

4. Employment

4. Employment

Local Plan Aim

To foster a strong economic base for the Borough, through the sustainable growth and diversification of employment opportunities.

Key Objectives

1. To identify opportunities for the development of the local economy as a key employment centre in Thames Gateway.
2. To secure the growth in, and a range of, employment opportunities, including for local residents, focused on public transport nodes, to allow for less long-distance commuting, especially by car, and a more sustainable relationship between home and work.
3. To secure employment development on the major sites of a substance and quality which will raise aspirations for the rest of Kent Thameside.
4. To facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the requirements of small and medium sized firms.
5. To require high standards of design and environment in new employment development both on new sites and in existing employment areas.

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Dartford is a significant employment location in North Kent. Its economy is strongly influenced by its location on the south eastern edge of the London conurbation and its relationship to the principal transport network.
- 4.1.2 Government guidance for Thames Gateway and Kent Thameside point to a regional role for Dartford in the future, providing significant opportunities for employment and helping to reduce Kent's current reliance on London for jobs.

4.2 Policy Context

- 4.2.1 A key Government aim, set out in PPG4 - 'Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms' - is to encourage continued economic development insofar as it is compatible with environmental objectives. The need for sustainability points, therefore, to mixed-use developments. Development plan policies should provide for choice, flexibility and competition.
- 4.2.1a PPG12 – Development Plans emphasises that one of the Government's key objectives is to encourage continued economic development and growth. Local plans are seen as having an important role to play in helping create the right conditions in which businesses can thrive and prosper. Local authorities are encouraged to take account of the need to revitalise and broaden the local economy; to stimulate employment opportunities; as well as encouraging industrial and commercial development, particularly the knowledge driven sector. Local plans should provide a range of suitable sites for industrial and commercial development which take account of the needs of existing and future businesses.
- 4.2.2 PPG13 - 'Transport' - encourages local planning authorities to achieve a better balance in employment and housing levels within the urban and rural area. They are also encouraged to focus activities attracting large numbers of trips in areas very close to major public transport facilities and in locations easily reached from local housing, and to facilitate home working and the provision of facilities for small groups of employees to work together locally.

- 4.2.2a Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) encourages local planning authorities to make better use of existing employment land resources. Authorities are encouraged to allocate sites within urban areas and in places which are accessible by environmentally friendly modes of transport. Land is to be allocated within an overall strategy for urban renaissance and rural development, providing a range of premises and sites to meet the varied needs of business. Precedence is to be given to the re-use of developed land over the release of new land and wherever possible the intensification of use on existing sites should be encouraged.
- 4.2.3 The Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG9a) recognises that development of strategic significance is already happening in the Borough, at Crossways Business Park and Bluewater. It also identifies opportunities at North Dartford for a high quality science and business park, and at Ebbsfleet, which is identified as a unique opportunity for a new focus of growth around the new International Passenger Station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.
- 4.2.4 The 1996 Kent Structure Plan (KSP) states that major economic development and housing opportunities at Dartford are to be comprehensively planned through the Local Plan process. North Dartford, Crossways and Ebbsfleet are identified as strategic areas for mixed-use, primarily employment development.
- 4.2.5 Structure Plan policy ED1 sets out guidance on the scale of land provision appropriate for the Borough. The floorspace guidelines for financial and professional services and business uses (A2 and B1) and general industrial and warehousing uses (B2 and B8) are set out below. The figures are only indicative of the scale of development to be planned for and do not represent a precisely quantified requirement. The policy recognises the Borough's important Thames Gateway location and provides for additional provision where this is justified in the context of the strategy for Thames Gateway. Accordingly the ED1 quantity for A2/B1 uses provide for a significant business development at Ebbsfleet, pursuant to KSP policy NK1(f), in addition to the strategically important opportunities at North Dartford.

Floorspace (sq m)			
Type of Floorspace	1991-2001	2001-2011	Total
Financial and professional and business uses (Use Classes A2/B1)	205,000	205,000	410,000
General industrial/warehousing (Use Classes B2/B8)	130,000	130,000	260,000

- 4.2.6 The level of economic development provision in the Borough compared with the Structure Plan guidelines is set out below:

CATEGORY	A2/B1 (sq m)	B2/B8 (sq m)	TOTAL (sq m)
COMMITMENTS:			
Net completions 1991-2001	44,000	68,000	112,000
Not Started 2001	17,000	32,000	49,000
Under construction at 2001	8,000	3,000	11,000
Pending Losses at 2001*	- 13,000	- 64,000	- 77,000
<u>TOTAL COMMITMENTS</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>40,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>

LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATIONS	318,000,	268,000	586,000
<u>TOTAL SUPPLY</u>	<u>374,000</u>	<u>307,000</u>	<u>681,000</u>
KSP GUIDELINES 1991-2011	410,000	260,000	670,000

NB The figures have been rounded to the nearest 1,000 and columns and rows may not necessarily sum.

* Includes land that will be lost at Northfleet Industrial Estate and Kent Kraft Industrial Estate when the second phase of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is constructed.

- 4.2.7 The above schedule indicates that, overall, sufficient land is identified to meet the Structure Plan requirement, although the supply of A2/B1 floorspace is marginally less than the Structure Plan guidelines.

4.3 Background

4.3.1 Dartford continues to be a significant employment location in North Kent. In 2000 firms in the Borough employed about 42,000 people. The Borough's economy is strongly influenced by its location on the south eastern edge of the London conurbation and its relationship to the principal transport network. The majority of the Borough's employment is located north of the A2, within the urban area.

4.3.2 Employment in Dartford has traditionally mirrored that of North Kent as a whole, with notable concentrations of jobs in traditional primary industries such as papermaking, cement manufacture and heavy engineering. During the last 10 to 15 years there has been a substantial decline in these industries. The large psychiatric hospital sector has also contracted as a consequence of the Care in the Community Programme. Despite these declines, in most sectors the local economy has remained relatively buoyant, largely due to the Borough's M25 location, and associated growth in transport and distribution. The opening of the Bluewater regional shopping centre in 1999 has substantially increased the retail sector. As at 2000 the main employment sectors were chemical products, transport, hospital activities and retailing. There is a high level of construction employment due to the extent of development activity in the area.

4.3.3 Commuting is an important way of life for many residents as well as people who work in the Borough. Less than half (46%) of Dartford residents work in the Borough and 14% commute to Central London. Of resident commuters almost a third travel by public transport (32%) whilst almost two-thirds (63%) travel by car. Workers who commute into the Borough tend primarily to do so by car (84%).

4.3.4 There is a mismatch between the type of jobs in the Borough and the skills of residents in a number of sectors. A sixth of residents work in the banking, finance and insurance sector - twice as many as there are jobs in the Borough - whilst a tenth of jobs are in the extraction and manufacture of metals and chemicals - more than twice the number of local residents employed in these sectors.

4.3.5 In a strategic policy context, the identification of Thames Gateway - and within it, Kent Thameside - as a focus for growth on the east side of London, combined with the planned Channel Tunnel Rail Link and Ebbsfleet intermediate international and domestic passenger station, and the recognition in the Kent Structure Plan of the opportunities in Dartford, point to a major role for Dartford in contributing to regional development objectives. This is particularly important in relation to economic development, where Dartford's combination of strategic locational advantages and development prospects highlight a potential of more than purely local significance.

4.4 Provision of Employment Land

- 4.4.1 The policies and proposals in this chapter relate to the urban area north of the A2. The Council's approach towards the provision of employment facilities, including redevelopment and extensions, in the countryside and in the villages is dealt with in the Countryside and Villages chapter.
- 4.4.2 Structure Plan policy ED1 sets out guidelines of 670,000 sq m of employment floorspace for the period 1991 to 2011. This Plan makes a net provision of 681,000 sq m for the period 1991 to 2011, of which 586,000 sq m is on allocated sites. The allocations include mixed-use development sites, such as Ebbsfleet, where development will commence during the plan period, but, due to their scale, will not be completed until post 2011.
- 4.4.3 The major employment sites, including mixed-use sites, identified in this Plan are estimated to have the physical site capacity to generate an additional 19,000 office, industrial and warehousing jobs over the period 2001 to 2011. However, the development prospects for each site have to take account of factors such as sectoral changes in land and space requirements, and the likely take up of land based upon past experience. Taking these factors into account, the major employment sites are expected to generate about 12,500 net jobs within the Plan period. Overall, when permissions under construction and not started at 2001 and known job losses expected to occur over the plan period are taken into consideration it is estimated that some 13,000 net new jobs are likely to be generated in the period 2001 to 2011.
- 4.4.4 The employment growth potential of the area provides the opportunity to diversify the local economy into modern high value added sectors which will offer high quality employment prospects. With this comes the potential for a wider range of jobs more suited to residents' skills and occupational preferences, creating the opportunities for residents to work closer to home. There is also the opportunity for more "reverse commuting" to the area, especially from south-east London.
- 4.4.5 The following basic sustainability principles have been used to guide the location of new jobs and facilities in this Plan as well as assessing changes needed to enable existing employment areas to facilitate greater sustainability:
- all major trip-generating employment activities serving a more than local area hinterland should ideally be concentrated at public transport nodes, where good access by public transport can be gained from most directions, otherwise at locations well served by public transport;
 - major facilities serving a regional or sub-regional catchment should in addition be located where good regional/national public transport access is or will be available;
 - warehousing or extensive manufacturing industry (with relatively low numbers of workers per hectare but significant freight movement) should be located close to the strategic road network and offer a choice of means of access for staff and visitors; and
 - mixed-use development, where employment uses are complemented by other uses will be sought, while isolated single use development will be deterred.
- 4.4.5a RPG9a sets out the vision for Kent Thameside and promotes a 'new town' scale of growth. The guidance recognises that Kent Thameside's growth will focus upon damaged land and can provide significant opportunities for employment, helping to reduce Kent's reliance upon London for jobs. It also requires this Plan to foster locations capable of attracting development that can secure a change in image,

economic buoyancy and an improved quality of life. In furtherance of this the guidance identifies strategically significant sites and these include North Dartford, Crossways, Ebbsfleet, Eastern Quarry, and Swanscombe Peninsula. These sites include, or are entirely, areas of land which although 'damaged' fall within the PPG3 definition 'greenfield'.

4.4.5b RPG9 encourages development plans to seek to achieve at least 60% of all new development in the 'Rest of the South East' on previously developed land. The guidance also promotes the implementation of the strategic development sites identified in RPG9a. Paragraph 4.4.5 above sets out the sustainability principles used to guide the re-assessment of 1995 Local Plan employment allocations and the identification of new employment areas. The employment allocations, including mix of uses, have been identified because they help promote a better distribution of employment within the urban area north of the A2 and as a consequence provide the opportunity for a more sustainable development pattern. With the exception of Crossways the sites identified by the 1991 Local Plan solely for employment uses are now allocated for mixed-use development, including employment. This is in line with RPG9 which encourages allocations to be within the urban area and accessible by environmentally friendly modes of transport. Whilst the percentage of land allocated for employment on previously developed land is low, at 14%, much is allocated on 'damaged' sites (64%) that help provide the opportunity for a more sustainable development pattern.

E1 Provision of Employment Land		
Provision is made for some 587,000 sq m of floorspace for financial and professional, business, general industrial, storage or distribution uses (use classes A2, B1, B2 and B8) in the plan area. The following sites, shown on the Proposals Map, are allocated for employment uses:		
Site	Floorspace Square Metres (gross external)	Use Classes Proposed
Crossways	116,000	B1, B2, B8 with ancillary A1 and A2
North Dartford*	150,000	B1, B2 and B8
Dartford Fresh Marshes	58,000	B2 and B8 and associated B1
Stone Castle	50,000	B1
Eastern Quarry*	50,000	B1, B2 and B8
Ebbsfleet* @	100,000	B1
Darenth Road	16,000	B1
Swanscombe Peninsula West	25,000	B1
Sandpit Road	16,000	B1 B2 and B8
Ingress Park*	5,000	B1, B2 and B8
TOTAL	587,000	

* Floorspace will be provided within major mixed-use developments

@ The outline planning permission granted in principle provides for up to 265,000 sq m of B1 floorspace within Dartford Borough. Of this it is estimated that 100,000 sq m will be capable of development during the Plan period, based upon the assumption that Phase Two of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link will be completed by 2007.

It should be noted that the employment floorspace figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 square metres and that they are indicative estimates only. The actual figures will be determined by location, site constraints and other design considerations.

- 4.4.6 A number of sites have been identified in the Borough for economic development. Policies for these sites are set out below. Some development sites in the Borough have a mixed-use potential where commercial development may be a significant element, complementary to other main uses, such as housing. These sites are dealt with in the Major Development Sites chapter. No employment sites are identified in the rural areas of the Borough or in the villages south of the A2.

4.5 North Dartford

- 4.5.1 North Dartford, including Joyce Green Hospital and Littlebrook Lakes, comprises an area of 104 hectares adjacent to junction 1A of the A282 (M25) and the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge. The site is of prime importance in the Thames Gateway, and its development will set the scene for much of what follows as the Thames Gateway development unfolds. It affords an exceptional opportunity for substantial economic development within the regional context and as part of a mixed-use development, with some related housing and ancillary uses. The residential component should be planned in such a way as to complement the employment and educational uses. The site has the potential to offer high-quality space to technology-based companies (see policy MDS4 in the Major Development Sites chapter).

4.6 Dartford Fresh Marshes

- 4.6.1 Land at Dartford Fresh Marshes, south of University Way, affords the opportunity for major economic development within the regional context, primarily for an extension of the existing premises of GlaxoSmithKline, 25.6 hectares (gross) of land is identified for employment purposes of which the majority is within the ownership of GlaxoSmithKline. Within this area, development will be primarily general industrial (use class B2) and storage and distribution uses (use class B8) with associated business use (use class B1). There may be limited scope at the northern end of the site, outside the GlaxoSmithKline land holding, for some business use development.
- 4.6.2 Following the merger between Glaxo Wellcome and Smith Kline Beecham, GlaxoSmithKline announced a major restructuring. A consequence of this is that the West Site has been declared surplus to requirement. The site has potential for primarily leisure mixed-use development, including some employment. (see policy TC10 in the Town Centre chapter).
- 4.6.3 Existing GlaxoSmithKline manufacturing facilities and firms located on Central Road and the Central Road Industrial Estate use Central Road as their main access. The junction of Central Road and Mill Pond Road is at capacity and unsuitable to accommodate additional traffic. The proximity of the site to University Way provides the opportunity for the site to have direct access onto this main road and thus not increase traffic movements on the northern edge of the town centre and along the predominantly residential Burnham Road. Any proposal will need to incorporate appropriate traffic access onto University Way via the Joyce Green Hospital roundabout. It will also be important to design the access from University Way and within the site to ensure that there is no through route between University Way and the town centre via Central Road for vehicular traffic.
- 4.6.4 Any development must take account of local landscape and nature conservation interests. The site has a sensitive visual relationship with the River Darent and it is

essential that development proposals make provision for a landscaped buffer zone, within the site boundary, to ameliorate the impact of development on the environment and amenity of the River Darent. The Council regards this as an important economic development site and will be looking for the highest standard of design and development.

- 4.6.5 The County Council's Areas of Archaeological Potential Maps indicate that the area contains potential archaeological remains such as a Roman, Medieval and post Medieval settlement in the northern part of the site, and it is possible that over the rest of the site buried land surfaces occupied during the prehistoric or Roman periods will survive and may be affected by any proposed development. Developers will be expected to provide information on the nature and quality of these archaeological remains and these findings should influence the form of the proposed built development. An appropriate condition will be attached to any planning permission.
- 4.8.4 The Darent Valley footpath passes through the site. Any development proposals will be expected to provide for and, where possible, improve the footpath beside the river (see policy C8 in the Countryside chapter).
- 4.8.5 The Kent Minerals Local Plan (Construction Aggregates) (adopted December 1993) identifies the site as an "area of search" where minerals exist and may have potential for commercial working. The Minerals Local Plan, however, contains several caveats to safeguard the development prospects of land at Dartford Fresh Marshes. The Borough Council is concerned to ensure that any proposals for mineral extraction and reclamation do not prejudice the development of the site. As such the Council will need to be convinced that any mineral proposal will not have:
- significant implications on the timing of built development;
 - significant adverse impact on landscape, nature conservation and archaeology; and
 - significant adverse implications for the subsequent physical development of the land, in terms of topography and landscape, construction and flood risk.

E2 Dartford Fresh Marshes

Land at Dartford Fresh Marshes is allocated predominantly for use classes B2 and B8 with associated B1 uses. In addition to these main uses there may be some limited scope within the northern part of the site for other B1 development. Proposals will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. the nature conservation interest of the area is protected ensuring that the principal area of ecological value is retained, and that appropriate provision is made for its enhancement and management;**
- 2. a landscaped buffer zone, is provided within the site boundary, along the eastern bank of the River Darent to ameliorate the impact of the development on the environment and amenity of the River Darent and along the site's northern boundary;**
- 3. the existing adjoining major pharmaceutical complex is not prejudiced;**
- 4. demonstrate, prior to commencement of the development, that full consideration has been given to the viability and practicality of extracting mineral deposits from the area proposed to be the subject of built development including the use of material so derived in the construction of the proposed development;**
- 5. safeguard the Darent Valley Footpath;**
- 6. incorporate suitable access arrangements onto University Way in such a manner that it does not provide a through vehicular link with the town centre; and**

7. demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact upon Dartford Marshes, particularly in regard to land drainage or water quality.

4.7 Crossways

- 4.7.1 This section deals with land at and adjoining the Crossways Business Park including Thames Europort. 67 hectares of land is identified for employment purposes.
- 4.7.2 Crossways Business Park site has good road and river access and provides a mix of B1, B2 and B8 units together with three hotels and a pub/restaurant. Outline planning permission was granted in 1995 for the development of a further 185,800 sq m of floorspace at Crossways Business Park for uses within B1, B2, B8 uses and general supporting services including retail, a petrol filling station, and a hotel, together with associated access and service roads, car parking, incidental open space and landscaping. Recent planning permissions provide for an additional restaurant, Travel Lodge hotel and day nursery. The outline planning permission allows for limited supporting retail development only and no significant increase will be acceptable.
- 4.7.3 The Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG9a) states that Stone Marshes, with the Crossways Business Park at its centre, offers significant opportunity for quality mixed-use developments. The Framework argues that whilst logistics operations, perhaps allied to port operations, will continue to be important, local plan policies should discourage, over time, employment uses with space extensive requirements. The Plan, therefore, seeks to limit such employment activities.
- 4.7.4 The parcel of land immediately to the east of Newton's Court is in close proximity to existing residential properties and adjacent to a housing allocation. Development proposals will, therefore, need to be of a scale and mass that does not overpower or overshadow existing and proposed residential properties. This plot of land is considered to be suitable for units for small and medium sized firms or local retail facilities. Local retail facilities should be accessible to the immediate local residential population, and include direct pedestrian links.
- 4.7.5 Thames Europort is located on the site's river frontage and provides a roll-on roll-off freight service to mainland Europe. There has been recent investment in a new two berth quay and associated handling facilities. Proposals have been announced, however, to transfer Thames Europort's operations to a new port facility to be developed at Shellhaven in Essex. RPG9a states that the waterfront has clear potential for an expanded port operation but that care will need to be taken to limit any adverse impacts on the wider environment. The Council's policy approach to Thames Europort is set out in policy RT2 in the River Thames chapter.
- 4.7.6 The Kent Minerals Local Plan - Construction Aggregates (December 1993) includes a policy (CA4) that would normally permit proposals for wharves and/or depots to receive and despatch aggregates at Stone Marshes.
- 4.7.7 The Kent Waste Local Plan (March 1998) identifies the eastern end of Crossways as a site suitable for the collection, processing and sorting of "Category A" waste for re-use, and for any associated crushing and screening plant necessary to prepare them for re-use (policy W7). Along with this, policy W9 identifies the same location for waste separation and transfer.
- 4.7.8 The Environment Agency have reported the presence of water voles at Crossways, protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As a designated protected

species, the presence of water voles will be a material consideration when determining any planning application.

E3 Crossways

Proposals for the development of land at Crossways within use classes B1, B2, and B8 together with supporting retailing and ancillary uses will only be permitted if they:

- 1. incorporate appropriate access arrangements and demonstrate that before the development comes into use, adequate transport capacity will be available to serve the development;**
- 2. allow for the operational requirements of Stone Pumping Station;**
- 3. provide for a high quality development in a landscaped setting;**
- 4. provide for wildlife conservation, including reserves and wildlife corridors;**
- 5. incorporate high quality public transport, pedestrian and cycle access, particularly to Dartford Town Centre, Greenhithe Station and neighbouring sites; and**
- 6. take account of the site's inter-relationship with Thames Europort and its operational requirement.**

The conversion or redevelopment of premises for B8 use will not be permitted.

4.8 Darenth Road

4.8.3a Land west of Darenth Road and south of Powdermill Lane was identified in the 1995 Local Plan for employment use. The site is adjacent to the Questor employment estate (formerly known as the Dartford Trade Park) to the west, residential properties to the north and a proposed leisure facility to the north east. Most of the northern part of the site is "previously developed" in PPG3 terms.

4.8.3b This eight hectare site is allocated primarily for employment (use classes B1, B2 and B8) development with supporting residential development together with a new access road and a river crossing to Questor. Residential development should occupy no more than one third of the site area. There may be an opportunity for development to include an element of live/work units.

4.8.3c Questor is accessed from Hawley Road via an entrance road and from the western and eastern ends of Powdermill Lane. The entrances at the western and eastern end of Powdermill Lane are very sub-standard. Powdermill Lane connects to Darenth Road which is also sub-standard from its junction with Princes Road to Powdermill Lane. Whilst the Hawley Road entrance is of a satisfactory standard the road conditions are not ideal. The estate is used as a 'rat run' by traffic seeking to bypass traffic queues along Hawley Road and at Princes Road.

4.8.3d A new access road from Princes Road through the Darenth Road allocation linking into Questor via a new road bridge over the River Darent would provide the opportunity to improve site security at Questor. It would also enable the estate road accessed from Hawley Road to be closed within the Questor site and Powdermill Lane to be closed immediately east of the River, reducing its use to access only. Questor House and land immediately adjacent will continue to be accessed from Hawley Road. Questor is not served by public transport and the new road would provide an opportunity to accommodate such a facility. The cost of the new access road shall be funded by the development of the Darenth Road allocation.

4.8.3e The western edge of the site lies within the fluvial flood plain and any development proposals should safeguard its flood storage role. Land raising might be possible

provided replacement flood storage can be created upstream, either on or off site, such that it can perform a similar function to the facility it replaces. Any land raising and replacement proposals will need to be agreed with the Environment Agency.

- 4.8.3f Proposals will need to take account of the fact that much of the site has good tree cover and trees on the northern part of the site are covered by preservation orders. Trees not covered by tree preservation orders should be retained wherever possible.
- 4.8.3g The County Council's Areas of Archaeological Potential maps indicate that the north-western sector of the site contains potential archaeological remains relating to a post Mediaeval Powder Mill and early mediaeval artefacts. Developers will be expected to provide information on the nature and quality of these archaeological remains and these findings should influence the form of the proposed built development. Developers may also be expected to contribute towards the provision of interpretation facilities.
- 4.8.3h Although the southern flank of the site has no tree cover, it is well screened by tree cover on land south of the site. The site has particularly sensitive visual relationships with the River Darent and the Darent Valley Footpath on its western edge and with the open land on its southern flank. It is important that the development proposals make provision for landscaped buffer zones, within the site, on the southern flank and enhance the existing buffer zone on the western flank. Darenth Road on the eastern edge of the site has a rural nature, and any development should retain its character as much as possible.
- 4.8.4 In view of the above a planning brief will need to be agreed with any developer, prior to the submission of a planning application, to ensure an acceptable overall scheme.

E4 Darenth Road

Land at Darenth Road is allocated for primarily employment (use classes B1, B2 and B8) development with supporting residential development that does not exceed one third of the total site area, and the construction of a new access road and river crossing over the River Darent to Questor. Proposals should provide for high quality development in a well-landscaped setting. Proposals will only be permitted where they:

- 1. conform with a planning brief for the whole site which has been prepared or agreed by the local planning authority and are accompanied by a masterplan;**
- 1a. are for the comprehensive development of the site as a whole;**
- 2. provide for a landscaped buffer zone, within the site boundary, to ameliorate the impact of the development on the River Darent and the character of the open Green Belt to the south;**
- 3. minimise the impact on the rural character of Darenth Road;**
- 4. safeguard the Darent Valley Footpath;**
- 5. provide a new access road that links Questor via this site and Darenth Road to Princes Road, including a new road bridge over the River Darent. The new road and bridge should be designed to comply with the County Council's highway standards; and**
- 6. are readily accessible by public transport, bicycle and on foot.**

4.9 Poor Neighbour Uses

- 4.9.1 There are industries and activities that can, by their very nature, be a source of localised environmental problem and nuisance and are sometimes known as 'poor neighbour' uses. Nevertheless, such industries and activities satisfy a market

demand and can sometimes be an important source of employment. Examples of such activities include paint spraying, including re-spraying motor vehicles, or scrap yards. PPG4 advises that, where appropriate, local plans should provide specifically for such activities, and that these need to be separated from sensitive land uses, such as residential areas. Proposals for activities that are poor neighbour uses will be assessed against policy E8.

4.10 Business Development in Residential Areas

4.10.1 PPG4 advises that some small-scale proposals for business activities, particularly in existing buildings, may be appropriate in residential areas. PPG13 supports home working and provision of facilities for small groups of employees to work together locally. New technology and an increasing number of small businesses make working from home a more realistic option for many people. Working from home may reduce the need to travel, can reduce the demand for resources as buildings may be multi-use, and can help increase activity during the day so deterring crime.

4.10.2 Permission is not normally required where the use of part of a dwelling house for business purposes is ancillary to the main use and does not change the overall character of the property. Where permission is required, considerations of scale, the nature of the use itself, traffic, car parking, the number of visitors and the location of the property in relation to nearby residential properties, will apply. In most circumstances where permission is granted the potential intensification of the use will be strictly controlled, to avoid creeping growth.

E6 Business Development in Residential Areas

Proposals for the establishment or expansion of businesses (use class B1) in residential areas, including home working, will only be permitted if all the following are satisfied:

- 1. the proposal would not lead to an adverse effect on the character and amenity of the area;**
- 2. the nature, scale and location of the proposal would not result in any adverse environmental impact, or result in unacceptable levels of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, dust, traffic or parking;**
- 3. parking provision is in accordance with the Council's standards;**
- 4. the proposal incorporates suitable access arrangements; and**
- 5. additional traffic flows generated by the proposal could be accommodated on the existing local road network.**

A planning condition or obligation precluding intensification may be applied. Where appropriate, planning conditions will be used to control matters such as noise levels, hours of working, the nature of the use and changes of occupier.

4.11 Protection of Employment Areas

4.11.1 PPG4 states that development plans should aim to ensure that sufficient land is available for employment and that there should be a variety of sites to meet differing needs. It also states that a choice of sites provides for competition, so stimulating economic activity. RPG9 encourages local planning authorities to make better use of existing employment land resources, and encourages the intensification of use on existing sites wherever possible. The majority of employment provision, existing and proposed, is located on industrial estates and business parks. The Borough Council seeks to foster a range of employment opportunities to allow for reduced commuting and provide for a more sustainable relationship between home and work. Therefore,

in order to maintain this supply, it is important that employment sites are retained to ensure that they remain available for industrial, office or warehousing development. Proposals for the redevelopment of employment uses that intensify employment uses will be treated favourably providing there would be no adverse effects due to increased traffic or adverse impact on car parking provision, environment or amenity. Justification will be required for proposals that result in lower intensity of use. It will be for those promoting change to demonstrate that a site or premises is unsuitable for employment use or has become unable to support a commercial or industrial use.

4.11.2 GlaxoSmithKline is an important employer in the town, and due to their need for modern, efficient production facilities there has been a programme of internal rationalisation at their site. As a result, part of the GlaxoSmithKline land-holdings have been declared redundant and will be released for redevelopment in the medium term. Policy TC10 in the Town Centre chapter recognises potential on the West Site and from which the Policy E7 safeguarding has been withdrawn. The future of the East Site will need careful consideration: the policy approach should take account of the site's mixed use potential in line with Policy DD4.

E7 Protection of Employment Areas

The expansion, conversion or redevelopment of premises for uses falling within use classes B1, B2 or B8 will be permitted on the following employment sites and premises, as shown on the Proposals Map:

- 1. Sandpit Road, including Swan Business Park;**
- 2. Victoria Road Industrial Estate;**
- 3. GlaxoSmithKline, including Central Road;**
- 4. Riverside Industrial Estate;**
- 5. Questor (formerly the Dartford Trade Park), including Lakeside Business Park;**
- 6. Orbital One and adjoining site;**
- 7. Northfleet Industrial Estate; and**
- 8. Kent Kraft Industrial Estate.**

Proposals should provide high standards of design, layout and landscaping and should not harm the character and amenity of immediately surrounding uses and the wider area.

Within a protected employment area development that would cause the loss of an employment site or premises to other uses will only be permitted if:

- a) the present use harms the character or amenities of the adjacent area, the site is no longer capable of satisfactory use for employment purposes and overriding local benefits would come from the proposed development;**
- b) the proposed use would cause no significant traffic or amenity problems;**
- c) the proposed use would not be likely to restrict the range of uses which could be carried out by businesses on employment sites or in premises in close proximity; and**
- d) it is demonstrated that there is insufficient demand to justify the site's continued retention in any possible employment use.**

4.12 Development Outside Allocated Employment Sites or Protected Existing Employment Areas

4.12.1 There may be development sites neither identified in the Local Plan nor within existing employment areas, set out in policy E7, where development proposals for employment uses may be acceptable. RPG9 requires local plans to make better use of existing employment land resources and to give precedence to the re-use of

developed land. The Council recognises the employment benefits that might arise in this way, and will consider any such proposals against the criteria in policy E8.

4.12.2 The Council's policy approach to business development (use class B1) in residential areas is set out in policy E6 above. Development that generates significant volumes of freight movement will not be permitted where it is not well related to the strategic road network (ie A2 or A282/M25).

E8 Development Outside Allocated Employment Sites or Protected Existing Employment Areas

Except in relation to proposals to which policy E6 applies, proposals for development for employment uses outside identified sites or existing employment areas will only be permitted if:

0a. they would not result in the loss of greenfield land;

- 1. they would not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for access roads in terms of safety, congestion or capacity, or require improvements that would have an adverse impact upon the character of those roads;**
- 2. access arrangements are suitable;**
- 3. the site is very accessible by public transport, bicycle and foot;**
- 4. they would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenities of immediately surrounding uses and the wider area; and**
- 5. they would not result in a significant loss of land allocated for other uses.**

4.13 Accommodation for Small Sized Firms

4.13.1 Small firms are an important source of new employment. The encouragement of the establishment and growth of small firms is an important element in the continuing development of the local economy. There will be opportunities for this within existing employment areas and on the sites identified in this Plan for new economic development at Darenth Road, or mixed-use development at North Dartford, Eastern Quarry, Ebbsfleet and Ingress Park. For the purposes of this policy a small business unit is defined as having a maximum gross floorspace of 235 sq m.

E9 Accommodation for Small Sized Firms

On existing employment sites identified on the Proposals Map and allocated industrial and business sites planning permission will be granted for workshop or small business units. A condition may be imposed preventing the amalgamation of two or more units into a lesser number of larger units.

4.14 Amenity

4.14.1 The nature of employment uses means that they can have an adverse impact on amenity, especially in relation to nearby housing areas. The Borough contains a number of installations handling notifiable substances, including high-pressure natural gas pipelines. The views of the Health and Safety Executive about proposals within the consultation zones related to these installations, will be sought as to any risks arising from the proposed development. Where the proposal is adjacent to, or its means of access runs through, residential areas hours of operation will be required that do not adversely affect the amenity of residents. This will include no Sunday, Bank Holiday or evening/night-time working.

E10 Amenity

Proposals for employment-related development will only be permitted where:

- 1. the proposal does not create a health or safety hazard, or pollution caused by noise, vibration, smoke, fumes or other emissions;**
- 2. the proposal does not result in the creation of, or is in proximity to, a hazard as notified by the Health and Safety Executive; and**
- 3. there are acceptable hours of operation.**

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