topographic and visual unity, with a clear sense of place, and usually aspects of historical, wildlife and/or architectural conservation interest.
- 9.41 Scale, height, siting, use, materials and design are factors that will determine whether a development affects the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. Compatibility with surroundings, movement, reflectivity and colour are important in considering impact on setting. Generally, the further away a development is from the AONB boundary, the less the impact on this designation.
- 9.42 Within the setting of the AONBs, priority will be given over other planning considerations to the conservation or enhancement of natural beauty, including landscape, wildlife and geological features, while recognising that landscape considerations carry less weight than within these designations. At the same time, due regard will be had to the economic and social well-being of the area.
- 9.43 The landscape character of the Borough has been extensively analysed in work carried out in two Landscape Studies. The findings of these Studies, which together define 44 Landscape

Character Areas (LCAs) across the Borough outside of the two AONBs and the Ashford and Tenterden Urban Areas, are brought together and set out in detail in the Landscape Character SPD (2011). This document sets out clearly the key characteristics of each LCA. All proposals coming forward should have regard to this SPD, and to the guidance on landscape characteristics that it provides, so as to ensure that new development does not compromise or damage landscape character but instead contributes towards enhancing the character of the LCA in which the site is located.

- 9.44 Development proposals near to the boundary of a LCA should take account of any relevant landscape features or characteristics of the adjacent LCA in addition to that in which it is situated, in order to ensure that there would be no adverse impacts on the character of that area.

Policy ENV3a - Landscape Character and Design

All proposals for development in the borough shall demonstrate particular regard to the following landscape characteristics, proportionately, according to the landscape significance of the site:

- a) Landform, topography and natural patterns of drainage;**
- b) The pattern and composition of trees and woodlands;**
- c) The type and composition of wildlife habitats;**
- d) The pattern and composition of field boundaries;**
- e) The pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths;**
- f) The presence and pattern of historic landscape features;**
- g) The setting, scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings and other traditional man made features;**
- h) Any relevant guidance given in the Landscape Character SPD;**
- i) Existing features that are important to and contribute to the definition of the local landscape character shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development; and,**
- j) Any non-designated, locally-identified, significant landscape features justified in a Parish Plan or equivalent document.**

Policy ENV3b – Landscape Character and Design in the AONBs

The Council shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs and High Weald AONBs.

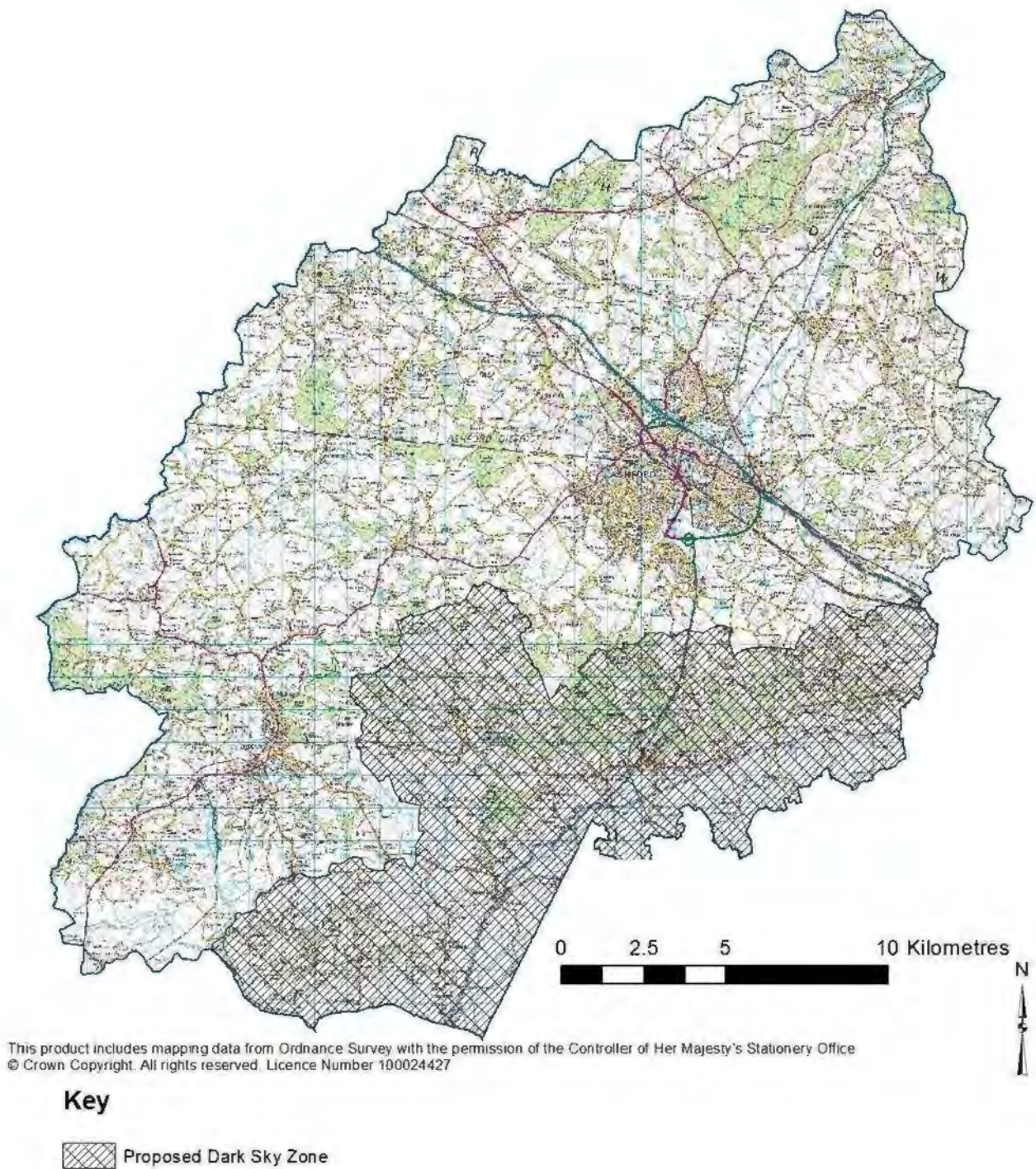
Major development proposals within the AONBs will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it is demonstrated they are in the public interest.

All proposals within or affecting the setting of AONBs will also only be permitted under the following circumstances:

- The location, form, scale, materials and design would conserve and where appropriate enhance or restore the character of the landscape.**
- The development would enhance the special qualities, distinctive character and tranquility of the AONB.**
- The development has regard to the relevant AONB management plan and any associated guidance.**
- The development demonstrates particular regard to those characteristics outlined in Policy ENV3a, proportionate to the high landscape significance of the AONB.**

Dark Skies

- 9.45 Paragraph 125 of the NPPF identifies the importance of minimising the impact of light pollution, stating *'by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation'*.
- 9.46 This is of particular relevance to Ashford Borough as the rural areas in the southern part of the borough currently enjoy some of the darkest skies in the south east region, unaffected as yet by the effects of external lighting often brought on by development. The area around Woodchurch in particular, to the east of Tenterden, has been measured by global satellites as comprising one of the only areas in the county with no light detected. It therefore provides important opportunities for stargazing activity and meets the criteria for an 'intrinsically dark landscape' as described by the NPPF. This opportunity is currently being pursued by the Council, in partnership with the relevant Parish Councils and in close consultation with the Astronomical Society (a key and highly active part of the local voluntary sector within the Borough) to secure the designation of this area as a Dark Sky Zone. A shown on the map below.

Map 7: Proposed Dark Sky Zone

- 9.47 In addition, much of the Kent Downs and High Weald AONBs currently enjoy low levels of light pollution, an important aspect of their landscape character and tranquility and one which it is therefore important to seek to conserve and enhance.
- 9.48 In all areas of the Borough, obtrusive external lighting can result in harm to residential amenity and to the diurnal rhythms of biodiversity. Light control is therefore a key planning consideration in all development proposals, with particular attention required to this aspect of development in the zones of darkest skies and existing low district brightness, as set out in the Ashford Dark Skies SPD (2014). In such zones, lighting should be the minimum needed for security or working purposes and should minimise the potential obtrusive light from glare or

light trespass. Lighting proposals that would significantly affect areas of nature conservation importance, including National Nature Reserves, SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

9.49 There is an increasing demand for artificial lighting for safety (road schemes etc.), crime prevention (security lighting) and for leisure activities (floodlighting of sports facilities), etc. Linked with this increasing demand has been a rise in the number of complaints about obtrusive light received by local authorities. This combination of circumstances has raised the profile of obtrusive light as an environmental issue.

9.50 Obtrusive light is generally a consequence of poorly designed or insensitive lighting schemes. The main problems associated with obtrusive light are:

- **Sky glow** - the orange glow we see around urban areas caused by a scattering of artificial light by dust particles and water droplets in the sky;
- **Glare** - the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a darker background; and
- **Light trespass** - light spilling beyond the boundary of the property on which a light is located.

Each of the three types presents very different problems for the general public and for the environment as a whole.

9.51 As per guidance established by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP, 2011), the borough has been divided into distinct “Environmental Zones” based on global satellite radiance data, to determine suitable local thresholds and standards for external lighting. These are presented in the table below:

Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations as appropriate for Ashford Borough		
Zone	What is acceptable?	Where does it apply?
E0	No decorative lighting acceptable. Security lighting acceptable only in exceptional circumstances.	Designated ‘dark sky’ zone
E1	External lighting to be limited to accord with ILP lighting guidance for this zone. Decorative lighting generally inappropriate. All lighting must be extinguished after 23:00 except in exceptional circumstances.	AONBs; SSSIs; rural areas outside of HOU3a rural settlements
E2	For large-scale developments, lighting levels should accord with ILP technical guidance for this zone. Where development takes place, strict control of new street lighting. All lighting must be extinguished after 23:00 except in exceptional circumstances	Within identified HOU3a rural settlements (excluding Tenterden High Street)
E3	External lighting levels should accord with ILP technical guidance for this zone.	Extensions to the Ashford urban area and Tenterden High Street
E4	External lighting levels should accord with ILP technical guidance for this zone. Street lighting proposals should be carefully planned and specified to achieve best practice in light pollution control.	Within the Ashford urban area

Policy ENV4 – Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies

Proposals will be permitted provided that the lighting proposed is: the minimum appropriate for its purpose; is designed such that lighting is directed downwards, with a beam angle below 70 degrees and; that no significant adverse effects individually or cumulatively will result to the character of the area, the residential amenity of local residents, the safety of vehicle users and pedestrians or the diurnal/seasonal rhythms of the Borough's biodiversity assets.

The correlated colour temperature (CCT) of outdoor lighting should not exceed 3000 Kelvins in order to limit the effects of known environmental hazards associated with short-wavelength visible light.

Proposals where external lighting is required should include a full lighting scheme that provides information about layout and beam orientation, a schedule of the light equipment proposed including luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and lumen unit levels. Schemes will be expected to comply with ILP technical guidance in relation to the Environmental Zone in which an application is proposed.

Within the area proposed to be designated as a 'dark sky zone', proposals will only be permitted where they adhere to the above requirements and where they can demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse effects on the visibility of the night sky or its intrinsically dark landscapes.

All proposals will be expected to demonstrate clear regard to the guidance and requirements set out in the Council's Dark Skies SPD (2014).

Protecting Important Rural Features

- 9.52 In addition to the many and varied elements that constitute landscape character, there are a number of specific features that are worthy of protection in their own right. Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are often not just important landscape features but provide a range of habitat and biodiversity value not found in other forms of woodland. The NPPF (paragraph 118) advises against the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. The protection of such important features of the Borough's landscapes which have long contributed to the quality and variety of the countryside here is an important objective that requires specific policy coverage.
- 9.53 The river corridors and tributaries that permeate the rural areas of the Borough also play an important role in defining the appearance and function of many parts of the Ashford countryside, including several villages. These corridors are important for floodwater storage and conveyance and safeguarded water quality can play a variety of roles from recreational routes to wildlife habitats and therefore are considered worthy of protection from inappropriate development.
- 9.54 The Borough's rural lanes provide the means to travel around the countryside but are also distinctive features in their own right that have played a role in shaping the overall character and appearance of the countryside of this Borough over many centuries. Some rural lanes may have a particular landscape, nature conservation or historic importance and their character and appearance should be protected. Similarly, the public rights of way network (including bridleways) often reflects a legacy of the Borough's strong history of routeways and provides a mosaic of opportunities across the borough for walking, equestrianism and recreation in the

countryside. It is important that this network is retained and, if possible, enhanced through working with the County Council to deliver its Right of Way Improvement Plan, (currently entitled the Countryside Access Improvement Plan) and the creation of clear, attractive connections to (or through) new developments.

- 9.55 Local historic and landscape features, whether designated or not, may provide elements which create local legibility or reference points of meaning to the local community and can also be important in establishing character. Where such features have been identified by Parish Councils or recognised local community organisations in a Parish or Neighbourhood Plan (or an equivalent document), development should also have regard to the need to protect, or where possible, enhance those features.

Policy ENV5 – Protecting Important Rural Features

All development in the rural areas of the Borough shall protect and, where possible, enhance the following features:

- a) Ancient woodland and semi-natural woodland;**
- b) River corridors and tributaries;**
- c) Rural lanes which have a landscape, nature conservation or historic importance;**
- d) Public rights of way; and,**
- e) Other local historic or landscape features that help to distinguish the character of the local area.**

Water and Climate Change

Development and Flood Risk

- 9.56 Ashford is at particular risk from fluvial flooding, as five main rivers converge in the town – the Great Stour, East Stour, Aylesford Stream, Whitewater Dyke and Ruckinge Dyke. Two flood storage reservoirs upstream of Ashford, one at Aldington on the East Stour, the other at Hothfield on the Great Stour currently protect Ashford town from fluvial flooding. These reservoirs were recently tested between December 2013 and February 2014 with the wettest winter since 1910. The region received 258% of long term average rainfall with high peak flows in local rivers. The reservoirs neared full capacity but prevented widespread flooding in Ashford⁹.
- 9.57 Flooding remains a critical issue for Ashford given the topography of the surrounding area and the geology which is predominantly Chalk, with outcrops of Gault Clay and Lower Greensands. The rivers are highly responsive to flows which increase rapidly after heavy rain and fall quickly in drier spells giving them ‘flashy’ characteristics. Whilst the Ashford urban area has had significant investment in flood alleviation in recent years, there are some areas of the town still considered to be at risk of flooding by the Environment Agency, notably in South Ashford. It is therefore essential that development does not increase this risk. New development presents an important opportunity to ‘build-in’ additional local capacity in terms of flood mitigation. Adaptations to new development can contribute towards combating the effects of climate change over the next 100 years.

⁹ Information supplied by the Environment Agency.

- 9.58 The NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear the importance of accounting for flood risk within Local Plans to protect people and property from flooding. The Environment Agency has identified areas at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea for the Ashford Borough, available from the Flood Mapping pages of the Agency's website. These areas are defined into four categories as follows, Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), Zone 2 (medium probability), Zone 3a (high probability) and Zone 3b (functional floodplain). These flood zones are indicative of the potential undefended floodplain.
- 9.59 In allocating new areas of development, the Local Plan has generally avoided areas with a high probability of flood risk and the functional floodplain. All future proposals should preferably be located in Flood Zone 1, as locating development in Flood Zone 1 means that future development is not reliant on costly fluvial flood defences that may become unsustainable in future due to climate change. It should be noted, that runoff from development within Flood Zone 1 has the potential to cause an increase in the probability of flooding if not mitigated. Therefore, any development which causes an additional flood risk by virtue of increasing runoff would need to be suitably mitigated or it will be considered unacceptable.
- 9.60 However, for other reasons of sustainability and regeneration and where there are no reasonable alternative available sites, the Council may give consideration to the vulnerability of land uses in considering development in higher flood risk areas. In these circumstances, developments will need to meet the 'exceptions test' as specified within the NPPF. It will be important to establish the 'actual' risk of flooding, which takes account of the protection afforded by any flood defences present, and the 'residual' risk should that level of protection fail, as set out within the Ashford SFRA. The development must demonstrate that any additional flood risk has been adequately mitigated either on or off site.
- 9.61 Site-specific flood risk assessments (FRAs) should be submitted alongside development proposals in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance. FRAs should be appropriate to the scale and nature of proposed development taking account of flood risk and future climate change.
- 9.62 The functional floodplain is '*land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood*' and will have the highest protection against development. Only water compatible developments or essential infrastructure will be allowed in these areas where they have passed both exception tests. In any event, development must avoid flood storage areas or restricting water flows. The Ashford Green Corridor is made up of open spaces and recreational areas alongside the rivers that flow through Ashford, much of which is within the functional floodplain. These areas will be protected and enhanced for flood storage and their amenity value.
- 9.63 In line with government guidance, the Council commissioned the Ashford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2014) which assessed the extent and nature of flood risk across the Borough and the implications for land use planning, taking account of the anticipated impacts of climate change. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been updated in 2017 to take account of the revised climate change allowances, published in 2016. In addition, Kent County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority prepared the Ashford Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan.
- 9.64 These documents together with the Environment Agency's maps should be used to support the consideration of all planning applications.
- 9.65 Applicants will need to demonstrate that their proposal accords with both the NPPF and Local Plan policies in relation to flood risk. The appropriate responsible bodies should be consulted,

as required, during the initial design process, including the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Southern Water and Kent County Council.

Policy ENV6 – Flood Risk

Proposals for new development should contribute to an overall flood risk reduction.

Development will only be permitted where it would not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site itself, and there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere.

The sequential test and exception tests established by the National Planning Policy Framework will be strictly adhered to across the Borough, with new development preferably being located in Flood Zone 1. Where it is demonstrated development is unable to take place in an area of lower flood risk, essential transport or utility infrastructure, or other development may be allowed as per an exception test if the development is designed to be compatible with potential flood conditions, and:

- a) Suitable flood protection and mitigation measures are incorporated into the development appropriate to the nature and scale of risk;**
- b) Comprehensive management and maintenance plans are in place for its effective operation during the lifetime of the development (taking account of climate change allowances);**
- c) Adoption arrangements are secured (where applicable) with the relevant public authority or statutory undertaker;**
- d) The development would make a significant contribution to the overall sustainable development objectives of the Local Plan, such that the wider sustainability benefits of the development outweigh the flood risk; and,**
- e) It can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council and the Environment Agency that adequate resistance and resilience measures have been put in place to avoid any increase in flooding either on site or elsewhere.**

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), endorsed by the Environment Agency, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks involved will be required in line with Planning Practice Guidance and in particular where the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or Surface Water Management Plan, indicates there are records of historic flooding or other sources of flooding.

In all cases, development that would harm the effectiveness of existing flood defences or prejudice their maintenance or management will not be permitted.

Water Resources and Efficiency

- 9.66 Water is a finite resource essential for human health and wellbeing as well as the natural environment and needs to be managed. Water resources are managed by the Environment Agency in England who implement a licensing strategy for the abstraction of water for various purposes, including public water supplies, industry and agriculture. Once abstracted from the environment responsibility passes over to the water undertakers who have a statutory duty to supply drinking water.
- 9.67 South East Water (SEW) supplies the Ashford Borough with potable water. Currently, household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall which is

available to meet demand, and as such the whole of SEW's supply area is currently classified as 'an area of serious water stress'¹⁰.

- 9.68 Public concern about water supply remains high. SEW forecast data shows that if the company 'do nothing' there will be insufficient water to meet future demand across their supply area. The SEW Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) (2015-2040) uses a twin-track approach to managing this supply demand deficit through demand management and water resource development and, without both components of this approach in place new development may be restricted in future. However, SEW have confirmed that following sensitivity testing on housing numbers their WRMP programme will fully satisfy the growth in demands within their supply area proposed within the Ashford Local Plan.
- 9.69 Demand management measures include a long-term strategy to reduce water use focused on changing customer behaviour. The WRMP has a target to reduce per capita consumption of water across their supply area to 149 litres per person per day (l/p/d) by 2040. This is a reduction against the current baseline of 166 l/p/d and highlights the need for sustained water efficiency improvements. However, there is still a need for the optional requirements for water efficiency on new build. South East Water's 'Water Efficiency Strategy' makes it clear that the standards for new homes are a significant part of the company's planning for water efficiency; that new homes provide the best opportunity for providing best practice water efficiency in the most cost-effective ways; and that SEW depends on the commitment of the Borough Council to help it meet its targets. The only way, therefore, that overall water efficiency can be improved is for the optional requirement to be sought.
- 9.70 A range of new water resource infrastructure is being proposed to increase capacity within the WRMP some located within the Ashford Borough or adjoining local authority area. This includes a new groundwater source at Maytham Farm, Rolvenden with plans to replace non-operational works with a new treatment works (in 2020), and a new reservoir at Broad Oak near Canterbury (in 2033).
- 9.71 There is a need for local authorities, developers and water companies to work closely together to deliver the efficiencies necessary to meet the identified water supply targets set out within the SEW WRMP (2015-2040).
- 9.72 The Government updated Building Regulations Part G in 2015, introducing an 'optional' requirement of 110 l/p/d for new residential development, which should be implemented through local policy where there is a clearly evidenced need. The evidence, outlined in detail in the supporting Water Cycle Study, clearly justifies the need for more stringent water efficiency targets for new residential development in the Borough.

Policy ENV7 – Water Efficiency

All new residential development must achieve as a minimum the optional requirement set through Building Regulations for water efficiency that requires an estimated water use of no more than 110 litres per person per day.

Water Quality, Supply and Treatment

- 9.73 The Council considers it critical that adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities

¹⁰ Environment Agency, Water Stress Classification (July 2013).

are in place to serve development. Significant engagement has taken place with the relevant service providers in relation to the provision of both water supply and wastewater infrastructure in the Borough, and it is confirmed that there is sufficient capacity for planned development up to 2030. However, planning for the period beyond 2030 will begin prior to the end of this plan period, and it is possible that preliminary works to ensure continued capacity, in liaison with the service providers, will be required in order to accommodate new development post-2030.

- 9.74 With regard to wastewater infrastructure, significant recent investment in strategic infrastructure has taken place, including at the wastewater treatment works and to the trunk sewers in the borough. Should the need for further investment arise, it can be planned and funded through the water industry's five-yearly price review process. The Council considers it necessary to ensure that development does not go ahead before any required improvements to the strategic infrastructure are made, and the Council will need to be satisfied when granting permission for major development that there is sufficient capacity at the wastewater treatment works, or that the capacity will be provided, in time to serve the new development.
- 9.75 With regard to the sewerage system (network of sewers and associated facilities that convey wastewater to the treatment works for treatment), developers will be required to work in collaboration with the service provider to ensure that the infrastructure is delivered in parallel with the development. New residential and commercial development will be permitted only if sufficient capacity is either available, or can be provided in time to serve it. Where there is insufficient capacity in the sewerage network, developments will be required to provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity. In circumstances where there is no mains connection within reasonable distance to connect to, alternative proposals should be considered.
- 9.76 The majority of Ashford's water supply comes from large underground chalk and greensand aquifers that need regular replenishment over sustained periods. These aquifers are currently over abstracted and over licensed and there is a presumption against further consumptive abstraction¹¹. As well as being important sources of drinking water, groundwater provides rivers with their based-flow which if not maintained can be detrimental to water quality. For development proposals in Groundwater Protection Zones (Source Protection Zones and/or Groundwater Vulnerability Zones), it will be necessary to investigate and risk assess the potential for any adverse effects on groundwater supplies in consultation with the Environment Agency.
- 9.77 DEFRA brought in changes to water abstraction licensing exemptions in England in 2018 to better manage water at catchment level. Demand management measures such as water efficiency and the use of sustainable drainage to retain groundwater supplies are essential for the long-term resilience of water supplies in the Ashford Borough.
- 9.78 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the legal framework established to protect and restore clean water throughout Europe. For sites adjacent to main rivers in the borough, development must respect the river corridor, through the provision of, for example, a suitable buffer zone from the top of the river banks. A key target of the WFD is to achieve 'good' status by 2021 or 2027. Aylesford Stream on the East Stour was previously the only waterbody within East Kent achieving 'Good' WFD status but the latest cycle (2) shows that that it is no longer meeting WFD objectives. Whilst pollution from wastewater has a significant impact on water

¹¹ Stour Abstraction Licensing Strategy (2013) Environment Agency

quality other impacts such as road runoff, rural discharge from farming practices and low rainfall combined with widespread water abstraction and physical modifications also contributed to poor water quality.

- 9.79 New development must ensure that there are no direct or indirect adverse effects on the quality of water sources in the borough. Appropriate mitigation measures need to be put in place to minimise the impact of increased urbanisation on the water environment. Without such measures, there will be a significant risk of groundwater pollution and flooding.

Policy ENV8 - Water Quality, Supply and Treatment

Major proposals for new development must be able to demonstrate that there are, or will be, adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities in place to serve the whole development, or where development is being carried out in phases, the whole of the phase for which approval is being sought. Improvements in these facilities, the timing of their provision and funding sources will be key to the delivery of development.

All development proposals must provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity wherever feasible, as advised by the service provider, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage systems for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

Schemes that would be likely to result in a reduction in the quality or quantity of groundwater resources will not be permitted. The Council will support, in principle, infrastructure proposals designed to increase water supply and wastewater treatment capacity subject to there being no significant adverse environmental impacts and the minimisation of those that may remain.

Where a site overlies a Groundwater Protection Zone an appropriate site investigation and risk assessment may be required to be undertaken in consultation with the Environment Agency prior to any grant of planning permission.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)

- 9.80 Water supply, flood risk and water quality have all been identified as critical constraints to the sustainable growth of Ashford. Ashford's water environment needs to be managed carefully and the multi-benefits of implementing SuDS within local developments cannot be overstated.
- 9.81 SuDS can make a real difference to flood risk by managing the quantity of surface water runoff from development, they can also moderate flow rates and prevent sudden water level rises following heavy rain. SuDS can significantly reduce harm to valuable water resources by retaining water within the local hydrological system as well as protecting water resources from pollution by filtering run-off. SuDS can form an integral part of both soft or hard landscaping and can contribute to the quality of green space for the benefit of amenity, recreation and wildlife. SuDS may also allow new development in areas where existing drainage systems are close to capacity, thereby enabling development within existing urban areas.
- 9.82 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduced the concept of flood risk management into law and sets out the intention for SuDS in all new development. The NPPF requires LPAs

to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change, and requires all new developments in areas at risk of flooding to give ‘priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems’.¹² The Government have recently made changes to the NPPF making it clear that they expect SuDS to be provided in all new major development wherever it is appropriate¹³. DEFRA have published ‘non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems’¹⁴ which provides guidance on minimum standards of design, maintenance and operation of SuDS systems and sits alongside the Planning Practice Guidance. These documents together with the Ashford Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan¹⁵ provide information and guidance in formulating planning proposals.

- 9.83 The Ashford Integrated Water Management Study¹⁶ identified that SuDS with restricted discharges would be integral to managing flood risk as Ashford grows.
- 9.84 SuDS are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. The four pillars of a successful integrated SuDS system include the provision of amenity, biodiversity, landscaping, and water quality control. SuDS also provide opportunities (in line with NPPF) to:
- reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;
 - remove pollutants from urban run-off at source;
 - combine water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife.
- 9.85 In April 2015 KCC, as Lead Local Flood Authority for Kent, become a statutory consultee as per national requirements following a parliamentary statement in December 2014. Kent County Council have an adopted “Drainage and Planning Policy Statement” which should inform development of drainage schemes. There are also situations where consultation with the Environment Agency will be necessary in relation to fluvial flood risk, water quality, biodiversity and groundwater protection, which may impact measures proposed for surface water management.
- 9.86 A recent discharge rates assessment based on the latest flood modelling for Ashford confirms the potential to reduce flood risk in Ashford through development appropriately managing and ultimately reducing site runoff rates through new development will assist in ensuring that the floodplain extents within Ashford do not increase even in light of expected changes in rainfall intensity as a result of predicted climate change.
- 9.87 The findings of the Discharge Rates Assessment demonstrated that the standard of 4 l/s/ha is difficult to achieve when applying to small site developments. The infrastructure required to store the quantity of water needed to achieve this discharge rate would not be feasible within smaller sites, as long term storage requires large areas of land. Therefore, on sites below 0.25ha it is advised that a maximum discharge limit of 2l/s is sought through the incorporation of flow-control devices.
- 9.88 The Discharge Rates Assessment recommended that discharge requirements should be based

¹² National Planning Policy Framework (2012), DCLG, Paragraph 103.

¹³ Written Ministerial Statement, DCLG (December 2014) HCWS161.

¹⁴ Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems, Defra, March 2015.

¹⁵ KCC, Ashford Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan (October 2013).

¹⁶ Ashford Integrated Water Management Study (2005), Ashford’s Future / Environment Agency

on site specific conditions and monitoring (if available). By undertaking site-specific studies, a detailed analysis of what SuDS could be implemented into the site could also be achieved.

- 9.89 Finally, it was noted that the Council could consider a higher discharge rate than 4 l/s/ha to apply for some brownfield sites. This study has outlined that the majority of the allocated sites in this plan would be capable of accommodating drainage infrastructure that would be able to discharge to half-capacity within 24 hours, based on a discharge rate of 5 l/s/ha.
- 9.90 In light of the recommendations of this report, a more focused approach will be taken to reflect recent changes in local and national policies with respect to the requirements for discharge runoff rates throughout the borough and recent government changes on SuDS. These changes will seek to continue the reduction in flood risk through development across the borough, targeting larger sites where multifaceted benefits can be obtained by the introduction of appropriate SuDS and discharge rate reduction. Drainage should seek to mimic the current drainage regime for a site, whilst also reducing the peak discharges and volumes from critical storms, paying keen attention to drainage destination. The ultimate aim of the policy is to improve flood risk management in the Borough through future development.
- 9.91 The discharge rates outlined below will enable continued success in reducing runoff rates within the Borough through development.
- 9.92 Within the Ashford Borough, the requirement for the inclusion of SuDS within major development has been extended beyond that set out within the NPPF, and also includes minor developments. Permitted developments are also encouraged to integrate SuDS into schemes.
- 9.93 Developers will normally be expected to make provision for SuDS on-site where it is practical to do so. In the unlikely case of an exception, where SuDS cannot be achieved on developments in the Ashford urban area, developers will be required to make suitable in-lieu financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements. Consideration should also be given to 'strategic SuDS' where a limited number of attenuation and treatment areas are needed downstream in areas of significant planned development.
- 9.94 The Council expects SuDS to form an integral part of the development design process. This is because successful SuDS require a range of discharge or infiltration techniques that need to be designed in a sequential order. Whilst primarily used to attenuate runoff, early consideration of SuDS provides the opportunity to design-in other benefits which will deliver more sustainable developments. Whilst it is acknowledged that some sites can be more challenging than others, SuDS can be applied to any site. For the reasons set out above, the Council advocates the use of masterplanning in SuDS. Useful guidance on how to successfully integrate SuDS through the masterplanning process has been developed by KCC in Water.People.Place.¹⁷ Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and statutory consultee has also produced a Drainage and Planning Policy Statement which should be referred to in the consideration of planning applications.¹⁸

¹⁷ Water.People.Places is available on Kent County Council's webpages

¹⁸ KCC, Drainage and Planning Policy Statement, (September 2015)

Policy ENV9 - Sustainable Drainage

All development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality, and to mimic the drainage from the pre-developed site.

On greenfield sites, development should discharge at a maximum of 4l/s/ha, or 10% below current greenfield rates for the existing 1:100 storm event, whichever is lower. There must be no increase in discharge rate from less severe rainfall events, with evidence submitted to demonstrate this principle.

On Previously Developed Land, development must endeavor to achieve 4 l/s/ha runoff or seek to achieve 50% reduction of existing peak runoff rates for the site where existing discharge rates can be established.

On smaller sites (less than 0.25ha), development should achieve a maximum discharge of 2l/s.

Any SuDS scheme must demonstrate regard to the adopted Sustainable Drainage SPD and any subsequent revisions.

SuDS features should always be the preferred option and provided onsite wherever practicable.

All development proposals will be required to:

- a) Ensure all new developments are designed to reduce the risk of flooding, and maximise environmental gain, such as: water quality, water resources, biodiversity, landscape and recreational open space;**
- b) Ensure that all new developments are designed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change;**
- c) Lower runoff flow rates, reducing the impact of urbanisation on flooding;**
- d) Protect or enhance water quality. Incorporating appropriate pollution control measures, to ensure there are no adverse impacts on the water quality of receiving waters, both during construction and in operation;**
- e) Be sympathetic to the environmental setting and the needs of the local community;**
- f) Incorporate a SuDS scheme that is coherent with the surrounding landscape and/or townscape;**
- g) Provide a habitat for wildlife in urban watercourses; and encourage natural groundwater recharge (where appropriate);**
- h) Demonstrate that opportunities have been taken to integrate sustainable drainage with biodiversity enhancements through appropriately designed surface water systems, as well as contribute to amenity and open spaces;**
- i) Demonstrate that the first 5mm of any rainfall event can be accommodated and disposed of on-site; and,**
- j) Demonstrate that clear arrangements have been established for the operation and maintenance of the SuDS component for the lifetime of the development.**

Renewable Energy

- 9.95 The NPPF (Para. 97) recognises the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources. LPAs are required to have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources as it helps ensure a secure more sustainable supply of energy that reduces carbon emissions minimising the impact of climate change.
- 9.96 There is an array of technology available which is classified as renewable and low carbon technology, some of which are now commonplace within Ashford developments. The more familiar types used include solar thermal and photovoltaics panels, ground or air source heat pumps and, to a lesser extent, combined heat and power, wind turbines and small scale hydro. These technologies should be located on site or in close proximity to the end user.
- 9.97 National policy requires Local Planning Authorities to *‘design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts’*.
- 9.98 It is recognised that any planning decision needs to balance the impact of renewables provision against the benefits of the proposal, and planning practice guidance makes it quite clear that renewable energy does not automatically override environmental protection.
- 9.99 This is significant for the Ashford Borough which has large areas designated as AONB and is predominantly rural in character. Proposals which have an adverse impact on the landscape character, distinctive landform, special characteristics and qualities of the AONB or its setting would need to be opposed unless their impacts can be successfully mitigated. Local topography will be an important factor when considering whether there could be any damaging effect on the landscape. The use of Landscape Character Assessments and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments will be useful in this context and their outcomes should inform any future proposal.
- 9.100 In helping increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, the NPPF (para.97) requires Local Plans to *‘identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co- locating potential heat customers and suppliers’*. Decentralised energy relates to local renewable energy and can encompass a wide range of technologies. Renewable and low carbon energy includes heating and cooling as well as the generation of electricity.
- 9.101 Co-locating potential heat customers provides the opportunity to utilise district heat networks subject to appropriate heat demand. If supported by Combined Heat and Power (CHP), district heat networks can provide a highly efficient means of supplying energy. The government recognises this, hence the promotion through national policy. Policy CG19 of the Chilmington Green AAP promotes this form of technology for the first phase as the scale and mix of uses, including a primary school and retail units have the potential to make such a scheme viable. There are also stand alone CHP schemes located at the International Station and Tesco at Park Farm.
- 9.102 The issues associated with implementing such a heat network are intrinsically complex including capacity and heat distribution issues as well as the cost of bringing forward such infrastructure. Imposing such a requirement has the potential to add a significant burden to development infrastructure costs. Aside from the Chilmington Green development, no policy

intervention approach is proposed for district heat networks, instead leaving it to the market to bring forward suitable proposals.

Biomass

- 9.103 Significant government attention has been directed towards the potential for biomass as fuel in order to respond to climate change, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable development and energy security. The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009, and brought forward under the current government) commits the UK to contribute to the overall European renewable energy target and to generate 15% of our energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. The UK Bioenergy Strategy (2012) outlines the country's approach to securing the benefits of this source. It indicates that sustainably sourced biomass could contribute around 8-11% to the UK's primary energy demand by 2020. The Council recognises the potential for biomass fuel, and particular woodfuel, in providing a sustainable source of energy.
- 9.104 The Community Energy Strategy (2014) outlined the government's approach to encouraging the development of community energy in the UK. This includes the generation of community heat from sustainable woodfuel from unmanaged woodlands. This was complemented by the Timber Standards for Heat & Electricity (2014), which advised on the parameters for the management of woods for woodfuel. The Council is supportive of community innovations in renewable energy that can contribute to any or all of the following outcomes: carbon reduction; green jobs; biodiversity improvements; competitively-priced fuel; energy security; reducing waste; supporting sustainable forestry.

Standalone Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

- 9.105 PV Panels or solar technology relating to an individual building is often permitted development provided it is not in a designated area, is not of an unusual design or will not be installed on a listed building. The Council has established Renewable Energy Planning Guidance Notes that have been approved by Cabinet. The guidance notes have been prepared to assist applicants in bringing forward domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays, as well as large scale solar PV arrays, such as solar farms.
- 9.106 Following concerns by local communities into the insufficient weight given to the environment with regard to landscape, heritage and local amenity in relation to wind farms, the government updated national guidance. This makes it clear that local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing. No such areas are identified in this local plan and thus on-shore wind energy is not anticipated to be acceptable unless an area is identified in a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.107 Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee has produced a Renewable Energy Position Statement (Updated June 2011) in which it states that due to the high sensitivity of the Kent Downs AONB it considers that large scale commercial wind turbine developments will be unacceptable. The statement also considers it extremely unlikely that any location can be found in or within the setting of the AONB where field- scale solar PV arrays, such as solar farms, does not have a significant adverse effect on the landscape. National policy guidance also highlights the need to focus large scale solar farms on previously developed land and non-agricultural land and as a last resort, low grade agricultural land. This greatly limits the

availability of potential sites within the Borough.

- 9.108 The following policy sets out how proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be considered.

Policy ENV10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Planning applications for proposals to generate energy from renewable and low carbon sources will be permitted provided that:

- a) The development, either individually or cumulatively does not result in significant adverse impacts on the landscape, natural assets or historic assets, having special regard to nationally recognised designations and their setting, such as AONBs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings;**
- b) The development does not generate an unacceptable level of traffic or loss of amenity to nearby residents (visual impact, noise, disturbance, odour);**
- c) Provision is made for the decommissioning of the infrastructure once operation has ceased, including the restoration of the site to its previous use; and,**
- d) Evidence is provided to demonstrate effective engagement with the local community and local authority.**

A statement should be submitted alongside any planning application illustrating how the proposal complies with the criteria above and any mitigation measures necessary and be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 9.109 The NPPF (paragraph 94) requires LPAs to have a proactive strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change within their Local Plans. This will include policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the delivery of highly efficient buildings both in terms of energy and water use.
- 9.110 Carbon dioxide emissions account for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK (82% in 2013). It is estimated that 37% of carbon dioxide emissions are emitted from the energy sector, 25% from transport, 17% from the residential sector and 16% from the commercial sector¹⁹.
- 9.111 Previous Local Plan policy and supplementary planning documents have required new residential development, through the implementation of EcoHomes and the Code for Sustainable Homes, to reduce energy emissions. Both of these have recently been superseded by changes to Building Regulations that have come into force for new dwellings. Building Regulations now take into account all regulated emissions, i.e. arising from heating, water heating, fixed lighting and ventilation. The Council is therefore relying upon Building Regulations to reduce energy emissions from new housing development in the future.

¹⁹ DECC, 2013 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions (27th March 2014)

- 9.112 With regards to non-residential and commercial sectors of development, which also account for a significant proportion of carbon emissions, government's recent reforms have not been introduced for this sector, although it is expected that a similar framework will be adopted by the government in the future. Previous Local Plan policy in relation to setting sustainability standards for non-residential development has focused on the use of BREEAM standards. Given the uncertainty about when national requirements may come into place, and the significant proportion of carbon emissions that this sector accounts for, it is considered necessary to require new development to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' standard.
- 9.113 As set out in previous parts of this chapter, water resource is also a major issue for the Borough. The policy therefore requires new development to achieve specific improvements in terms of water consumption.

Policy ENV11 - Sustainable Design and Construction - Non-residential

All major non-residential development will achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' standard, with at least a 40% improvement in water consumption against the baseline performance of the building (Wat1, 3 credits), unless demonstrated not to be practicable.

Air Quality

- 9.114 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the planning system should contribute to and wherever possible enhance the natural and local environment. It should prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk of pollution, including air pollution. Consideration must be given to the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual development proposals on protected and important habitats and local areas.
- 9.115 Ashford Borough generally has very good air quality. There are currently no areas within the Borough where the air quality fails to meet the required standards, and there are no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Should an AQMA be declared in the lifetime of the plan, further development will be permitted in and around that area only if acceptable measures to offset or mitigate any potential impacts have been agreed as part of the proposal. In that case, an air quality assessment will be required if the proposal is likely to have a significant effect, which takes account of existing background levels of air pollutants, the cumulative effects of development on individual sites, as well as a feasibility assessment for mitigation measures to ensure air quality objectives are not exceeded.
- 9.116 Planning is an effective tool to improve air quality. It can be used to locate development to reduce emissions overall, and reduce the direct impacts of new development, through policy requirements. As set out in the Strategic Policies of this Plan, proposed development allocations have been located to, where possible, minimise the need to travel, therefore reducing emissions from road traffic. The transport section of this Plan includes policies which promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, with the aim of reducing the use of the car.
- 9.117 Ashford Borough Council is a member of the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership where data and information about air quality throughout Kent is pooled and shared. The partnership has produced guidance which sets the requirements for the consideration of air quality in proposals for new development. National guidance has been produced by Environmental

Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management.

- 9.118 The overall outcome of an air quality assessment is to determine whether the development will have a significant impact on air quality and/or whether the existing air quality environment is acceptable for the proposed development.
- 9.119 The types of development that are likely to require an air quality assessment are identified in the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnerships Technical Planning Guide.
- 9.120 The following policy sets out the requirements for development proposals to consider air quality and ensure potential negative impacts upon air quality are ameliorated.

Policy ENV12 - Air Quality

All major development proposals should promote a shift to the use of sustainable low emission transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality.

Development should be located where it is accessible to support the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Development proposals that might lead to a significant deterioration in air quality or national air quality objectives being exceeded, either by itself, or in combination with other committed development, will require the submission of an Air Quality Assessment to be carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance. This should address:-

- a) The cumulative effect of further emissions; and,**
- b) The proposed measures of mitigation through good design and offsetting measures that would prevent the National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded or reduce the extent of the air quality deterioration.**

Proposals which will result in National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded will not be permitted.

The Historic Environment

Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

- 9.121 One of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF as "*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)*". Significance is defined, in this context, as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. Evidence of the breadth of heritage assets in the Borough is contained in the National Historic List for England and the Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Kent County Council for the county.

The Ashford Heritage Strategy

- 9.122 The Ashford Heritage Strategy (2017), prepared by the Council, sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the Borough's rich historic environment, assessing the significance of its broad portfolio of heritage assets, the contribution they make to the environment of the Borough and their potential to contribute to the delivery of other sustainable development objectives of the Local Plan.
- 9.123 Given the high number of listed buildings and other designated places and structures in the Borough, the Strategy categorises all historic assets under a series of themes selected to reflect the broad heritage and historical fabric of Ashford - Prehistory, Farming and Farmsteads, Routeways, Historic Houses and Gardens, Ecclesiastical, Industry and Commerce, Invasion and Defence and the Railway. This is an approach adopted by other heritage strategies and endorsed by Kent County Council. These themes are not meant to be a definitive list, or to be read in any other way than as a tool for facilitating the assessment of the significance of the large numbers of the Borough's heritage assets and the contribution they make to the environment.
- 9.124 The NPPF (paragraph 128) advises that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by proposals including any contribution made by their setting, and the Heritage Strategy provides a useful resource to assist in this regard.

Listed Buildings

- 9.125 Ashford Borough is home to a significant number of listed buildings, statutorily recognised as being of particular special architectural or historic interest. They are a valuable and irreplaceable resource for the Borough and the NPPF advises they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 126). As well as being of heritage value in themselves, Listed Buildings often make an important contribution to the character of a wider area and help to deliver positive benefits to the cultural, economic and environmental offer of the Borough. To this end, the Council will support proposals which put such buildings to viable use consistent with their conservation.

Local Listing

- 9.126 Many buildings or structures in the Borough which do not currently meet national criteria for statutory listing nevertheless often have local historical importance and may be worthy of protection and conservation in their own right. Local lists play an important role in celebrating non-designated heritage that is particularly valued by communities. The process of preparing a local heritage list allows local people, in partnership with the Council, to identify local heritage that they would wish to see recognised and protected. Such local lists once agreed by the local planning authority as having heritage significance, will merit consideration in planning matters, with the planning authority taking a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset itself. Ashford does not currently have a Local List and the council will therefore prepare a SPD setting out guidance and recommended methodology on Historic England's Guiding Principles for Local Heritage Listing in order to support local groups wishing to prepare Local Heritage Lists.

Policy ENV13 - Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

Proposals which preserve or enhance the heritage assets of the Borough, sustaining and enhancing their significance and the contribution they make to local character and distinctiveness, will be supported. Proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets through regeneration, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into appropriate and viable use consistent with their conservation, will be encouraged.

Development will not be permitted where it will cause loss or substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets or their settings unless it can be demonstrated that substantial public benefits will be delivered that outweigh the harm or loss.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, or where a non-designated heritage asset is likely to be impacted, harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum viable use of the heritage asset.

All applications with potential to affect a heritage asset or its setting should be supported by a description of the asset's historic, architectural or archaeological significance with an appropriate level of detail relating to the asset and the likely impact of the proposals on its significance.

Conservation Areas

- 9.127 Conservation Areas contain some of the best townscapes in the Borough along with attractive areas of landscape which provide their settings. Their designation demonstrates that they have "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) The Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Borough's 43 Conservation Areas and as part of this duty has an ongoing programme of updating and preparing Appraisals for each of the Conservation Areas as heritage assets in their own right.
- 9.128 Conservation Area Appraisals have recently been undertaken for Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch. These Appraisals examine the key elements that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of each area in addition to a spatial analysis of the area including a description of interrelationships of spaces and key views and vistas, and landmarks and an assessment of architectural details, building materials and the contribution of the public realm, local green spaces, parks, gardens and trees (public and private) to the setting of the Conservation Area. They also briefly record the general condition of the area and identify negative features that should be improved or enhanced, suggest potential boundary changes and identify pressures and problems such as traffic, inappropriate advertising, vacancy and disrepair of buildings that detract from the setting and character of the Area.
- 9.129 The Council will continue to review the Conservation Areas across the Borough and where appropriate will amend or create new Conservation Areas in accordance with guidance provided by Historic England.

- 9.130 The variety of building styles dating from different periods frequently adds character and interest to Conservation Areas. Innovative design can be appropriate, provided that it is of the highest quality and is sensitive to the context of the site and its setting within the Conservation Area. Therefore, development proposals coming forward within Conservation Areas should have regard to the layout and grain of buildings, streets and spaces and should reflect and wherever possible enhance local distinctiveness through the retention of building lines, and attention to boundary treatments, open spaces and footpaths. It is also important that new development takes particular account of the impact on the setting of Conservation Areas and important views into and out of the Area.

Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas

Development or redevelopment within Conservation Areas will be permitted provided such proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Area and its setting.

Proposals should fulfill each of the following:

- a) The scale and detailed design of all new development and alterations should respect the historical and architectural character, proportion and massing, including roofscapes, of the area, the relationship between buildings, the spaces between them and with their setting;**
- b) The materials proposed should be appropriate to the locality and complement those of the existing buildings;**
- c) Buildings and streets of townscape character, trees, open spaces, walls, fences or any other features should be retained where they contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area;**
- d) The development should not generate levels of traffic, parking or other environmental problems which would result in substantial harm to the character, appearance or significance of the area;**
- e) The use should be appropriate to and compatible with the character, appearance and historic function of the area; and,**
- f) The development would not prejudice important views into or out of the conservation area.**

Archaeology

- 9.131 There are 42 Scheduled Monuments in Ashford Borough. These are identified in the Heritage Strategy. In addition, areas of known archaeological potential, arising largely from evidence uncovered during new developments, and from the Kent Historic Towns Surveys of 2003 - 2004 (undertaken across the county by Historic England and KCC and including seven towns and villages in the Borough), have been identified by Kent County Council. Further information about these areas is contained in the Ashford Heritage Strategy. In these areas, there is a reasonable possibility that archaeological remains exist and therefore the potential impact of any proposed development on archaeological remains will need to be considered. In certain cases, developers may be required to provide detailed information on the nature and

quality of any archaeological remains on the site before a planning application is determined. Large scale development proposals affecting sites outside but adjoining areas of known archaeological potential may also be required to submit archaeological surveys.

- 9.132 “Significance” is defined in the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. More information on the significance of heritage assets in Ashford Borough can be found in the adopted Ashford Heritage Strategy (2017). However, on a site-by-site basis, archaeological investigation in areas of archaeological potential or where unexpected finds have occurred should include an analysis of archaeological significance, and would include recommendations designed to ensure that any development does not damage or destroy any potential archaeological remains, ensuring important remains are properly recorded and, as relevant, preserved.
- 9.133 Should a significant archaeological find occur unexpectedly during development, the Council will seek specialist advice and encourage appropriate action, including recording, preservation in situ (the preferred option), or limited or full excavation. In some cases approved schemes may need to be amended to avoid excessive damage to archaeological remains.

Policy ENV15 - Archaeology

The archaeological and historic integrity of Scheduled Monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and where possible enhanced. Development which would adversely affect such designated heritage assets will be assessed in line with Policy ENV13.

In addition, where the assessment outlined in Policy ENV13 reveals that important or potentially significant archaeological heritage assets may exist, developers will be required to arrange for field evaluations to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications.

Where the case for development affecting a site of archaeological interest is accepted, any archaeological remains should be preserved in situ as the preferred approach. Where this is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record may be an acceptable alternative dependent upon their significance. Any archaeological recording should be by an approved archaeological body and take place in accordance with a specification and programme of work to be submitted to and approved by the Borough Council in advance of development commencing.



Chapter 10 Community Facilities

CHAPTER 10: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Meeting the Needs of the Community

- 10.1 The provision of good quality community infrastructure and services designed around people and their cultural, leisure, health, learning, social and wellbeing needs is fundamental to the creation of strong, vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities. As Ashford grows and the demand for new or enhanced community infrastructure increases, there is a need to apply strategic policies to ensure appropriate and sustainable provision that supports this demand. This will mean that some community facilities and services may be locally based and aimed at meeting the needs of the local residents in that particular area, whilst others may be more strategic and will need to be delivered in larger facilities and spaces which serve the wider town or Borough.
- 10.2 This section provides the policy framework for the delivery of facilities that provide social and community leisure space, recreation and sports, arts and creative industry spaces, public open spaces, children's play, educational and learning such as schools and libraries; health services, places of worship, space for the voluntary and community sector, and youth and children's services. Such spaces and services involve a mix of agencies, professions and services and require the coordinated actions of a number of stakeholders, including the voluntary sector, to successfully deliver, manage and maintain these.
- 10.3 It has been proved that community infrastructure that offers a range of services at one site, or 'Hub', helps to establish a focal and active point that benefits the area and community life. It also enables land to be better used with toilets and kitchens as well as parking and green space shared by a number of users. In general, such a model of provision is also more viable to maintain.
- 10.4 The longstanding commitment by this Council to the delivery of new infrastructure that embraces the 'hub' approach has and continues to result in good quality and well placed community and social facilities in the Borough. Such existing and programmed provision provides a useful framework upon which to build, in order to meet the needs generated by the additional level of population growth which will arise over the Local Plan period.
- 10.5 To this end the Council's approach will be to continue to work with developers and providers and community groups to ensure the provision of community infrastructure in the right locations and at the right time. The Council recognises that it will need to adopt a pragmatic approach as large amounts of community provision already has planning approval, but has not been implemented yet; something which the Council cannot control. Therefore, contributions from new developments may be needed to expand or enhance infrastructure that is already being planned or is in the early stages of being implemented. This may also involve monies to secure the early delivery of such infrastructure where it is appropriate to do so. Adopting this approach ensures that provisions are in place that will support the communities as they develop - a key planning objective of this Local Plan.

Retention of Existing Facilities

- 10.6 Retaining existing facilities wherever practical is the most sustainable way of enhancing and

expanding provision. This position is supported by the NPPF which recognises the importance of community and social facilities and requires that LPAs guard against the unnecessary loss of this valued provision, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day to day needs.

- 10.7 The Council therefore aims to protect social and community infrastructure and to guard against unnecessary loss unless there are strong reasons why this is no longer viable or where provision is replicated nearby.

The Arts and Creative Industries

- 10.8 Participation in arts and creative pursuits increases personal well-being and helps to build healthy communities; it enhances people's skills, unlocks potential and stimulates learning and enterprise.
- 10.9 Enhancing the local arts scene and working with the creative industries has been a particular focus of the Council's work in recent years and is a priority of the Corporate Plan. An Arts and Creative Industry Strategy is emerging which builds on 'Grow the Arts in Ashford', the Council's adopted Art Strategy. These strategies are committed to nurturing and supporting the arts and help form evidence to this Local Plan and its supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 10.10 Ashford's offer has been enhanced recently through the development of a new arts and performance space at St Mary's Church (in the centre of town) which attracts regionally and nationally significant touring artists and is developing a local audience. The establishment of the internationally renowned Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company has also elevated Ashford's position as an emerging key destination for the arts. The draft Strategy acknowledges that while Ashford enjoys these facilities, and also enjoys a wider programme of cultural opportunities such as events across the Borough, including local festivals. There is however a marked lack of galleries, multi-use art facilities, theatre and production and rehearsal spaces.
- 10.11 The following strategic arts spaces are identified in the draft Strategy to meet the current deficit and provide a wide range of creative activities and opportunities as Ashford grows:
- Revelation St Mary's: this venue will be an important space to meet the demands of the local audience and a key strategic centre for presenting a high quality arts programme that enhances the economy of the town centre;
 - Rehearsal and production centre: a large space for touring companies and local community groups to create and show work and smaller spaces for educational sessions. This will aim to drive innovation in the arts and the provision of excellent arts experiences;
 - Making and exhibiting workspaces: a space (or collection of spaces) where creative designers can co-locate, make and present their work in a gallery and offer associated spaces for the community to engage in the arts and crafts;
 - Arts use in community hubs: helping to ensure urban and rural community hubs cater for arts and are well equipped and designed to support a range of creative activity.
- 10.12 The Council expects that these projects will largely be funded by way of CIL receipts. S106 contributions will however be used where local community buildings/ indoor sports buildings are required, as stipulated through various site allocations in this Local Plan. These buildings

will be required to be designed in a way that allows for a variety of users, including art and creative industries.

- 10.13 Overall proposals that would significantly improve Ashford's arts scene and encourage creative industries by virtue of their quality, cultural diversity, distinctiveness and economic impact will be supported.
- 10.14 New public art will also be encouraged as a result of developments throughout the town and key developments will be expected to contribute to such provision as part of ensuring a higher quality and more distinctive urban environment. This is further explored under policy SP6 'Promoting High Quality Design'.

The Voluntary Sector

- 10.15 Over recent years the voluntary and community sector (VCS) has become increasingly involved in managing many community facilities and delivering public services. The VCS in the Borough is vibrant and diverse, comprising in the region of 850 organisations. It provides a wide range of services and has been shown to bring considerable advantages and benefits deriving from its value-driven motivation and focus on social needs.
- 10.16 Given the wide nature of the sector, it is accepted that projects which are needed to allow the voluntary sector to continue to play a role in meeting the communities needs will come forward over the lifetime of this plan. Where these projects can be costed and shown to be deliverable, the Council will seek proportionate developer contributions or the delivery of space/ provision on site. It is likely such provision will be focused in and around Ashford Town Centre, but is not limited to this boundary.

The Education Sector

- 10.17 The requirements identified in this Local Plan have been based on liaison with Kent County Council, the local education authority.
- 10.18 The residential developments proposed in this Local Plan will create a requirement for additional school places and thus for existing primary and secondary schools to be expanded and for new schools to be built. Wider demographic trends also affect the need for school places. The Council's longstanding approach has been to require developer contributions on behalf of the education authority where new primary and secondary schools or extensions to existing ones are needed to cater for the needs of children from new housing development. The contribution sought is based on 'pupil product figures' provided by Kent County Council for the number of primary and secondary school children likely to reside on each new housing development.
- 10.19 Broadly, this approach will continue, with the Council consulting the local education authority to determine where an education contribution should be sought. The Council will seek contributions through S106, where it would accord with the CIL Regulations and national guidance. CIL receipts may also be required in the future.
- 10.20 In some parts of the Borough the number of additional school children will create the need for new schools to be built, as reflected in the site allocations in this Local Plan. The specification required will be determined through negotiation between the County Council, the Borough Council and the developer.

The Health Sector

- 10.21 The NPPF acknowledges the link between planning and healthy communities and states that the planning system should support strategies to improve health and wellbeing, promote healthy communities and include strategic policies that will deliver the provision of health facilities. It encourages policies that will facilitate social interaction and healthy inclusive communities.
- 10.22 The Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board, comprised of health professionals, local government officers and patient representatives, was established in 2013. The board offers a fresh look at the way the health and wellbeing of Ashford's residents is observed and measured. It also has an influence over the commissioning decisions made across public health and social care in the borough. It looks at improving the health and wellbeing of the people living in Ashford through joined up commissioning across the National Health Service, social care, borough council, public health and other services that are directly related to health and wellbeing.
- 10.23 Health issues are addressed in policies across this Plan, including those on design, transport, economic development, employment skills and training and provision of cultural and local services. Proposals for new health facilities in sustainable locations will generally be supported.
- 10.24 The Council's current approach is to require developer contributions through S106 on behalf of the local health authority for new or improved healthcare facilities, and this will continue. In order to meet the needs for new healthcare facilities resulting from development set out in this Plan, the Council will seek contributions through S106 where it would accord with the CIL regulations and national guidance. CIL receipts may also be required in the future.

Community Leisure Buildings

- 10.25 The Council has a long established tradition of delivering 'multi-purpose community leisure buildings' which fulfil the needs of emerging and established communities. Recent provision takes into account the scale of the development, the nature of the place being delivered, and the proximity of nearby facilities and its offer. This Local Plan adopts this robust approach, supported by the Council's, and partners', experience of what kind of facilities are deliverable and viable over the longer term particularly in response to some of the larger site allocations being proposed.
- 10.26 In addition, where indoor sporting facilities are proposed, they should generally provide space for a mixed use of community activity as part of their delivery to make the most efficient use of these buildings and also help with their on-going viability.

Policy COM1 - Meeting the Community's Needs

Infrastructure and facilities required to meet the needs generated by new development, including sports, arts, community (including youth) and voluntary sector space, education and health provision, open space and play areas shall be provided as the community is established.

Infrastructure or facilities designed to meet localised needs should normally be provided on-site. Other needs will be delivered in liaison with the relevant stakeholders and service providers to ensure that the provision is supplied in a way that meets their requirements and supports sustainability.

Provision shall be secured through S106 and/or CIL as set out in policies IMP1 and IMP2, and have regard to any relevant supplementary planning documents.

If a site comes forward as two or more separate schemes, of which one or more falls below any appropriate threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of contribution on each part to match in total the provision that would have been required on the site as a whole.

In the Borough as a whole, the loss of existing community infrastructure will be resisted unless sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that they are no longer required or are obsolete and that suitable replacement provision is being provided or is located nearby.

Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces

- 10.27 Recreation, sport, open space and play areas can enrich the quality of our lives and contribute towards healthy living. The Borough currently enjoys a wide range of such space and this provision will be added to when current planning permissions are implemented, most notably Chilmington Green which will deliver significant recreational and leisure areas.
- 10.28 For the avoidance of doubt this policy covers the following:
- indoor sports/community facilities,
 - outdoor sports pitches,
 - children's play areas,
 - public open space/ green space areas,
 - informal open space,
 - natural open space,
 - strategic parks
- 10.29 Policy COM2 also relates to allotments and cemetery provision although the specific policy framework for these are set out in policy COM3 and COM4 respectively.
- 10.30 The following total quanta of recreational, play, sport and open space are required to meet the needs of the new development proposed in this Local Plan that do not already have planning permission (circa 7,000 new dwellings). These figures are derived from evidence including the Council's recently approved Indoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy, alongside the standards set out in the current Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD. The figures do not take into account the role which could be played by provision at schools. This provision should be treated as supplementary as in most cases it tends to have limited public access at key times.

Table 4 - Total Targets for Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Space

Informal space*	33.6ha
Children's play*	8.4ha
Strategic Parks*	5.0ha
Allotment provision*	3.4ha
Sports halls (1 badminton hall or equivalent)**	4
3G Artificial Pitch**	1
Football Pitches**	7 adult, 3 junior
Hockey 2G pitch**	1 adult
Rugby**	2 senior pitches
Cricket square and outfield**	1

**figures derived from Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD*

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

- 10.31 These figures are established as a 'target' as only major development (as defined in the NPPF) will be required to deliver a proportion of these provisions. However, in due course, smaller developments may also contribute via CIL receipts. In addition, alternative funding to that supplied from development will also be sought by the Council as a means of achieving the targets set out in table 4 above, such as funding grants from Sports England. Therefore the identification of a target figure is considered to be a robust starting point for the policy below.
- 10.32 In order to determine the quantum and type of provision required for each qualifying proposal, regard should be had to the following.
- 10.33 For the provision of public open space, natural greenspace, informal greenspace, children's play, strategic parks, allotments and cemeteries, proposals shall be consistent with the standards set out in the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD. In due course, the Council will update these standards as part of a development contributions SPD that will have its viability implications assessed.
- 10.34 For the provision of indoor sports facilities and outdoor sports pitches, proposals shall utilise the Sports England Calculator to ascertain the level and type of facilities and pitches needed as a starting point.
- 10.35 This initial assessment shall then be supplemented by a more detailed assessment that applies the outcomes of the Council's Indoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 10.36 This may necessitate that the base requirements, identified through the Calculator, need to be refined and/or altered to reflect local circumstances and complement the Council's preferred delivery strategy, as expressed below. Where refinements are required, any alternative provision should be of an equivalent scale or value to that identified by the initial assessment.
- 10.37 A number of specific projects have already been identified as a means of achieving the Council's preferred delivery strategy to meet the targets in Table 4. These projects are expressed in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule that supports the Local Plan and will be updated annually. In addition, a working group will be established shortly with the remit to assist in the delivery of these projects. The working group will include the Council, the National Governing Bodies for a variety of sports and Sports England.

- 10.38 The Council's expectation is that all qualifying proposals will meet the needs generated by the development and will be delivered through a combination of on-site measures and/or off-site financial contributions secured via Section 106 Agreements. In many cases the application of this policy will result in the delivery of new facilities. However, where appropriate, developer contributions may also be used to enhance existing facilities in order to improve their qualitative characteristics so as to encourage more use and generate greater capacity.

The Hub Approach

- 10.39 The Local Plan seeks to deliver a community hub model, and the strategies emerging for recreation, sports, open space and play all recommend the same model. The sport and recreational hubs are identified on Strategic Diagram 2 (Appendix 9). They are:
- 10.40 **Discovery Park:** a new, major open space and recreational area that is proposed to include a number of sports pitches (including the provision for 3G pitches), a large scale indoor sports building, strategic play space and managed outdoor recreational space. The majority of Discovery Park will come forward in response to development at Chilmington Green and the area is protected as part of the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan, the provisions of which fall outside the scope of this Local Plan. However, an extension to Discovery Park is proposed to come forward as part of the Court Lodge development (policy S3).
- 10.41 **Conningbrook Park:** a new large water based recreational resource and facilities at Conningbrook Lakes and significant indoor sports provision in the form of the existing Julie Rose Stadium. Complementary provision in the form of strategic play space and informal space will also be provided here.
- 10.42 **Ashford Town Centre:** a key location for indoor sports provision within the Borough. The Stour Centre is the principal indoor sports facility within the borough and caters for a range of sports, including swimming, badminton, squash, netball and football. In addition the town centre is also home to green spaces in the form of Victoria Park, Memorial Gardens and the Green Corridor. The town centre will continue to be a key recreational and sporting hub over the plan period.
- 10.43 **Finberry / Park Farm:** a community and leisure hub adjacent to the new primary school at Finberry that complements the facilities planned at Bridgefield Park. This Hub aims to deliver a 3G state of the art sports pitch which will be supported by a multi-use play area, a community building with indoor sports courts and changing facilities.
- 10.44 **Kingsnorth Recreation Centre:** already a well established urban hub for the area and town. This could support an increase to its current recreational and outdoor space offer located here.
- 10.45 **Sandyhurst Lane:** another site already offering social, community and sports provision (comprising two full size grass football pitches and one rugby pitch supported by a pavilion comprising four team and one officials changing room, bar and large function room). New provision is proposed which could include improved sports pitches, informal and natural green space and potentially allotment space.
- 10.46 **Spearpoint:** a busy football hub already existing on this site and contains six grass pitches, a newly built pavilion and tennis courts. The courts are currently in poor condition. The aspiration is to refurbish the tennis courts and provide a major new play area. Further leisure development on this site could also be considered.

- 10.47 **Pitchside/Courtside:** Pitchside and Courtside are adjacent dual use sites in South Ashford on the campus of John Wallis Academy. Pitchside consists of a full size 3G pitch and two full size grass football pitches for community use. In addition the Academy grass playing field has a junior pitch, full size football pitch and full size rugby pitch which are available for occasional community use as demand dictates. Pitchside is supported by a four changing room pavilion. Courtside comprises six hard courts supported by a two changing room pavilion with meeting room and office. The primary use of the courts is for netball, with tennis the secondary use. This provides a key mixed use sports hub and has the potential to be extended and upgraded.

Local Provision

- 10.48 Not all of the provision of recreation, sport, open space and play areas will serve a wider catchment or play a strategic role. There are a number of local areas which fulfil a key role in meeting everyday community needs. These areas include Bridgefield Park, South Willesborough (Bulleid Place/Swan Centre), Singleton (Cuckoo Park/ Singleton Environment Centre), and Repton Park and Community Centre. These offer multi-use community space for local residents, children's play and informal recreational open space. Hythe Road recreation ground should be up-graded to provide a much needed quality open space for informal recreation including multi-use games area. When new development comes forward, there will remain a need to deliver provision at a local scale, to directly serve the community in which it is located.

The Approach in the Rural Area

- 10.49 The spatial approach in the rural area has to be a different one to the strategic hub approach above, given the dispersed nature of the settlement pattern. Here the Council has a strong track record of working with Parish Councils to ensure the delivery and maintenance of small scale provision across the rural settlements of the Borough.
- 10.50 In the rural areas it is important that the provision is linked where possible to public transport routes in order to work to avoid social exclusion, to ensure facilities are as accessible as possible to the widest catchment of users and thereby maximize the viability and vitality of the facilities themselves. The Council will liaise with the Parish Councils to determine the optimum level of provision possible in the rural areas

Policy COM2 - Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces

As a borough-wide target, the Council shall seek to deliver the overall quantum of new recreation, sport, play and open space provision, as set out in table 4 of this Local Plan, by 2030.

To assist in achieving these targets, qualifying development proposals shall meet the need it generates, through the delivery of either new facilities or through the enhancement of existing facilities that improves their quality, availability and/or accessibility. New provision will be delivered via a combination of on-site measures and/or through off-site financial contributions, secured via Section 106 Agreements.

Proposals on qualifying sites will be expected to have regard to the following:

For the provision of public open space, natural greenspace, informal greenspace, children's play, strategic parks, allotments and cemeteries, proposals shall be consistent with the standards established in the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD.

For the provision of indoor sports facilities and outdoor playing pitches, proposals will be expected to use the Sports England Calculator to ascertain the level and type of provision needed. A more detailed assessment will then be required in order to take account of the outcomes of the Council's Indoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy so that provision can be appropriately altered or refined to take account of local circumstances and the need to complement the Council's preferred delivery strategy.

In Ashford, the provision of children's play, strategic parks and sports facilities will normally be targeted towards the sports and recreation hubs identified in this Local Plan and as shown on the Ashford Urban Area diagram (see Appendix 9). Proposals which undermine the ability of a hub to play a role in delivering this provision shall not be supported.

In the rural area, provision should normally be delivered in a way that helps maintain, enhance and potentially expand existing facilities at the settlement where the development is proposed, or at the nearest settlement that has existing similar facilities.

Unless otherwise stated in site-specific policies, on-site provision shall normally be limited to informal/natural green space, and space or facilities which have been identified to meet a local need generated by the development itself. This provision shall be phased in a way that supports the local community as it grows.

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Exceptions to the approach outlined above could be justified, should the following circumstances arise in that:

- a) There is suitable public open/ green space provision nearby and this provision can be accessed by green routes;**
- b) There is a suitable sports facility nearby which has the capacity to be used by the public at key times and this access can be secured over the long term at determination of the application;**
- c) Delivering such facilities would render a scheme unviable; and,**
- d) Not delivering the required provision is supported by the Council or in agreement with, where relevant, the Parish Council.**

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not redeveloped or used for other purposes, unless:

- An assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the provision is surplus to requirements, or**
- Any loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location, or**
- The development is for an alternative sport and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.**

Allotments

- 10.51 Allotment gardening is an increasingly popular leisure activity and allotments themselves are an important feature in both urban and rural communities, providing wildlife and species rich habitats and attractive areas of green space in otherwise residential areas.
- 10.52 Allotments also make an important contribution to the planning and promotion of healthy communities, providing attractive and functional green areas that can foster physical activity, and encourage informal social interactions. Allotments are therefore considered an important facility that meets the needs of the community and therefore form part of the requirements set out in policy COM1.
- 10.53 Given their role in the well-being of communities and the difficulties in finding new open spaces within existing built up areas, the development of existing allotment land will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.
- 10.54 Demand for allotments owned by the Council is kept under review, with additional provision being made where necessary. Over the lifetime of this Local Plan the need for additional allotment provision is 3.4ha. How this provision will be delivered shall be set out in an appropriate strategy that will be produced by the Council in due course, the requirement for which is identified in the Council's Open Space Strategy (2018).
- 10.55 None of the site allocations in this Local Plan require new allotments to be delivered on-site as none exceed the threshold identified in the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD for such provision. However, proposals for new allotments will normally be supported in principle, particularly where large scale development is proposed.
- 10.56 Where new allotment provision is proposed as part of an application it should be provided in a way that is well related to residential properties, sits sympathetically in the landscape and has

suitable vehicular access arrangements. In addition, the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD establishes a number of design principles relating to allotment provision which should also be applied to all new allotment sites coming forward during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy COM3 - Allotments

The provision of new allotments will be supported provided they follow the design principles established within the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD.

Proposals for the redevelopment of existing allotment land will only be permitted where the allotment site is significantly under-used and suitable alternative provision for allotment holders is available nearby, where the site is not needed to rectify any local shortages in informal open space, and where the proposed development would not lead to the loss of an important undeveloped area which plays a significant role in the character of the local environment.

Cemeteries

- 10.57 The yearly mortality rate in this Borough has remained broadly constant over the last ten years despite an increase in population. This is due to people living longer, however a continued increase in life spans is unlikely over the medium term and so it has been assumed that the future mortality rate will increase in line with Ashford's population growth, which grew at a rate of 1.2% per annum between 2001 and 2011. The Council's current assessment is that over the Plan period to 2030 there is sufficient capacity at its cemeteries in Ashford, Bybrook and Tenterden.

Policy COM4 - Cemetery Provision

Proposals for the expansion or creation of new cemeteries in the Borough will be supported providing that the land is suitable for such use, there are no adverse impacts on the water table, the provision and any facilities would sit sympathetically on the landscape so as to not adversely impact any wider views and suitable access onto the local road network can be achieved.



Chapter 11 Implementation

CHAPTER 11 – IMPLEMENTATION

Funding and Delivery of Infrastructure

- 11.1 This Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which is an iterative document that sets out the infrastructure that is required to be delivered to support the planned development up to 2030. It has been informed by discussion with key providers and identifies (where known) how and when this infrastructure might be delivered and to what extent new development is directly reliant on its delivery as a means of prioritising the required infrastructure.
- 11.2 Clearly, it is not possible to foresee all potential needs arising from development proposals (including windfalls), and so these will need to be assessed at the time against relevant policies in this Plan. Where specific requirements are known at this stage, these have been identified through the site allocation policies.
- 11.3 Development is expected to meet the additional demand for infrastructure that it creates, and new infrastructure should be required to be delivered at the right time to meet the new demand. In some circumstances, for example where more than one development site is contributing to its delivery, alternative solutions will need to be considered. The Council, working with the relevant service providers, will allow for some flexibility in this regard, taking into account how critical the infrastructure is and the phasing and timing of development. Flexibility will also be considered in response to issues of viability, as set out in Policy IMP2.
- 11.4 Over the last 20 years or so, the Council has successfully managed to fund new infrastructure of many types and forms through Section 106 Agreements. This infrastructure has helped to ensure that new developments are properly served by the services and facilities that support everyday life and that these facilities are delivered at the right time to meet new demand.
- 11.5 The introduction of the CIL Regulations in April 2015 limits the scope of Section 106 Agreements and their ability to act as a pool for developer contributions towards strategic infrastructure, although they still have a role in the provision of site specific facilities. The Council proposes to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule following the adoption of this Local Plan. This will be tailored to take account of the general policy requirements contained within this Plan and reflect the viability position at the time of drafting.
- 11.6 Nevertheless, the Council still considers that Section 106 Agreements can provide a more certain means of delivering specific infrastructure and services than the use of CIL receipts. This has benefits for developers, residents and service providers and allows for more transparency about what will be delivered and when. The Council will therefore continue to use S106 to secure the delivery of infrastructure, where it is justified to do so in line with the NPPF and CIL Regulations, in preference to assuming funding will arise from CIL in due course. Consequently, the Council will continue to work with service providers to identify specific projects which meet additional demand arising from the policies of this Plan, allowing for a maximum of five S106 Agreements to provide proportionate contributions to those projects.
- 11.7 The Council, in liaison with the relevant highway authority, will also utilise S278 agreements to secure infrastructure and funding for highways related projects.
- 11.8 The Council also intends to publish a generic development contributions SPD that will provide

greater clarity on what level of financial contributions will be sought from the development schemes to deliver the infrastructure that is required.

Policy IMP1 - Infrastructure Provision

The Council will continue to work with relevant service providers to identify and deliver the infrastructure that is needed to support the development set out in this Plan.

Development shall make provision to meet the additional requirements for infrastructure arising from the development, where it is justified to do so in line with the NPPF and CIL regulations. The infrastructure should be provided at a time that is required to support the needs generated by the development.

Provision should be made either by delivery of the infrastructure or by financial contributions towards the cost of the delivery. This shall normally be secured through section 106 agreements, section 278 Agreements, and/or Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

The Council will take a flexible approach where it is justified to do so for reasons of development viability.

Flexibility, Viability and Deferred Contributions

- 11.9 Although this Plan is based on a whole plan viability approach to show that it is realistically able to be delivered, the Council understands the need to remain flexible - a key requirement of the NPPF.
- 11.10 In reality, the wider economy and the property market are likely to experience a number of different cycles through the lifespan of the Local Plan. Changes in demand, development values, build costs and Government policy could all have a bearing on the ability to deliver development and fund infrastructure. Individual sites may incur unforeseen abnormal costs in their redevelopment or require specific infrastructure requirements that mean that, on occasion, additional costs need to be carried.
- 11.11 The starting point for this Plan is that development proposals can meet all of their respective policy and infrastructure requirements in full and be delivered in a timely way to ensure needs are met as a scheme comes forward. The Council has in the past adopted a flexible approach in relation to affordable housing and the provision of other infrastructure contributions. Given that this Plan has been subject to much more stringent viability testing than previous ones, and the policies in it have been framed from this evidence, it is expected that the number of applications where viability issues are identified should significantly reduce.
- 11.12 However, it is recognised that in some cases a shortfall in the contributions towards infrastructure requirements and affordable housing provision or other policy requirements, as set out in this plan, may be justified on viability grounds. Where an applicant believes that this is the case, site specific viability evidence must be submitted to robustly demonstrate that the required developer contributions or other policy requirements cannot be met.
- 11.13 In such cases, where a reduction in contribution and relaxation of policy requirement is agreed, the council will work with the relevant service providers to determine the most appropriate balance of infrastructure provision and/or policy requirements, including affordable housing

provision (in line with Policy HOU1) that should be delivered so that the impact on residents is kept to the minimum possible.

- 11.14 Where site specific viability evidence can robustly demonstrate that the required developer contributions cannot be met, the Council has adopted a system of ‘deferred contributions’. Using this approach, the Council may agree that some normal Section 106 financial contributions can be foregone on the proviso that, should sales values increase beyond an agreed benchmark in future, some or all of the previously under-funded contributions will be made up. This approach provides the council and developers with important flexibility to allow development to proceed in changing market conditions over the course of the Plan period and has successfully been applied in the last few years. Where development risk is highest and market demand uncertain – for example, in new or untested sectors of the housing market such as private rented sector apartment complexes in the town centre – the Council may seek independent advice and decide to waive the ‘deferred contributions’ approach to help de-risk schemes and improve prospects of their delivery.
- 11.15 In implementing such an approach regard will be had to the Council’s Guidance Note ‘Principles for the Assessment of Planning Applications where the Financial Viability of the Development shows that it cannot afford to pay all of the necessary Infrastructure Contributions’ and any future Supplementary Planning Documents relevant to the issue.

Policy IMP2 – Flexibility, Viability and Deferred Contributions

Where proposals do not meet all of the policy and infrastructure requirements set out in this Local Plan, it must be supported by extensive viability evidence that establishes why any departure from policy or deficit in infrastructure contribution is deemed necessary to make the scheme viable and there should be wider planning benefits for the development to go ahead.

Any viability evidence that is provided to support an application must be done so in a transparent way and will be rigorously tested by independent advisors, paid for by the applicant.

Where a deficit in infrastructure contribution has been deemed acceptable, the Council will require the applicant to agree a deferred contributions approach, to claw back as much of any deficit as possible, should market conditions improve significantly.

For larger schemes, where a deficit has been deemed acceptable and a proposal is to be phased over time, or where the opportunity exists to do so, the applicant will agree with the Council a programme or method of re-evaluating the viability of the scheme, to capture changes in circumstances.

Governance of Public Community Space and Facilities

- 11.16 Development proposed within this Local Plan will deliver a variety of what can broadly be termed public community space and facilities which – in this context - includes open space, indoor and outdoor sports provision, community buildings, venues for art and the voluntary sector, SuDS features and areas around these features and, potentially, the verges next to footpaths and roads.
- 11.17 How this provision is delivered and maintained has a direct impact on the quality of a place. In the past, the Council has generally been successful in securing and managing, with our partners, community space and facilities from developers. This has greatly improved the quality of life for the Borough's residents and ensures that Ashford remains an attractive place to live, work and visit – a key objective of the Council as referenced in its Corporate Plan.
- 11.18 Although expanding such provision to cater for the new development proposed in this Local Plan clearly delivers many sound planning benefits, it does also create operational and financial challenges for the Council given the pressures on Council budgets. The same is true of our public sector partners. This pressure is unlikely to be eased, certainly in the short to medium term and in fact is likely to be increased, meaning a dynamic and innovative solution needs to be applied to ensure that both the right level of provision is secured to meet need, and that it is managed to a high standard so that the quality place aspirations are sustained.
- 11.19 With such public sector financial constraint, there is a real potential that the quality of community space and facilities is undermined through a lack of resources, particularly if it relies on the public sector adopting and taking full responsibility for the long term stewardship. Furthermore, such a total adoption role provides very limited opportunities and incentives for local communities to have and maintain a stake in their area and help develop a positive sense of place.
- 11.20 The Council's preferred position in recent times has been to not adopt new community space and facilities that come forward in response to development proposals. This remains the case.
- 11.21 Instead, the Council favours stewardship models as a means of ensuring ongoing management of community space and facilities. Such models take various forms, including community management companies, charitable trusts, Parish Council led models, community development trusts, community interest companies, and co-operative or community benefit societies.
- 11.22 The exact form of model will be dependent on local circumstances, the stewardship functions transferred, the extent and type of assets to be managed and the types of financial arrangements needed. Developers will be expected to endow new stewardship bodies with both assets and money where practical, the latter of which should be at a level at least equivalent to a ten year commuted payment period.
- 11.23 The Council accepts that these sorts of models may only be suitable where there is a sufficient scale of development to create a natural community focus or where there is sufficient scale of on-site community space and facilities to manage. In certain circumstances, smaller schemes could also adopt such an approach, particularly if there is sufficient space and facilities nearby which could be taken on by a joint governance arrangement.
- 11.24 Where a proposal is not suitable to deliver the community based model envisaged above on account of its lack of size or facilities being delivered and / or its proximity to other

developments does not allow for a more holistic approach, then a private management company solution might be considered acceptable.

- 11.25 Where this is the case, proposals will need to demonstrate that the private management company proposed will:
- be run in a way that ensures residents have and retain a key governance role,
 - maintain openness and transparency,
 - be focused on the local development and the maintenance of the environment in the longer term with surpluses reinvested for such purpose,
 - provide a quality service at a reasonable cost over the longer term,
 - allow for residents to take control in the longer term should this be their ambition.
- 11.26 In certain circumstances, such as the adoption of community space and facilities that will form provision within a strategic hub (see policy COM2) or where the Council currently plays a governance role and wants to retain this role, then the Council could be the adopting body. In these circumstances, financial contributions will be required towards the management of community space and facilities, for not less than a ten year period.
- 11.27 Given the importance of the issue of governance, all schemes that will deliver substantial levels of community space and facilities will be required to produce a governance strategy that will set out the specifications and details of the facilities to be delivered and how these will be managed and maintained over time. For larger schemes, this will also need to set out how the early governance arrangements will work in practice given that community space and facilities might be delivered before a community is fully established.

Policy IMP4 - Governance of Public Community Space and Facilities

Proposals that will deliver substantial community space and facilities are required to be supported by a governance strategy which will need to be agreed with the Council. This strategy will need to set out what facilities are to be delivered and by when, and how they will be managed over time to an acceptable standard.

Proposals which adopt a community stewardship model of governance will be supported.

Should a private management company model be promoted, then it will need to be established and run in a way that is affordable, gives the residents a key governance role and is focused towards the management of the facilities to be delivered by the development.

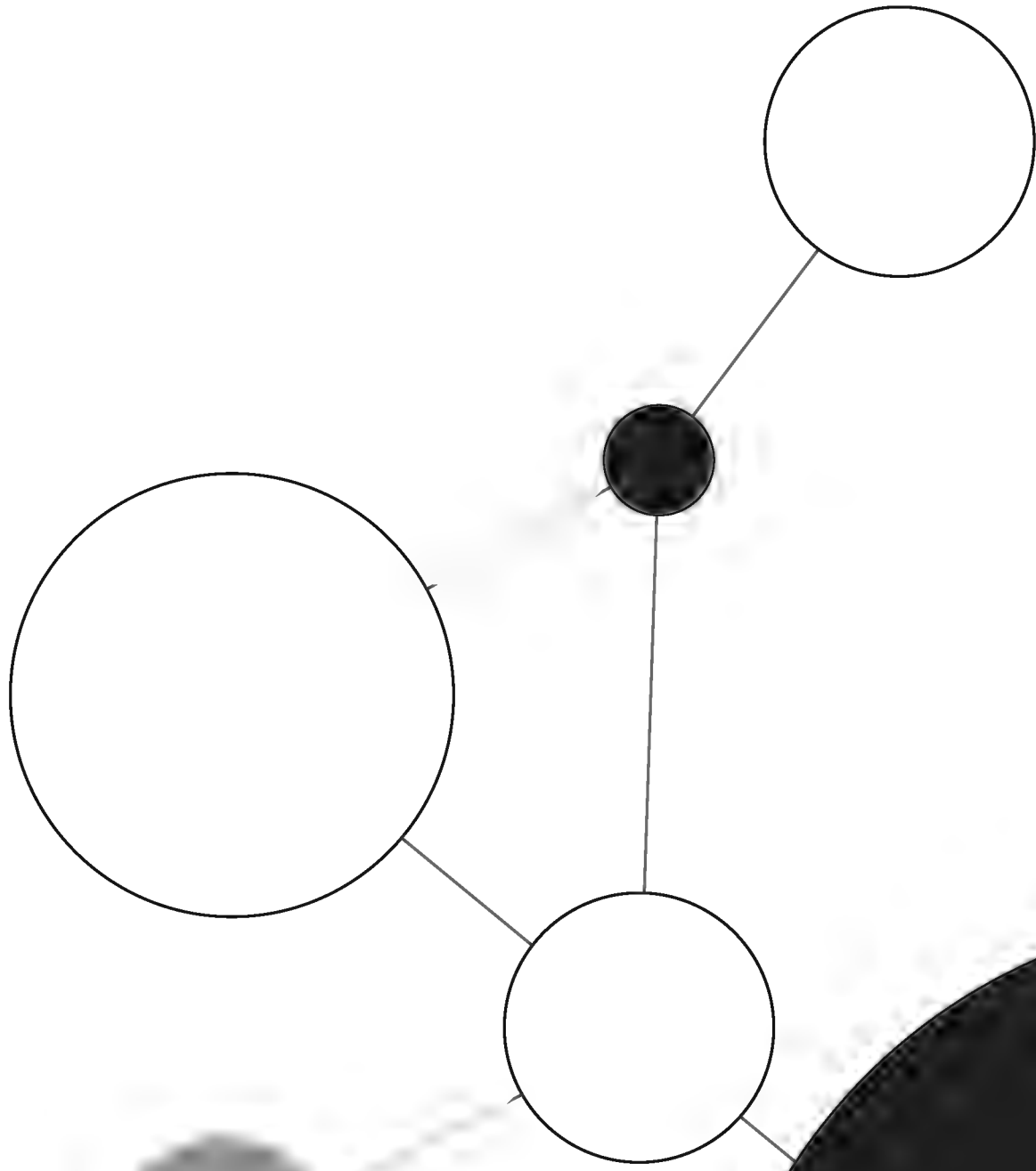
Where the Council takes on an adoption role, financial contributions will be secured from the developer towards the maintenance of facilities for at least a ten year period.

Enforcement

- 11.28 The Council's approach to enforcement is clear. It is the responsibility of individuals and businesses to comply with the law. The Council will do all it can to help advise and treat people fairly but those who flout the system deliberately and/or repeatedly and cause serious harm can expect the strongest possible response. The range of actions open to the Council and severity

of penalties are often dictated by central government but, within these limits, the Council will always aim to act in a way which deters others from non-compliance.

- 11.29 Residents understandably put great value on the quality of life and local environment that they enjoy in the Borough's countryside, towns and villages. When development takes place without permission and causes significant impacts on people's lives, residents of the Borough understandably expect that action should be taken.
- 11.30 The Council has agreed a 'Local Enforcement Plan' (as advised by the NPPF) which sets out how the Council can and will respond. Government advice encourages councils to try to resolve issues by negotiation as this is very often the quickest and most effective way to resolve problems. It is also the best way to use resources. Taking formal action, assuming it succeeds, can be a much longer process than people imagine and consumes a lot of stafftime.
- 11.31 However, where negotiation fails, or individuals deliberately or persistently ignore the rules and carry out development that seriously impacts on the wider community, then there should be no doubt that the Council will take formal action whenever possible.



GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Air Quality Management Areas: Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Article 4 Direction: A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

Climate Change Adaptation: Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate Change Mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Designated Heritage Asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Development Management: Development Management is the process by which planning applications are determined.

Development Plan: This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Economic Development: Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

Ecological Networks: These link sites of biodiversity importance.

European Site: This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Geodiversity: The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green Infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic Environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

HMOs: Houses in Multiple Occupation: Housing which is occupied by 3 or more unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities.

HRA: Habitats Regulations Assessment: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transposes EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna into UK national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Assessments for significant effects on habitats must

be carried out and mitigation measures identified.

International, National and Locally Designated Sites of Importance for Biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites (see Appendix 4 for list).

Local Enterprise Partnership: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Localism Act: The Localism Act was introduced in 2011. Its aim was to devolve powers from central government into the hands of individuals, communities and councils.

Main Town Centre Uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

National Planning Policy Framework. National Planning Policy (NPPF): This is the Government's statement of planning policy with which all Local Plans must be in conformity with. Where a local plan is silent on an issue planning decisions will be made in accordance with national policy. This Local Plan has been prepared and was examined in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in the Annex 1 of the NPPF 2018. Therefore, all reference in the document to NPPF relate to the NPPF 2012, unless otherwise stated.

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Supporting guidance to the NPPF. Guidance can be updated and is available to view online at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

Neighbourhood Plans: A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Open Space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Plan Period: The period covered by policies in the Local Plan (up to 2030).

Planning Condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation: A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Policies Map: This Local Plan is supported by an interactive online Policies Map which applies the relevant policies to the applicable spatial area within the borough. This includes showing the extent of the Borough's two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), its many ecological conservation and open space areas and proposed development site allocations. This interactive map will be updated after the adoption of the Local Plan to ensure that it remains up to date (for example if new areas of open space are designated after adoption). The map can be accessed on the Local Plan pages of the Council's website.

Pollution: Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise

from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

Previously Developed Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Primary Shopping Area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

Primary and Secondary Frontages: Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

Priority Habitats and Species: Species and Habitats of Principle Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Ramsar Sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Regional Spatial Strategy: The South East England Regional Planning Body and the South East Plan 2009 have been revoked under the Localism Act 2011.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural Exception Sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating qualifying households.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

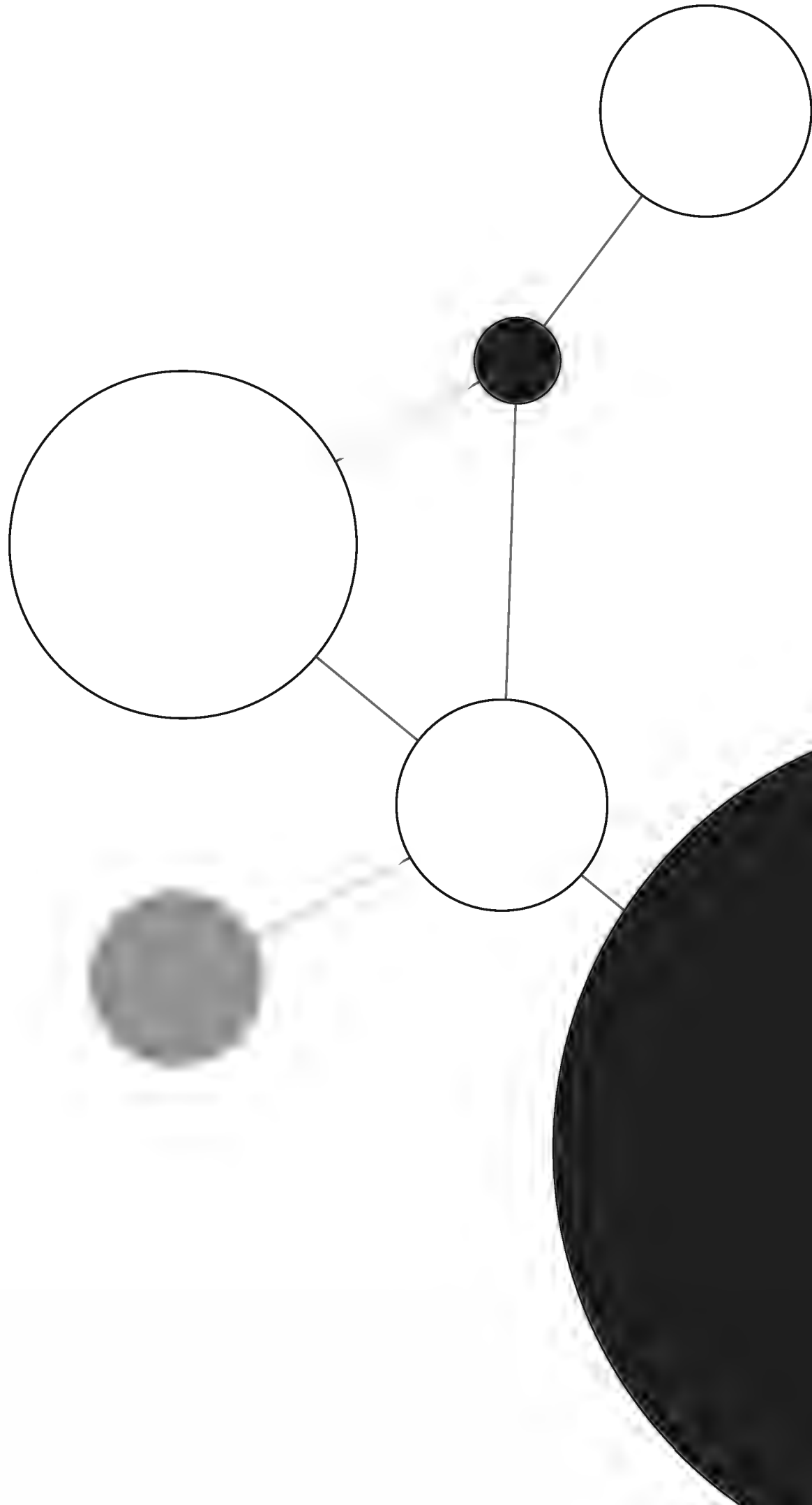
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Areas (SPA): Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

Wildlife Corridor: Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Windfall Sites: Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

Appendices



Appendix 1 - Schedule of Policies that have been superseded/deleted by the adoption of the Local Plan 2030

Policy Number	Policy Title/Purpose
GP10	Conserving and Enhancing Tenterden's Special Character
GP12	Protecting the Countryside and Managing Change
EN7	Shop Front
EN9	Setting and Entrances to Towns and Villages
EN10	Development on the Edge of Existing Settlements
EN11	Merging of Distinct Settlements
EN12	Private Areas of Open Space
EN13	Green Corridors
EN14	Land Adjoining the Green Corridors
EN16	Development in Conservation Areas
EN23	Sites of Archaeological Importance
EN27	Landscape Conservation
EN28	Historic Parks and Gardens
EN30	Nature Conservation Sites
EN31	Important Habitats
EN32	Important Trees and Woodlands
S13	Cheeseman's Green
S17	Park Farm, Kingsnorth
S20	Singleton
S21	Great Chart Playing Fields and Cricket Pitch
S22	Land at Former Rowcroft and Templar Barracks
S34	William Harvey Hospital
S36	Klondyke Works
HG3	Design in Villages
HG5	Sites not on the Proposals Map
HG9	Extensions to Dwelling in the Countryside
HG10	Residential annexes
HG12	Extensions to caravans or mobile homes
HG16	Protection of existing housing
ET3	Ashford 'Employment Core'
ET4	Business Parks
ET7	'Bad Neighbour' developments
ET9	Re-use of Industrial Building for Leisure
RE4	B1 uses within Residential Curtilages
RE12	Annexes to Agricultural Dwellings for Retired or Semi-Retired Farmers
RE14	Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions
RE15	Location of Agricultural Services
SH1	Proposals in Ashford and Tenterden town Centre
SH2	New Retail Schemes in out of Centre Locations
SH3	Primary Frontage in Ashford Town Centre

Policy Number	Policy Title/Purpose
SH4	A2 Retail uses in Bank Street, Ashford
SH6	Local and Village Centre and Individual Shops
SH11	Garden Centre
SH16	Pubs
TP6	Cycle Parking
TP10	Park and Ride
TP20	Roadside Facilities
LE5	Equipped Public Open Space
LE6	Off-Site Provision of Public Open Space
LE7	Play Facilities
LE8	Leisure Facilities
LE9	Maintenance of Open Spaces
LE10	Loss of Leisure Facilities
LE11	Loss of Public Open Spaces
LE12	Loss of Playing Fields
LE13	Leisure Building on Public Open Space
LE16	Allotments
CF6	Standard of Construction of Sewerage Systems
CF7	Main Drainage in Village
CF8	Renewable Energy
CF9	Waste Recycling
CF10	Satellite Dishes
CF12	Free Standing Telecommunications Masts
CF14	Overhead Electricity Lines
CF19	New Health Care Centres
CF20	Nurseries and Crèches
CF21	School Requirements for new Housing Development
CS1	Guiding Principles
CS2	The Borough Wide Strategy
CS3	Ashford Town Centre
CS4	Ashford Urban Area
CS5	Ashford Urban Extensions
CS6	The Rural Settlement Hierarchy
CS7	The Economy and Employment Development
CS8	Infrastructure Contributions
CS9	Design Quality
CS10	Sustainable Design and Construction
CS11	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
CS12	Affordable Housing
CS13	Range of Dwelling Types and Sizes
CS14	Gypsies and Travellers
CS15	Transport
CS16	Retail
CS17	Tourism
CS18	Meeting the Community's Needs
CS18a	Strategic Recreational Open Spaces
CS19	Development and Flood Risk

CS20	Sustainable Drainage
CS21	Water Supply and Treatment
TC1	Guiding Principles for Town Centre development
TC2	The Town Centre Core
TC3	Elwick Place
TC4	Park Mall
TC5	Vicarage Lane Car Park
TC6	Corner of Elwick Road and Station Road
TC7	Ashford Library
TC8	Godinton Way Industrial Estate
TC9	The Commercial Quarter
TC10	The Southern Expansion Quarter
TC11	Victoria Way East
TC12	Former Powergen North
TC13	Victoria Way South
TC14	Gasworks Lane
TC15	The Internationals Station Quarter
TC16	Former B&Q Site, Beaver Road
TC17	The Civic Quarter
TC18	The Residential Transition Quarter
TC19	New Street South
TC20	New Street North
TC21	Multi-Storey Car Parks
TC22	Office, Retail and Leisure Parking Standards
TC23	Residential Parking Standards
TC24	Cycles Parking Standards
TC25	Commuted Parking
TC26	Green Corridors in the Town Centre
TC27	Open Space, Recreation, Sport and Play Facilities
TENT1	Tenterden Southern Extension
CHAR1	Land South of Arthur Baker Playing Fields
CHAR2	Land South of Maidstone Road
HAM1	Land North of Lancaster Close
HAM2	Land at Parker Farm
WYE1	Wye Court Farm, Land off Churchfield Way
WYE2	Land at Luckley Field, Wye
WYE3	Imperial College, Wye
ALD1	Land South and West of Quarry Wood
BETH1a	Land at Mill Road
BETH2	Land rear of The George Public House
BID1	Land at Sandeman Way
CHIL1	Former Chilham Sawmill Site
ROLV1	Rolvenden Football Ground, Tenterden Road
WOOD1	Land between 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch
TRS1	Minor Residential Development or Infilling
TRS2	New Residential Development Elsewhere
TRS3	Replacement Dwelling in the Countryside
Policy Number	Policy Title/Purpose

TRS4	Exception Sites for Local Needs Housing
TRS5	Exception Sites for Specialist Housing Schemes
TRS6	Exception Sites for Community Facilities
TRS7	Retention of Existing Employment Sites & Premises
TRS8	Extension to Employment Premises
TRS9	New Employment Premises and Uses in the Rural Settlements
TRS10	New Employment Premises in the Countryside
TRS11	Conversions of Rural Buildings to Non-Residential Uses
TRS12	Conversion of Rural Buildings to Tourist-Related Residential Uses
TRS13	Conversion of Rural Buildings to General Residential Uses
TRS14	Diversifying Existing Agricultural Businesses
TRS15	Tenterden Primary Shopping Frontages
TRS16	Rural Shops and Services
TRS17	Landscape Character & Design
TRS18	Important Rural Features
TRS19	Infrastructure Provision to Serve the Needs of New Developments
U0	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
U1	Land off Abby Way, Willesborough Lees
U2	Newtown Works
U3	Land at Chart Industrial Estate
U4	Lower Queens Road
U5	Land at Blackwall Road, Willesborough Lees
U6a	Former Ashford South Primary School
U6b	K College, Jemmett Road
U7	Leacon Road
U8	Warren Park and Ride
U9	Maidstone Road
U10	Former Ashford Hospital
U11	Bishop's Green, Singleton
U12	Associate House, Queens Road
U13	Mabledon Avenue
U14	Land at Willesborough Lees
U15	Henwod
U16	Orbital Park
U17	Eureka Business Park
U18	Warren Lane
U19	Sevington
U20	Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites
U21	Green Corridors
U22	Conningbrook Strategic Park
U23	Landscape Character and Design
U24	Infrastructure Provision to Serve the Needs of New Development

Appendix 2 - Local Plan 2030 Evidence Base Documents

Doc	Doc Title	Content Ref
SD02	Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the Ashford Borough Local Plan to 2030	In line with relevant EU and UK legislation, these documents review the policy framework against economic, social and environmental factors to ensure that they contribute towards the aims of sustainable development.
SD06	Self-Assessment of Soundness	This soundness compliance self-assessment checklist was produced by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). This checklist has been completed to demonstrate that the Local plan meets the tests of soundness as set out in the relevant legislation.
SD07	Duty to Cooperate Statement and Update November 2017	This statement sets out the engagement and co-operation with neighbouring planning authorities, other public bodies and relevant organisations in the preparation of the Local Plan. This was created by the Localism Act (2011) placing legal duty on planning authority to discuss strategic issues in their area.
SD08	Housing Topic Paper, Addendum and Update to Appendix 1 of Housing Topic Paper (June 2018)	This explains the housing strategy in the Local Plan 2030, which the Council view as the most sustainable planning approach for the Borough and is consistent with the National Planning Policy as set out in the NPPF.
SD09	Viability Study - Local Plan and CIL Viability Report (2016) Viability Study Update (2017)	Evidence which assess the cost implications on the development industry, stemming from the policy framework contained within the Local Plan. It has been prepared in consultation with the development industry and other key stakeholders and follows the relevant regulations and guidance.
SD10	Ashford Borough Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 2016	Sets out the infrastructure that will be needed up to 2030 in order to support the growth envisaged in the Local Plan. The IDP is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule which separates this provision into various themes and provides an indication of when the provision is needed, who is the lead body to deliver it, what it will broadly cost and what the likely funding gap is.

Doc	Doc Title	Content Ref
SD11	Habitat Regulation Assessment and Appropriate Assessment (2017)	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transposes EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna into UK national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Assessments for significant effects on habitats must be carried out and mitigation measures identified.
SD14	Equalities Impact Assessment	An assessment that summarises how council has had to due regard the public sector equality duty, in its decision making process.
SD12	Ashford Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2016/17	A Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires LPA's to: <i>'prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.'</i> It also recommends that employment and mixed use sites are considered in the same way.
SD13	Ashford Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 and updates	The purpose of the SHMA is to develop a robust understanding of housing market dynamics, to provide an assessment of future needs for both market and affordable housing and the housing requirements of different groups within the population.
TBD01	Kingsnorth Strategic Link Road Ashford – Feasibility Study (2016)	A report undertaken by Amey, commissioned by ABC through KCC, which provides design support in respect of the proposed Court Lodge Link Road as identified in the Local Plan.

Doc	Doc Title	Content Ref
TBD02	Traffic Impact Assessment – Summary Report (2016)	Amey have been commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC), in partnership with Ashford Borough Council (ABC), to assess the impact of major Local Plan allocation sites to the north of Ashford town centre. This report aims to assess the impact of two sites (Kennington East and Eureka) on the local highway network.
TBD03	Ashford Town Centre Parking Review (2014)	Ashford Borough Council (ABC) appointed Peter Brett Associates to provide a review and update of the existing parking strategy to establish potential capacity and future demands arising from development envisaged in the Local Plan.
TBD04	Ashford Cycling Strategy (2015)	Sustrans have been contracted to survey every town in England for the Department for Transport to provide cycle data. The cycling strategy builds upon this evidence and sets out a strategy for cycling in the town of Ashford.
TBD05	Feasibility Report A20 Development Sites – Access Assessment (2017)	Amey were commissioned by Kent County Council to undertake a feasibility study in respect of the suitability of 3 potential A20 allocation sites in terms of access (both vehicular and pedestrian).
TBD06	AMEY – Technical Note – ABC Response to HE Representations (2017)	Amey were commissioned by Ashford Borough Council to undertake Strategic Network Report in response to representations made by Highways England.
EBD01	Ashford Borough Council and Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council – Rural Economic Assessment (2014)	The purpose of the study is to assess the likely growth of the rural economy to 2030 and to identify locations within the rural area of Ashford Borough that are capable and suitable for accommodating jobs and industry to support the growth of the local economy.
EBD02	Ashford Employment Land Review: Site Assessments (2016)	Commissioned by the Council and carried out by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners in 2016. Provides a review of current provision and forecasts future demands in terms of employment land needs, by sector.
EBD03	Ashford Retail Leisure Needs Assessment (2015)	Assessment which advises on the level of retail / leisure development that is required based on the current provision and market share and how this could change as a result of planned growth up to 2030.

Doc	Doc Title	Content Ref
EBD04	Ashford Strategic Employment Options Report (2012)	Ashford Borough Council commissioned a Strategic Employment Options Report to consider future demand for employment land to 2030. The report has been prepared by a consultancy team, comprising GL Hearn (GLH), Cambridge Econometrics (CE) and SQW.
NBD01	Ashford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2014) and updates	An SFRA is a planning tool that assists councils in their selection and development of sustainable site allocations away from vulnerable flood risk areas. The SFRA will assist the council to make the spatial planning decisions required to inform the forthcoming Local Plan for the period up to 2030.
NBD02	Green Corridor Action Plan 2017	The Green Corridor is a network of largely green open areas made up of recreation space and other green and blue spaces alongside the Great and East Stour rivers flowing through Ashford. The production of this 2017 Plan reviews and updates the position from the original 2000 Green Corridor Action Plan. This includes agreeing extensions to the current Green Corridor network and establishing proposed improvements within the plan. This is to fit alongside the Ashford Local Plan and is an Appendix to the Ashford Open Space Strategy up to 2030.
NBD03	Adopted Heritage Strategy 2017	The Heritage Strategy sets out the council's aims and objectives to safeguard Ashford's historical assets and develop the borough's cultural offer for the enjoyment of Ashford's residents and visitors, with the aim of strengthening the local heritage offer and supporting the tourism potential that heritage can provide.
NBD04	Landscape and Visual Appraisal 2017	Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal for 4 Potential Housing Allocation Sites, A20 Corridor and Land off Pluckley Road, Charing, undertaken by Land Management Services Ltd
NBD05	Water Cycle Study 2016	This water cycle topic paper provides a high-level review of existing water cycle processes and supporting infrastructure to ensure the level of proposed development envisaged within the Local Plan does not have a detrimental effect on the water environment within the Ashford Borough.

Doc	Doc Title	Content Ref
CBD01	Ashford Draft Cultural Strategy (2015)	The strategy looks at the existing art and cultural industry provision within the borough but with a specific focus on the town of Ashford. It then looks at opportunities for the industry to expand and what the future demands might be for a variety of space as a result of development coming forward over the Plan period.
CBD02	Ashford Borough Playing Pitch Strategy (2017)	Reviews and audits all outdoors sports pitches and indoor facilities in the borough. The Strategy then sets out how this provision could be expanded and managed up to 2030, in a sustainable way. The Strategy is Sports England compliant in that it follows their guidance and has had input from various national governing bodies for sports (including football, rugby, hockey and cricket).
CBD03	Ashford Draft Tourism Strategy (2013-2014)	This review places at its heart the needs of our local tourism businesses and organisations. It seeks to establish how the Council can best support and develop these key partners. The Council is committed to economic growth, job creation and improving the infrastructure that supports and encourages a thriving tourism economy through an ever-improving visitor offer and experience.
CBD04	Open Space Strategy 2017	<p>The Open Space Strategy has been produced to detail how Ashford Borough Council, in partnership with a range of organisations, plans to protect, enhance and provide public open spaces to 2030.</p> <p>The strategy was undertaken in 2017, and provides a number of key strategic recommendations which are reflected within the Local Plan.</p>
GBD16	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment and Update Paper (2014 and 2016)	ABC commissioned Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford to produce an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, establishing the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This report presents the projection of permanent and transit requirements for the period 2012-2028. ABC produced an update to this work in 2016.

A number of additional documents are also available as supporting documents to the Local Plan and the full library is available to view on the Local Plan pages of the Council's website.

Appendix 3 - List of housing site allocations

Maps of these designations can be found on the Local Plan 2030 Online Policies Map, which can be found on the Local Plan pages of the Council's website.

No.	Site name	Number of units
S1	Commercial Quarter, Ashford Town Centre	159
S2	Land NE of Willesborough Road, Kennington	700
S3	Court Lodge, Kingsnorth	950
S4	Land north of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road, Kingsnorth	400
S5	Land South of Pound Lane, Kingsnorth	150
S6	Newtown Works Phase 2	350
S7	Former Klondyke	90
S8	Lower Queens Road, Ashford	40
S9	Kennard Way - Henwood	25
S10	Gasworks Lane, Ashford	150
S11	Leacon Road, Ashford	100
S12	K College, Jemmett Road	160
S13	Former Ashford South Primary School	110
S14	Park Farm South East	325
S15	Finberry North West	300
S16	Waterbrook	350
S17	Willesborough Lees	220
S19	Conningbrook Residential Phase 2	170
S20	Eureka Park	375
S24	Tenterden Southern Extension Phase B	225
S26	The Street, Appledore	20
S27	North Street, Biddenden	45
S28	Northdown Service Station, Maidstone Road, Charing	20
S29	Land South of Arthur Baker Playing Field, Charing	35
S30	Land on New Road, Egerton	15
S31	Land north of St. Mary's Close, Hamstreet	80
S32	Land at Parker Farm, Hamstreet	10
S33	Land at Hope House, High Halden	35
S35	Land adjacent to the Village Hall, Mersham	10
S36	Land rear of Kings Head PH, Shadoxhurst	19
S37	Land adjacent to Village Hall, Smarden	50
S38	Land South of Church Road, Smeeth	35
S40	Land at Front Rd, Woodchurch	8
S41	Chilham, Mulberry Hill	2
S42	St Michaels, Beechwood Farm	3
S45	Land South of Brockmans Lane, Bridgefield	100
S46	Chart Road, Ashford	25
S51	Land north of Church View, Aldington	6

S52	Land South of Goldwell Court, Aldington	12
S54	Land at Clockhouse, Challock	15
S55	Land Adjacent to Poppyfields, Charing	180
S56	Branch Road, Chilham	10
S57	Warehorne Road, Hamstreet	50
S59	Land at Old Rectory Close, Mersham	8
S60	Pope House Farm, Tenterden (St. Michael's)/ High Halden	50
S62	Land off Appledore Road, Woodchurch	30

Appendix 4 - Nationally and locally protected biodiversity designations

Maps of these designations can be found on the Local Plan 2030 Online Policies Map which can be found on the Local Plan pages of the Council's website.

INTERNATIONALLY PROTECTED SITES

- Wye and Crundale Special Area Conservation (SAC)
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay RAMSAR

NATIONALLY PROTECTED SITES

National Nature Reserves (NNR) at:

- Hamstreet Woods
- Wye and Crundale Downs

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| • Alex Farm Pastures | TQ 968 369 |
| • River Beult | TQ 865 425 |
| • Charing Beech Hangers | TQ 979 484 |
| • Down Bank | TR 083 522 |
| • Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay | TQ 950 290 |
| • Ham Street Woods | TQ 996 352 |
| • Hart Hill | TQ 943 506 |
| • Hatch Park | TR 063 410 |
| • Hoads Wood | TQ 953 426 |
| • Hothfield Common | TQ 969 458 |
| • Orlestone Forest | TQ 982 350 |
| • Park Wood, Chilham | TR 043 526 |
| • Wye and Crundale Downs | TR 080 470 |

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES (LWS)²³

- Hemsted Forest
- Sandpit Wood, etc. Clapper Hill
- Woods, Meadows and Ponds, High Halden
- Knock Wood, etc. Tenterden
- Ashenden Gill, etc. Tenterden
- Heronden Woods and Pasture, Tenterden
- Friezingham Dykes and Newmill Channel, etc. Tenterden
- Rother Levels and adjacent Woods, Wittersham
- Halden Place Orchard, Nr. Rolvenden

²³ The Kent Nature Partnership (KNP) oversee the selection of Local Wildlife Sites

- Stone Cliff, Isle of Oxney
- Comb Wood, etc. Wittersham
- Spuckles Wood, etc. Stalisfield Green
- Hunts Wood, etc. Kenardington

- Harlakenden Wood, Shadoxhurst
- Valley west of Tong Green
- Bilsington Woods and Pasture
- Blean Woods, South
- Aldington Sandpit
- South Willesborough Dykes
- Park Wood, etc. Nr. Kenardington
- Shadoxhurst Woods and Pasture
- Aldington Woods
- River Great Stour, etc. Godinton
- Hothfield Lake, etc.
- Ashford Warren, etc.
- Royal Military Canal
- Great Stour, etc. Ashford to Fordwich
- Little Chart Mill Ponds, Woods, etc.
- Woods and Pasture, extra to Hoads Wood SSSI
- March Wood, etc. Hothfield
- Weald Cottage Meadow, etc. Bethersden
- Dering Wood, etc. Pluckley
- Pasture and Orchard, Pluckley
- Ponds and Pasture around Smarden
- Tylden Strict Baptist Chapel Yard
- River Sherway adj. Ponds and Pasture, Headcorn
- Foxden Wood, etc. Egerton
- Pasture, Pembles Cross
- Charing Hill Chalk Pit, etc.
- Longbeech Wood, Charing
- Challock Forest, King's Wood
- Denge Wood complex
- Woods and Pasture, Mill Pond, near St. Michaels
- Willesborough Lees and Flowergarden Wood, etc.
- Naccolt Pit
- Woods, etc. Brabourne
- Pasture, etc. Bulltown Corner, extra to SSSI
- Kingsmill Down Pasture, Hastingleigh
- Huntstreet Woods and Pasture
- Bybrook Nature Reserve
- Orlestone Forest
- Lord's Wood, etc. Stone-in-Oxney
- Meadow near Maltman's Hill, Smarden
- Wanden Meadows, etc. Egerton Forstal
- Woods and Meadows near Shadoxhurst
- Jarvis Farm Meadows and Pond, near Woodchurch
- Tile Lodge Wood, etc. Eastwell
- Winchcombe Down (south), extra to SSSI
- Challock Churchyard, near Challock Manor
- Woods, Pasture and Ponds, Bromley Green

- Burnt Mill Pond, etc. Charing Heath - extra to SSSI
- Orlestone Pastures and Woods
- Dering Meadows, Maltman's Hill
- Rolvenden Churchyard
- Lenham Heath and Chilston Park
- Hothfield Common Field
- Hurst Wood, Charing Heath
- Cork Farm Apple Orchard, Old Wives Lees

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

- Ashford Green Corridor
- Hothfield Common
- Poulton Wood, Aldington

BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Parts of the following Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) fall within this Borough)

- East Kent Woodlands & Downs
- High Weald
- Lower Stour Wetlands
- Low Weald Woodland
- Mid Kent Greensand & Gault
- Mid Kent Downs Woods & Scarp
- Medway & Low Weald Grassland & Wetland
- Romney Marshes
- The Blean

Appendix 5 – The Housing Trajectory 2018-2030

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	TOTAL
TOWN CENTRE SITES													
Extant Commitments													
Former Powergen			222	189	189	60							660
Elwick Road Phase 2				100	100								200
Victoria Way East			115	100									215
Town Centre Allocations													
Commercial Quarter (S1)					79	80							159
Gasworks Lane (S10)											75	75	150
URBAN SITES													
Extant Commitments													
Chilmington Green	50	150	200	200	200	200	200	250	250	250	250	300	2500
Finberry (LP 2000)	120	120	120	120	100	65							645
Repton Park (LP 2000)	100	100	104										304
Godinton Way (TC8)		28											28
Blackwall Road (U5)	2												2
Abbey Way (U1)		23											23
Conningbrook Phase 1 (U22)	50	50	50	75	75								300
K College, Jemmett Road (S12)	50	50	60										160
Land at Butt Field Road, Singleton (U11)	12												12
Willesborough Lees (S17)	20	60	60	60	20								220
Urban Site Allocations													
Land NE of Willesborough Road, Kennington (S2)		25	25	50	50	75	75	80	80	80	80	80	700
Court Lodge, Kingsnorth (S3)				50	90	110	110	110	120	120	120	120	950
Land north of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road, Kingsnorth (S4)			50	60	60	60	60	55	55				400
Land South of Pound Lane, Kingsnorth (S5)		50	50	50									150
Former Ashford South Primary School (U6a and S13)				50	60								110
Former Newtown Works (S6)						50	50	50	50	50	50	50	350
Former Klondyke (S7)***			93										93
Lower Queens Road (U4 and S8)				40									40
Kennard Way - Henwood (S9)		25											25
Leacon Road (U7 and S11)			50	50									100
Park Farm South East, Bridgefield (S14)		50	100	100	75								325
Finberry North West (S15)								75	75	75	75		300
Waterbrook (S16)		20	50	50	50	50	50	50	30				350
Conningbrook Residential Phase 2 (S19)						70	50	50					170
Eureka Park (S20)			30	50	50	80	80	85					375
Land South of Brockmans Lane, Bridgefield (S45)					50	50							100
Chart Road (S46)				25									25
RURAL SITES													
Extant Commitments													
Tenterden Southern Extension Phase A (TENT1A)	80	80	70										230
Rolvenden Football Ground, Rolvenden (ROLV1)	30	10											40
Land at Luckley Field, Wye (WYE2)	25												25
Tenterden, Tilden Gill - Major Windfall*		40	40	20									100
Rural Site Allocations													
Aldington - Land north of Church View (S51)		6											6
Aldington - Land South of Goldwell Court (S52)			12										12
Appledore - The Street (S26)		20											20
Biddenden - North Street (S27)	20	25											45
Challock - Land at Clockhouse (S54)	15												15
Charing - Northdown Service Station, Maidstone Road (S28)		20											20
Charing - Land South of Arthur Baker Playing Field (S29)***	51	40											91
Charing - Land Adjacent to Poppyfields (S55)		30	75	75									180
Chilham - Branch Road (S56)		10											10
Egerton - Land on New Road (S30)		15											15
Hamstreet - Land north of St. Mary's Close (S31)		25	25	30									80
Hamstreet - Land at Parker Farm (S32)		10											10
Hamstreet - Warehome Road (S57)		25	25										50
High Halden - Land at Hope House (S33)***		28											28
Mersham - Land at Old Rectory Close (S59)		8											8
Mersham - Land adjacent to Village Hall (S35)		10											10
Shadoxhurst - Land rear of Kings Head PH (S36)	19												19
Smarden - Land adjacent to Village Hall (S37)		25	25										50
Smeeth - Land South of Church Road (S38)		20	15										35
Tenterden Southern Extension Phase B (S24)				70	80	75							225
Tenterden (St. Michaels/High Halden) - Pope House Farm (S60)		25	25										50
Woodchurch- Land at Front Rd (S40)		8											8
Woodchurch - Land off Appledore Road (S62)		15	15										30
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS													
Wye Neighbourhood Plan area (WYE3, Former Imperial College)		40		40	45								125
Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan area		20	14										34
Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan area	25	8											33
Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan area		10	14										24
WINDFALLS (NON ALLOCATED SITES)													
Windfalls - Small sites (Under 10 dwellings) - not started**		102	102	102									306
Windfalls - Small sites (Under 10 dwellings) - under construction	140												140
Windfalls - Major sites (10 dwellings or above) - not started**		20	23	22									65
Windfalls - Major sites (10 dwellings or above) - under construction	209	55											264
Projected Future windfalls					150	150	150	150	100	100	100	100	1000
TOTAL	1018	1501	1859	1778	1523	1175	825	955	760	675	750	725	13544
CUMULATIVE TOTAL	1018	2519	4378	6156	7679	8854	9679	10634	11394	12069	12819	13544	
Key LP 2000 = Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000 site policy U = Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD site policy **Extant permissions not started have been reduced by 25% for assumed non delivery TC = Ashford Town Centre AAP site policy *Not counted in major windfall figures below *** Where planning permission has been granted or is resolved to be granted the numbers reflect the permission and not the proposed allocation.													

Appendix 6 - Monitoring Framework

It is essential that the policies in this Local Plan are monitored so that early action can be taken to overcome any barriers to delivery of the Plan's objectives and policies. This is particularly important where there are key pieces of infrastructure that need to be delivered in a timely manner to enable development to proceed. Monitoring is also important to enable communities and interested parties to be aware of progress and ensure that the overall development plan strategy is being delivered.

The Borough Council produces an annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) which sets out the overall performance of planning policies set out in the various DPDs that have been prepared previously - each DPD has a set of Key Indicators that are used to monitor overall progress and are reported on within the AMR. The AMR also provides up-to-date information on the implementation of any neighbourhood plans that are in progress or have been made.

The Council's view is that there needs to be a consolidation of the various indicators that have been previously used into a set that can be easily interpreted and reflect the current Local Plan and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. Therefore a revised list of Monitoring Indicators relevant to the policies within this Local Plan has been prepared.

These revised indicators, grouped by topic area, are based on the following objectives:

- To check the effectiveness of policy and whether it is delivering sustainable development;
- To check the timely delivery of key infrastructure
- To assess the extent to which policies are being implemented and whether development targets are being met;
- Where policies are not being implemented then explain why;
- To identify policies that may require early review.

The Council recognises that the Local Plan is a long-term strategy, and intends to formally review the plan by 2025, as set out in the introduction of this document. It is not proposed to undertake short-term formal reviews of the Local Plan unless it is clear from the monitoring reporting that key elements of the strategy are not being delivered.

Housing Indicators

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Net Housing Growth	SP1 (a) – Strategic Objectives SP1 (f) – Strategic Objectives SP2 – The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery	i. Net annual dwelling completions ii. Cumulative net additional dwelling completions over the plan period iii. Total extant permissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under construction Not Started 	Total Requirement 2011-2030: 16,120 2017-2030: 12,943	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)
Location of new housing growth	SP2 – The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery HOU3a– Residential windfall development within settlements HOU5 – Residential windfall development in the countryside SP5 – Ashford Town centre	Net annual dwelling completions by area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashford Town Centre Ashford Urban Area Urban extensions Tenterden Rural Settlements Countryside 	SP2 – Table 1	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)
Allocation Vs Windfall Delivery	SP2 – The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery HOU3a – Residential windfall development within settlements	Net Annual dwelling completions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated sites Chilmington Green Windfall Sites – Total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior Approval – Office to Residential Prior Approval – Agricultural to Residential 	As set by the Housing Trajectory	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)
Affordable Housing	HOU1 – Affordable Housing	Net annual affordable housing completions on major sites* by tenure and area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashford Town Ashford Hinterlands Rest of Borough <p><i>*Major residential developments are those of 10 dwellings or more or over 0.5ha</i></p>	As set by Table in Policy HOU1	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Custom and Self Build	HOU6 – Self and custom build development SP1 (f) – Strategic Objectives	i. % of custom and self-build plots provided on sites over 40 dwellings in Ashford and Tenterden. ii. % of custom and self-build plots provided on sites over 20 dwellings in villages and rural areas. iii. Plots returned unsold (annual). iv. Annual borough dwelling completions of custom/self-build dwellings. v. Cumulative borough completions of custom/self-build in the plan period.	Edge of Ashford and Tenterden sites of 40 or more dwellings: 5% Villages and rural areas sites of 20 or more dwellings: 5% No target Borough target: as required by up to date self-build register	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA) Self-Build Register
Specialist Housing	SP1 (f) – Strategic Objectives HOU2 – Local Needs/Specialist Housing HOU18 – Providing a range and mix of dwellings types and sizes	Net annual additional dwellings by housing type: i. Local Needs ii. Specialist Housing iii. Older Person Housing (C2 uses) iv. Exclusive Homes	No Target	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)
Land Use	SP1 (a) – Strategic Objectives	Percentage of net annual dwellings built on Brownfield Land	No Target	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)
Housing Range & Mix	HOU18 – Providing a range and mix of dwelling types and sizes SP1 (f) – Strategic Objectives	Net annual dwelling completions by bedroom size: i. Studio & 1 bed ii. 2 bed, iii. 3 bed, iv. 4 bed v. 5 bed or more. <i>Will be split into Town Centre, Urban and Rural</i>	To provide a range identified by the most up to date SHMA or equivalent housing need data.	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Accessibility and Space Standards	HOU12 – Residential Space Standards (Internal) HOU15 – Private external open space HOU18 – Providing a range and mix of dwellings types and sizes SP1 (c, f) – Strategic Objectives	% of Net annual dwelling completions meeting the following standards i. Internal Space Standards ii. External Space Standards iii. Accessibility Standards	100% Accessibility 100% on major developments of 10 or more only	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA)
Travellers Pitches	HOU16 – Traveller Accommodation HOU17 – Safeguarding existing traveller sites SP1 (f) – Strategic Objectives	i. Total annual permanent pitch increase ii. Extensions to existing sites iii. Annual Temporary pitches granted permission iv. Annual loss of pitches v. Baseline borough pitches	Meet identified 5 year supply need in most up to date GTAA No net loss if 5 year supply not achieved	Annual Housing Information Audit (HIA) Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTAA)
Design Quality	SP6- Promoting High Quality Design SP1 (c) – Strategic Objectives	Percentage of applications refused on design grounds and Success on Design Quality policy at appeal	No Target	Annual Housing Information Audit (ABC)
HMOs	HOU11- Houses in Multiple Occupation	Permissions granted for HMO properties by Ward	No Target	Annual Housing Information Audit (ABC)

Economic Indicators

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Employment Floorspace	SP1 (g) – Strategic Objectives SP3 – Strategic Approach to Economic Development EMP1 – New Employment Uses EMP2 – Loss or redevelopment of employment sites premises EMP5 – New employment premises in the countryside	Annual increase of employment floorspace (m ²), borough-wide. Gross and net totals by use class: i. B1a ii. B1b iii. B1c iv. B2 v. B8 vi. B1-B8 (unable to split) vii. Total Gain viii. Total Loss ix. Net Total <i>Will also be recorded by area: Ashford Town Centre, Urban, and Rural Settlement and countryside.</i>	66 hectares gain between 2014 and 2030 (Borough- wide) Minimal gain in countryside (EMP5)	Annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA)- ABC
Retail and Leisure Floorspace	SP1 (g) – Strategic Objectives SP4 – Delivery of Retail and Leisure Needs SP5 – Ashford Town Centre	Annual change of Retail and Leisure (Use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D2 & Sui Generis) floorspace (m ²) by area; Ashford Town Centre; Tenterden Town Centre; local/village centres and Rest of Borough	Need contained within Tables 2 and 3 of the Local Plan	Annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA)- ABC
Fibre to Premises	EMP6 – Promotion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) Sp1 (d) – Strategic Objectives	% of new development enabling FTTP; residential and employment	All development within urban area. All major* developments within the rural area	ABC

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Shopping Frontages	SP4 – Delivery of Retail and Leisure Needs EMP7 – Primary and Secondary shopping frontage in Ashford Town centre EMP8 – Primary shopping frontage in Tenterden Town Centre	% of shop frontages in Ashford and Tenterden which are A use class (retail)	Primary Shopping Frontages -100%	Shop frontage survey (ABC)
Local and Village Centres	SP4 – Delivery of Retail and Leisure Needs EMP10 – Local and Village Centres	Gains and losses of shops and services within local and village centres	No loss of shops and services	Annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA) - ABC

Transport Indicators

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Strategic Schemes	TRA1 – Strategic Transport Schemes SP1 (d)- Strategic Objectives	Implementation of strategic schemes which include: i.M20 Junction 10a ii. Pound Lane Link Road iii. A28 dualling/Chart Rd improvements iv. Former ring road junctions	Within plan period	ABC
Town Centre Parking	TRA2 – Strategic Public Parking Facilities	Total gains and losses of public parking spaces serving Ashford Town Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-stay • Short-stay 	Gains within plan period	ABC
Residential Parking Standards	TRA3(a) Parking standards for Residential development	% of residential development applications meeting the standards set out in TRA3(a)	100%	HIA - ABC

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Parking Standards for non-residential	TRA3(b) Parking Standards for non-residential development	% of non-residential development applications meeting the standards set out in TRA3(b)	100%	Annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA)
Sustainable Travel	TRA4-Promoting the Local Bus Network TRA5- Planning for Pedestrians TRA6 – Provision for cycling SP1 (e)- Strategic Objectives	Enhancements to sustainable transport methods provided from new development Enhancements to cycle and pedestrian routes and cycling parking provision from new development	Improvement of existing non-car routes Gains of pedestrian and cycle paths No loss of PRoW provision	HIA-ABC S106 monitoring KCC Highways & Transportation PRoW and Access
Local Road network	TRA7 – The road network and development TRA8- Travel plans, assessments and statements TRA9 – Planning for HGV movement SP1 (e) – Strategic Objectives	Developments permitted against highway authority advice	0%	KCC Highways

Natural and Built Environment Indicators

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Biodiversity	ENV1 – Biodiversity SP1 (b) – Strategic Objectives	i. Condition of the 57 SSSI's ii. Condition of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas' (BOA's) iii. Condition of Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites.	No decline	Natural England- Condition of SSSI report Kent BAP- BOA reports Kent Nature Partnership- State of Kent Wildlife Report and Kent Habitat Survey

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Green Corridor	ENV2 – The Ashford Green Corridor SP1 (b) – Strategic Objectives	i. Development permitted within Green Corridor Designation areas ii. Development proposals contributing to projects identified within the Green Corridor Action Plan	Not permitted unless policy criteria applies	ABC – HIA and CIA
AONBs	ENV3b Landscape Character and Design in the AONBS	% of major planning applications in the AONBs approved contrary to Policy ENV3b.	0%	ABC- AONB Units
Dark Skies	ENV4 – Light and Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies	External lighting levels on new developments comply with standards in policy and guidance.	100%	ABC-HIA
Rural Features	ENV5 – Protecting important rural features SP1 (b) – Strategic Objectives	i. Loss or gain to Ancient woodland or semi-natural woodland ii. Loss or gain to River corridors and tributaries iii. Loss or enhancement to rural lanes and/or PROWs	No net loss	Kent Nature Partnership – The 2012 Kent Habitat Survey and Data Environment Agency- Our Stour Data report KCC Highway and PROW Teams
Flood Risk	ENV6 – Flood risk	% of planning applications granted on Flood Zones 2 or 3 against Environment Agency Advice.	0%	HIA

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Water Resources	ENV7 – Water Efficiency ENV8 – Water Quality, Supply and Treatment ENV11 – Sustainable Design and Construction-non-residential	i. % of new residential development meeting the requirements of water efficiency regulations – 110 litres per person per day. ii. % of major* development proposals not providing adequate water supply and connections to wastewater treatment facilities. iii. % of non-resi major applications meeting 40% improvement in water consumption against baseline performance.	i. 100% ii. 0% iii. 100%	Building Regulation data, HIA and CIA
SUDs	ENV9 – Sustainable Drainage	Compliance of all development proposals with SuDs Policy, SPD and subsequent revisions.	100%	HIA
Energy	ENV10 – Renewable and low carbon energy	New development which generates energy from renewable and low carbon sources.	No Target	ABC
BREEAM	ENV11 – Sustainable Design and construction – non-residential SP1 (c) – Strategic Objectives	% of Major non-resi development achieving BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard.	100%	Building Regulation Data
Air Quality	ENV12 – Air Quality	% of proposals permitted which result in National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded.	0%	DEFRA air statistics
Agricultural Land	SP1 (a) – Strategic Objectives National Policy	Amount of high grade agricultural land (Grade 1 & 2) lost to development (ha). Major* sites only.	No target	Kent Landscape Information system (K-LIS); Natural England; Agricultural Land Classification (ALC).

Community, Leisure and Tourism Indicators

Indicator Objective	Local Plan Policies	Indicators	Target	Data Source
Tourism	EMP11 – Tourism	Loss and gain of tourism facilities Loss and gain of hotel and B&B development	Borough wide retention and gains in urban areas.	Annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA)-ABC
Community	COM1 – Meeting the community's needs COM3 – Allotments COM4 – Cemetery Provision SP1 (d) – Strategic Objectives	Amount of existing public leisure, cultural, school and adult education, youth, health, public service, allotments, cemetery provision and community facilities lost (unless satisfactory replacement facilities are provided) and gained as a result of new development <i>Split between Town Centre. Urban and Rural</i>	No Target	HIA CIA ABC – Amount of developer contributions and commuted payments received and spent
Play, Open Space & Sports	COM2 – Recreation, sport, play and open spaces SP1 (d) – Strategic Objectives	Amount of existing public play, open space and sports provision lost (unless satisfactory replacement facilities are provided) and gained as a result of new development <i>Split between Town Centre, Urban and Rural.</i>	Table 4 - Spatial target for play, open space and sports.	Amount of developer contributions and commuted payments received and spent

Appendix 7 – Local Plan Policies in a Neighborhood Plan context

How Local Plan Policies should be applied in a Neighbourhood Plan context.

With regards to the topic based policies, the assessment showed that all of them directly related to at least one of the strategic policies (SP1 – SP7). It therefore follows that they should be viewed as the tools to deliver the strategic objectives established by those policies. However, some policies only apply in certain geographical locations within the borough. They should therefore not be considered ‘strategic’ for Neighbourhood Plans that fall outside of their scope. This applies to the following policies: -

- SP5 - Ashford Town Centre
- HOU7 - Replacement dwellings in the countryside
- EMP3 - Extensions to employment premises in the rural area
- EMP4 - Conversions of rural buildings to non-residential uses
- EMP5 - New employment premises in the countryside
- EMP7 - Primary & Secondary Shopping Frontages in Ashford Town Centre
- EMP8 - Primary Shopping Frontage in Tenterden Town Centre
- TRA1 - Strategic Transport Schemes
- TRA2 - Strategic Public Parking Facilities
- ENV2 - The Ashford Green Corridor
- ENV3b - Landscape Character and Design in the AONBs
- ENV5 - Protecting important rural features

Site allocations should be considered strategic in most instances. However, the Council does accept that some smaller allocated sites may not be ‘central’ to achieving the vision and aspirations of the Local Plan which is ‘test’ 5 in paragraph 076 of the PPG. Within this context, the Council considers that the following site allocations should be viewed as ‘non-strategic’ for the purpose of Neighbourhood Planning:

- S30 – Land on New Road, Egerton – 15 dwellings
- S32 (HAM2) – Land at Parker Farm, Hamstreet – 10 dwellings
- S35 – Land adjacent to Village Hall, Mersham – 10 dwellings
- S40 (WOOD1) – Land at Front Road, Woodchurch – 8 dwellings
- S41 – Mulberry Hill, Old Wives Lees – 2 dwellings
- S42 – Beechwood Farm, St Michaels – 3 dwellings
- S51 – Land north of Church View, Aldington – 6 dwellings
- S52 – Land south of Goldwell Manor Farm, Aldington – 12 dwellings
- S54 – Land at Clockhouse, Challock – 15 dwellings
- S56 – Branch Road, Chilham – 10 dwellings
- S59 – Land at Old Rectory Close, Mersham – 8 dwellings

Neighbourhood Plan groups are advised to contact the planning department to discuss the Local Plan policies in the context of their specific designated area.

Appendix 8 – The Evolution of the Local Plan 2030

This Local Plan has gone through a number of stages, including an independent Examination in Public overseen by two Planning Inspectors. This appendix explains this background and highlights the key changes made at each stage of the process, so the reader can understand the background and context.

Clearly, such a process has also meant that there have been occasions where some policies (including site allocations) have been amended, deleted or introduced. On occasion, this will have required alterations to original policy reference numbers, or required additional policy references to be created.

As such, not all policies in this adopted version of the Local Plan 2030 follow in numerical order, as can be seen on the contents page.

In addition, it has also been necessary to alter the final paragraph numbers of the adopted Local Plan to ensure that they read coherently throughout the document. As such paragraph numbers will not correlate with previous iterations of the Local Plan 2030.

Key Stages of Plan making

Regulation 19 (2016)

The Local Plan 2030 Regulation 19 version was published for public consultation in June 2016. The consultation ran from 15th June to the 10th August 2016. There were 2,866 representations received during this consultation.

Regulation 19 ‘Main Changes’ (2017)

In July 2017 the Council consulted on a series of main changes, to the Regulation 19 document.

The most significant ‘Main Changes’ at 2017 were:

- The overall requirement for housing was increased from 14,680 to 16,120 dwellings. This reflected the national population projections. Policy SP2-Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery was amended as a result.
- A number of capacities on proposed housing allocations were changed on S4 and S5, South of Kingsnorth, S14 Park Farm South East, S16 Waterbrook, S19 Conningbrook, S20 Eureka Park, S24 Tenterden Phase B, S26 Appledore, S33 High Halden and S38 Smeeth.
- A number of additional housing allocations were identified across the borough in the following locations: Ashford, Bridgefield, the A20 (Hothfield, Westwell and Smeeth), Aldington, Brook, Challock, Charing, Chilham, Hamstreet, High Halden, Mersham, St Michaels, Wittersham and Woodchurch.
- The proposed Park and Ride site at the Warren and Lower Road was deleted, as was Woodchurch housing site S39 and S50- Land at Caldecott, Smeeth.
- Affordable housing Policy HOU1 was amended to reflect new guidance to remove the starter homes and require an amended mix of affordable home ownership products.
- Windfall housing policies were amended. As such Policy HOU3a replaced Policy HOU3 and HOU4 (which were deleted).

- Policy HOU13- Homes for Family Occupation was deleted but much of the text remained through Policy HOU12.
- A new policy (HOU18) was introduced to promote a range and mix of dwelling types and sizes to be provided on sites of 10 dwellings or more.
- A new policy (SP7) was introduced to resist the coalescence of two or more separate settlements or erosion of a gap between settlements.
- A new policy for the former Bombardier works site at Chart Road for commercial uses but safeguards the area of the site adjacent to the railway including the railway siding for operational railway use. (Policy S11a)
- The overall level of allocated land for economic development has been increased to 22 hectares by increasing the site area of the Waterbook S16 allocation.

The consultation ran from 7th July to the 31st August 2017. There were 1,177 representations received during this consultation.

Submission draft Local Plan to 2030 (December 2017)

Ashford Borough Council submitted the final draft of the Local Plan 2030 to the Secretary of State on 21 December 2017 for Examination.

This was the composite version of the 2016 Regulation 19 version, the Main Changes in 2017 and subsequent minor amendments made in response to the comments received during the ‘Main Changes’ consultation.

Examination in Public - Main and Additional Modifications (2018)

The Examination in Public ran throughout 2018, with public hearing sessions being held from 11th April to 14th June 2018.

Following the close of the public hearing sessions on the Local Plan, the Inspectors provided the Council with a Post Hearing Advice Note, indicating where they recommend changes to be made to the Local Plan to address ‘soundness’ concerns.

In addition to changes outlined in the Inspectors Post Hearing Note, a number of other changes were proposed throughout the Examination process, either through Statements of Common Ground agreed with statutory bodies, through hearing statements or verbally in hearing sessions following discussion with the Inspectors and/ or other parties.

To address this, the Council proposed on a set of ‘Main Modifications’ which were consulted upon between 13th September and 26th October 2018. There were 233 representations received during this consultation.

The most significant main modifications are summarised below:

- The following proposed site allocations were deleted:
 - S47- A20, Land east of Hothfield Mill
 - S48- A20, Land rear of Holiday Inn Hotel (MM46)
 - S49- A20, Land north of Tutt Hill
 - S58- High Halden A28, Stevenson Brothers
 - S34-Hothfield, Coach Drive- due to its location being visibly separate from the village and the loss of trees.

- S53- Brook, Nats Lane- due to impact on local character and residential amenity.
 - S61- Wittersham- due to uncertainty regarding the proposed access to the site and its potential impact on biodiversity.
- The following proposed site allocations had their housing capacity altered: S51- Aldington, Land North of Church View (reduced from 10 to 6), S52- Aldington, Land South of Goldwell Court (reduced from 20 to 12) and S59-Mersham, Land at Rectory Close (reduced from 15 to 8).
 - All policy capacities were changed to read ‘an indicative capacity of... dwellings’ rather than ‘up to’, unless specific design requirements or constraints required ‘up to’ to remain in place.
 - The removal of five settlements from both policies HOU3a and HOU5. These were not considered suitable settlements for windfall growth and will be considered as ‘countryside’ for the purposes of decision making: Bislington, Crundale, Molash, Sevington and Shottenden.
 - Policy HOU5 settlements are now listed separately to HOU3a settlements as they are not suitable for edge of settlement growth. These settlements no longer included in Policy HOU5 are Appledore Heath, Boughton Lees/Eastwell, Brook, Charing Heath, Egerton Forstal, Godmersham, Hastingleigh, Kenardington, Little Chart, Newenden, Old Wives Lees, Pluckley Thorne & Station, Rolvenden Layne, Ruckinge, Stone in Oxney, Warehorne and Westwell.
 - Policy HOU5 has been made clearer in regards to the ability to ‘absorb’ additional growth, the assessment of settlement size and the type and quality of services available and the proximity to primary settlements such as Ashford.
 - Policy HOU14 to apply to a minimum of 20% of homes rather than 100%, which is reflective of the evidence base.
 - Policy EMP6 have been redrafted to provide clarity about how it should be implemented. It now requires applicants to produce a FTTP statement to support any planning application.
 - Policies EMP7 & EMP8 have been redrafted to include consideration of the impact upon a proposal on the vitality and viability of the Town Centres.
 - Policy IMP3 has been deleted, but the supporting text remains.

A schedule of additional modifications were also proposed. These covered issues that did not make a material change to the Plan and were not related to issues of soundness.

Inspectors’ Report on the Examination of Ashford Local Plan to 2030

The Inspectors notified the Council, by way of issuing their report, in January 2019 that subject to the Modifications (and three other minor modifications), that the Local Plan 2030 was sound and compliant with the relevant legislation.

This led to the adoption of the Local Plan 2030 in February 2019.

Links to consultations and other documents

The consultations and associated documents referred to above can be viewed on the Council's consultation portal on the Council's webpages:

<https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk/consult.ti/system/listConsultations?type=C>

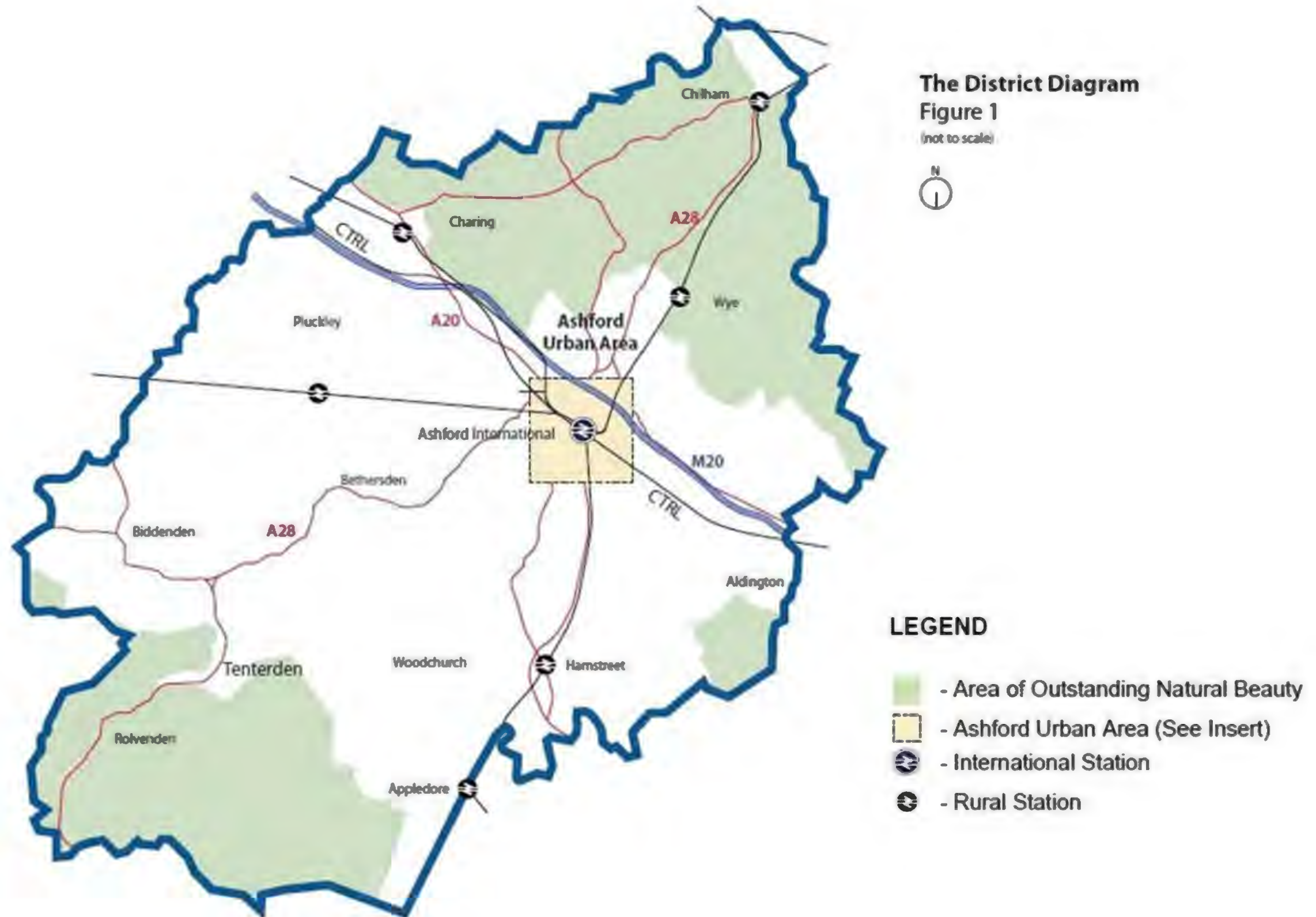
The submission version of the Plan and related documents referred to above can be viewed on the Local Plan to 2030 webpages on the Council's website.

Transitional arrangements - the NPPF 2012

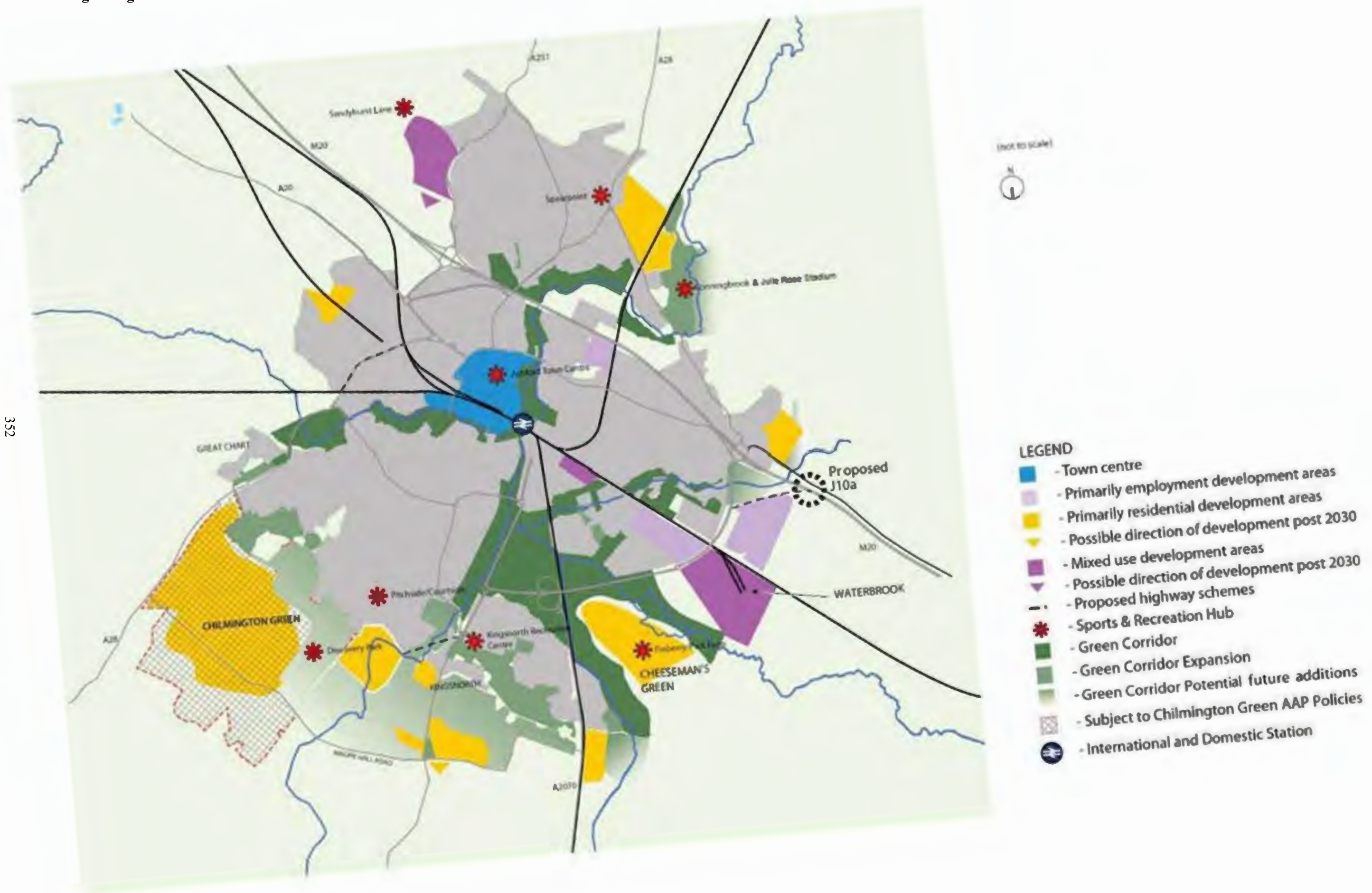
The reader should also note that the Local Plan 2030 was submitted in December 2017. Consequently, the Local Plan has been prepared and was examined in accordance with the transitional arrangements as set out in Annex 1 of the NPPF 2018.

Therefore, all references in the text to the NPPF relate to the NPPF 2012, unless otherwise.

Strategic Diagram 1 – District Diagram



Strategic Diagram 1 – Ashford Urban Area



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Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford Kent TN23 1PL

Large print copies, audio, Braille and translated versions of this document can be obtained by telephoning 01233 330229 or email planning.policy@ashford.gov.uk