Dartford Town Centre Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Document for Consultation

September 2007

Part of Dartford’s Local Development Framework
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PART 1 CONTEXT

1 Foreword

1.1 This consultation document sets out a vision and strategy for the future development of Dartford Town Centre and the sites north of the railway line, referred to collectively as the Northern Gateway. It is intended to guide future change and development in the area.

1.2 A Preferred Options Document is one of the steps along the way towards adopting the Area Action Plan. It follows consultation with the community, business interests and other stakeholders to identify issues and options. Possible options have been assessed to identify those most likely to achieve the long term vision and to address the town centre issues raised.

1.3 This document has been prepared by the Council following on from earlier commissioned work by Donaldsons. It is supported by a number of technical documents providing an evidence base, which are available on the Council’s website.

1.4 The next steps in the programme are:

May 2008 - Submission of Area Action Plan to Secretary of State and further six week consultation

October 2008 – Anticipated Public Examination

May 2009 – Anticipated Adoption

1.5 This document is being published to stimulate debate and invite comments on the approaches proposed. The period for making comments is 13 September to 25 October 2007.

1.6 Please send your comments to:

Planning Policy Team
Dartford Borough Council
Civic Centre – Room C3
Home Gardens
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1DR

Or e-mail to: LDF@dartford.gov.uk
2 Context

Vision for the Town Centre 2026

Dartford – a place where people are paramount. A town where the built and natural environment, historic and modern, combine to provide a stunning setting for people to come and shop, meet, work, play, live or just enjoy.

Portrait of the Town Centre

2.1 Dartford town centre is situated in the north-west corner of Kent close to the eastern boundary of Greater London and the southern bank of the River Thames. It falls just within the M25 ring. It is close to other town centres and key attractors such as Bexleyheath, Bluewater Regional Shopping Centre and Ebbsfleet International Station, due to open in November 2007.

2.2 The town centre has developed where the old Roman Road crossed the River Darent. It has a compact centre that is constrained by steep hills to the east and west. The North Kent railway runs on an embankment on the northern side of the town and this forms a physical and visual barrier between the town centre and land north of the railway. Central Park covers 24 hectares of land to the south east side of the town and penetrates into the heart of the centre. All traffic enters and leaves the town by way of a ring road which tightly bounds the central town area. The ring road is a barrier to walking into and out of the town and at peak periods is prone to traffic congestion especially at key intersections.

2.3 Dartford is a historic market town which retains much of its original street pattern. Many of the historic buildings continue to play an important part in the town’s character and streetscape.

2.4 The town provides a range of retail, service sector, leisure, cultural and civic facilities and also contains a number of homes, some situated in or close to the core retail area. In recent years the core shopping area has experienced a decline in the quality of shopping offer. Health indicators for the town centre show poor economic performances with a high percentage of vacant retail properties combined with some of the lowest retail rents and some of the highest retail yields in Kent1.

2.5 The regular weekly open air markets together with occasional specialist markets attract visitors from a wide catchment area within and outside the Borough.

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1 Dartford Town Centre Indicators Dartford – Kent County Council Analysis and Information Team
There is a limited evening economy which is based around the theatre and nightclubs. The latter raises on-going issues regarding noise and parking, particularly for town centre residents. During the day there are a number of sports and leisure opportunities within and adjacent to the town centre and Central Park itself is a popular destination for town residents and users.

2.6 In past times, industrial activities developed along the River Darent north of the railway line. Several of these major sites are expected to become available in the near future as a result of rationalisation. A number of key town centre sites have also become available for re-use or redevelopment. These provide an opportunity to regenerate the town centre.

2.7 The town falls within the Thames Gateway development area. Significant levels of new housing and employment will be developed in the borough over the next 20 years, together with significant public transport improvements, including the Ebbsfleet International Passenger Terminal. The new development will bring opportunities and challenges for the town centre.

Issues

2.8 The following broad issues and needs have been identified that affect the town centre and will need addressing through the Area Action Plan. These are:

2.9 The town experiences competition from nearby centres at Bexleyheath, Crayford, Gravesend as well as Bluewater and Lakeside. New retail development is underway at Gravesend and development is proposed at Bexleyheath and Crayford. The town will need to improve and increase its retail offer just to retain its place in the retail hierarchy.

2.10 Quality of the retail offer. The town has a low number of anchor stores and lacks a range of quality comparison goods shops. There is also an under-provision of convenience goods floorspace. The town centre has few larger shops to cater for the requirements of multiple retailers. There is a need to extend both the range and quality of comparison goods shops and the amount of convenience goods. Consequently, the town centre attracts only around 40% of spending from its catchment area.

2.11 The town centre lacks coherence. There are some parts of the main shopping area where the run of shops is fragmented and uninviting. There are two distinct and separate primary shopping areas: Prospect Place; and the Orchards and Priory Shopping Centres linked by the High Street. This provides little incentive for shoppers to make use of the full range of shops and reduces the potential for spending.

2.12 The quality of the town centre environment. The environment of the town is of variable quality both in terms of the streetscape and buildings. It does not encourage visitors to stay and enjoy the town’s assets. The condition of the
Conservation Area needs improving and there is a lack of pleasant outdoor public spaces to stop and rest.

2.13 The **quality of town centre buildings**. Some buildings in the town centre no longer meet modern requirements internally, do not function well externally and are unattractive as part of the town centre built structure.

2.14 There is a **limited leisure and entertainment offer**. There are night clubs and pubs but little in the way of family entertainment. The Orchard Theatre is an isolated activity, with limited scope to combine it with a meal or drinks.

2.15 **There are barriers to walking in the town centre.** Some routes between key parts of the centre are indirect, unclear, unattractive and not overlooked. The ring road passes through a part of the shopping area, creating conflict between cars and shoppers. The town centre needs to be transformed into a centre which is safe, attractive and easy to walk around.

2.16 Whilst the town is well served by **public transport** there is no central bus station or transport hub at the railway station. There are poor bus arrangements for pick-up and drop-off. Bus stop arrangements can be used to underpin the success of the town by bringing passengers closer to the centre or near to the main shopping streets or malls.

2.17 There are multi-storey and land surface **car parks** within the ring road and adjacent to the ring road, both within and outside the central area. The surface car parks create a poor pedestrian environment and are a poor use of land in the town centre. Some of the multi-storey car parks interrupt active uses in the town centre and create dead frontages.

2.18 **Northern Gateway**. Parts of the older industrial area north of the railway station are no longer required for employment purposes. New uses are required which can contribute to the town centre’s health and vitality.
3 Strategy for a Revitalised Town Centre

3.1 The strategy outlined below has been developed on the basis of an analysis of strategic options that considered:

1. The extent of retail floorspace to be provided in the town centre.
2. New uses additional to shopping which would best strengthen the centre.
3. How best to locate new uses in relation to each other in the town centre.
4. What approach to take to the evening / night-time economy.
5. How the Northern Gateway can best support the town centre.

3.2 The analysis is summarised in Appendix 1, with the full analysis available as a separate document. The Council’s Preferred Approaches have been taken forward in the proposed Strategy. More detailed policy approaches and options for the use of sites are developed from these so that the identified issues can be addressed and the Vision for the town centre be achieved.

3.3 This Plan does not start from a blank sheet. Many aspects of the strategy are being taken forward and are evolving. Steps to regenerate Dartford town centre are already in motion. This Strategy is, therefore, a practical one. It seeks not only to define what will happen and where, but also how this can help to achieve the Vision.

3.4 The basic principles of the Strategy are to:

- Develop a much improved shopping offer, not just in terms of quantity but also quality and choice.
- Attract anchor stores on to major development sites to bolster existing shops and act as a catalyst for further retail investment.
- Encourage a combination of independent and multiple stores, to help differentiate the shopping offer from other centres.
- Define a unique identity for Dartford by giving its assets, including the historic environment, its market town status, Central Park, the River Darent and the Orchard Theatre, a higher profile in the life of the town.
- Create a more coherent shopping circuit, so that shoppers are drawn to all parts of the town.
- Refresh and renew the buildings and streetscape in the town centre.
- Make walking in the town centre a much more pleasant experience.
- Expand the range of non-shopping attractions and expand the evening economy.
- Provide more homes and jobs in the town centre and at the Northern Gateway to support the town’s economy.
- Make getting to the town centre, by whatever means, easy and convenient.
• Create a sustainable mixed use community which takes advantage of good public transport links at the Northern Gateway.
• Provide a safe environment for residents and visitors.

3.5 These elements of the Strategy will be implemented by a variety of means, as detailed in Appendix 3. The main vehicle for implementation will be through the redevelopment of outworn sites. Part 3 sets out how these sites will contribute to achieving the Strategy.
PART 2 POLICY APPROACHES

4 Strengthening the Shopping Offer

4.1 The regeneration of Dartford town centre is fundamentally about revitalising its role as a shopping centre. The evidence base has identified the underperformance of shopping in the town in terms of the low level of spending it attracts from its catchment area, high shop vacancy levels and weakness of the centre as compared to surrounding centres at the same level in the retail hierarchy\(^1\). Consultation with shoppers and retailers has highlighted the need to expand the range and quality of shops.

4.2 The town centre has two distinct shopping areas: Prospect Place and the area around the High Street, including the Orchards and Priory Shopping Centres. It lacks sufficient ‘critical mass’ of shops and stores to attract higher market shares of shoppers expenditure from a wide area. The retail offer caters principally for the lower mid-market.

New Shopping Provision

4.3 The Dartford Retail and Leisure Study 2005 forecast that up to 2016 there is spending capacity to support additional convenience (food) shopping in the range of 3,350 square metres to 4,350 square metres, and between 7,300 square metres and 15,500 square metres for comparison (non food) shopping. This is in addition to shopping floorspace previously proposed at Lowfield Street. This is a theoretical potential for future capacity in the town centre and is dependent on Dartford being attractive to shoppers. Given the existing high level of shop vacancies, particularly the large site of the former Co-op store and shop units within the covered shopping centres the priority is to first of all to fill these spaces, so as to consolidate the primary shopping area and create a more coherent core.

4.4 This will not happen spontaneously. A catalyst is needed to increase the attraction of Dartford and draw more customers into the centre. The introduction of one or more anchor stores to kick-start the revitalisation of the town centre has been strongly supported in consultation exercises. The immediate opportunity is at Lowfield Street where a site has been assembled for mixed development, including major retail development. The former Co-op store, on Hythe St, now vacant, provides another opportunity for re-use or redevelopment with a view to attracting major multiple stores into new purpose-built shop premises. The Orchards Shopping Centre also has potential to be modernised and reconfigured to better suit current retailing requirements.

\(^1\)Dartford Retail and Leisure Study 2005 Section 7.
Preferred Approach 1: New Shopping Floorspace

To increase the amount of shopping floorspace, over and above current levels. This approach involves the creation of additional shopping space as well as take-up of existing vacancies.

In the short term, opportunities exist for refurbishment or redevelopment of the former Co-op store and the Orchards Shopping Centre and encouragement of major new retail development at Lowfield Street (see Map 6)

In the medium term, if demand exists, further opportunities for retail development should be considered within the town centre boundary. Preference will be given to sites within the Primary Shopping Area (See Map 1).

Additionally, new shopping development should aim to:

- consolidate the shopping core by providing anchor stores in the weaker shopping areas
- give priority to locations which currently do not have an active frontage
- contribute to the improvement of the public realm through design of the building and streetscape around it, including creation of a fine grain of walking routes
- be well-integrated with the rest of the shopping area.

Size of Units

4.5 Many of the shops in the prime retail area are smaller than are now required by multiple retailers to carry their full stock. The Priory and Orchards shopping malls were built in the 1970s and 1980s respectively and the shop sizes no longer meet multiple retailers’ needs. By contrast, the recent retail development at Prospect Place, to the north of the town centre, has been successful in attracting stores such as Matalan and TK Maxx as it can offer the store size sought by retailers.

4.6 The consultation exercise has identified a strong desire that the town centre should contain a mix of both multiple and independent stores. Many of the existing independent traders are keen to maintain a presence in the town centre. These independent stores contribute to the identity of the centre, preserving its original character and differentiating it from competing centres.

4.7 The Retail Study has identified the need for larger shop units to meet the requirements of multiple stores. New development or refurbishment of existing shops, particularly within the purpose built shopping centres, can help to generate unit types that are attractive to multiples. Independent shops generally require smaller shop units, with competitive rents. A large number of
Map 1  Proposed Primary Shopping Area and Primary Shopping Frontage

Legend

Proposed Primary Shopping Frontage
Proposed Primary Shopping Area

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these currently exist but there is a need to ensure that sufficient of these remain to meet demand.

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<th>Preferred Approach 2: Size of Units</th>
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<td>New and refurbished retail development should provide a range of unit sizes. Initially this will be of a large and medium size to redress the current imbalance.</td>
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<td>Existing small retail units should be protected from redevelopment as long as demand for them exists, particularly on High Street, Hythe Street and Spital Street.</td>
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**Primary Shopping Frontage**

4.8 The Primary Shopping Area is that part of the town centre where shops predominate but where a range of supporting uses, such as cafes, restaurants, banks and building societies co-exist. Within this area, a more tightly defined primary shopping frontage needs to be identified where retailing will be concentrated, so that it is convenient for shoppers and gives certainty to retailers and developers. Within the Primary Shopping Frontage the level of non-retail frontage will be limited.

4.9 At July 2007 the percentage of retail frontages in the proposed Primary Shopping Frontage identified on Map 1 was 67%, excluding vacancies. The current situation is considered to provide an appropriate balance between a concentrated retail core, whilst allowing for complementary uses within this area.

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<td>Within this area, the minimum percentage of the frontage to be in retail use (use class A1) will be 70%. Other uses in Primary Shopping Frontage should complement the shopping function, such as cafes, restaurants, banks and building societies.</td>
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**Food Stores**

4.10 The town centre contains a strong convenience element to its retail offer. The existing Sainsbury and Waitrose superstores are both located within the Primary Shopping Area next to the ring road and benefit from supporting car parking. This works well in that traffic is kept out of the core of the town centre whilst the proximity of these stores to the comparison shops allows for linked trips. This arrangement is supported for at least one and maybe two additional food superstores in the town centre. Any additional food superstore (more than
2,500 square metres trading floorspace) should be well related to the ring road with potential for supporting car parking.

4.11 The retail study has identified capacity for further food shopping floorspace. However, growth in food shopping should be balanced with comparison shopping, with the comparison floorspace forming the major part of shopping provision in the Primary Shopping Area. Potential locations for a food superstore are at Lowfield Street, as part of a mixed shopping development, and Prospect Place.

Preferred Approach 4: Food Stores

One or up to a maximum of two superstores in the Primary Shopping Area, adjacent to the ring road, will be supported. The preferred locations are Lowfield Street and Prospect Place.

The need for further allocations for superstores will be reviewed once these sites have been taken up. Should the need for further sites arise, the preference will be for sites within the town centre but outside the Primary Shopping Area.

Smaller food stores (1200 sq m max) will be acceptable within the ring road, for example, as part of a larger shopping redevelopment of the former Co-op store, subject to a predominance of comparison shopping being retained.

Retail Warehousing

4.12 Prospect Place was allocated and developed as a retail warehouse park to complement the town centre offer. This is well situated for retail warehousing, as it is within the town centre but adjacent to the ring road. However, the area has partially been taken up by multiple clothing retailers that would be better located at the core of the shopping centre. The relocation of the clothing retailers would provide additional space for further retail warehousing for electrical or heavy household goods.

4.13 The retail warehouse unit at Overy Street does not make best use of a riverside site. Relocation of the unit would enable the redevelopment of the existing site for housing.

Preferred Approach 5: Retail Warehousing

Further retail warehouse use for electrical/household goods at Prospect Place is supported, with existing multiple clothing retailers being encouraged to locate in the core of the shopping area.
There is potential for limited retail warehousing as part of a mixed development in the Northern Gateway West, where this enables the redevelopment of the retail warehouse unit in Overy Street for housing.
5 Uses to Complement Shopping

Land Uses in the Town Centre

5.1 Government policy (Planning Policy Statement 6, Planning for Town Centres) encourages a wide range of uses in town centres, providing choice to meet the needs of the entire community and taking advantage of accessible locations that are well-served by a choice of means of transport.

5.2 A number of strategic options have been considered for land uses in the town centre to support the shopping facilities (see Appendix 1). The Council’s Preferred Approach is to promote a mix of leisure, employment, residential and community uses in the town centre, to complement and support the shops.

5.3 This approach offers clear advantages for the rejuvenation of the town centre and addresses a number of its current weaknesses. A wider range of activities will widen the appeal of and increase the number of visitors to the town centre. It has the potential to result in linked trips and increase the shopping spend. Residential and employment uses can provide an increased customer base for the shops, as well as creating activity at different times of day and evening. In combination, this wide range of uses can provide vibrancy and safety throughout the day and evening. Leisure uses in the early evening, in particular, can help to extend the ‘working day’ of the town centre and make it a much more inviting place to visit at these less busy times.

Preferred Approach 6: Land Uses to Complement Shopping

To promote a range of uses in the town centre, including:

- Homes
- Jobs – office floorspace, particularly small offices in the town centre; additionally, B1 and B8 uses in the Northern Gateway
- Live-work units (B1), for example, arts and crafts studios
- Hotels and Conference facilities
- Leisure – commercial as well as pubs and restaurants
- Recreation
- Cultural facilities
- Social and community facilities

These uses will be encouraged subject to meeting criteria for a healthy town centre economy, including:

- retention of a concentrated shopping core - proposals will be subject to a policy on Primary Shopping Frontages
- ensuring active frontages within the Primary Shopping Area
- retaining and enhancing a fine grain of walking routes
sensitive location of uses with the potential to create disturbance, such as late night drinking and music, particularly in relation to homes.

**Housing**

5.4 The Draft South East Plan has set a target of 15,700 new homes to be delivered in Dartford in the period 2006 to 2026. The Council’s Site Specific Allocations Preferred Policy Approaches Document (July 2006) identified approximately 1,500 of these homes to be built within the area covered by this Plan. However, as part of the Core Strategy, further work is being undertaken on the capacity of individual sites and the preferred sequence for delivery of sites across the Borough. This may result in revised housing numbers for Dartford town centre.

5.5 The town centre and immediate environs are sustainable locations for housing given their access to public transport, shops, services and jobs. Consultation with existing town centre residents revealed an appreciation of the benefits of town centre living but some concerns about night-time disturbance.

5.6 New residential development within the town centre needs to be carefully planned to avoid potential issues of disturbance and nuisance, noise and light pollution. In mixed developments, the mix of uses needs to avoid juxtaposition of late night uses alongside housing and be designed so as to minimise any impacts. Residential development can help improve safety by providing natural surveillance of the streets.

5.7 Within the town centre, flatted development is generally considered to be more appropriate than family housing. However, this increases the risk of transient populations with a rapid turnover of residents who do not set down roots in the local community. The Council wishes to encourage the development of established communities that set down roots in the area and particular care will need to be taken in the design of town centre housing in order to achieve this. This should include generous internal space standards, so that the flats offer good quality accommodation in the long-term for all age groups and not just a short-term first step on the housing ladder; a communal area where residents have the opportunity to meet, normally provided as outdoor amenity space but an additional indoor space would be advantageous; and private amenity space for all flats, which could take the form of balconies or roof gardens.

5.8 Within the Northern Gateway and at Overy Street a significant proportion of family housing with gardens will be sought, so as to achieve mixed and balanced communities.

5.9 Given the good public transport infrastructure and proximity of a wide range of facilities, low parking standards will be encouraged in the town centre. Recognising that not all town centre residents will be able to lead a ‘car free’
lifestyle the potential to establish a ‘car club’ in new developments should be investigated.

5.10 The built design of housing in the town centre will be required to respect the historic context of the town, in particular the Conservation Area. Whilst contemporary design is encouraged, this should make reference to historic buildings within the town and contribute to a unique identity within the centre.

5.11 The density of new development will be determined and assessed to the extent that it addresses the issues above.

Preferred Approach 7: Housing

The following sites within the town centre are identified for housing:

- Predominantly flatted development
  - Lowfield Street and Fairfield Pool and Leisure Complex
  - Station Approach
  - Former Co-op site
  - Mill Pond

- Predominantly family housing
  - Overy Street
  - Northern Gateway West
  - Northern Gateway East

Proposals will be assessed against a range of criteria, including internal space standards; availability of communal space for flats; private amenity space; the ability of the development to create sustainable communities; the contribution of the design of the scheme to the creation of a unique identity for the town centre; and effective protection for residents against disturbance from late night uses.

Leisure, Culture and Recreation

5.12 Consultation with town centre businesses, traders, residents and young people, has identified support for expanding the range of leisure and cultural facilities provided in the town centre. The town centre boasts the successful Orchard Theatre, a few restaurants, pubs and night clubs. However, these facilities are not grouped together in a way which encourages visitors to the town centre to enjoy an evening out as a whole and there is limited early evening and family-orientated leisure provision. Facilities such as a cinema, ice rink or bowling alley would help to provide a more rounded offer.

5.13 The Orchard Theatre has the potential to underpin a successful evening economy, providing activity and vibrancy in the town centre. There is an
opportunity to establish a leisure quarter around the Theatre and Orchard Shopping Centre car park with additional facilities, such as a cinema with complementary restaurants, cafes and bars. The Council has improved the space around the Orchard Theatre and further enhancement of its setting through the provision of a new public square is encouraged. Improved night time walking routes to the High Street would help to create synergies with the wider town centre.

5.14 Other opportunities for extending and improving the leisure and recreational offer include: strengthening the sport and leisure offer at Acacia Hall including relocation of the Fairfield Pool to the site; an improved range of facilities at Central Park with better links to the town centre; an enhanced Darent Valley Footpath through the town; and a wider variety of bars and restaurants in the centre and at the Northern Gateway.

5.15 The creation of a town square at Market Street provides an opportunity to create a focus for cafes, restaurants and pubs.

5.16 Whilst the provision of leisure facilities in the town centre is supported, they should not break up the retail frontage or other active frontages.

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<tr>
<td>Create a leisure quarter around the Orchard Theatre and Orchard Shopping Centre surface car park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the intensification of sporting and leisure facilities at Acacia Hall, including the relocation of Fairfield Pool onto this site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement proposals for improvements to Central Park and the Darent Valley Footpath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage cafes, restaurants and pubs (Use Classes A3 and A4), in particular, adjacent to the Orchard Theatre; in the proposed new town square at Market Street; and around the Mill Pond and River Darent in the Northern Gateway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support proposals for new leisure uses (Use Class D2) that will extend the range of family activities available in the town centre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hotels

5.17 A recent hotel study has identified a demand for four new hotels in the Borough up to 2016\(^1\). Business and tourism growth will generate significant demand for

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\(^1\) Kent Thameside Hotel Futures prepared for Kent Thameside Delivery Board and Tourism South East May 2007
additional bedspaces. A town centre based hotel would be another means of generating activity and spending within the town centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Approach 9: Hotels</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support the development of a hotel or hotels that are well related to public transport and town centre facilities. Preferred locations are as part of mixed use developments at Station Approach or Northern Gateway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition, smaller, individual hotels in the town centre are also supported, providing these are outside the Primary Shopping Frontage and contribute to the public realm and active street frontages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 Making More of Dartford’s Assets

6.1 The town centre has a number of built and natural assets. These treasures have a low profile in the life of the town centre. Taken jointly, they could increase Dartford’s attraction as a destination of choice for shopping and leisure trips and create a unique atmosphere where visitors would want to linger longer. Increased linkages between these assets and town centre shops will help improve the viability of the town centre. These assets include:

- The historic environment, including the town centre Conservation Area.
- The markets.
- Central Park.
- The River Darent.
- The Orchard Theatre.

The Historic Environment

6.2 The historic buildings and traditional street pattern remaining at the heart of Dartford are a key part of the town’s identity and help to set it apart from some of its competitors. Whilst the town centre has a rich heritage reflected in its built environment, which ranges from medieval through Victorian to the twentieth century, the historic buildings have been isolated and the setting of the historic building stock is affected by the presence of low quality adjacent architecture. Some of these historic treasures have become neglected, and need to be refurbished and refreshed. This will help increase Dartford’s attraction as a shopping, leisure and tourism destination.

6.3 Consultation revealed that safeguarding and improving the town’s historic assets was very important. This was the most important issue for town centre residents.

6.4 The historical core area is protected by a Conservation Area (see Map 2). However, even outside the Conservation Area, care needs to be taken to provide a suitable backdrop to the historic centre and not overwhelm it.

6.5 A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted by the Council\(^1\). The Management Plan identifies a set of overriding principles to guide proposals for future development affecting the Conservation Area. The Plan also sets out a list of actions. Those with a direct bearing on the Area Action Plan are:

- Establish a local list of listed buildings and include policies for the protection of the buildings and features included on it, including policies on demolition and the use of Article 4 Directions\(^2\).

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\(^1\) Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan October 2006

\(^2\) An Article 4 Direction removes permitted development rights, thereby necessitating that a planning application is made for all development.
• Develop design guidance on the most appropriate form and materials for use.
• Installation of better signage boards to guide people around the town.
• Maintaining and enhancing significant views through the use of policies for the protection of important views.
• Introduce medium to long term plans to remove the current paving in the pedestrianised areas and replace it with a scheme that includes pavements of large masonry slabs.
• Expand town centre interpretation, such as interpretation boards at key points, and town trails.
• Consider the need to use Article 4 Directions1.

6.6 There is a mural at One Bell Corner that highlights significant moments in the town’s history and a couple of buildings have plaques identifying significant people or events. The town centre has buildings of local and national significant and key points along the River Darent that would also benefit from interpretation and/or inclusion in a town trail. This could be in the form of interpretation boards, plaques on buildings or public art such as sculpture or murals. Developments within the town centre and by the River Darent will be expected to contribute towards such heritage interpretation.

Preferred Approach 10: Preservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

All new development, including extensions within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area will adopt the principles set out in the Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan. It will preserve and enhance the character and interest of historic spaces and buildings within the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area key frontages and significant views, will be protected and enhanced.

Within the Conservation Area, planning applications and proposals will be expected to adhere to the following principles:

• All development will preserve and enhance the character and interest of historically significant spaces.
• New construction, buildings and extensions will not visually dominate the historic buildings in terms of colour, scale and massing and will respect building frontage lines.

1 An Article 4 Direction removes permitted development rights, thereby necessitating that a planning application is made for all development.
• New building frontages will respect the massing, window lines and proportions, string course and parapet lines of adjacent buildings that contribute to the character and interest of the Conservation Area.
• New buildings, facades and extensions to existing buildings must be well designed and be built using high quality materials.
• Where existing buildings and features detract from the quality of the Conservation Area, their redevelopment will be encouraged.
• Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building, or that sit within the Conservation Area should provide design options that demonstrate the proposed development does not dominate the context within which it is proposed.
• ‘Above the shop’ uses should be encouraged and access to the upper floors of buildings with ground floor shops improved.
• There are areas within the Conservation Area that have developed separately from adjacent areas and have evolved with differences in character. Where these areas are to be linked in the future with roads, paths or sight lines, these new connections should not diminish the distinct historic character of the individual areas.

Planning applications for shop fronts in the town centre will be assessed against the Council’s adopted Shop Front Design Guide\(^1\).

Means of funding improvements to the current paving in pedestrianised areas will be investigated.

A local list of listed buildings and policies for the protection of the buildings and their features will be established.

Design guidance on the most appropriate form of development and materials for use will be developed.

Locally and nationally significant buildings and the River Darent will be the subject of heritage interpretation measures. This could take the form of interpretation boards, plaques or art. Developments within the town centre will be expected to contribute towards such heritage interpretation.

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**The Markets**

6.7 Dartford is a market town, with a Charter dating from the reign of Charles I restricting the ability of neighbouring areas to hold markets. Regular street markets are held on Thursdays and Saturdays. These are popular and bring additional visitors into the town centre. However, the Thursday market is on the edge of the town centre which may reduce the amount of combined visits to town centre shops. The range and quality of goods on offer is limited and this may restrict the range of social groups attracted by the market.

\(^1\) Shop Front Design Guide September 2006
6.8 Markets have the ability to create colour, excitement and activity in an area and attract people who would not otherwise visit.

**Preferred Approach 11: The Markets**

The Council will explore ways to expand and improve on the current market offer.

A permanent location for the markets closer to the shopping core will be sought if an opportunity arises through redevelopment. The preferred location is at Market Street.

**Central Park**

6.9 The strength of feeling of local people for Central Park was demonstrated, in 2005, by the strong objections to proposed development at Lowfield Street, which included a road through the Park. The Council has responded by initiating proposals to make the Park even better, providing new facilities that will give more people increased reason to use it. The aim is to integrate it within the life of the town centre and provide another attraction to strengthen the town’s draw.

6.10 Consultation was undertaken in March 2007 seeking the public’s view on a wide range of new and improved facilities for the Park with the theme of “restoring the Park to its Edwardian splendour”. There was strong support for the proposals and the Council is seeking funding for their implementation.

6.11 Work is already progressing on some of the proposals with a new skatepark opened in May 2007 and funding has been obtained for further studies for improvements to the Darent Valley Footpath which runs through the Park, including a new walking path to Brooklands Lakes utilising one of the existing river tunnels under Princes Road.

6.12 Whilst relatively well-used, the full potential of linked trips between the park and shopping could be developed further. A more attractive, safer and more visible route between the Park and High Street would aid in this.

6.13 The development of active frontages at Lowfield Street and Acacia Hall could provide new routes and destinations for people using the Park. Active frontages facing the park will also provide greater overlooking and sense of security than at present, providing the opportunity to open the northern part of the park after dusk.
Preferred Approach 12: Central Park

Continue to seek funding opportunities for improvements to the Park.

Walking routes and visual links between the Park and the town centre to be strengthened as part of any redevelopment proposals adjoining the Park.

Create more entrances into the Park from all sides.

River Darent

6.14 The river has been an underused asset. Buildings have turned their backs on it and there is limited public access to and along the river.

6.15 The purchase of the Acacia Hall Complex and Sports Grounds and the redevelopment opportunities at the Northern Gateway provide potential to improve public access to and along the river throughout the town. Redevelopment of retail warehousing at Overy Street for housing, could provide a further opportunity to improve the riverside route into the town centre.

6.16 Funding has been obtained from DCLG\(^1\) to improve accessibility along the Darent Valley Footpath in and around the town centre. Further grant aid to develop the Darent Valley Footpath is being considered by other key partners such as Sustrans and English Partnerships.

Preferred Approach 13: River Darent

Seek funding opportunities and implement proposals to improve public access to and along the river through the town and at the Northern Gateway.

Require new development adjacent to the River to make provision for public access to and along the river; enhance the biodiversity of riverside land where appropriate; and provide interpretation measures at key points.

The Orchard Theatre

6.17 The Orchard Theatre is a major cultural and leisure facility that has the potential to underpin a broader based evening economy, with good quality bars, cafes and restaurants and other complementary leisure activities, such as a cinema. However, its setting is currently poor, with a busy road to one side and a surface car park to another. Although it is close to the station, bus stops and the core of the shopping area, walking and visual links to these areas are poor. Consequently, the Theatre feels isolated from the rest of the town. The site itself has limited public space around it, giving it a hemmed in feeling.

\(^1\) Department of Communities and Local Government
6.18 The Theatre’s setting has recently had environmental improvements carried out, providing an increased and enhanced public space in front of the Theatre and an improved walking route to the High Street. However, the Theatre would benefit from a more sympathetic development on the Orchards car parking area, with the potential for a leisure and cultural quarter to complement its activities.

**Preferred Approach 14: Orchard Theatre**

Encourage complementary activities on adjoining sites so as to develop a more rounded evening economy.

Continue to seek ways to improve the setting of the Theatre and active edges around it, particularly in the consideration of proposals on adjoining sites.

Improve car and coaching parking arrangements for Theatre users.
7 An Environment to Enjoy

7.1 Key to the success of the town centre is an environment where visitors will want to linger longer and make use of the facilities on offer. Consultation responses revealed that creating a high quality, welcoming and attractive environment was of equal importance with provision of a wider range of shopping facilities in improving the town centre.

7.2 A number of aspects of the town centre environment that are in need of improvement have been identified. These include:

- Making walking around the town centre safer and more pleasant.
- Creation of a high quality public realm.
- Ensuring that new buildings are of a high quality design.
- Greening the town centre.

Walking Around the Town Centre

7.3 The town centre, with its pedestrianised High Street and two covered shopping centres, can only be used and enjoyed on foot. Whilst the very heart of the centre is easy to walk around, beyond this core, getting to where you want to be easily and safely becomes more of a challenge:

- For a visitor unfamiliar with the town, it is difficult to see how to get from the main entry points, into the core area of activity.
- Direct walking links are not always available.
- There is conflict with traffic, particularly around the ring road. This has the greatest impact in Home Gardens, affecting those arriving by bus or train, as well as at Market Street, where the ring road bisects the shopping area and cuts off the Park and library from the shops.
- Some crossing points over the ring road are not at street level – these are unpopular and result in pedestrians trying to cross the road where no crossing facilities exist.
- Some of the main walking routes cross surface car parks, making the route unattractive and bringing people into conflict with cars.
- Some of the main walking links have blank walls and a lack of activity along the route (inactive frontages), making them unattractive and feeling unsafe at night.

7.4 Consultation with town centre traders, businesses and residents identified strong support for the provision of clear, safe and attractive walking routes in the town centre, with priority for pedestrians1.

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1 Town Centre Forum Consultation 20 June 2007 and Town Centre residents consultation 21 June 2007
7.5 Map 3 shows the main walking routes through the town where improvements are needed to make them safer and more direct. Map 4 shows the inactive frontages within the Primary Shopping Area, where opportunities should be taken to address this situation.

Preferred Approach 15: Walking

To make walking into and around the town centre easy, safe and pleasant.

To achieve this by taking opportunities provided by development or grant funding to:

- Create direct walking routes where they are needed, in particular, as identified on Map 3. These include:
  1. Home Gardens bus stops to the High Street – provide street level pedestrian crossing
  2. Orchards Shopping Centre/Orchards Theatre to Hythe Street
  3. Westgate Car Park to Hythe Street and Spital Street
  4. Railway Station to Hythe Street
  5. Northern Gateway to Railway Station and the town centre
  6. From the High Street to Central Park
  7. From Darent Road to Central Park
- Create a finer grain of walking routes as part of new developments
- Provide improved crossing points across the ring road
- Investigate opportunities to redesign Hythe Street, Spital Street, Market Street, Lowfield Street and Kent Road with a greater pedestrian focus
- Investigate ways to reduce the impact of surface car parks on pedestrian movement
- Liven up inactive frontages, as shown on Map 4, preferably through development which provides activity at street level but if this is not possible, through aesthetic and street lighting improvements.

New development at the Northern Gateway should make provision for east-west and north-south pedestrian routes.

Creation of a High Quality Public Realm

7.6 The public realm, or the outdoor space available for public use, has an important role to play in both providing the setting for the town centre’s historic buildings as well as creating spaces that are welcoming and attractive in their own right. A high quality public realm will make the town a more inviting place to live, work, shop and enjoy leisure time in.
Map 4 Inactive Frontages and Surface Car Parking
7.7 Creating spaces where people can stop, meet and rest in comfortable and attractive surroundings can prolong the length of time visitors spend in the centre and create a more lively atmosphere, thereby helping to strengthen the town centre economy. Opportunities to provide new high quality public spaces in key locations should therefore be taken.

7.8 A Public Realm Design Guide is being prepared to inform urban design both inside and beyond the Conservation Area. It sets out the hierarchy of streets with their proposed types of finishes and families of street furniture, so as to give a harmonious feel to the town centre and to avoid a patchwork appearance to public and semi-public spaces.

7.9 North of the railway line, redevelopment provides the opportunity to create a new ‘sense of place’. The River Darent is a concealed feature, buildings turn their backs on the river and there are limited access and observation points. The enhancement of the river and creation of a public riverside walk with safe and attractive walking routes through the new development is a key aspiration.

Preferred Approach 16: Public Realm

A high quality public realm will be required as part of new developments.

Opportunities to create new public spaces will be sought as part of new developments, in particular at:

- Market Street
- Adjacent to the Orchard Theatre and Orchards Shopping Centre
- Station Approach
- Mill Pond
- High Street
- Hythe Street at the junction with Copperfields
- Lowfield Street

In the Northern Gateway, a ‘sense of place’ should be created through the design of a unique public realm.

Design of New Development

7.10 The Plan identifies a number of sites for redevelopment and over the lifetime of the plan other sites may come forward. This presents opportunities to repair and improve parts of the town centre which do not function well or are not attractive.

7.11 Whilst the importance of the town’s historic built heritage and the need to provide an appropriate setting for it has been stressed, a positive response to the
local context does not always need to be a replication of existing building styles. Contemporary design can enrich a place through contrast of styles and design of the highest quality may provide the gems of tomorrow.

7.12 Consultation revealed that there was strong support for new development, providing it respected its context. There was slightly less support, but still a majority, in favour of modern buildings, providing they were well designed.

7.13 Central Government is keen that the Thames Gateway acts as an exemplar for the development of sustainable homes. This Area Action Plan precedes the Core Strategy, which will set out the Council’s policies on Sustainable Development and mitigating climate change. However, given the high proportion of housing that is likely to be determined in Dartford in advance of an adopted Core Strategy, the Council is keen not to miss the opportunity to achieve low levels of carbon emissions in new homes in the town centre and to ensure water efficiency.

7.14 It will be important that new development helps improve community safety by designing out crime through measures such as providing natural surveillance of the street and active ground floor uses.

Preferred Approach 17: Design of New Development

New development should:
- Be of the highest quality of design, responding positively to the local context and contributing to the identity of the area.
- Be designed to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and facilitate sustainable construction.
- Improve community safety through designing out crime.

Contemporary design will be encouraged providing this draws on and makes reference to the historic context, through its built form, materials and craftsmanship or detailing.

The Council will encourage standards of energy and water efficiency which are above mandatory levels required by Building Regulations, this includes the use of on-site renewable energy, and provision of district-wide combined heat and power plants where this is practical. It will encourage homes to be built to Level 3 and above of the Code for Sustainable Homes, in advance of a detailed policy in the Core Strategy.
**Greening the Town Centre**

**Trees and Greenery**

7.15 There is little relief from the hard landscaping and buildings at the centre of the town. Trees and greenery would serve to soften this area and help add interest to the streetscape. Possible locations for new tree planting are at One Bell Corner, a tree lined avenue as part of any development at Lowfield Street and in other new areas of public realm. New buildings also provide opportunities for the incorporation of greenery on roofs or walls.

7.16 The town centre has CCTV coverage to improve security and new trees planted should therefore be small and not have a dense canopy. Any tree planting should not restrict views of Holy Trinity Church or restrict market access. The design, location and choice of shrubs and greenery should consider the needs of community safety, for example plants should be used that allow adequate sight lines to be provided and easily maintained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Approach 18: Trees and Greenery</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To encourage tree planting where it enhances and enlivens pedestrian routes and the public realm, and to take opportunities to provide greenery in new public spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities should be taken to enliven new development through incorporation of greenery.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Green Grid**

7.17 It is vital that urban growth is complemented by areas of green space which provide relief and contrast, and help bring shape and character to communities. The Council has for some years promoted the concept of a Green Grid. This is a network of green spaces and routes, linked together to provide a green framework. It incorporates areas large and small at the heart of the urban area as well as more expansive areas at its edges. The Green Grid provides an opportunity to improve and enhance biodiversity, particularly along the River Darent. Where appropriate, new development on allocated sites which front onto the river should include planting that enhances the biodiversity of the river and the river bank.

7.18 Central Park and Brooklands Lakes, to the south of Princes Road, and the Darenth Valley are key components of the Green Grid. The Darent Valley Footpath which runs through the town links Dartford Marshes, a key Green Grid site with Brooklands Lakes. Development opportunities at Overy Street and the
Northern Gateway, in particular, should incorporate green spaces and routes to link with this wider network.

**Preferred Approach 19: Green Grid**

New development, particularly at the Northern Gateway and Overy Street, should incorporate new areas of green space that will link in and be part of the wider Green Grid network in the borough.

**East and West Hill Ridges**

7.19 The ridges on East and West Hills provide important backdrops to the town with two to three storey buildings set within a mature treed landscape. They are an important part of the character of the town. East Hill has significant tree cover but recent works has shown how vulnerable this ‘green’ screen is. West Hill has a less dense, but nevertheless important tree cover.

**Preferred Approach 20: East and West Hill Ridges**

To protect the tree cover on East and West Hill ridges and resist development that would impact on it.
8 Getting to the Town Centre

8.1 It is recognised that an increasingly attractive and vibrant town centre with an enhanced retail offer will encourage more trips by local residents and visitors. Providing access to the town centre for additional visitors will require sustainable transport and car parking strategies to ensure the future attractiveness and sustainability of the town. It will be important to encourage through traffic to use other routes so that the road network is available for people who want to access the town centre. Proposed new housing and jobs in and around the town centre will enable a greater proportion of trips to be made on foot or bicycle, provided that safe and attractive walking and cycling routes are available.

8.2 A number of weaknesses have been identified:

- A number of traffic bottlenecks on the local network;
- Cycle infrastructure and access is poorly provided for within the town centre;
- Few bus services enter the heart of the town centre and this needs to be addressed;
- Under-utilisation of some car parks and capacity issues at others requires a parking strategy that maximises the number of spaces available, and the split between short and long stay parking to be better managed so as to enable easy and convenient parking for shoppers and workers;
- The severance effect of the railway embankment and ring road constrains movement on foot between the Northern Gateway and the town centre.

Strategic Transport Infrastructure

8.3 The large scale of development proposed across the whole Kent Thameside area, which covers Dartford and Gravesham north of the A2, will result in significantly increased movement across the area. The capacity of the strategic and local transportation network is limited and further infrastructure is required to accommodate the development. Developments within the town centre will be contributors to the generally increased levels of movement, and will add to the need for transport schemes within the town centre and further afield.

8.4 Dartford and Gravesham Councils are jointly consulting on proposed arrangements for funding of a Strategic Transport Programme. This programme is proposed to be implemented through a pooled fund of developer contributions raised through a tariff on development, as well as supporting funding from Central Government and Kent County Council. This programme will be additional to site specific transport improvements required as part of new developments, and will include expenditure specifically targeted at improving access to the town centre.
8.5 A final policy for implementation of a strategic transport programme is to be adopted through the Core Strategy. However, in advance of this, the Council has introduced an interim policy that applies to residential development north of the A2 of ten units or more. It will therefore be applied to all developments over the threshold within the town centre.

**Preferred Approach 21: Strategic Transport Infrastructure**

A tariff towards the strategic transport infrastructure fund will be applied to residential developments currently of ten units or more, in accordance with the Interim Policy adopted by the Council or a policy which supercedes it. The Council will also seek appropriate contributions from non-residential developments.

**Traffic Movement**

8.6 The potential scale of new development envisaged for the town centre will place additional pressures on existing road junctions in and around the town centre, some of which already experience congestion problems. A requirement for capacity improvements at the junctions of East Hill/ Home Gardens/ Overy Street and West Hill/ Highfield Road has been identified. The Council will assess on a site by site basis whether the funding for any junction improvement should be funded by the development or from the Strategic Transport Infrastructure fund.

**Preferred Approach 22: Local Traffic Improvements**

The need for localised junction improvements and vehicular access should be tested as a part of development proposals. Identified requirements should be funded directly by the development unless it is determined that the Strategic Transport Infrastructure fund is the appropriate means of funding.

**Air Quality**

8.7 Air pollution levels on the town centre ring road, East and West Hills, Lowfield Street and Hythe Street, exceed air quality standards. This area has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area. The Council is preparing an Action Plan to address the issue and to seek to reduce emissions to an acceptable standard.

8.8 Emerging actions to address the situation include a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, and improved traffic management to minimise build-up of stationary traffic which are promoted through this Area Action Plan.

**Preferred Approach 23: Air Quality**
To investigate options and opportunities to help improve air quality, including measures such as improved junction management using Urban Traffic Management and Control.

To require new developments to make a contribution towards measures to offset any adverse air quality impacts of the development.

Public transport

Buses

8.9 The town is served by 15 bus services, including two Fastrack services. There is no central or edge of centre bus station, instead bus stops are located around the town. The arrangement of bus stops can be confusing to visitors. There are concentrations of bus stops on Home Gardens and in Market Street. The proposal for the creation of a town square at Market Street would require the removal of many of the bus stops.

8.10 The Area Action Plan provides an opportunity to consider how the location of bus stops can best support the town centre economy. A number of options have been considered, including:

- Retaining the present dispersed pattern of bus stops.
- Creating a single bus/rail interchange at the railway station.
- Creating a single hub for buses elsewhere.
- A more concentrated pattern of bus stops than at present, but no single hub.

8.11 The Council’s preferred approach is to create a more concentrated pattern of bus stops in the Hythe Street area. This would involve some change in bus routeing, with buses accessing from Home Gardens and travelling south along Hythe Street and Spital Street onto Westgate Road. This arrangement allows for public space improvements proposed for Market Street and the creation of a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

Preferred Approach 24: Buses

Promote a change in the pattern of bus services and stops in the town centre, with the aim of creating an improved pedestrian environment, particularly at Market Street, and drawing bus passengers into the heart of the shopping area.

Seek new bus stops in Hythe Street outside the former Co-op store as part of any development of the site.

Promote opportunities to encourage bus priority within the town centre.
Dartford Station

8.12 The railway station is a key transport node for the town with regular services to London and North Kent. It is one of the most used stations in Kent.

8.13 The station is located on a large man-made mound and lies between the development sites north of the railway and the Primary Shopping Area. Access to the station is from the south side, adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area. However, links to the shops are poor and on leaving the station there is no sense of having arrived in the town centre. Given the potential for development north of the station there is a need to strengthen walking links with the station, including a northern entrance to the station.

Preferred Approach 25: Dartford Station

Improve physical and visual links between the town centre and the station.

Seek a new pedestrian entrance to the railway station from the north.

Public Car Parking

8.14 The majority of shoppers travel into Dartford town centre by car. Convenient and sufficient parking is essential to the success of the town centre, even if the use of more sustainable modes of transport is increased.

8.15 Dartford currently benefits from a wide range of public parking facilities, located around the town centre, although not all are fully utilised. The busiest car parks operate very close to capacity and queuing at these is often observed. This has a detrimental impact on the shopping experience.

8.16 There is increasing pressure on long stay parking. Dartford Station provides a walk-on service to London. It is a popular station but has limited parking provision. This has had an impact on car parking charges which are priced to discourage long stay parking to safeguard spaces for town centre users and not commuters. It has also resulted in on-street parking in surrounding residential streets. Town centre workers compete with commuters for the long-term spaces. Increased retail and business development in the town centre is likely to exacerbate the situation.

8.17 The car parks are in different ownerships and there is no consistent parking regime for the town. Prospect Place is the only car park where visitors can park for two hours for free.

8.18 A town centre objective is to encourage people to stay longer in the town. Car parking charges will have an influence on how long people stay. The Council will work with shopping centre and car park operators to provide a more
consistent parking regime where the pricing is conducive to managing parking demand whilst supporting the town centre's vitality and viability.

8.19 The car parks have an adverse visual impact on the town. Most of the main car parks are adjacent to the ring road. The car parks at Prospect Place, Waitrose and Sainsburys provide surface parking. The surface car parks tend to sever the retail units they serve from the rest of the town, and disrupt walking routes. Surface parking does not represent the most productive use of land.

8.20 Multi-storey car parks also raise some issues. The Westgate Road car park creates a significant length of dead frontage on Kent Road and Orchard Street and the rear pedestrian access is poor. Ramps, for example at the Orchards Shopping Centre, are visually intrusive and disrupt walking routes.

8.21 Provision of long-stay car parking and coach parking at Victoria Road is referred to in Preferred Approach 31:- Northern Gateway West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Approach 26: Public Car Parking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Implement car park pricing and management plans in new development, which support the vitality and viability of the town centre, whilst mitigating the environmental impact of car usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek an appropriate balance between long and short stay parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support the redevelopment of surface car parks for town centre uses where they provide for active frontages, improve car park safety and make provision for lost car parking spaces within any development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investigate opportunities to improve the safety and security at Westgate Road car park, including the provision of active frontages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In large new developments, car parking should be located adjacent to the ring road, where it does not interfere with pedestrian movement. Surface car parking will be discouraged, and active frontages at ground floor level will be sought.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cycling

8.22 There are a few lengths of dedicated cycle way in the town centre. The National Cycle network Route NCR1 passes through the northern and eastern edge of the town. Cycling to the town is difficult. Problems faced by cyclists include roads that are heavily trafficked or crowded with parked cars, a pedestrianised High Street and relatively steep hills to the east and to a lesser extent to the west. Improved cycle routes and additional cycle storage/parking will be needed if cycling is to be more widely used for trips into the town centre.
Preferred Approach 27: Cycling

To investigate the potential to improve cycle routes into the town and locations for cycle parks/storage.

Development should make provision for new cycle facilities and where appropriate new cycle routes within the development. Where possible such provision should be linked to the existing cycle network.
PART 3 OPPORTUNITY SITES

9.1 The town centre and the Northern Gateway between them contain an unusually large amount of development opportunities, where sites have been assembled for redevelopment, have recently become vacant or where landowners have identified opportunities for change or refurbishment. This collection of sites provides an unparalleled opportunity to turn around the flagging economy of the town centre and to deliver a centre that serves the needs and aspirations of current residents as well as those who will be coming to live in the area. These sites provide the opportunity to put the strategy into effect, by providing land uses that will support and strengthen the town centre’s economy whilst delivering a vastly improved environment.

9.2 The sites have been grouped into ‘Districts’. Within these Districts there is a strong synergy between each of the sites. Proposals for each of the sites need to be co-ordinated with and take account of proposals on the adjoining site, so that benefits can be maximised. The Districts and the sites of which they are comprised are shown on Map 6.

9 Station District

9.3 There are five sites on and around the station which together provide a significant development opportunity. The sites are well served by public transport, bus and rail. There is an opportunity to develop a sustainable community that has good pedestrian links to the town centre.

Preferred Approach 28: Station District

To develop a mixed use, sustainable community that takes full advantage of the good public transport links available. These uses to be complementary to town centre uses and strengthen the economic viability of the centre.

Enhance the waterside areas around the Mill Pond and River Darent and open them up to the general public, providing an additional attraction to complement the town centre.

To support the creation of new and improved pedestrian and cycle links with the town centre, including an entrance to the railway station on the northern side. The cost of these links to be jointly funded by developments at Station Approach and in the Northern Gateway.

Proposals for each site need to be coordinated with and take account of the proposals on the adjoining site(s).
Map 5  Inter-relationship of Opportunity Sites and the Town Centre
Station Approach

9.4 The station approach site is an important transport hub and gateway to the town but it currently lacks a sense of having arrived in a town centre. A large part of the site is dedicated to surface car parking. The station building itself is cramped and visually unattractive. The site also includes the Council’s civic offices. The site is a man-made mound, raised above the Primary Shopping Area and separated from it by the ring road. This poses challenges for its integration with the rest of the town centre.

Preferred Approach 29: Station Approach

Create a strong gateway by improving visual and physical links with the town centre and link the site with the proposed new communities in the Northern Gateway.

 Allocate the site for mixed-use development. Potential uses include office, hotel, residential and limited retail floorspace to serve commuters and the resident population.

Proposals for redevelopment of the site should include:

1. A contribution towards a station entrance on the northern side.
2. Improved links to the Orchard Theatre and Orchards Shopping Centre.
3. Incorporation of a new landscaped plaza in front of the station building to create an improved sense of arrival.
4. Improved walking routes to Hythe Street and the River Darent/Overy Street.

The site lies within flood zone 2. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.

Northern Gateway East and West and Mill Pond Sites

9.5 The Mill Pond and Northern Gateway East sites are surplus to Glaxo Smith Kline’s operation requirements and are vacant. SEEDA has assembled land at the Northern Gateway West. Together these sites represent a significant development opportunity to support the regeneration of the town centre.

9.6 It will be important that the inter-relationships between the sites are taken into consideration, particularly pedestrian movement and Green Grid links.

Preferred Approach 30: Northern Gateway

The Council has the following objectives for the Northern Gateway:

1. A Comprehensive approach to all three sites – a joint Masterplan to be prepared for the sites to ensure that the proposals are compatible
2. A northern extension of the town centre - the sites should be used in such a way that they genuinely contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and should thus complement and not compete with the town centre. Town centre uses such as large-scale retail and leisure will not be acceptable.
3. Creating linkages – a range of new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes both north-south and east-west, should be provided across the sites linking with the town centre and station, and with existing residential communities.
4. The creation of a sustainable community – providing a mix of housing with family homes wherever possible, with jobs and an appropriate level of local services and facilities within easy access of all Northern Gateway residents and employees.
5. The Creation of a ‘Community Hub’ – providing a focus for facilities and services to serve the new and existing communities.
6. A mixed use development. This would include residential development where it comprises flats and family accommodation, with an emphasis on family accommodation.
7. Provision of jobs – a range of commercial accommodation (subject to market demand) through new high quality development and the retention of appropriate existing accommodation/users. New commercial
accommodation could include small freehold industrial units and offices, and in particular, B1 hi-tech units for light industry and research & development to take advantage of the economic links with other local employers.

8. **Provision of low-key leisure uses** – focused around the Mill Pond and Dartford Creek providing an additional complementary attractor to the town centre and its environs.

9. **Creating an active and vibrant area** - this should be achieved in the area closest to the station and around the Mill Pond and along Dartford Creek so as to engender a sense of community safety and a place where local residents and workers would want to spend time.

**Design/Layout Objectives**

10. A range of community facilities to be provided in the Northern Gateway, in particular through the creation of a “Community Hub”. In addition, ancillary retail and community facilities such as a hall or rooms, and possible location for the Bird College of Dance. There may be the potential for these facilities/services to share the same building.

11. Improving the environment in and around Dartford Creek, creating better public access with linkages north and south along the river corridor and opening up the Creek for navigation.

12. Improving the Northern Gateway for non-vehicular users (inc. pedestrians and cyclists). This may include measures such as traffic calming measures and traffic management along Mill Pond Road to facilitate linkages between the Northern Gateway and the town centre.

13. Creation of new Green Grid corridors through the Northern Gateway sites.

14. Creation of new public realm as part of new development at the Mill Pond, this could be in the form of a public plaza.

15. High quality design. Frontages facing the station and railway line need careful treatment as they will be visible by a large number of passengers using the North Kent line and will influence their impression of the town.

16. Public transport orientated development linked to rail, Fastrack and other local bus services.

17. To achieve an appropriate level of car parking that strikes a balance between encouraging use of public transport and meeting practical requirements.

18. Development to take account of archaeological remains, flood risk and contaminated land.

19. Make provision for sustainable infrastructure for roads, water supply and waste water and drainage in a manner that meets the needs of the new community.
Northern Gateway West

9.7 The site is in primarily employment use, including ‘bad neighbour’ uses and is partly constrained by the Health and Safety Executive COMAH zone\(^1\) for the Glaxo Smith Kline North Site and for the Gas Holder site. The Gas Holder is unlikely to be identified as surplus to requirements in the short to medium term. SEEDA has assembled land at Steam Crane Wharf and the former Unwins depot to bring forward development.

Preferred Approach 31: Northern Gateway West

To allocate land for mixed use development to include employment and housing (subject to a Control of Major Accidents and Hazards Zone). There is also potential for some retail warehousing, only where this provides for the relocation of Wickes, enabling housing development on the Overy Street site and the possibility of relocation of night-time leisure uses from the town centre.

To allocate the land south of Victoria Road and north of the railway line primarily for long stay car parking to serve the station and the town centre and to provide coach parking for the Orchard Theatre, with ancillary office space at the eastern end. Development will be expected to provide significant environmental improvement and long-term management and maintenance of the listed Priory Walls.

The site lies within flood risk zone 3. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.

Mill Pond

9.8 The Mill Pond is a valuable asset, providing a pleasant feature and setting for the site as well as providing an important floodwater storage role, which the Environment Agency has advised should be retained in any future redevelopment.

Preferred Approach 32: Mill Pond

Allocate the site for mixed use, public transport orientated development but excluding major retail or leisure development. Potential uses include: residential, office, restaurants and cafes, hotel, health and fitness facilities, and ancillary retail.

The Mill Pond and River Darent should be enhanced and provide for public access alongside them, with the creation of a plaza as a central focus of activity.

\(^1\) COMAH Control of Major Accidents Hazards Regulations 1999. Statutory Instrument 1999 No. 743
Development around the Mill Pond should take advantage of its south facing aspect and waterfront.

Development of the site should make a contribution towards an entrance to the railway station on the northern side.

The site lies within flood zones 1, 2 and 3. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.

**Northern Gateway East**

9.9 Land at the Northern Gateway East is likely to require remediation because of existing and past uses in the area. The north western part of the site is subject to the Health and Safety Executive’s COMAH zone guidance, which will limit the types of activities that can take place within the zone.

**Preferred Approach 33: Northern Gateway East**

Allocate the site for mixed use development. Potential uses to include residential (subject to Control of Major Accidents Hazards Zone), employment (Use Classes A2 office and B1), community facilities and ancillary retail. Community facilities could include a primary school, social service facilities and Primary Care Trust services.

The development to provide for:

- A mix of residential development of houses with gardens and flats.
- Improved access arrangements at the Mill Pond Road/Central Road and Mill Pond Road/Overy Street junctions in addition to new access points at Temple Hill and Central Road.
- In the longer term the possible use of Central Road to provide vehicular access between the site and Bob Dunn Way, subject to the assessment of transport impacts.
- Contribution to a high quality pedestrian link with the station.
- Provision for an improved footpath along the River Darent, including improved landscaping.

The western part of the site lies within flood zone 2. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.

**Overy Street**

9.10 The site is mainly used for retail warehousing and associated car parking. The Council is supportive of the relocation of the retail warehouse unit to the Northern Gateway West where this facilitates the redevelopment of the existing site for housing.
Preferred Approach 34: Overy Street

To make better use of this site, opening up the river to public access and providing an attractive route into the town centre.

Allocate the site for family houses with apartments alongside the river. Development of the site to include:

- Provision for an improved footpath along the River Darent and a landscaped zone between the river and the residential units.
- An improved pedestrian route across the River Darent to the station and town centre.
- A contribution for the provision of a new river foot crossing south of the site.

The site lies within flood zones 1, 2 and 3. Any assessment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.
10 Orchards District

10.1 The Orchard Theatre is a major cultural and leisure facility that has the potential to underpin a broader based evening economy, with good quality bars, cafes and restaurants, and other complementary leisure activities, such as a cinema.

Map 8 Orchards District

The Orchards Shopping Centre

10.2 The Orchards shopping centre was built in the late 1980s with an internal layout and unit sizes that does not enable existing retailers to expand. Some of the unit sizes are also no longer suited to today’s retailers’ needs. The provision of additional retail floorspace at the shopping centre would provide the opportunity to create larger units to make the centre more attractive to retailers and thus help enhance the retail offer. There is a surface car park to the north of the shopping centre and which serves the centre and which disrupts the walking route from the bridge over Home Gardens to the High Street.

Preferred Approach 35: Orchards Shopping Centre

Encourage refurbishment of the centre and extension over the surface car park at Home Gardens to provide enhanced shopping facilities and a leisure quarter. There is also potential for ancillary office uses or a range of community uses.

Development of the site to include:
• A major leisure use such as a cinema.
• Large shop units.
• Cafes, bars and restaurants to complement the Theatre.
• A new public space that extends and enhances the environmental improvements already carried out next to the Orchard Theatre.
• Safer and more attractive walking routes between Home Gardens and the High Street.
• Active ground floor frontages facing onto the new public space, along Suffolk Road towards Bulls Head Yard and Home Gardens.
• Incorporate car parking to meet the needs of the development in a way that does not have a negative impact on the street scene.
• Provide a new, street level pedestrian crossing at Home Gardens in the vicinity of the Fastrack stops.
• Consideration of a new entrance to the shopping centre linking with the Darent Valley Footpath in the vicinity of the Crown Courts on Home Gardens.

The site lies within flood zone 3. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.

Former Co-op Store

10.3 The site has been declared surplus by the Co-operative Society and is currently vacant. The site occupies a prominent position on Hythe Street, on the route between Prospect Place and the High Street. The Spital Street frontage was built in Art Deco style, is a key unlisted building and lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Any development should provide for the retention of the Art Deco features and the re-instatement of lost features, such as the provision of replica bronze shopfront, where it has been removed, to match that which remains, and the removal of the canopy.

Preferred Approach 36: Former Co-op Store

Redevelopment or re-use of the site to create a retail anchor linking the High Street with Prospect Place. Potential uses on upper levels can include residential and ancillary office uses.

The development to provide:

• Active frontages on Hythe Street, Spital Street, and, as far as possible, along Orchard Street.
• A predominance of shop unit sizes that are suitable for multiple retailers.
• Provision for bus bays in Hythe Street.
• A pedestrian link between the Westgate Car Park and Hythe Street, incorporating active frontages.
• A new public space provided on Hythe Street where it meets Copperfields.
• Built design which respects and takes reference from its context
• Retention of the Spital Street frontage and re-instatement of the Art Deco features.

The site lies within flood zones 2 and 3. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.
11 River District

11.1 The sector includes the main opportunity for expanding the town’s retail offer, at Lowfield Street. It also includes important outdoor and recreational activities at Central Park and Acacia Hall. These have the potential to be expanded and enhanced and contribute to the town centre’s offer. Development at Lowfield Street and Market Street will play a part in ensuring a better integration of these facilities into the life of the town.

Map 9 River District

Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool and Leisure Complex

11.2 Much of the land on the eastern side of Lowfield Street has been assembled by a private developer for redevelopment.

11.3 The Fairfield Pool and Leisure Centre was built in the 1970s and is nearing the end of its useful life. The Council has an aspiration to provide for a relocation of Fairfield Pools to an alternative town centre site, possibly the Acacia Hall Complex. The facility could be cross-subsidised from the development of this site.
Preferred Approach 37: Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool Leisure Complex

Redevelopment of the site for mixed use to include retail and housing and with strong integration with the town centre. A number of additional uses may also be appropriate.

Retail development on the site should serve to strengthen the town centre’s shopping function and be well integrated with the Primary Shopping Area.

The development must also:

- Respect the Conservation Area and its setting.
- Provide new walking routes between Lowfield Street and Central Park, including a new public space.
- Provide for any junction improvements and traffic management measures required to serve the development and secure integration.
- Provide for a reconfiguration of Market Street, including a new public space.
- Make a contribution towards improvements in Central Park.
- Provide for a relocation of Fairfield Pools to an alternative town centre site, possibly to the Acacia Hall complex.

The northern part of the site (from Market Street to Vauxhall Place) should provide a retail development of sufficient significance to act as an anchor store for the town with active street frontages and strong integration with the town centre. Both comparison and food shopping are suitable in this location but the scheme must include comparison shopping at the northernmost part of the site, so as to strengthen this element of the towns offer. Residential, office uses, a hotel, community facilities and live/work units (B1) are suitable uses on the upper floors and to the rear of the site.

In the Conservation Area (14-36 Lowfield Street) any development should:

- Retain frontages facing onto Lowfield Street and Market Street.
- Respect the building form and its Conservation Area setting.

Development fronting Central Park at this northern end should seek an integration between the buildings and the Park, with activity in the buildings enlivening this frontage. Small-scale leisure, cultural, community or educational facilities or artisan live-work units (B1) may be appropriate.

Development should avoid uses that will directly compete with those proposed as part of funding bids to enhance Central Park.

South of Vauxhall Place, the development should provide for the relocation of Fairfield Pool, with housing being the preferred use. Development at the
southern end of the site should take account of the low rise housing at Cranford
Street.

Much of the site lies within flood zone 3. Any redevelopment will need to be
guided by a flood risk assessment.

**Market Street**

11.4 Market Street is part of the town centre ring road. It is also the location for
three parallel sets of bus bays, with bus stops, which act as a mini bus station,
along with two short stay car parks. The physical environment suffers as a
consequence.

**Preferred Approach 38: Market Street**

Create a people-friendly environment with a new town square and a permanent
location for a range of street markets, providing an area of activity bonding
Lowfield Street with High Street and creating stronger links with Central Park.

Eating and drinking establishments (use classes A3, A4 and A5) around the new
square will contribute to activity in this location.

Redesign Market Street to provide a stronger pedestrian focus.

11.5 Work has been undertaken by consultants on traffic movement in connection
with redevelopment proposals for Lowfield Street. These have a bearing on
Market Street and would allow implementation of the approach above. The
study identified three options:

Option A This involves the closure of Market Street: providing a new
dedicated route for Fastrack through the south-western corner of
Central Park that brings the service into the heart of the town
centre; and utilising the existing Fastrack route for vehicular
traffic.

Option B This involves the closure of Market Street: providing a new
junction on East Hill north of the Darenth Road junction to provide
a link into Fastrack so that it can be used for vehicular traffic, and
to provide a new route for Fastrack parallel to the current route,
running along a strip on the eastern edge of Central Park.

Option C This involves the management of traffic in Market Street. The
existing dedicated Fastrack route to be maintained and the
proposal will have no impact on Central Park. This arrangement
allows for priority to be given to pedestrians and the strengthening
of walking routes from High Street to Central Park and Lowfield
Street. Removal of bus stands allows for increased public space and the possibility of a permanent and attractive location for the market, subject to further study.

11.6 **Option C** is the Council’s preferred approach, since it leaves Central Park intact but still allows the Market St proposals to be implemented.

**Preferred Approach 39: Market Street Road Proposals (1)**

Option C, involving the management of traffic and down grading of Market Street, should be implemented as part of major redevelopment at Lowfield Street.

11.7 In connection with Option C, there are two related options for traffic movement through Market Street. The first is to retain the current alignment of Market Street, including its sharp corner by Holy Trinity Church. The alternative is to construct a new road link behind 55-69 High Street and 2-20 Market Street, providing an enhanced public space in front of the Church and improving its setting.

**Preferred Approach 40: Market Street Road Proposals (2)**

Give pedestrians greater priority on Market Street by removing the bus stands, increasing pedestrian space and providing improved crossing points, as in Option C above.

To assess a revised road alignment of Market Street to the rear of 55-69 High Street and 2-20 Market Street, taking account of historic and conservation matters, and help improve the setting of Holy Trinity Church and Acacia Hall.

**Acacia Hall Complex**

11.8 The Acacia Hall complex provides a range of social, leisure and recreation facilities. These include a ballroom, bar, sports centre and playing pitches. The Borough Council has acquired the Acacia Hall complex as part of its intention to enlarge Central Park for residents and visitors and is renovating some of the building. The site and buildings provide an opportunity to create a strengthened sport and leisure offer right within the town centre, bringing it into the life of the town.

11.9 The northern part of the complex lies within the Conservation Area. The Bridge House and Acacia Hall are listed buildings and immediately north of the site is Holy Trinity Church, also a listed building.
Preferred Approach 41: Acacia Hall Complex

Integrate the complex with the town centre and improve links with Central Park.

Pursue funding and proposals for a new and enhanced recreation, sporting, cultural and leisure quarter, including a replacement for Fairfield Pool, generally providing these within the existing building footprint.

Any new development to respect the Conservation Area and the setting of Acacia Hall, its grounds and Bridge House, while retaining important views of these buildings and vistas to Holy Trinity Church.

The western part of the site lies within the flood zone 3. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.

Old Council Offices/Iceland Block and 47-53 High Street

11.10 The Iceland building is a prominent building which does not complement the Conservation Area in which it lies. It is adjacent to a listed building (no 45). Number 43 is identified as a key unlisted building. There is an opportunity to replace the Iceland building and adjoining office building with a development that improves built design.

Preferred Approach 42: Old Council Offices/Iceland Block and 47-53 High Street

To support the redevelopment of 47-53 High Street so as to improve on the quality of built design in this important part of the Conservation Area and to enable an improved pedestrian area and new town square in Market Street.

A mixed use development will be sought with retail uses fronting the High Street and restaurant and café uses fronting Market Street. On the upper levels residential, office uses, a small individual hotel or community uses would be appropriate.

New development should protect the setting of Holy Trinity Church and 45 High Street and protect vistas of Holy Trinity Church.

The site lies within flood zones 2 and 3. Any redevelopment will need to be guided by a flood risk assessment.
APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Part 1  Summary of Evaluation of Strategic Options

This section provides a summary of the evaluation of key strategic options carried out by the Council in preparing the Area Action Plan. A more detailed paper showing the evaluation of the strategic options can be found on the Council’s website www.dartford.gov.uk.

The key strategic options considered in the preparation of the Plan are identified below, together with a summary of the assessment and the conclusions leading to the Council’s preferred options. These preferred strategic options have been developed into the more detailed Preferred Approaches which are contained in the Area Action Plan.

In carrying out the assessment the following evidence and background material was taken into account:

- findings from the evidence base:
  - Donaldsons: Dartford Retail and Leisure Study 2006,
  - Position Statement 8Cii for the South East Plan Examination in Public 2006,
  - Kent Thameside Hotel Futures 2007.
- results of Enfusion’s Sustainability Appraisal.
- responses received during consultation:
  - Donaldsons: Public Consultation: Dartford Town Centre and Northern Gateway Area Action Plans Production Stage Issues and Options, September 2005,
  - Dartford Youth Council, May 2007,
  - Town Centre Focus Day, June 2007,
- policies in strategic plans:
  - Kent Thameside Community Strategy Update 2007-2008,
  - Kent and Medway Structure Plan: Mapping out the Future 2006,

Note that due to similarities, issues 2 and 5 have been considered together, as have issues 6 and 7.

Issue 1: Improving the Retail Offer within the Town Centre

| Option 1a | Regenerate the town centre by increasing the net additional retail floorspace. |
| Option 1b | Regenerate town centre by retaining the level of existing retail floorspace. |
| Option 1c | Regenerate town centre by allowing change of use of some retail units and consolidating within a smaller area. |

The Evidence Base forecasts a need for:

- additional convenience and comparison goods floorspace by 2016,
- wider range of higher quality retailers and increased market share of expenditure.

The Sustainability Appraisal identifies Option 1a as the preferred option for sustainability.

Consultation Responses identified the need for an improved retail offer which will attract a wider customer base by:

- providing higher quality retailers and a wider range of shops,
- ensuring a mix between local independents / multiples and the retention of small retailers,
- lower rents, less vacancies and moving the Thursday market to the High Street,
- redevelopment of the Priory Centre, Iceland and Lowfield Street,
- branding Dartford as a market town.

Appendix 1.1
**Strategic Documents** promote:
- Dartford as a Principle Town Centre and a Secondary Regional Centre,
- enhanced quality, range and choice of shopping,
- the sequential approach when locating retail development,
- increased footfall and rents, reduced retail yields and vacancy rates.

**Overall Assessment** Given that this assessment points towards the need for a major improvement in retailing, Options 1b and 1c are not supported. In particular, these options will not:
- generate sufficient retail floorspace to meet the forecast demand,
- create a wider retail range by relying on existing vacancies or consolidating shops into a smaller area,
- encourage and accommodate large multiple retailers.

**The Preferred Strategic Option is 1a** as it is likely to enable an increase in the range and quality of shops. Option 1a is developed through Preferred Approaches: 1 New Shopping Floorspace, 2 Size of Units, 3 Primary Shopping Frontage, 4 Food Stores, 5 Retail Warehousing and 11 The Markets.

**Issue 2: Uses to Support the Shopping Function**

**Issue 5: Balance of Uses in the Northern Gateway**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 2a and 5a</th>
<th>Provide a balance of additional uses including residential units, leisure, culture and recreation and work floorspace.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 2b and 5b</td>
<td>Provide predominantly leisure floorspace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2c and 5c</td>
<td>Provide predominantly residential units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2d and 5d</td>
<td>Provide predominantly work floorspace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **Evidence Base** identifies that:
- an increased residential population will generate demand for leisure in the future,
- there is a limited supply of modern offices in the town centre and limited demand as evidenced by few planning applications. Crossways has developed a significant office sector and permission for significant office development at Ebbsfleet will continue to restrict the viability of town centre office development,
- there is a need for residential uses to meet the draft South East Plan requirement,
- there is a need for new hotels in town centre sites and that the Northern Gateway is well suited to a budget or upper tier budget hotel.

The **Sustainability Appraisal** identifies Options 2a / 5a as the preferred option for sustainability.

**Consultation Responses** identified the need for:
- a broader evening economy (see issue 3 below),
- a mix of leisure, hotel, housing, community, sports and open space,
- redevelopment to provide more attractive facilities,
- better links between Northern Gateway and the rest of the town centre.

**Strategic Documents** promote:
- Dartford as a major town centre with mixed use development creating expanded or diversified service, business or leisure activities in combination with major retail development,
- opportunities for local employment,
- meeting housing targets and ensuring homes are affordable.

**Overall Assessment:** Given that this assessment points towards the need for a variety of uses in the town centre and the Northern Gateway, Options 2b, 2c, 2d, 5b, 5c and 5d are not supported. In particular:
- there is no demand for large, single use office or leisure schemes,
- single use schemes will not contribute towards town centre vitality.

Appendix 1.2
The Preferred Strategic Options are 2a and 5a as they support a variety of uses. Options 2a and 5a are developed through Preferred Approaches: 3 Primary Shopping Frontage, 6 Land Uses to Complement Shopping, 7 Housing, 8 Leisure, 9 Hotels and 14 Orchard Theatre.

### Issue 3: Creating a More Attractive Evening Economy

| Option 3a | Pursue a more balanced economy by encouraging a greater variety of evening time activities, including more family friendly activities/venues and more residential development in the town centre. |
| Option 3b | Maintain the existing mix of night time activities and continue to allow the development of pubs, bars and clubs. |

The Evidence Base identifies that there is no real current demand for additional commercial leisure facilities until the residential population increases.

The Sustainability Appraisal identifies Option 3a as the preferred option for sustainability.

Consultation Responses identified the need for:
- improved security, lighting, policing, CCTV, active frontages and more people on the streets,
- a choice of family entertainment activities - cinema, snooker clubs, bowling alley and ice rink,
- better quality restaurants and a café culture,
- an improved public realm especially at the Orchard Theatre and a new Town Square,
- a safe and managed evening and night time economy which controls noise, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Strategic Documents promote:
- expanded or diversified economy including a mix of leisure activities and commercial uses,
- uses that attract large numbers of people including cultural, tourism, social and community venues and leisure uses.

Overall Assessment: Given that this assessment points towards the need for a vibrant evening economy which attracts different users into the town centre, Option 3b is not supported. In particular:
- more pubs and clubs encourage youths into the town centre at night, which reduces the desire for other members of the community to visit the town centre after dark.
- a variety of evening activities and a more balanced evening economy will not develop.

The Preferred Strategic Option is 3a as it will provide a mixed, vibrant evening economy with a variety of leisure activities that will attract a wider audience. Option 3a is developed through Preferred Approaches: 6 Land Uses to Complement Shopping, 8 Leisure, 9 Hotels and 14 Orchard Theatre.

### Issue 4: Access to the Town Centre

| Option 4a | Dispersed distribution of car parking and bus services |
| Option 4b | Improving accessibility and traffic movement around the town centre, with bus services located in easily accessible locations and car parking easily accessible from the ring road |

The Evidence Base identifies:
- a number of weaknesses impacting on transport and accessibility issues, including:
  - traffic bottlenecks,
  - poor cycle infrastructure and access,
  - few bus services entering the heart of the town centre,
  - under-utilisation of some car parking and capacity issues at others,
  - severance effect of the railway embankment and ring road.
Consultation is currently taking place on a Strategic Transport Tariff, and the Council has implemented an interim policy.

The **Sustainability Appraisal** identifies Option 4b as the preferred option for sustainability.

**Consultation Responses** identified the need for:
- safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes,
- low cost public transport, bus stops that maximise footfall, good public transport interchanges and integration of the railway into the town,
- sustainable developments that do not cause highway capacity issues,
- an improved road system and reduced traffic and congestion,
- a more accessible town for the disabled, elderly and carers of children,
- improved car parking including residents parking, secure multi-storey car parks, long stay car parking and a pedestrian only High Street at night.

**Strategic Documents** promote:
- increased use of public transport and better interchange facilities, with better integration between bus and rail services,
- encouragement of non car modes to access services and facilities,
- improved pedestrian and cycle access,
- development sites (especially those generating large numbers of trips) that are well served by public transport, walking and cycling and are located and designed to reduce average journey lengths.

**Overall Assessment:** Given that this assessment points towards the need for an integrated approach to transport issues in the town centre, with improved accessibility, more public transport, efficient car parking and better traffic flows, Option 4a is not supported. In particular it will encourage a dispersed pattern of car parking and bus services.

**The Preferred Strategic Option is 4b** as it provides an integrated approach for land use and transport. Option 4b is developed through Preferred Approaches: 12 Central Park, 13 River Darent, 14 Orchard Theatre, 15 Walking, 21 Local Traffic Improvements, 22 Strategic Transport Infrastructure, 23 Air Quality, 24 Buses, 25 Dartford Station, 26 Public Car Parking and 27 Cycling.

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**Issue 6: Juxtaposition of Uses in the Town Centre**

**Issue 7: Juxtaposition of Uses in the Northern Gateway**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 6a and 7a</th>
<th>Development separated into different uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 6b and 7b</td>
<td>All uses intermingled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 6c and 7c</td>
<td>Intermingling of uses but segregation where uses conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no specific local based evidence regarding conflicting land uses. However, **PPG24 Planning and Noise** recognises that:
- noise-sensitive developments should be separated from major sources of noise,
- new noisy activities, should be sited away from noise sensitive land uses,
- evening and night activities such as discos, night clubs, public houses, fast food restaurants generate noise from within the premises, from customers in the vicinity and from traffic and car parking.

The **Sustainability Appraisal** identifies Options 6c / 7c as the preferred options for sustainability.

**Consultation Responses** identified the need for:
- themed quarters and zones for different uses,
- control of evening / night noise and anti-social behaviour.

**Strategic Documents** promote alternative locations for the relocation of non-conforming uses which cause serious environmental disruption for residential use.

Appendix 1.4
**Overall Assessment:** Given that this assessment points towards the need for intermingling, but with some segregation of conflicting uses, Options 6a, 6b, 7a and 7b are **not** supported. In particular these options will not safeguard residents’ quality of life from noise nuisance.

**The Preferred Strategic Options are 6c and 7c** as they protect residents from potentially disturbing land uses. Options 6c and 7c are developed through Preferred Approaches: 6 Land Uses to Complement Shopping and 7 Housing.

**Part 1 Summary** The assessment above shows that the following strategic options are preferred.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1a</strong></td>
<td>Regenerate the town centre by increasing the net additional retail floorspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2a</strong></td>
<td>Provide a balance of additional uses including residential units, leisure, culture and recreation and work floorspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3a</strong></td>
<td>Pursue a more balanced economy by encouraging a greater variety of evening time activities, including more family friendly activities/venues and more residential development in the town centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4b</strong></td>
<td>Improving accessibility and traffic movement around the town centre, with bus services located in easily accessible locations and car parking easily accessible from the ring road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5a</strong></td>
<td>Provide a balance of additional uses including residential units, leisure, culture and recreation and work floorspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6c</strong></td>
<td>Intermingling of uses in the town centre but segregation where uses conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7c</strong></td>
<td>Intermingling of uses in the Northern Gateway but segregation where uses conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2 \hspace{1cm} Site Compatibility Matrix with Preferred Strategic Options

This section assesses options for different uses for town centre opportunity sites and compares them against the Preferred Strategic Options (as detailed above) in a compatibility matrix. The land use that performs the best in this assessment is identified by bold text and has influenced the preparation of the relevant Preferred Approaches in Part 3 of the Area Action Plan.

Note that some of the opportunity sites have been grouped together as their site characteristics are similar in nature and they are located in close proximity to each other. The Northern Gateway West, Millpond and Northern Gateway East sites have been considered as a whole, as have the Market Street and Old Council Offices/Iceland Block.

### Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Alternative Uses Considered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Option 1 \hspace{1cm} Mixed Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Station Approach</td>
<td>1a, 2a, 3a, 6a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Northern Gateway West, 32 Mill Pond, 33 Northern Gateway East</td>
<td>1a, 3a, 4b, 5a, 7c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Overy Street</td>
<td>4b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Orchards Shopping Centre</td>
<td>1a, 2a, 3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Former Co-op Store</td>
<td>1a, 2a, 3a, 4b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool</td>
<td>1a, 2a, 3a, 4b, 6c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Market Street, 42 Old Council Offices/Iceland Block</td>
<td>1a, 2a, 3a, 4b, 6c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 Acacia Hall Complex</td>
<td>4b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2 Summary

The assessment shows that the preferred use for the majority of the opportunity sites is mixed use development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity site</th>
<th>Preferred type of development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Station Approach</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gateway West</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millpond</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gateway East</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overy Street</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchards Shopping Centre</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Co-op Store</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool Leisure Complex</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Street</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Council Offices/Iceland Block</td>
<td>Mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia Hall Complex</td>
<td>Leisure/Sports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 1.6
APPENDIX 2: MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The monitoring framework seeks to ensure that the implementation of the plan’s objectives and policies are monitored and assessed in order that appropriate action is taken when and if required, to ensure continued delivery of the Plan. The Area Action Plan (AAP) will be monitored and reviewed annually using a range of indicators to assess progress against the plan’s objectives and targets. The monitoring findings will be published in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which will also identify causes where progress has been slow or where the implementation of policies have not resulted in anticipated outcomes. The AMR will also propose actions to deal with the issues identified.

Schedule of Plan objectives, Preferred Policy Approaches, target areas and example indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Action Plan Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strengthening the shopping offer | • Refurbishment or redevelopment of former Co-op store and the Orchards Shopping Centre and car park and mixed use redevelopment, including significant retail floorspace, at Lowfield Street.  
• Provision of large and medium retail units  
• A1 uses to be no less than 70% in the area defined as Primary Shopping Frontage | • Provision of additional retail floorspace including unit size and use class order  
• Minimum 70% in A1 use in the primary shopping frontage  
• Improved town centre health indicators | • Amount of planning permissions granted and completed retail development in the town centre  
• Permitted and completed retail unit size  
• Percentage of primary shopping frontage in retail use  
• Town centre health indicators; including retail yield, vacancies, rents and footfall |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Action Plan Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Encourage uses that will complement the shopping function** | • Promote a range of non-retail uses  
• Support uses that provide for spread of activity throughout the day and evening  
• Residential development at Lowfield Street, Station Approach, former Co-op store, Mill Pond, Overy Street, Northern Gateway West and East  
• Creation of a leisure quarter around the Orchard Theatre and low-key leisure uses at Northern Gateway  
• Provision and improvements to facilities for leisure, cultural and recreation provision including Acacia Hall.  
• Preferred locations for eating and drinking establishments including Market Street, Orchard Theatre, Mill Pond and River Darent at Northern Gateway  
• Development of a hotel(s).Preferred locations Station Approach and Northern Gateway | • Provision of additional floorspace in TC area for non retail uses  
• Improved footfall  
• Leisure/entertainment uses around the Orchard Theatre, Northern Gateway and Acacia Hall complex  
• Provision of A3 and A4 uses in preferred locations  
• Delivery of new and improved recreation, sport, cultural and leisure provision  
• Phasing of housing completions  
• Employment in the town centre and on opportunity sites | • Amount of planning permissions granted and completed retail, office and leisure development in the town centre  
• Amount of completed UCO development A2-A5, B1, C1, D2, housing and Sui – Generis in the town  
• Amount of permissions granted and completed housing on allocated town centre sites, housing types and density  
• Total number of people employed and by employment sector  
• Amount of permissions granted and completed non-residential development and employment floorspace provided at opportunity sites |

Appendix 2.2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Action Plan</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Make more of Dartford’s assets | • Give assets a higher profile  
  • Improve linkage between assets and town centre shops  
  • Safeguard and improve the town’s historic built environment  
  • Expand and improve the market offer  
  • Integrate Central Park and River Darent into the life of the town  
  • Use the Orchard Theatre as a basis for extending the evening economy | • New development to preserve and enhance the character of historic spaces and buildings within the Conservation Area  
  • Interpretation measures for significant buildings  
  • Establishment of a local list of listed buildings  
  • Expand and improve markets and provision of permanent location  
  • Seek opportunities for improvements to Central Park  
  • Strengthening of walking routes and visual links between the park and the town  
  • Seek opportunities to improve public access to and along the river  
  • Encourage complementary activities on sites adjoining Orchard Theatre | • Delivery of Central Park Initiative and Darent River Path improvements  
  • Improvements to buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area  
  • Implementation of new market area | • Central Park Initiative and Darent River Path improvements; outcomes achieved  
  • Number of buildings and spaces in the Conservation Area that have been improved  
  • Completion of new permanent market area  
  • Footfall on market days |

Appendix 2.3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Action Plan</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                 | Create an attractive and enjoyable environment | • Creation of direct walking routes in and around the town  
• Public realm, opportunities for high quality public spaces and preferred sites  
• Opportunities for redesigning streets with a pedestrian focus  
• Development to provide activity at street level  
• New development to be the highest quality of design  
• New development should improve community safety through designing out crime  
• Developments encouraged to incorporate standards of energy and water efficiency above mandatory requirements and homes built to Level 3 of Code for Sustainable Homes  
• Tree planting and improved greenery  
• Creation of new greenspace in new development that links with wider Green Grid network  
Retain tree cover at East and West Hill Ridges | • Delivery of walking routes  
• Homes built close to open space/green walking routes  
• Provision of public spaces at identified sites  
• Environmental improvement programmes  
• Homes built to Level 3 and above of the Code for Sustainable Homes  
• Renewable energy and water efficiency provision  
• Active street frontages  
• Reported crime levels | • Provision of identified walking routes  
• Net amount of new green/open space, trees and new footpaths/walking routes provided  
• Proportion of new homes within 200m of open space/green walking routes  
• Amount of identified new public spaces provided  
• Environmental improvement schemes proposed and completed  
• Number of homes built to Level 3 or above of the Code for Sustainable Homes  
• Renewable energy capacity installed by type  
• Proportion of energy used in new development which comes from on site renewables  
• Proportion of active street frontages in Primary Shopping Area  
• Number of crimes reported |

Appendix 2.4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Action Plan</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Make getting to the town centre easy and convenient** | Improve access into the town centre by car – discourage through traffic | • Local junction improvements and vehicular access as part of development proposals  
• Residential tariff towards the strategic transport infrastructure fund  
• Take opportunities to help improve air quality  
• Promote a change in patterns of bus services and bus stops, and implement for bus priority measures  
• Improve links between the town centre and the railway station  
• Develop appropriate balance of long and short term parking  
• Encourage redevelopment of surface car parks  
• Take opportunities to improve the safety and security at Westgate Road CP  
• Implement car parking located adjacent to the ring road in large new developments  
• Car park pricing and management plans  
• Investigate potential to improve cycle parking and routes into town | • Traffic Management schemes  
• Bus Usage  
• Car parking  
• New cycle paths/lanes  
• Cycle trips  
• Delivery of improvements to station area  
• Modal travel patterns  
• Air quality within Dartford Town Centre and Approach Roads Air Quality Management Area  
• Strategic transport infrastructure | • Completed and planned traffic management schemes  
• Strategic Transport Tariff contribution by residential sites  
• Number of bus passengers using public transport including Fastrack  
• Number of long and short term public car parking spaces in the town  
• Amount of new development complying with car parking standards  
• Provision of cycle paths and lanes/junction improvements  
• Number of cycle trips  
• Modes of travel to the town centre  
• Air quality objectives met within Dartford Town Centre and Approach Roads AQMA  
• Number of rail passengers using Dartford station  
• Strategic transport infrastructure schemes committed and implemented |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Action Plan</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station District</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mixed use sustainable community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhance waterside areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of new and improved pedestrian with the town centre, railway station and River Darent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mixed-use development of office, hotel, residential and limited retail space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provision of new links and incorporation of plaza in front of station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gateway</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Joint master plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Range of new and improved pedestrian link routes and cycle linkages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provision of mix of housing with easy access to jobs and facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of a community hub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provision of a range of commercial accommodation and low key leisure uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fulfil design/layout objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provision for sustainable infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2.6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overy Street</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Open up the river to public access and to provide a route into the town centre</td>
<td>• Mix of residential provision</td>
<td>• Identified provision planned or completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchards District</td>
<td>The Orchards Shopping Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage refurbishment of the centre and extension over the surface car park to provide enhanced shopping facilities and leisure quarter</td>
<td>• Provision of a major leisure use, large shop units, cafes, bars and restaurants, a new public space, walking routes, active frontages, car parking and pedestrian crossing at Home Gardens</td>
<td>• Identified provision planned or completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Action Plan Objective</td>
<td>Preferred Policy Approaches</td>
<td>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</td>
<td>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Former Co-op Store        | • Redevelopment or re-use of site to create a retail anchor linking the High Street with Prospect Place  
• Provision of active frontages, shop unit sizes suitable for multiple retailers, bus bays in Hythe Street, pedestrian link between Westgate car park and Hythe Street and a new public space |  | • Identified provision planned or completed |
| River District             |                            |                                                       |                                                       |
| Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool and Leisure Complex | • Redevelopment of the site for mixed use to include retail and housing and other uses as appropriate  
• Provision of walking routes from Lowfield Street to Central Park, junction improvements and traffic management measures, reconfiguration of Market Street together with a public space, contribution to improvements in Central Park and relocation of Fairfield Pools to the Acacia Hall complex |  | • Identified provision planned or completed |

Appendix 2.8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area ActionPlan Objective</th>
<th>Preferred Policy Approaches</th>
<th>Indicative areas to be developed into detailed targets</th>
<th>Example Indicators (may relate to more than one objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Market Street             | • Creation of a new town square and a permanent location for a range of street markets and provision of use classes A3, 4 and 5  
• Provide a stronger pedestrian focus                                                                                                                                   |                                                       | • Identified provision planned or completed               |
| Acacia Hall Complex       | • Integrate complex with town centre and improve links with Central Park  
• Pursue funding and proposals for a new and enhanced recreation, sporting, cultural and leisure quarter                                                                                                          |                                                       | • Identified provision planned or completed               |
| Old Council Office/Iceland block and 43 -53 High Street | • Redevelopment of 43-53 High Street  
• Provision of a mixed use development to provide retail on High Street and restaurant and café uses fronting Market Street, together with other appropriate upper level uses |                                                       | • Identified provision planned or completed               |
APPENDIX 3: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

This implementation framework seeks to:

- Ensure that the AAP objectives and proposals are taken forward systematically and effectively
- Establish who has responsibility for implementation and of what
- Demonstrate that proposals are practical, realistic and deliverable.

Much of the change required to achieve the spatial aims of the plan is dependent on private investment, public funding and stakeholder implementation programmes. The Council will continue to develop partnership working between its own departments, stakeholders, and town centre businesses. Key mechanisms for partnership working will be with developers, Kent County Council (KCC), Kent Thameside Delivery Board (KTDB), Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA), English Partnerships, Dartford Town Centre Partnership Forum, the Local Strategic Partnership and local community groups. The Council will also use its role as local planning authority to control and encourage the change required, including using planning obligations.

It will be important to monitor progress of plan implementation in order that appropriate action is taken when and if required to ensure the delivery of the plan. The Monitoring Framework is set out in Appendix 2.

There can be a greater degree of certainty about delivery in the short term but this will diminish towards the later stages of the plan.
Implementation Framework

This schedule is sub-divided into three sections. The first sets out the types of development and locations proposed to meet the strategic objectives of the plan. The second identifies known infrastructure required and the third sets out the main development contributions (section 106 agreements) that will be sought from the opportunity sites.

1 Development Type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Type</th>
<th>What/where</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When (period)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>To increase the amount of shopping floorspace. Short term opportunities identified:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Former Co-op store</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008 – 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lowfield Street</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008 - 2013 to 2013 – 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orchards Shopping Centre</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008 – 2013 to 2013 - 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited retail warehousing at Northern Gateway West where it enables redevelopment of Overy Street for housing.</td>
<td>Private Developer and SEEDA</td>
<td>2008 – 2013 to 2013 - 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permanent location for markets. Preferred location; Market Street</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008 – 2013 to 2013 - 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Provide more homes in the town centre at the following identified sites:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Northern Gateway West</td>
<td>SEEDA and private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mill Pond,</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Northern Gateway East</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Station Approach</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overy Street</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Type</td>
<td>What/where</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>When (period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>Provision of leisure/entertainment facilities in the town centre, and in particular at:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchard Shopping Centre/Orchard Theatre</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acacia Hall Complex</td>
<td>DBC</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018 depending on funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market Street (town square)</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mill Pond and River Darent (Northern Gateway)</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Provision of new hotel bed spaces. Preferred locations</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>During the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Station Approach</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Gateway</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old Council Offices</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Provision of office, B1 &amp; B8 floorspace and live-work units as part of a range of uses in the town centre. Preferred locations:</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>During Plan Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Gateway West</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mill Pond</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Gateway East</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchards Shopping Centre</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Former Co-op store</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lowfield Street</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old Council Offices</td>
<td>Private Developer</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 3.3
## Known infrastructure requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure required</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport Infrastructure</td>
<td>Junction improvements As part of development of sites, development contributions, transport tariff, KCC Local Transport Plan (LTP) junction proposals and contribution</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvements to help improve air quality Through development contributions, KCC LTP measures to encourage modal shift and traffic management improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New bus stops in Hythe Street Through development contribution from former Co-op store site and bus companies funding</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New and improved pedestrian and cycle routes As part of development of sites, development contributions, KCC LTP and Sustrans proposals and contributions</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New northern pedestrian access to the railway station Pooled development contributions from Northern Gateway and Station Approach developments and Network Rail funding</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Realm</td>
<td>New public space at:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Market Street As part of development of Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool and Old Council Offices sites,</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Orchard Theatre As part of development of Orchard Shopping Centre and DCLG funding(DBC),</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At former Co-op store As part of development of former Co-op store site</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Station Approach As part of development of Station Approach site</td>
<td>During plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mill Pond As part of development of Mill Pond site</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lowfield Street As part of development of Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool site</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upgrading pedestrianised areas As part of development of opportunity sites, development contributions and other funding sources (to be investigated)</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 3.4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure required</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River Darent</td>
<td>Improved footway and cycleway Contributions from development at Station Approach, Overy Street, Northern Gateway West, Millpond and Northern Gateway East and DCLG funding</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New bridge over the River Darent at Overy Street</td>
<td>As part of Overy Street development</td>
<td>During the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving shop fronts and buildings in the Conservation Area</td>
<td>Townscape Initiative Heritage Lottery Funding, shopkeepers/landlords, opportunities arising from redevelopment of Lowfield Street, Acacia Hall Complex, Old Council Offices and the former Co-op sites</td>
<td>2007-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park Improvement Plan</td>
<td>Contributions from development at Lowfield Street and funding such as Heritage Lottery</td>
<td>2008-2013 to 2013-2018 depending on funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential development</td>
<td>Affordable housing As part of private residential development schemes, with developer, Housing Corporation and Registered Social Landlords funding</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>As part of development of Northern Gateway and additional funding from KCC</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/Secondary Education Facilities</td>
<td>Development Contributions and additional funding from KCC</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service Facilities</td>
<td>As part of development of Northern Gateway, development contributions and additional funding from KCC</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care services</td>
<td>As part of development of Northern Gateway, development contributions and additional funding from Primary Care Trust</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood risk mitigation measures</td>
<td>As part of development of sites and development contributions, guided by flood risk assessments</td>
<td>Over the plan period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational facilities</td>
<td>New swimming pool Cross funded by redevelopment of Lowfield Street/Fairfield Pool Leisure Complex site (DBC)</td>
<td>2008-2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 3.5
### Development contributions likely to be sought from developments at the opportunity sites

Development Contributions likely to be required by development at the following identified sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Station Approach</th>
<th>NGW(^1)</th>
<th>Millpond</th>
<th>NGE(^2)</th>
<th>Overy Street</th>
<th>Orchards SC(^3)</th>
<th>Former Co-op store</th>
<th>Lowfield Street</th>
<th>Acacia Hall</th>
<th>Old Council Offices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary/Secondary education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport tariff</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>New access arrangements</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>New bus stops in Hythe Street</td>
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<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Service Facilities</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Facilities</td>
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<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New public realm</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A new public square in front of the Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>A new Town Square</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage Interpretation</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plaza in front of railway station</td>
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<td>☑</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improvements to Central Park</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedestrian/Cycle Routes</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of new riverside walk</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of new river crossing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern pedestrian access to station</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<td>☑</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New swimming pool</td>
<td>☑</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Northern Gateway West
2. Northern Gateway East
3. Orchards Shopping Centre

Appendix 3.6
Development contributions are likely to be required on windfall sites and will be assessed on a site by site basis.

In addition to the contributions listed above, further contributions may be required by Kent County Council towards KCC provided services and by Dartford Borough Council for other facilities.
APPENDIX 4:

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT:
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Addendum:

Please note that the reference in paragraphs 3, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22 and 24 to “preferred options” should read “preferred approaches”.

DARTFORD
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK:
Sustainability Appraisal/
Strategic Environmental
Assessment

Dartford Town Centre
Area Action Plan
PREFERRED OPTIONS

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL
REPORT
Non-Technical Summary
August 2007

Prepared by Enfusion,
On behalf of Dartford Borough Council
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

1 This is the summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report for Dartford’s Local Development Framework (LDF) Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) (Preferred Options). It describes how the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process was used to assist in planning for the development and the use of land, as required by planning legislation and Government guidance. The SA assists sustainable development through an ongoing dialogue and assessment during the preparation of LDF Development Planning Documents (DPDs), and considers the implications of social, economic and environmental demands on land use planning.

2 Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils are working together closely on the SA and consultants Enfusion were commissioned in January 2005 to progress the SA work for the two Councils. After initial joint working, the two Boroughs are now undertaking the SA work separately to reflect the different timescales in the preparation of their LDFs.

THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3 The LDF is the new system introduced by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and it takes the form of a portfolio of documents including DPDs (Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations and Area Action Plans), the Statement of Community Involvement, and an Annual Monitoring Report. The Dartford Town Centre AAP sets a vision and strategy for the future development of Dartford Town Centre and the sites north of the railway line, referred to collectively as the Northern Gateway. It is intended to guide future change and development in the area. The Preferred Options Document sets out the Council’s preferred options that will inform and guide the development of policies in the Town Centre AAP Submission Document. The Council is also preparing Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations DPDs.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL & STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

4 Planning legislation requires that the LDF is subject to a SA, a systematic process that is designed to evaluate the predicted social, economic and environmental effects of development planning. European and UK legislation require that the LDF is also subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a process that considers the effects of development planning on the environment. Where significant adverse effects are predicted, the SEA aims to identify means to avoid or mitigate such effects. Government guidance advises that these two processes should be carried out together and requires the LDF to be subject to a SA incorporating SEA. The guidance outlines a number of
stages of SA work that need to be carried out as the LDF is being prepared:

- Stage A: Setting Context & Scope
- Stage B: Developing Options & Assessing Effects
- Stage C: Preparing the SA Report
- Stage D: Consulting on the Plan & the SA
- Stage E: Monitoring Implementation of the Plan

5 The SA/SEA of the Dartford Town Centre AAP has been prepared in accordance with these requirements for a SA/SEA.

THE CHARACTER OF DARTFORD BOROUGH AND TOWN CENTRE

6 Dartford Borough is located in the North West of Kent and occupies a unique strategic location adjacent to London and within the Thames Gateway area. The Borough is characterised by its historic environment and its location by the Thames and Darent Rivers, with settlements surrounded by agricultural land.

7 Those areas of the Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs which are located to the north of the A2, constitute ‘Kent Thameside’, one of the largest areas for development in the Thames Gateway. The draft South East Plan, (SEERA, 2006) sets a challenging growth agenda for Dartford (and Gravesham) with regard to housing allocations, job creation, and provision of supporting infrastructure and services.

8 Dartford Town Centre is well located to take advantage of this growth, through forming a retail and leisure hub for the area. The town provides a range of retail, service sector, leisure, cultural and civic facilities and also contains a number of homes, some situated in or close to the core retail area. In recent years the core shopping area has experienced a decline in the quality of shopping offer and poor economic performance including a high percentage of vacant retail properties.

9 The Northern Gateway comprises former industrial land located just to the north of Dartford Railway Station, with the River Darent running through the centre. The majority of the area will shortly be vacated by the Glaxo Smith Kline Corporation, who are rationalising their operations within their overall site. The AAP now identifies this land for new retail, employment and housing development.

SA SCOPING & ISSUES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

10 During early 2005 a joint scoping process for Dartford and Gravesham was carried out to help ensure that the SA covered key sustainability issues relevant to Dartford. Plans and programmes were reviewed and
information was collated relating to the current and predicted social, environmental and economic characteristics of the areas.

11 From these studies, the key sustainability issues and opportunities identified were associated with the high levels of growth in employment and housing proposed for the Thames Gateway. Issues included affordable housing, local employment, high design standards for development, protection of environmental quality, car usage, public transport and accessibility. Additional issues in the Town Centre included the quality and diversity of the retail offer, and the quality of the Town Centre environment, particularly for pedestrians. The scoping information was updated in early-mid June 2007.

CONSULTATION AND PREPARING THE SA FRAMEWORK

12 An SA Framework was compiled and included 19 SA Objectives that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified, and are used to test the draft DPDs as they are being prepared. This approach and the proposals for testing the development planning process was written up into an SA Scoping Report that was sent to a wide range of organisations and also made available on the Council’s website. Comments were invited and received from a number of these organisations, which helped to improve the SA Framework. Following is the revised list of SA Objectives.

SA Objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Balanced Communities</th>
<th>7. Sustainable Design and Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Integrated Communities</td>
<td>8. Environmental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Public Health</td>
<td>10. Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Phasing of Supporting Infrastructure</td>
<td>11. Land and Soil Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Housing</td>
<td>12. Biodiversity</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA OF THE TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN

13 Each stage of the preparation of the Town Centre AAP (including Vision, Strategy Principles, Issues, Strategic Topics and Options and Preferred Options), was appraised systematically using the SA Objectives. Where it was considered that there were opportunities to enhance the sustainability of the proposals, recommendations were made. The appraisal recognised 7 categories of predicted effects, each represented by a different colour, as illustrated in the following key.
Categories of Sustainability Effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Development actively encouraged as it would resolve an existing sustainability problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>No Sustainability constraints and development acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Neutral effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Uncertain effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Potential sustainability issues; mitigation and/or negotiation possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Problematical and improbable because of known sustainability issues; mitigation or negotiation difficult and/or expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Absolute sustainability constraints to development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE AAP VISION AND STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

14 In July 2007, Enfusion appraised the Vision and Strategy Principles, which set out the scope and intentions for the AAP. Overall the Town Centre Vision and principles were found to have positive implications for sustainable development and support aims to generate a more viable and vital town centre.

APPRAISAL OF THE DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE AAP ISSUES, STRATEGIC TOPICS AND OPTIONS

15 The Issues and Options consultation titled ‘The Vision for Dartford- Have your say’ took place in September 2005. The leaflet raised a number of issues important to the Town Centre, and offered strategic options to address those issues. An SA of the issues and options raised in the leaflet, and further strategic options developed in May 2007 was undertaken. From the appraisal, there emerged a clear preferred option in terms of sustainability for each strategic topic area, and each of these preferred options was then progressed by the Council in the Preferred Options consultation document.

APPRAISAL OF THE DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE AAP PREFERRED OPTIONS

16 The development of Issues and Options, and the subsequent SA undertaken, informed the development of 42 preferred options, which will be further developed into policies in the AAP Submission Document, due to be adopted in October 2009. The preferred options were subject to a detailed SA, with suggestions made for the mitigation of negative effects, where appropriate.
The SA found that, for the most part, the emerging policies are likely to have significant positive Borough-wide effects on sustainability. The preferred options have a particularly strong focus on solving two key sustainability concerns in the town centre: connectivity and accessibility across the Town Centre, and the approach in dealing with this is supported.

Recommendations were made to further improve the sustainability effects of the policies and the plan and these include:

- Further minimising car travel through measures such as encouraging car clubs and green travel plans, and improving provision for cyclists.
- A need to consider the multiple functions of green space, not just for recreation, but as a flood management resource and haven for biodiversity.
- Enhancing opportunities for acknowledging the area’s historic past, for example along the River Darent.
- Opportunities to enhance community safety through environmental design.
- Including references to sustainable construction and sustainable urban drainage.

SECONDARY, CUMULATIVE AND SYNERGISTIC EFFECTS

It was found that combined, the 42 policies will contribute significantly and positively to the sustainability of the Town Centre. Positive cumulative benefits of the emerging AAP include: increased economic viability of the Town Centre; increased vitality, encouraging safer, more active streets; an increase in housing availability; a much enhanced sense of community ownership, identity and well-being; much improved accessibility and connectivity in the Town Centre and between the Town Centre and neighbouring areas.

Potential negative affects were identified, which primarily result from the increase in population and consequent development and movement in the Town Centre. The Preferred Options, combined with emerging Core Strategy policies on sustainable construction, will assist in mitigating these impacts, which include: potential effects on air quality primarily due to increased vehicle movement; an increase in the use of water and energy resources; physical changes to the landscape and the existing built form and character of the Borough; and economic changes occurring through the regeneration of the area.

Uncertainties were also identified relating to some effects, however it was considered that much can be addressed by further studies at a development brief/site master planning level. Uncertain effects...
CONCLUSIONS: SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS AND THE DIFFERENCE THE SA PROCESS HAS MADE

22 The SA of the emerging Town Centre AAP has found that the Preferred Options will have an overall positive effect on sustainability, through aiming to create a vibrant and active Town Centre and sustainable Northern Gateway, with an attractive public realm. The policies will assist in reducing travel by private car; improve access to public transport (particularly Dartford Train Station and Fastrack); improve connectivity and make walking a more attractive and viable option, including through the enhancement of green networks and walkways along the River Darent. By encouraging mixed-use development, the policies will assist in creating more active, vibrant communities, in addition to meeting housing need in sustainable locations. The regeneration of Dartford Town Centre provides a number of opportunities to enhance the quality of life of residents in the Borough, and the Town Centre AAP has sought to identify these and capitalise on those opportunities, as supported by the findings of this SA.

23 Potential negative effects identified relate to cumulative effects on air quality primarily due to increased vehicle movement; an increase in the use of water and energy resources; physical changes to the landscape and the existing built form and character of the Borough; and recommendations have been made to minimise these effects.

24 The SA recommendations have been considered by Council Officers, and the majority have been taken on board through amendments to the AAP Preferred Options. Generally, the changes include amendments to policy wording, to strengthen the sustainability of preferred options. Additional strategic principles now refer to a ‘sustainable mixed community’, and to ‘making Dartford a safe environment’. Officers have also committed to incorporating recommendations into a revision of the Dartford Core Strategy, where it is considered they could be applied on a Borough-wide basis.

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LDF

25 Dartford’s LDF is designed to be an on-going, iterative process, in which all sections are kept up to date through a rolling process of public involvement, monitoring and, where necessary, adjustment. The monitoring of the significant effects of any plan of this type is seen as essential by the European SEA Directive, and the Council believes that all stakeholders should have an early opportunity to be part of the process.
The Council intends to develop indicators to meet the monitoring requirements for both the LDF and SA processes. The key sustainability issues identified in the SA Scoping Report, including consultation, and the SA of the AAP have assisted in developing indictors and targets for monitoring, which will contribute to the overall Monitoring Strategy for the LDF.

**NEXT STEPS**

In carrying out the SA of the Town Centre AAP, Enfusion has identified a number of recommendations. The Council has subsequently amended the AAP in line with the recommendations. Furthermore, this SA will be used to inform the preparation of policies in the Town Centre AAP Submission Document. Enfusion will then carry out a further SA, to determine whether the last stage of policy refinement has progressed the SA Objectives further and a Revised SA Report will be published alongside the Town Centre AAP Submission Document.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND HOW TO COMMENT ON THE SA REPORT AND THE TOWN CENTRE AAP**

If you would like any further information or if you have any comments on the SA of the Town Centre AAP Preferred Options we would be grateful to receive them. Your views are important and the Council needs to receive them by 25 October 2007. Comments should be sent to the Policy (Planning) Team by post or e-mail.

**Post to:**

Policy (Planning) Team  
Dartford Borough Council  
Home Gardens  
DARTFORD  
Kent  
DA1 1DR

**Email:** ldf@dartford.gov.uk
If you or anybody you know requires this or any other Council information in another language, please contact us and we will do our best to provide this for you. Braille, audio tape and large print versions of this document are available upon request.

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