

# **DARTFORD LOCAL PLAN TO 2037**

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**DARTFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This first section introduces the Local Plan, key characteristics of the Borough, and vision of Dartford's development by 2037.

### **About the Local Plan**

- 1.2 Development in the UK is guided by national and local planning policy. At the Borough level, the Council determines how its area will change, and how land and buildings will be used in the future. The Local Plan sets out how this will happen in order to accommodate the required development identified in government policy. The Local Plan forms the basis for Dartford's decisions on planning applications for development, and also guides decisions on public and private sector investment. Dartford's Local Plan takes on board the priorities of government, local authorities, infrastructure providers, residents, parish/ town councils, businesses and other local organisations.
- 1.3 This new Local Plan sets the long term Borough development strategy, including the part of Ebbsfleet Garden City within Dartford. It has been produced by Dartford Council with significant input by the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC). The EDC was set up in 2015 to speed up delivery of the Garden City, which straddles the boundaries of Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs
- 1.4 This Dartford Local Plan replaces all policies from the existing Core Strategy 2011 and Development Policies Plan 2017. The Core Strategy set out ambitions for major transformation of the Borough, based on regeneration and development of large sites within the urban north of the Borough. This approach is successfully being implemented and will continue further, including at Dartford town centre. Many aspects of policies originally within the 2017 Plan also remain relevant and are taken forward in the Development Management policies (section 5) in this plan. The relationship between new and old policies is set out in Appendix A.
- 1.5 The Plan aims to be concise but far reaching, focussing on the provision of high quality development that meets needs in highly sustainable locations. It is intended to be flexible to change whilst also providing clarity for investment and infrastructure planning. The time horizon to 2037 enables infrastructure providers to plan future provision, so that development and new facilities can be co-ordinated. A base year of 2017 for this Plan reflects the commencement of preparation after adoption of the last plan, and the government's local housing need method.

- 1.6 This Plan needs to be read as a whole. All relevant policies will apply to development coming forward in the Borough. The Dartford Local Plan forms part of the statutory development plan. This also includes the adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. It would also include Neighbourhood Plans but none have yet been completed (one is underway at Stone). Local Plans can also be supported by Supplementary Planning Documents which give more information on the application of particular policies.
- 1.7 The Local Plan considers Dartford's own unique characteristics based on evidence<sup>1</sup>, and forms proposals for the sustainable development of the Borough in line with national policy. The remainder of this plan section outlines data on some of the Borough's current main characteristics, and the vision of how the Council would like the Borough to develop to 2037.
- 1.8 The Plan is then organised into the following sections:
- The Borough Objectives and Strategy in section 2 set out the overall location, type and amount of development expected to take place in the Borough, supported by strategies for infrastructure and addressing the important issue of climate change.
  - Sections 3 and 4 address the changes planned for Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City and the key principles for development taking place in these locations. These sections together with section 2 comprise the strategic policies of the plan.
  - Section 5 contains the Development Management policies which will also be taken into account when considering all planning applications.
  - Section 6 addresses implementation and monitoring which ensures that the vision, objectives and policies are being realised.
  - The Appendices include a glossary of terms (Appendix B) and the plan housing trajectory (Appendix C).

### **About Dartford Borough**

- 1.9 Situated in Kent and within the Thames Estuary, Dartford stands at a pivotal point in South East England, adjoining Greater London (Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, the statutory Sustainability Appraisal, LUC (July 2021) and Habitats Regulations Assessment, AECOM (July 2021).

**Figure 1: Dartford's location within Kent and South East England**



- 1.10 Dartford Borough includes areas highly rich in history and historic character. Across the Borough, there are approximately 180 listed buildings and 12 scheduled monuments. The six Conservation Areas are found in Southfleet parish, Wilmington, Greenhithe and Dartford Town Centre.
- 1.11 The Borough lies on the dip slope of the North Downs adjacent to the River Thames. The River Darent in the west of the Borough and the Ebbsfleet river in the east flow northwards into the Thames. Openness characterises the Borough as a whole, as a result of riverside settings (most notably the River Thames), large urban green areas and the countryside. Just over half of Dartford's area is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 1.12 There is a varied and distinctive landscape, comprising two distinct areas: the urban north and the more rural south. North of the A2 is a largely built-up area, containing 70% of the population. This stretches from Dartford town in the west (bordering the London Borough of Bexley) through to the growing communities at Ebbsfleet (adjoining Gravesham Borough) in the east. The largely built-up areas of Dartford, Greenhithe, Stone and Swanscombe, interspersed with former chalk quarries and industrial land, make up the urban area. Dartford Marshes in the north west of the Borough is not

within the urban area and provides an important break in development between settlements in Dartford Borough and the London Borough of Bexley.

- 1.13 The northern part of the Borough has seen significant residential and commercial growth in recent years, most notably north of Dartford Town, along with the development at or near Ebbsfleet Garden City.
- 1.14 The southern part of the Borough comprises areas of open countryside, much of which is within the Green Belt, interspersed with villages and some hamlets. With a range of shops (including a supermarket) and other community facilities, Longfield is the best served settlement in the southern area. However, Wilmington parish, which adjoins Dartford, has a larger population.
- 1.15 The Borough has major national and international connections via the strategic road network and rail services (including High Speed 1 and Eurostar from Ebbsfleet International Station).
- 1.16 Dartford Railway Station has become the busiest station in Kent with an annual passenger usage of 4.66 million in 2019/20<sup>2</sup>. Between 2019 and 2020, usage continued to grow. More people use Dartford railway station than Ebbsfleet International and all the other stations in the Borough put together. Swanscombe and Stone Crossing stations have recently seen particular proportionate growth in use
- 1.17 The A282/ M25 Dartford Crossing and the arterial A2 London-Dover routes generate high volumes of traffic flow through the Borough. This can be attributed to be the principal cause of the Borough's higher carbon emissions per capita than the regional average, given that the majority of emissions are from transport sources<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.18 As a result of economic growth in the Borough, data from the 2011 Census indicates that more people travelled into the Borough for work every day than residents who left to work elsewhere, i.e. Dartford generated net in-commuting. In terms of how residents travel to work, the 2011 data showed relatively high levels of private vehicle use, with 23% of trips being made by public transport and only 8% of trips being made by active travel modes (walking and cycling). This compares with 14% in the South East made by active travel modes.

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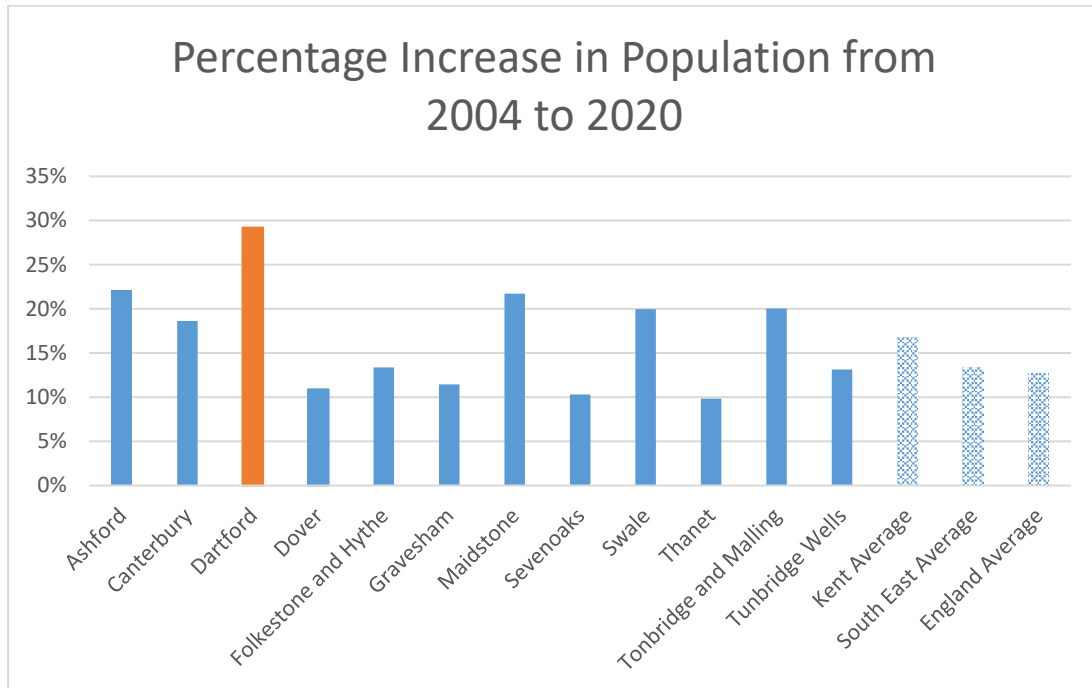
<sup>2</sup> Office of Rail and Road, Passenger Rail Usage Statistics 2019/20

<sup>3</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy dataset on CO2 per Local Authority since 2005



- 1.19 Between 2004 and 2020, the population of Dartford Borough increased by 29%, the largest increase across the Kent districts and a much higher increase than averages across Kent, the South East and England<sup>4</sup>. This is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Percentage Population Increase (2004 to 2019) Comparison**



Source: ONS

- 1.20 The socio-economic composition of the Borough is diverse. Nevertheless, in terms of general groupings, 70% of the Borough's population can be loosely characterised as falling within the following defined national categories, based on market research by Mosaic:

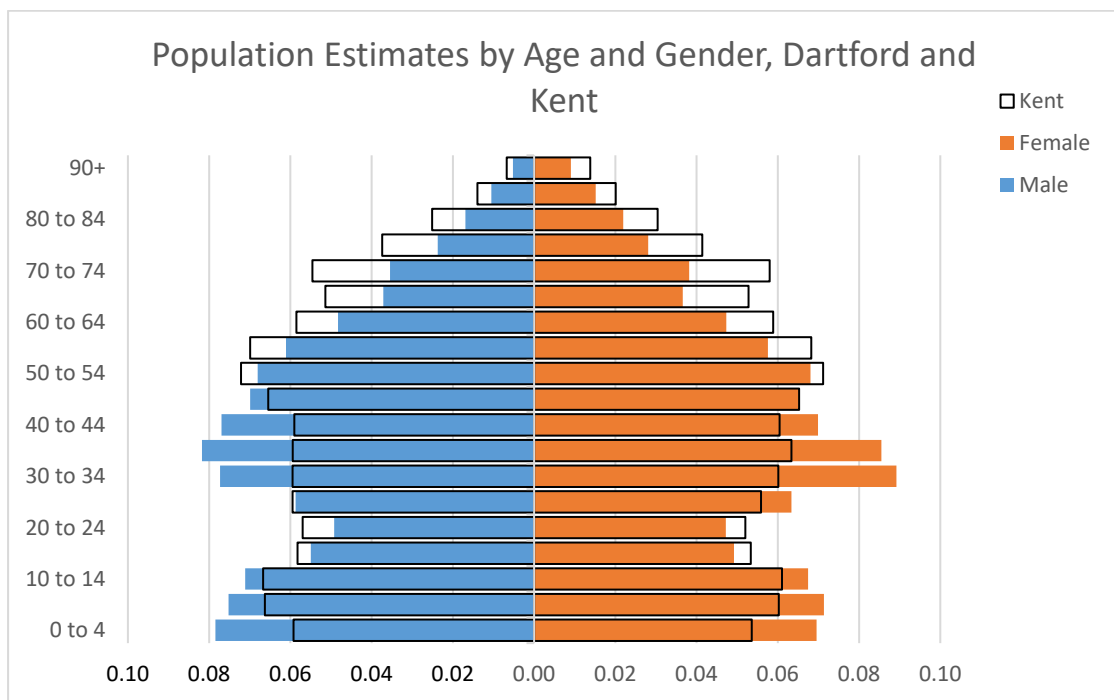
- Aspiring Homemakers – Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means;
  - Domestic Success – Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers;
  - Senior Security – Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement;
  - Rental Hubs – Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods;
- and

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates

- Family Basics – Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet.

1.21 The average age of residents in Dartford Borough is 37.4 years, lower than the Kent and national averages of 42.2 years and 40.2 years respectively<sup>5</sup>. Compared to the Kent average, the Borough has a higher proportion of children under 15 and adults aged between 25 and 49. Figure 3 sets out the age and gender of those living in Dartford Borough compared to the average in Kent.

**Figure 3: Population Estimates by Age and Gender – Dartford and Kent Average**

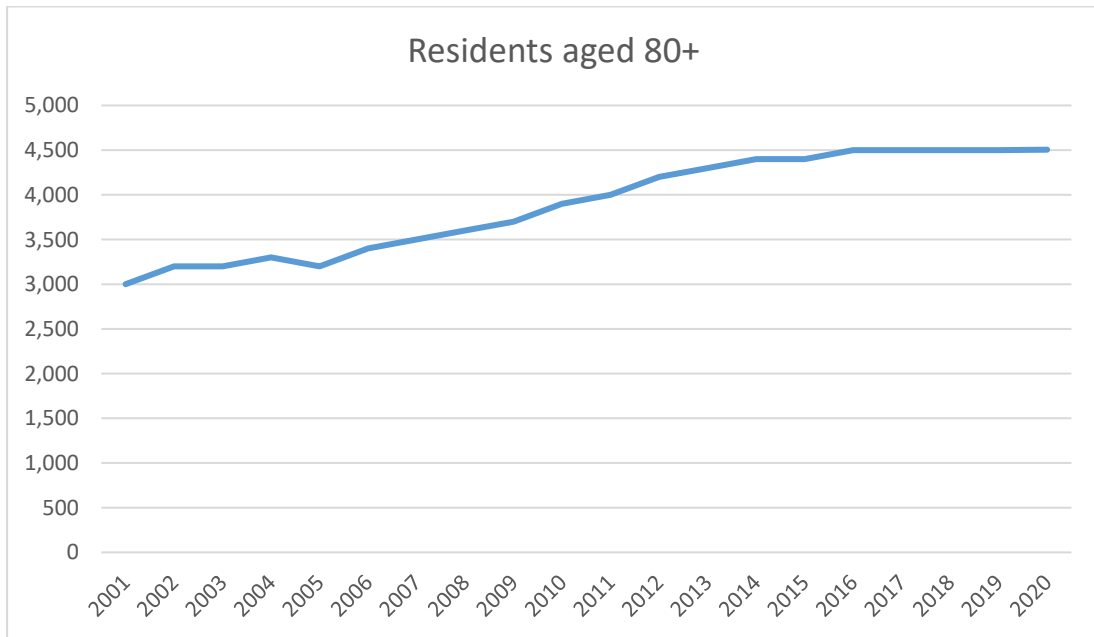


Source: ONS

1.22 The number of those aged 80 and over in the Borough has remained fairly constant over the past five years (and is slightly below the Kent average). This is shown in Figure 4. The average life expectancy in Dartford is 81 years, which is in line with the Kent and England averages.

<sup>5</sup> ONS (2020) mid-year estimates.

**Figure 4: Borough population aged 80 and over (2001 to 2020)**



Source: ONS

- 1.23 Noting that the proportion in Dartford Borough finding their day-to-day activities limited by illness is below the English average (14%)<sup>6</sup>, there are nevertheless some clear challenges facing the health of residents including<sup>7</sup>:
- Childhood obesity rates are slightly higher than the Kent average: 25% of reception year pupils and 37% of year 6 pupils are classified as overweight or obese;
  - The percentage of adults who consume the recommended '5 a day' of fruits and vegetables is well below the Kent average and is the lowest of all districts;
  - The number of premature deaths (under 75 years) due to cardiovascular disease or respiratory factors are both above the Kent average.
- 1.24 Dartford Borough has some good levels of educational attainment, and includes over-subscribed high performing schools. In 2019, 56% of Key Stage 4 children achieved a strong pass (Grades 5 or above) in English and Maths, higher than both the Kent and England averages (46% and 43% respectively)<sup>8</sup>.
- 1.25 Whilst good school grades are generally being achieved, 3.2% Key Stage 5 aged (i.e. those aged 16-18) residents in the Borough were not in education, employment or

<sup>6</sup> Census, 2011

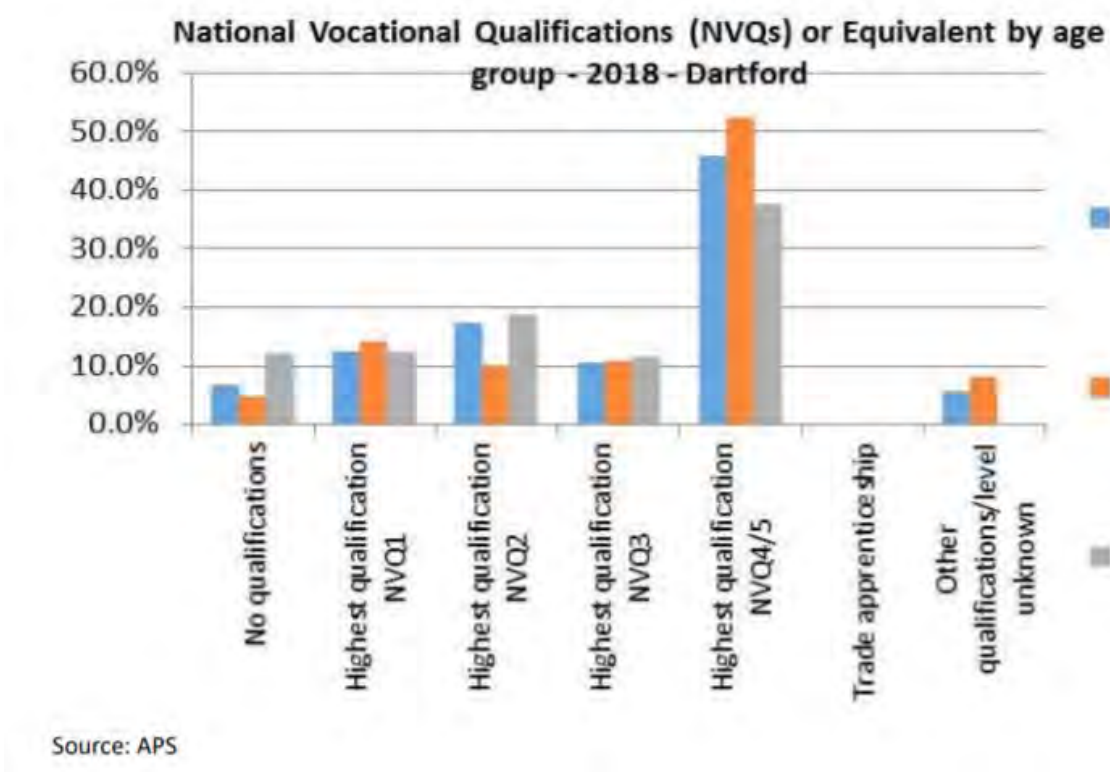
<sup>7</sup> Kent County Council (KCC) Public Health Observatory, <https://www.kpho.org.uk/health-and-social-care-maps/pdf-social-care-maps>

<sup>8</sup> KCC

training, which is slightly above the Kent average of 3%. More than one in ten of those over 50 years old have no qualifications.

- 1.26 As shown in Figure 5, nearly half (46%) of people living in Dartford Borough have NVQ4/5 level qualifications (degree and above). This is above the England (39%) and Kent (35%) averages<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 5: NVQs or Equivalent by Age Group in Dartford 2018**



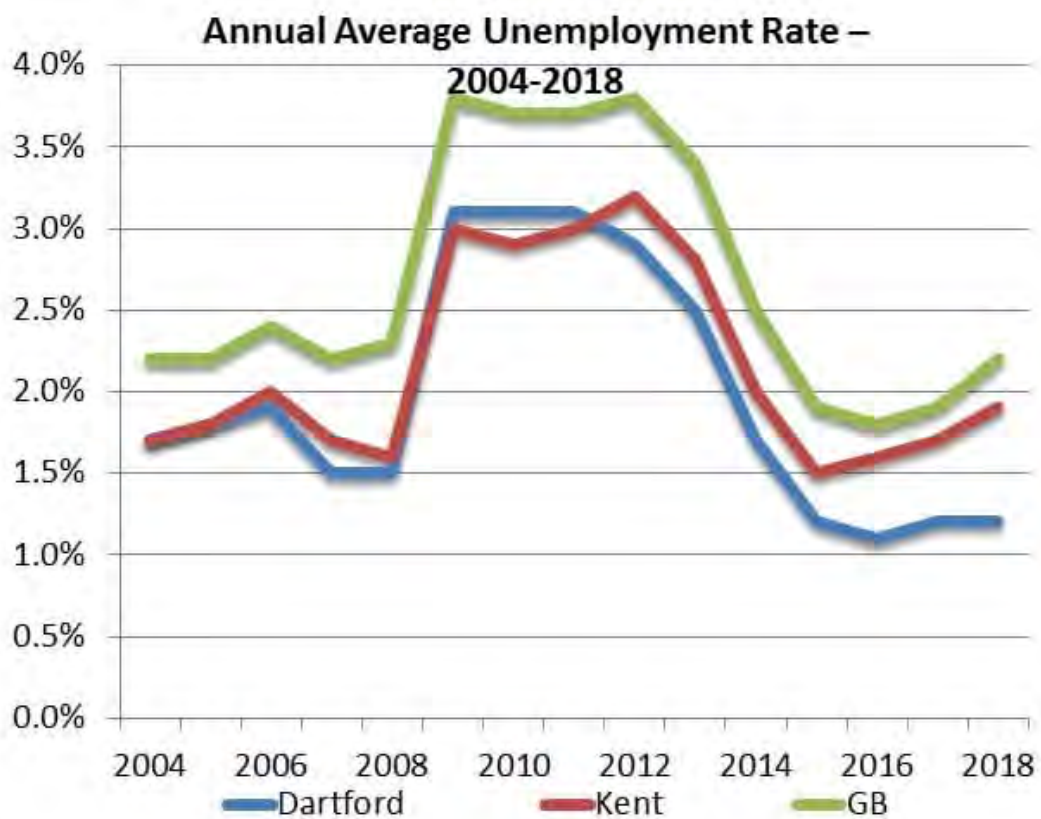
- 1.27 Despite above average school results and qualification attainments, only 41.3% of the Borough's residents are managers and/ or professionals. This is comfortably below average when compared with 53.5% for the South East and 50.2% for Great Britain.
- 1.28 Dartford Borough has a high proportion of non-professional employees. In 2020, 16.9% of Dartford Borough's residents are machine operatives or similar, a reduction from 25% in 2019 but remaining above levels for the South East and Great Britain. In 2020, 16.9% of residents had skilled trade occupations, compared with 8.9% for the South East and 9.2% for Great Britain<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> ONS Nomis Labour Market Profile

<sup>10</sup> ONS Nomis Labour Market Profile

- 1.29 The wholesale and retail sector is the largest single employer of people living in the Borough, with 22% of the population employed in the sector<sup>11</sup>. Employment within the construction industry has been growing over the past five years, with Dartford Borough seeing the highest percentage increase in construction enterprises across Kent.
- 1.30 As with a number of economic indicators for the Borough, unemployment rates are better than average, and over the years have improved relative to Kent as a whole. This is shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Average Annual Unemployment Rates for Dartford, Kent & GB**



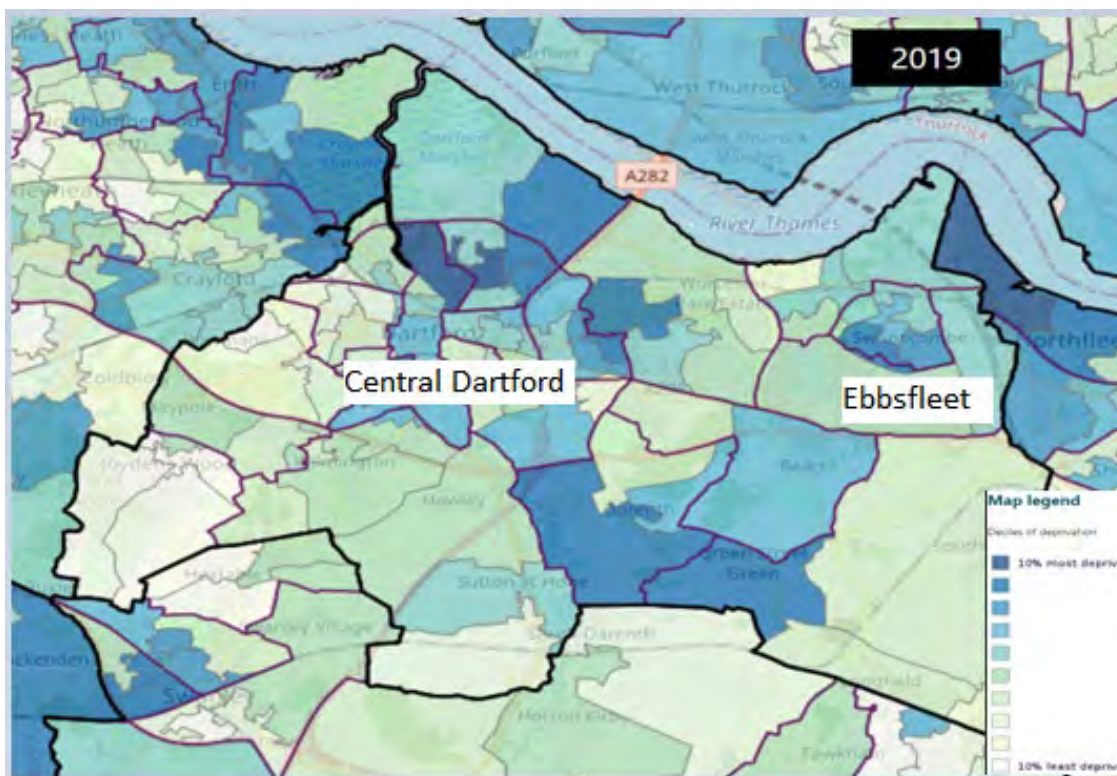
Source: Claimant Count

- 1.31 While Dartford Borough's unemployment rate rose from 2.9% in 2019 to 3.4% in 2020, it stayed below both regional and national rates (3.9% and 4.6%). Despite the first Covid-19 lockdowns, between January and December 2020 87.8% of the Borough's residents were economically active, higher than regional and national rates (81.6% and 79.1% respectively).

<sup>11</sup> ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey

- 1.32 Dartford Borough has hosted growth in new jobs and facilities, including at Bluewater Shopping Centre. At Dartford town centre's core, vacancy rates have been consistently decreasing and have remained stable in 2021. The Orchard Theatre in Dartford Town Centre is visited more frequently by residents in and around the Borough than venues in Central London or the O2 arena<sup>12</sup>.
- 1.33 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 shows that there are mixed levels of overall deprivation, with some higher levels of deprivation focused in parts of urban Dartford, as shown in Figure 7. The net result is that the Borough is broadly in the middle of national deprivation rankings. Out of 317 Boroughs in the country, Dartford Borough as a whole is the 154<sup>th</sup> least deprived.

**Figure 7: Index of Multiple Deprivation in Dartford Borough 2019**



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

- 1.34 In summary, the Local Plan needs to respond to a range of key Borough social and economic factors including:
- **A rapidly growing population** needing new local infrastructure, particularly for health and education.

<sup>12</sup> Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail and Leisure Study, LSH (January 2021)

- **A population profile that includes a high percentage of children and young adults** who will require sufficient educational, employment and leisure opportunities, and access to housing, to meet needs for the future.
- **A sizeable labour workforce with high employment rates** but a limited choice of local high order/ professional local job opportunities.
- **High levels of mobility** that puts pressure on public transport and creates traffic/ congestion in the Borough contributing to pollution levels.
- Requirements to support **healthy living** with the potential for greater walking and cycling, promoting clean air and access to the countryside and greenspace.
- **An ageing population** that should have the right kind community infrastructure easily available to meet needs.



## Borough Vision

- 1.35 The Local Plan sets the following vision of what sustainable development will look like long-term in Dartford (2037 and beyond). The vision represents agreed aspirations for change in the Borough and Council policy for Dartford's future, the views and plans of local residents, businesses and organisations, the established regeneration strategy in the wider area, and national growth and sustainable development policy:

### **Borough Vision:**

*Dartford Borough will be known across Kent, the Thames Estuary and beyond as a desirable and popular place to live, work and enjoy leisure time. Dartford will be recognised as well-connected and served by good infrastructure and facilities, with a strong economy and new and existing towns and villages of acclaimed quality of life and prosperity.*

*Neighbourhoods across the Borough will be attractive, healthy, secure, low-carbon and environmentally resilient, benefiting from excellent built and natural environments and improved living standards. They will afford easy access to local services, the open countryside, rivers and natural surroundings. The individual identity, and sense of place and heritage, of Dartford's established towns and villages will be retained and enhanced. Valued and sensitive local landscapes and townscapes will be suitably preserved for future enjoyment.*

*New development for economic and physical regeneration purposes, addressing social deprivation where found in neighbourhoods, will bring employment, facilities, and new infrastructure. Local residents will be able to access a diverse choice of homes to suit their needs at different stages of their life, through a range of accommodation available in a variety of types and tenures.*

*The wellbeing of the Borough's communities will benefit from investment and planned development and new technology. This will provide new and upgraded services, including handy, high frequency and reliable clean transport links, appealing walking and cycling routes, and improved local community, cultural, sports and recreational resources.*

*New settlements in Dartford Borough will be sensitively integrated with existing communities and the local environment, bringing accessible new services, public greenspaces and*



*attractive waterside settings. They will be served by walkable, convenient and high quality jobs, public transport, healthcare, and education and other services.*

*Retaining a clear sense of its history, Dartford Town Centre's streets, open spaces and riverside will be engaging and elegant, creating a place that is easy and enjoyable to use, walk around and experience. The vibrancy of the Town Centre will be supported by a diversified economy, new premises and more residents living in the town. Central Dartford will be the community heart of the Borough with a thriving, creative and innovative ambience, with the mix of activities and its high quality environment giving many reasons to visit.*

*Ebbsfleet Garden City will be sensitively integrated alongside surrounding neighbourhoods and in a way which protects and enhances biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets. At Ebbsfleet, the central area and its rapid public transport connections will form a vibrant and enterprising urban hub, a genuinely dynamic place to work and live. It will be characterised by healthy, green and open environments, with high quality streets for walking and cycling. Ebbsfleet's new communities will be well-linked, distinctive, diverse and thoughtfully designed, to reflect the needs, and cultural and landscape heritage, of the Borough.*

- 1.36 It can be seen from this section that there are development needs in Dartford to meet requirements for **community wellbeing, infrastructure/ economic investment and green/ attractive environments**. The rest of the Plan addresses these needs for the Borough, which are directly addressed in the strategic objectives in paragraph 2.2.

## **2. BOROUGH STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 This section sets out strategic objectives and principal overarching policies for the plan, to achieve the sustainable development needed for the Borough's future, taking account of its characteristics and as outlined in section 1. At the end of the section, the Plan's development types and locations are brought together and outlined at Table 2.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 2.2 In order to deliver the Dartford Local Plan vision, planning decisions in the Borough will pursue the following objectives for social, environmental and economic development (reflected through policies in this and the following sections):

#### **Objectives for the wellbeing of communities:**

- **W1:** Achieving cohesive, safe, walkable and attractive neighbourhoods, with a real sense of place and vitality that reflects the area's heritage and potential, and whose residents enjoy a choice of homes suited to their needs and easy access to local everyday facilities, including education and healthcare.
- **W2:** Improving health and wellbeing, and air quality arising from congestion, through reducing the need to travel by private vehicle, particularly by retaining and providing jobs, services, shops, community facilities and open space at suitable locations close to residential areas and where good public transport services are within easy walking distance.
- **W3:** Providing well-designed new housing that is genuinely mixed, affordable and of varied tenure, sustainable, and promotes healthy living, to secure the quality of life of residents and the ability for them to continue residing at their home or within the Borough.
- **W4:** Realising whole lifetime residential accommodation options and facilities, with accessible types and designs of living environments catering for people as their circumstances change.
- **W5:** Encouraging development that provides a wide range of opportunities for residents to enjoy good quality cultural, art, leisure and sports pursuits.

**Objectives for infrastructure and economic investment:**

- **I1:** Continuing urban regeneration through optimising the re-use of accessible and suitable brownfield land primarily within the north of the Borough to meet future local housing and employment needs, and delivering new infrastructure for travel, schools/skills, health, and other local services.
- **I2:** Facilitating a range of upgrades to the transport network, and a choice of sustainable and active travel options, with rapid and reliable public transport linking existing neighbourhoods and developments to key destinations and facilities, together with a high quality and comprehensive walking and cycling network.
- **I3:** Achieving a vibrant Dartford Town Centre with an attractive public realm in an enjoyable and accessible environment, new residential communities, improved connections and services, and a flourishing day and evening economy with an enticing cultural, retail and leisure offer.
- **I4:** Retaining a prosperous economy with a good choice of jobs per resident, increasing high quality, accessible, local employment opportunities, maintaining a diverse supply of premises and supporting existing business needs, with Ebbsfleet providing a productive mix of new commercial, community and residential activities.

**Objectives for a green and attractive environment:**

- **G1:** Protecting Green Belt land to maintain a distinct and enduring open environment for the Borough and the positive setting of Dartford's villages and rural heritage assets, retaining overall countryside character and openness of the Green Belt.
- **G2:** Securing quality and sustainable built design, public streets, and good open and amenity space provision in new development, and recognising and respecting heritage and green assets so that Dartford's historic environments and new neighbourhoods are enjoyed by current and future generations.
- **G3:** Ensuring the Borough is able to adapt to the effects of climate change and contributes towards reducing Dartford's carbon footprint through an increase in the proportion of water efficient buildings, the uptake of domestic and small scale

renewable energy, and promoting environmental resilience, new greenspace and tree planting.

- **G4:** Promoting sustainable local environments and habitats, achieving biodiversity net gain and active and healthy living, at new developments and through greenspace and landscape protection and provision, enhancing the green grid of footpaths, public rights of way, cycle routes, wildlife corridors, rivers and countryside links.
- **G5:** Acting to ensure no increase in flood risk in the Borough, and creating attractive and accessible riversides, encouraging sensitive recreation and travel on and alongside the Rivers Thames, Darent and Ebbsfleet.

2.3 Primary applicable objectives are referred to at the beginning of relevant policies.

## **Borough Spatial Strategy (S1)**

- *Strategic objectives: W1, W2, I1, I3, I4, G1*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 11, 15, 105, 120*

- 2.4 Dartford Borough has seen major change in recent years, with a modernised economy and new vibrancy achieved through re-use of brownfield land. The Borough now hosts prestige employers and substantial economic developments, such as Crossways Business Park, Bluewater and The Bridge, and attractive new neighbourhoods, for instance Ingress Park at Greenhithe. Growth has helped support Dartford town centre's prospects. Community service provision has expanded, for instance with new and expanded schools. The Fastrack bus network, with sections of dedicated routeway, has brought new direct public transport routes linking communities and facilities.
- 2.5 The regeneration of Dartford has therefore taken hold in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and needs to continue, and be planned and managed in order to maximise opportunities in the right way for local needs. The Dartford Core Strategy (2011) proved effective in identifying and delivering significant planned sustainable growth locations, and managing growth pressures, but updates to the spatial strategy will help maintain the regeneration focus on the north of the Borough. This will ensure a clear plan for meeting future development needs whilst protecting the quality of life and character of the Borough by continuing to focus on urban regeneration opportunities. In particular:
- redevelopment of brownfield sites in and near Dartford Town Centre is progressing, but the area still has huge untapped potential; and
  - plans for under-used land around Ebbsfleet International Station are not currently in delivery, but are now moving forward.
- 2.6 Dartford's Core Strategy reflected long established ambitions for strategic development across areas in Kent, Greater London and Essex on the River Thames, in areas previously largely characterised by heavy industry. With the approach taken in Dartford Borough, the ambitions for new jobs and homes have proved realistic and deliverable, with major redevelopments underway as planned. Nevertheless, there remain a number of challenges, including tackling climate change and improving local wellbeing and infrastructure into the 2020s and 2030s. Ensuring green local growth that provides walkable neighbourhoods and facilities, with high quality transport, health

and education services, and attractive riversides and public/ open spaces, will help to meet these needs.

- 2.7 The spatial strategy in this Local Plan ensures that a positive framework is in place to enable continued development of planned regeneration until 2037. There continues to be clear potential for the more efficient use of brownfield land and sustainable locations, combined with the location of jobs and homes in places where people are not heavily dependent on cars, through the sustainable development of the northern urban area.
- 2.8 Dartford's transformation into a productive post-industrial economy, generating thousands of new jobs, is planned to progress further, targeting local development and infrastructure needs. The growing strength of commercial development and employment generation in the Borough should be applied to provide a wider range of job and local business opportunities. Economic development must be focused on maintaining Dartford's competitiveness, particularly through enhanced public transport accessibility and enhancing the local environment of existing centres and employment clusters as set out below, in policies M19 to M21 in particular. In line with national policy, increased economic productivity is sought, and building on the strength of local growth sectors (including creative and high technology industries).
- 2.9 The Borough's identified large and small employment areas provide local jobs and new economic development potential. They will be expanded (most notably at Littlebrook/ The Bridge) and retained for current and future commercial and industrial businesses, meeting strategic economic needs.
- 2.10 A network of retail centres will be maintained to ensure accessible provision of shopping, leisure, essential services and jobs, at the heart of existing and new communities. This includes urban and village clusters that have maintained their vitality, but also Dartford Town Centre and the major economic asset of Bluewater (see Table 7).
- 2.11 The town of Dartford is well-placed in the accessible north west of the Borough, and has retained a mix of businesses, services and shops. However, with the prospect of further changes in the demand for shops ahead, an active strategy for the future is required. This is particularly the case where there is retail/ commercial space no longer fit for purpose, or other under-used land/ buildings where new uses can be introduced,

so that new town centre activities keep the centre thriving. Growth in the resident population in the town through creating new neighbourhoods will boost income for local retailing and businesses.

- 2.12 In the eastern part of the urban area, previously home to the cement industry, new neighbourhoods are emerging at Ebbsfleet. This location was recognised as a focus for regeneration and new infrastructure within the Thames Estuary, notably with the opening of Ebbsfleet International Station in 2007. The expectation that this would deliver substantial high quality jobs and a choice of modern business premises has not yet materialised, but the economic and sustainable development potential of land around the station can still be achieved and will complement the recent residential growth in the wider Ebbsfleet area. A genuine mix facilities and businesses at Ebbsfleet, set amongst extensive green infrastructure, would support its Garden City aims and avoid generating high levels of commuting.
- 2.13 Ebbsfleet Garden City and Central Dartford continue to offer the best opportunity for sustainable development and renewal of existing land and buildings. These locations will accommodate most of the assessed needs for residential development and high quality jobs in the future, supported by good public transport, key local services and shopping/ cultural facilities. Strategic allocations in Sections 3 and 4 of the Plan are therefore included within Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City, and are based on where key future on-site infrastructure and strategic mixed use development opportunities need to be secured. Additionally, longer term regeneration areas that are suitable and likely to become available are set out within these two priority areas. Residential development is also promoted at other sustainable sites in the Borough, as identified in the planned housing land supply<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.14 In addition to these plans for future new homes and jobs, significant new development has previously occurred/ been permitted at a number of other locations across the Borough's urban area. This included major development sites in the Greenhithe and Stone areas, settlements which have seen substantial growth from their small village origins. This part of the urban area, with distinctive places separated from Dartford town and Ebbsfleet, and occasional large breaks in the built form and distinctive topography, will principally see much needed community and green/ other infrastructure and the completion of existing proposals.

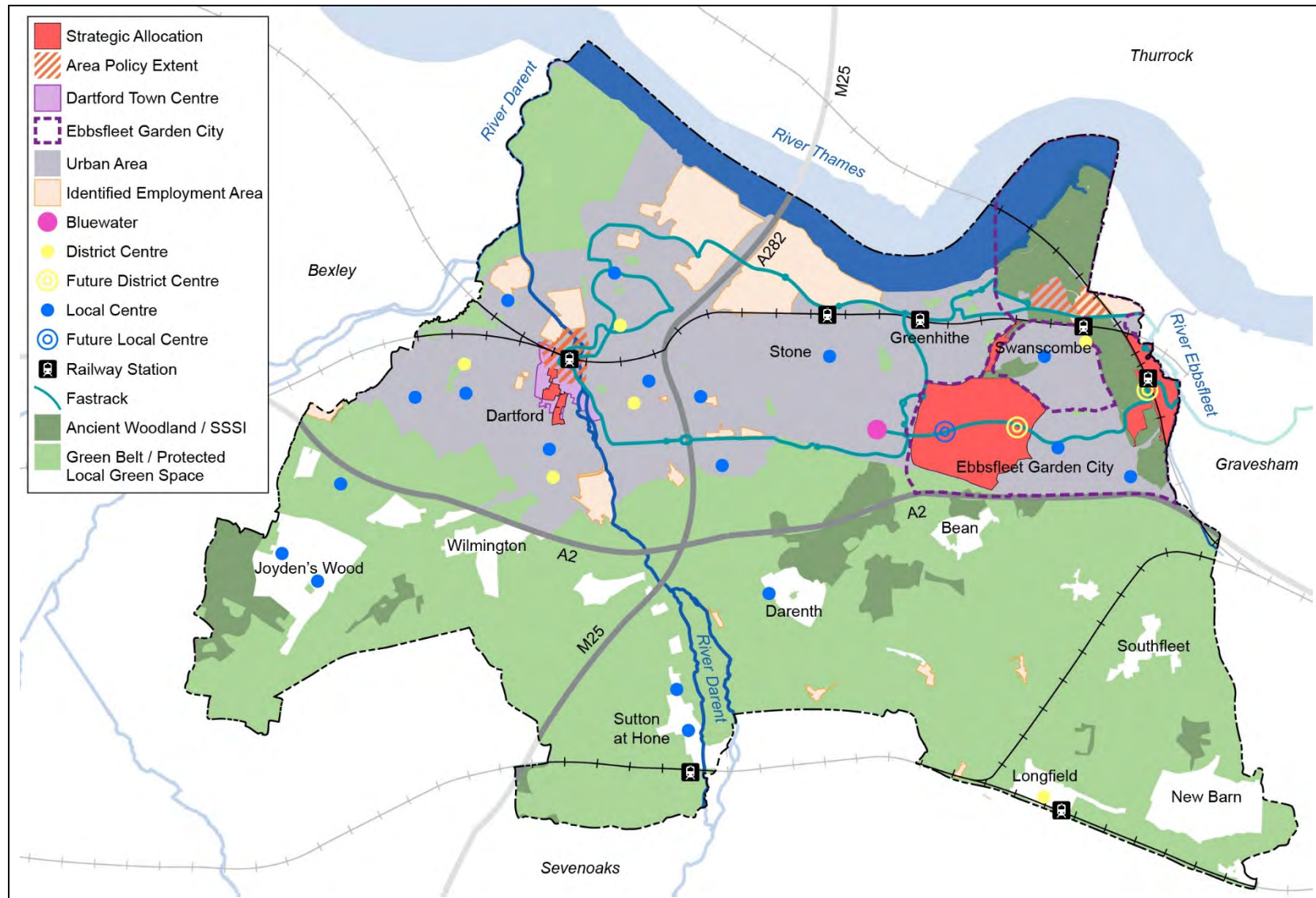
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<sup>13</sup> DBC (2021) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 2.15 The overall spatial strategy is outlined in the Borough's Key Diagram (Diagram 1). With this development focus on sustainable locations in the urban north of the Borough, the character of Dartford's villages and the open countryside can best be maintained. Much of the southern area of the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt where national policy seeks to maintain openness and permanence. Its purpose is also to limit urban sprawl between Greater London and towns in Kent, with the strategic wedge of open land at Dartford Marshes in particular providing a vital role in this regard. Green Belt land will be maintained to complement high levels of growth occurring in urban Dartford. This will ensure a defined sustainable pattern of development that is planned, clear and agreed for the Borough's future growth.



**Diagram 1: Key Diagram**



### **Policy S1: Borough Spatial Strategy**

1. Sustainable development will occur at planned locations in the Borough to meet assessed needs, securing new infrastructure provision and brownfield land re-use, creating neighbourhoods resilient and adaptive to climate change. Development should provide a diverse and complementary balance of uses and services within settlements, and minimise the necessity to travel by private vehicles.
2. Growth will be located at strategic allocations, sites in the identified housing land supply, and in line with the economic strategy. Development is directed to:
  - a) brownfield land not within the Green Belt; and
  - b) sites with good access by public transport and walking/ cycling to a range of local supporting services/ infrastructure.
3. The overriding priority for development in the Borough is at:
  - a) Central Dartford; and
  - b) Ebbsfleet Garden CityThese growth locations will be regenerated with the provision of new and improved infrastructure and strategic mixed use development.
4. Heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.
5. Designated sites of biodiversity value will be protected, and improvement of ecological sites and networks maximised.

#### **Urban Area Principles**

6. The Urban Area is defined as the area to the north of the A2 and outside the Green Belt. Within this area, complementary to strategic growth at Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City, developments with permission will be completed and additional development will occur at the Urban Area neighbourhoods of Dartford, Stone, Greenhithe and Swanscombe. This will include:
  - a) Residential development at sites in the identified housing land supply;
  - b) Provision of infrastructure, including for education and health facilities, and improvements to walking and cycling links, railway stations and the bus/ Fastrack networks;
  - c) Provision or enhancement of Green and Blue Infrastructure and Green Grid links;
  - d) Protection of shops and services at identified District and Local centres; and improvement of the quality of their environment where opportunities arise; and
  - e) Enhancements to the Rivers Thames and Darent for outdoor recreation, small scale river related leisure uses, walking and cycling, and ecology, where possible.

### Economic Strategy

7. Significant jobs, major commercial activity and new employment premises will be prioritised within Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City. Economic development will occur at locations elsewhere in the urban area where this is consistent with sustainable growth patterns and provides suitable improvement and expansion/ intensification of commercial locations. Economic growth will be based on a strategy of:
  - a) supporting the growth of existing local businesses within the Borough, and encouraging start-ups and small/ medium sized enterprises;
  - b) promoting enhanced productivity, targeting growth sectors and clusters of high technology or creative, industries; and
  - c) increasing professional and managerial employment.
8. Economic development and jobs growth will be delivered principally through supporting development opportunities, to deliver:
  - a) Planned strategic expansions at, or additional floorspace within, the identified employment areas.
  - b) Redevelopment for modern retail/ leisure premises and community facilities within the retail centres. The network of retail centres comprises:
    - i) Dartford Town Centre, which will attract a wide range of new businesses;
    - ii) Bluewater, which will continue its regional economic contribution;
    - iii) District Centres at Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Swanscombe and Longfield; and
    - iv) Local Centres in the urban area and at villages.

### Non-Urban Area Principles

9. The openness and permanence of the Metropolitan Green Belt in the south of the Borough and at Dartford Marshes will be maintained. Development will only occur where in full accordance with Green Belt policies.
10. Any residential or other development within the Borough's villages will be of proportionate scale and on non-Green Belt land.

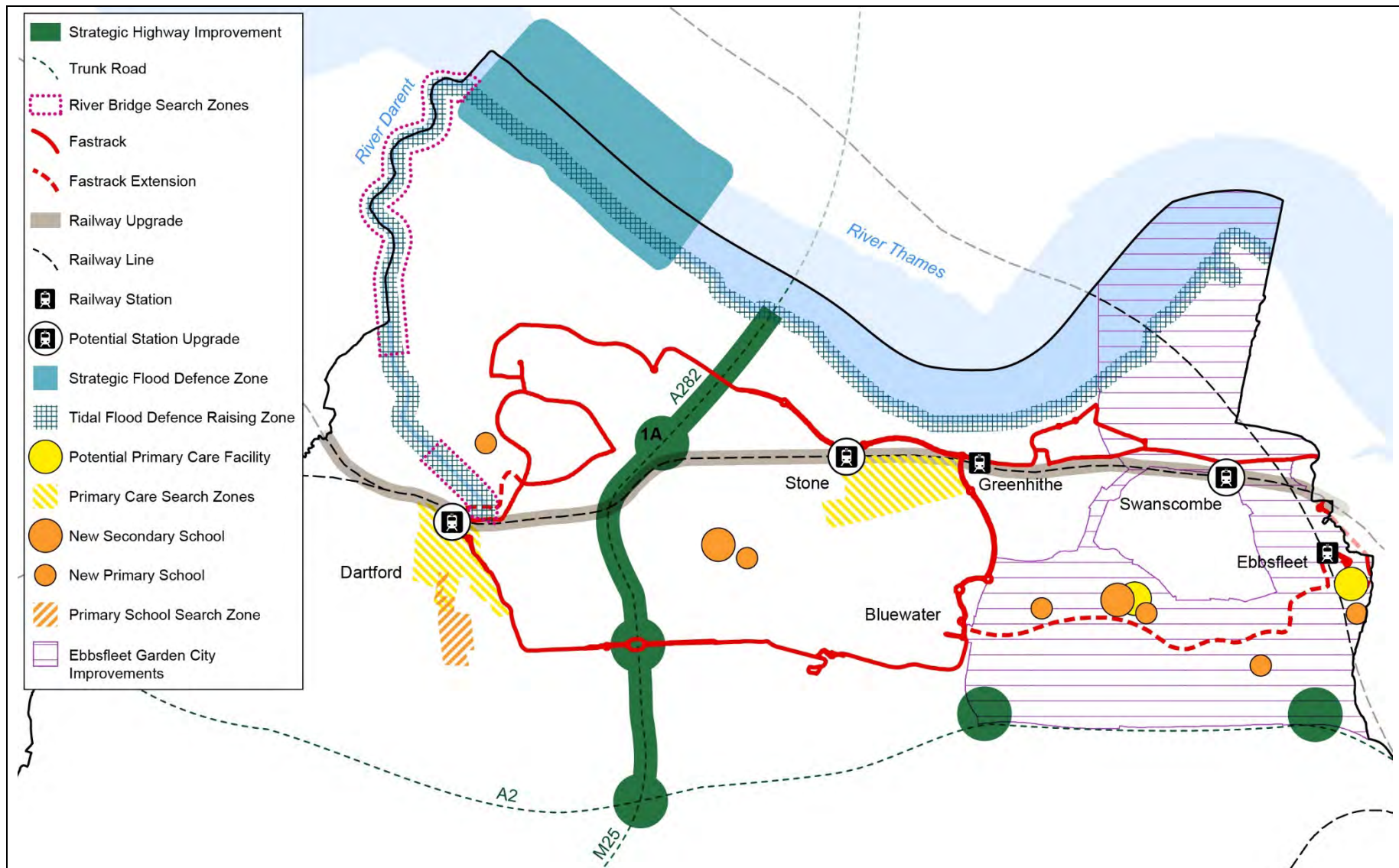
## **Infrastructure Planning Strategy (S2)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W2, W5, I1, I2, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 93, 98, 104, 105*

- 2.16 Infrastructure planning is a pivotal part of the sustainable growth of the Borough. In addition to transport and other networks, the provision of community infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities, is essential to meet the wellbeing and personal requirements of residents. Development should also be complemented by green infrastructure, the open and green spaces necessary for residents to enjoy a healthy and good quality of life, and for providing habitats for nature.
- 2.17 The Council works with a wide range of partners, including Kent County Council, Kent and Medway NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Highways England, to deliver high quality infrastructure alongside new development. The Council, along with the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation where applicable, will continue to lead the local co-ordination of infrastructure, working in partnership with service providers to identify, prioritise and secure the funding and, where necessary, land to deliver infrastructure.
- 2.18 The Council has provided a clear and consistent development focus in this Local Plan through the spatial strategy. Drawing from this, new services and facilities must be provided in a timely manner, with investment commensurate with the scale and needs of the Borough's communities as it grows. In particular, the Borough's urban area needs new facilities and public and private investment, to serve and protect residential areas, and to create high quality new places in growth areas that are appealing for pedestrians and with good communications. Some of these interventions, including 'search zones' where site specific delivery or the area requirement for community facilities is not yet fully confirmed, are summarised in Diagram 2.



**Diagram 2: Infrastructure Diagram**



### Community needs and local infrastructure planning

- 2.19 With high levels of population growth, pressing needs exist, particularly for new health and education facilities. The rate of progress in achieving infrastructure delivery has been variable. A number of education facilities have been completed for instance, but further needs remain. Looking ahead, infrastructure must be front loaded and provided early on in regenerating areas.
- 2.20 New community, transport and other infrastructure must be brought forward and the location and timing of infrastructure co-ordinated to address Dartford's growth plans. Cohesion of new and existing neighbourhoods needs to be consolidated and given a chance to form with the assistance of facilities essential to supporting successful communities, particularly schools and health/ wellbeing provision. Given the major changes already seen across some of the urban area, social integration supported by infrastructure needs time to take root, and development can only sustainably be achieved at an appropriate and planned pace.
- 2.21 The Local Plan looks towards 2037 and development needs to be flexible to future consumer preferences, wider implications of infrastructure/ technology, changing delivery models for community services, potential changes in the demand for skills or need to travel significant distances, and health impacts.
- 2.22 Policies consider the long term and highlight the significance of securing land for infrastructure, avoiding inappropriate alternative development that jeopardise facilities being delivered. This applies both to improvements needed to physical infrastructure in the Borough, including local and strategic (Thames Estuary) flood defences, and finding sites for new community infrastructure in growing urban locations. Similarly, green infrastructure needs to be planned within developments, with strategic provision on large sites. Sufficient waste infrastructure is also essential to ensure that residents minimise their environmental footprint.

### Dartford's infrastructure planning regime

- 2.23 Through discussions with the service providers and carrying out additional studies, Dartford has produced new infrastructure planning documentation that identifies the improvements to infrastructure and provision of additional community facilities needed to support the planned growth in the Local Plan. Dartford's infrastructure planning and

co-ordination relates the infrastructure needs arising as a result of growth to where development is focused. It also acknowledges the more strategic infrastructure required to support long term sustainable development across the Borough.

- 2.24 Dartford has introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Dartford's CIL governance is largely based on annual consideration and agreement of local needs/ requirements of service providers and available funding. This planned 'in principle' funding approach is anticipated to be maintained to provide clarity for both the service providers and developers that infrastructure to support development will be delivered. The implications of the introduction of any new national system of CIL developer contributions will need to be considered within this context. It is currently assumed that an update to the Council's CIL Charging Schedule will be considered on adoption of the Local Plan.
- 2.25 Planning obligations, secured through section 106 legal agreements, are also employed. These secure site specific measures, for instance land for the provision of community facilities and affordable housing provision.
- 2.26 Dartford's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)<sup>14</sup> outlines the main Borough infrastructure projects currently being actively planned, giving details of when they are expected to be provided, responsibility for their delivery and how they will be funded. The IDP is developed through discussions with the service providers and updated on a regular basis as projects progress, affording the opportunity for new projects to be added.
- 2.27 It is expected that the major service providers, whether for highways, public transport, waste, utilities, health and social care, education or other community infrastructure, will use the spatial strategy and financial contributions from development to bring forward and deliver infrastructure improvements through the IDP. It is also expected that they will maintain a package of other large and smaller scale service upgrades throughout the plan period and across the Borough that will meet the needs of both new development and indigenous growth.
- 2.28 Parish and town councils within the Borough receive a portion of the CIL contributions from development within their areas, and they have greater flexibility, providing it meets needs generated by development. Expenditure of this neighbourhood portion should

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<sup>14</sup> Infrastructure Delivery Plan, DBC (December 2020)

be optimised and the Council will encourage the parish and town councils to contribute the monies received through CIL towards essential strategic community infrastructure, such as new health facilities that serve their area. This can complement the actions of parish and town councils directly funding smaller interventions, e.g. improvements to the public realm, local recreation areas, pedestrian crossings, bus stops and residents' parking schemes.

- 2.29 Achievement of sustainable development and the associated infrastructure set out in infrastructure planning documents is based around the successful delivery of the planned spatial strategy, focused on Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City. It requires actively managing the location/ level of development as set out in Local Plan policies. This is a prime reason why significant unanticipated residential development proposals will be carefully considered, especially against policy M9.

#### Managing travel demand and infrastructure

- 2.30 Dartford Borough has attracted investment and population growth based on its strategic location and varied connections. For development to continue sustainably, the transport network needs to be improved, and the travel implications of development closely considered. Economic development has meant high levels of mobility. In addition to flows straight through the Borough, Dartford has both a high degree of out-commuting, and an even higher volume of people who flow into the Borough every working day. Usage of Dartford railway station has grown very rapidly. There are also high levels of movement on both the road and rail network passing through the Borough due to its proximity to London and the Dartford Crossing.
- 2.31 The very large volumes of traffic on both the M25 and A2 and the frequent occurrence of incidents leads to many drivers (including HGVs) being either forced or choosing to use local roads to complete their journeys. The lack of resilience of the Dartford Crossing generates much of the Borough's endemic congestion issues, with serious impacts on the local road network throughout all of Dartford town and beyond.
- 2.32 A range of transport planning interventions are necessary, including reducing reliance on private vehicles in new developments and improving public transport and active travel provision. As part of this, the Council will advocate the implementation of proposed highway schemes, particularly the Lower Thames Crossing (outside Dartford) and the upgrade of the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions, in a timely manner.



It will work with its highway partners to take forward and help deliver further necessary junction upgrades on both the strategic and local highway networks. This is expected to include Junction 1A on the M25 and potentially its other junctions in the Borough further south of the Dartford Crossing. This should be allied with a package of upgrades on the local road network to alleviate daily congestion pressure points.

- 2.33 Even after taking into account planned strategic highway works to address increased demand, development can only be accommodated if the proportion of journeys made by public transport and active travel modes are significantly increased together with other sustainable travel measures undertaken by new development to mitigate their impact. Policies M16 and M17 set out these further provisions.
- 2.34 A clear Local Plan strategy has an important role to play by leading the forward planning for a sustainable pattern of new activities. Uses that generate significant movements of people, such as schools, healthcare and large shopping or employment areas, need to be well located in close proximity to each other and residential areas, with a realistic choice of travel modes. The planning policies also consistently seek measures to secure major modal shifts in transport choice in favour of expanded active travel and public transport. These offer clear benefits for efficient travel and wellbeing, avoiding vehicular congestion, improving air quality and promoting healthy living.
- 2.35 Technological change is very significant to communication and mobility. It is expected to expand opportunities for more environmentally friendly vehicles such as replacing internal combustion engines with electric power, and alternative fuel options for buses. Measures to accommodate these changes will be required in developments. However, new information communications technology should also assist in providing economic growth prospects that are not dependent on ever-increasing travel demand.
- 2.36 There are some frequent and varied rail services available from stations within the Borough. However journeys times to central London are relatively slow (with the exception of Ebbsfleet International), suffer from capacity issues during peaks and may be prone to unreliability. There is the potential for better rail connectivity from Dartford with the opening of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) at Abbey Wood west of the Borough. Development proposals should not prejudice the long term potential of new rail services between Ebbsfleet and the current terminus for the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) services at Abbey Wood. The Council will continue to explore the potential of this project with partners, which will be based on the following principles for the Borough:

- Achieving significant modal shift away from a reliance on private vehicles to reduce congestion by delivering a new, integrated high quality transport service and connectivity required to meet current and future travel demands. A major intervention is required to provide additional capacity for the rail network to Dartford, and for reducing journey times to key central London destinations.
- Supporting regeneration and the creation of suitable new jobs and increased productivity, particularly at Dartford Town Centre.
- Demonstrating clear environmental and social benefits across the Borough.
- Establishing that the overall benefits to Dartford residents will outweigh the costs/ adverse impacts of construction.

2.37 In any event, the Council considers that there is a current need for major improvements to the railway stations at Dartford, Stone Crossing and Swanscombe. The potential for enhanced operation and customer convenience is significant, in particular at Dartford station, with the aim of achieving highly usable and integrated public transport hubs.

2.38 The direct Fastrack bus link between Ebbsfleet International Station and Bluewater will shortly be operating and further dedicated busway links are required. Further major improvements are required to wider Fastrack route infrastructure including the expansion of Fastrack services (e.g. potentially in the Swanscombe Peninsula area), and priority measures at strategic junctions in Dartford to ensure reliability. These must be allied with improved bus services on other routes serving the wider urban and rural areas of the Borough, including innovative provision such as demand responsive transport. The integration of ticketing and wider accessibility to real time information on public transport services will also encourage greater use and make multi-modal journeys easier.

#### Borough Green Grid Network

2.39 The Green Grid will continue to be upgraded and expanded by the Council and through new development to help prioritise and deliver connected Green and Blue Infrastructure and active travel improvements. It enables people and wildlife to move and make connections within the urban area, to and along rivers and other watercourses, to the countryside and to networks beyond the Borough.

**Policy S2: Infrastructure Planning Strategy**

1. Borough development will be plan-led, and major proposals masterplanned and phased, in order to ensure the co-ordinated delivery of new infrastructure, and that demand is managed to remain within capacity as far as possible until necessary new infrastructure is provided. New services and facilities will be provided to meet Dartford Borough's needs, with land retained within applicable large development for essential community, travel, flood defence and green infrastructure uses.
2. Community uses, including education, health, sports facilities, cultural services and local shops, will be retained, and new facilities delivered. Development will ensure communities have good quality and sustainable access to the day-to-day facilities they need including local services and jobs. Overall community infrastructure needs and growth will be regularly reviewed to ensure that a flow of sufficient new facilities are secured in appropriate locations.
3. New development will be located where well-served by public transport, and within easy walking distance of local facilities and jobs (for new homes, or the labour force/ primary catchment as applicable for other developments). All major development will feature significant measures to provide improved safe and secure active travel routes integrated with the surrounding area. Large and trip generating developments should support public transport use and new infrastructure. Focussing on sustainable locations/ transport provisions should support minimising pollution in Air Quality Management Areas and elsewhere.
4. Opportunities to achieve transport upgrades will be maximised. This includes promoting:
  - a) New and improved rail services and replacement or enhanced train stations.
  - b) New and improved Fastrack and other bus services/ routes, including addressing non-dedicated sections of Fastrack routes which are vulnerable to general traffic congestion and bus priority at junctions where possible.
  - c) Further highway and junction upgrades. Additional investment will be supported, dependent on further assessment by Highways England, Kent County Council, Dartford Borough Council and partners.
  - d) Use of rivers for the sustainable transport of goods and passengers as part of proposals for strategic scale development.
5. Physical and other infrastructure necessary to serve development, including beyond the plan period, will be co-ordinated with the relevant agencies, service providers and utility companies (including by liaison between them and the developer where appropriate). Space for strategic infrastructure provision, and access to it, will be reserved as required, including for flood defences and waste planning. New high quality and advanced communications infrastructure developments will occur in line with national policy to support the Borough's needs.

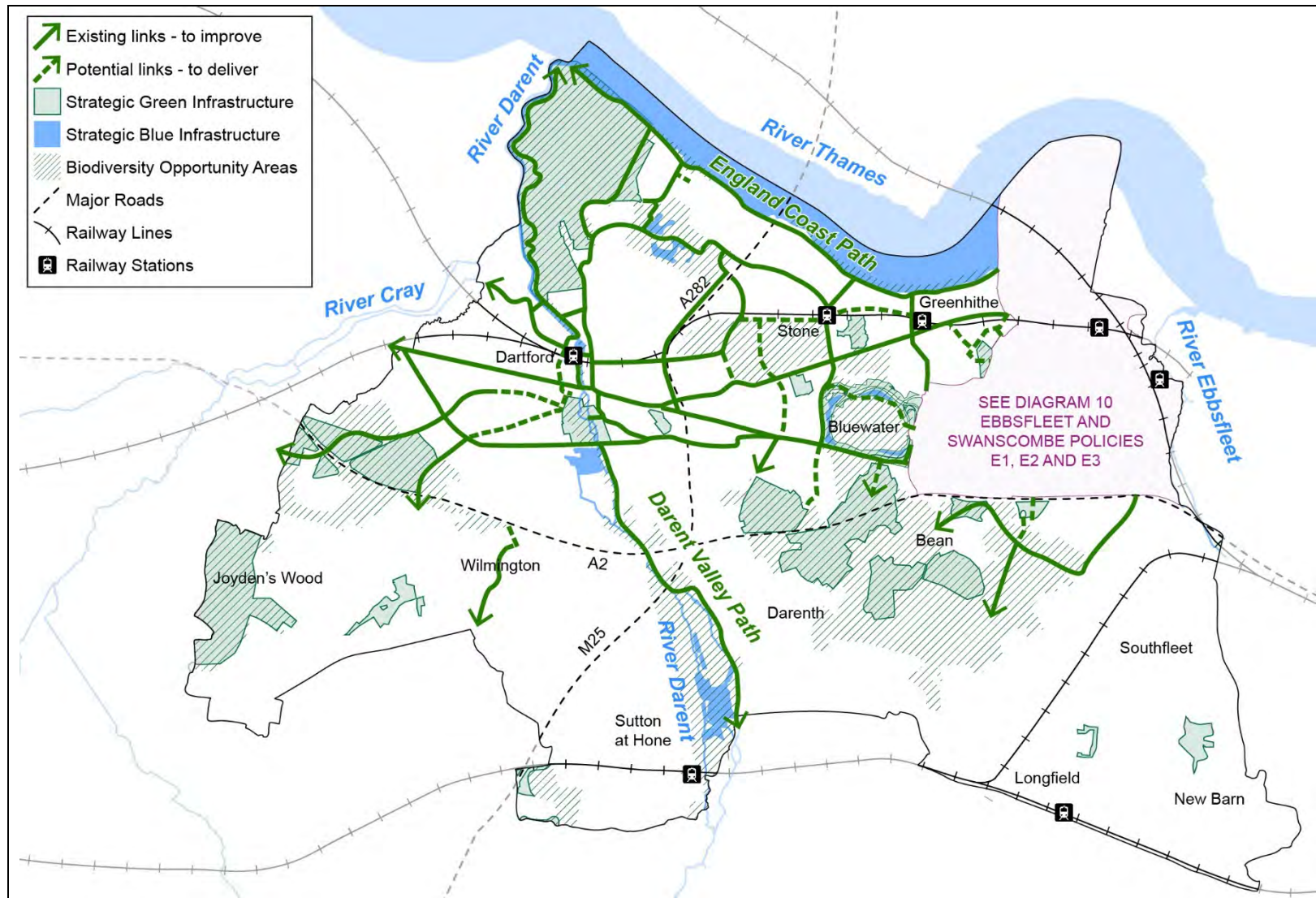
6. The Borough's Green Grid network will continue to be upgraded and expanded to a finer grain, including through improving existing green and blue infrastructure such as open spaces and water bodies, achieving appropriate new multi-functional greenspaces, and enhancing biodiversity. Development will also contribute proportionately to green infrastructure, with larger developments making significant provision on-site.
7. Dartford's infrastructure planning documents will set out the Council's priorities for infrastructure, and be a principal basis for working with partners on infrastructure delivery. Development will contribute to infrastructure provision as necessary in line with national policy through:
  - a) Contributions via Dartford's Community Infrastructure Levy; and/ or
  - b) Planning obligations secured by Section 106 legal agreements, where applicable, for affordable housing or site specific infrastructure; and/ or
  - c) Provision in-kind; or
  - d) Any successor developer contribution scheme.

### **Climate Change Strategy (S3)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, G3, G4, G5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 152-156, 159*

- 2.40 Climate change is likely to lead to hotter, drier summers, and warmer, wetter winters, with rises in sea levels and an increased frequency of storm events. The Council recognises the serious impact of climate change and the threats posed by rising global temperatures. The Council further appreciates that it has a duty to act, working with partners including the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to ensure that the Borough and its people play a part in securing a sustainable future. It welcomes the Government's commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 but aspires to go further to tackle the effects of climate change.
- 2.41 Development strategy has a key role to play in this, and therefore most of the Local Plan policies include relevant actions. It is expected that developments will design in flexibility, infrastructure and space for current, new and emerging technologies and adaptations. In particular, the Plan's land use strategy is based around locating new development in areas well-served by facilities and sustainable travel modes, and seeking to improve public transport services as well as walking and cycling routes, including via the Green Grid network. It aims to reduce the frequency and duration of private car use and thereby reduce Dartford Borough's carbon emissions. Development can also facilitate the take up of zero or low carbon technology, for instance through electric vehicle charging provision or promoting domestic renewable energy installations.
- 2.42 Applicable development will be expected to incorporate Green Grid habitat/ landscape corridors and enhanced or new footpaths/ cycle paths. Strategic elements of the Green Grid shown in Diagram 3 include: natural and open spaces such as marshes, heathland, woods, and parks; and the Thames Path which is soon to become part of the England Coast Path, National Cycle Route 1 which traverses the Borough from east to west, and the River Darent which provides a walking/ key wildlife corridor from north to south.

**Diagram 3: Strategic Green Grid Diagram**



- 2.43 The Borough includes a number of important natural environments, including some extensive Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In order to provide resilience to wildlife affected by rising temperatures, it is essential that the network of habitats is protected and improved. The natural environment as a whole has an important role to play in mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- 2.44 New legislation will be applied to optimise biodiversity net gain in Dartford, potentially assisted by the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. In addition to strategic policies in this plan, development management provisions apply, including policies M14 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) and M15 (Biodiversity and Landscape). These recognise, amongst other interventions, that trees absorb carbon and tree planting is strongly encouraged, and that new/ enhanced green spaces are required, including to provide areas where rain and floodwater can percolate, reducing the risk that properties will flood.
- 2.45 Parts of the Borough are at risk of flooding but are largely protected by flood defence infrastructure which will be protected and enhanced through policies in the Local Plan. In line with national planning policy, most development is directed at sites which are not within flood risk areas. The exception is the sustainable development of Central Dartford where growth will provide regeneration benefits but will need to be designed to mitigate flood risk (particularly in the currently modelled climate change scenario).
- 2.46 Development can also be designed to reduce energy consumption and mitigate the effects of rising temperatures. As set out in other policies, this may be through paying careful attention to the aspect of dwellings, designing internal layouts to provide natural ventilation, and including trees which provide natural shading to open spaces. As the Borough lies within a water stressed area, development will also need to incorporate water efficiency measures.



### **Policy S3: Climate Change Strategy**

1. Development will be well located, and innovatively designed and constructed, to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Development in the Borough should contribute to minimising carbon emissions from properties and processes, and reducing the need for unsustainable travel, avoiding vulnerability and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change by a package of bespoke measures integrated within development at an early stage of design and planning, including the measures set out in criteria 2-7.
2. The use of sustainable and active travel modes will be embedded into developments; designing for walking/ cycling (particularly at locations which benefit the Green Grid), public transport and low carbon motorised personal transport (including for future electric vehicle charging points/ cabling needs). This should be designed to be adaptable to allow for future changes to technology and transport methods.

#### Green and Blue Infrastructure

3. Existing green spaces, habitats, and tree coverage will be protected and enhanced, and new provision will be made, to absorb carbon dioxide, support biodiversity and reduce surface water runoff. The biodiversity mitigation hierarchy (avoid, reduce, mitigate, compensate) will apply, with the priority being to protect, enhance and integrate existing features of biodiversity interest. Achieving biodiversity net gain will play an important part in delivering this strategy.

#### Flood risk management

4. Development will be sequentially located in areas at lower risk of flooding, from any source unless the development demonstrably provides specific wider sustainability benefits and will be safe for its lifetime. Planned development in flood risk areas will fully mitigate flood risk impacts.
5. Development will be planned to deliver/ maintain existing and future local and strategic flood defences, and major development will provide sustainable drainage systems which reduce surface water flood risk and benefit the green infrastructure network.

#### Sustainable design and technology

6. Development will efficiently manage and re-use natural resources and waste, including through the use of water efficiency measures.
7. The design, location and construction of development will: minimise energy consumption; regulate internal temperatures; provide appropriate natural shading on buildings, at street level and in open spaces; incorporate renewable or low/ zero carbon energy sources; and allow for other new sustainable technologies to be provided or readily incorporated in the future.



### **Borough Development Levels (S4)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4, I1, I3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 11, 15, 66*

- 2.47 Along with economic rejuvenation and job generation, Dartford Borough has hosted a substantial increase in housebuilding since the Millennium. In this period, in actual year by year completions, the Borough has commonly delivered approximately 600 new homes per annum. When fluctuations have occurred in the Borough's provision of development, these have broadly related to national economic factors.
- 2.48 The Dartford Core Strategy (2011) co-ordinated a positive regeneration agenda for the Borough. This included plans for Ebbsfleet, confirming it for strategic redevelopment (having previously been part of the Green Belt), and a swathe of sites across the urban area on brownfield, largely redundant, land. These opportunities gave development in the Borough further impetus, leading to a wave of recent large scale new homes and jobs provision at identified locations. After the adoption of the Core Strategy, housing delivery significantly accelerated, particularly in the latter half of the 2010s. (Delivery rates in the last two years to 2021 then reduced from this level with greater national economic uncertainty from the impact of Brexit/ Covid-19).
- 2.49 The result has been very high Borough population growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with the number of residents in Dartford proportionately increasing by one of the fastest rates in the country. Population growth totalled 10% in the five years to 2020 (the highest growth rate in the country of any district level authority was 11%). It is regarded as questionable if this position can be sustainably accommodated Borough-wide over a prolonged period (for instance, given the small land area of the Borough and infrastructure delivery structural issues). However, consistent with the growth resulting from Core Strategy, this Local Plan maintains a clear urban regeneration and sustainable development delivery focus. Significant further residential and economic growth is expected through existing permissions, planned supply and new proposals, particularly in accordance with the development objectives at Ebbsfleet and Central Dartford.
- 2.50 Dartford Borough's regeneration agenda and the identification of strategic economic development land has proved beneficial in job generation and securing significant new

businesses in the Borough. There have been growing levels of provision of new employment (offices/ industrial) development. Over the Core Strategy period, delivery averaged approximately 13,000sqm per annum, with floorspace gains becoming consistent and greater over more recent years.

#### Future development mix and levels

- 2.51 To promote growing prosperity, a positive approach will be maintained towards economic growth and achieving wider job opportunities. Development within identified employment areas (including extensive newly allocated land) and planning permissions will significantly expand employment land supply. Using this approach, the Borough has capacity to:
- Flexibly deliver substantial new premises, accelerating employment delivery
  - Provide a choice of accessible urban and more rural business locations
  - Achieve a general balance in Borough development, with appropriate new jobs accompanying a growing population.
- 2.52 The retail sector is supported through the housing-led population growth. However, structural changes to retailing are recognised. In future, many retail premises may need to focus on the quality of premises and the personal experience as much as the scale of new retail floorspace. When quantitative needs to 2030 are calculated and modelled in line with national policy, the data<sup>15</sup> suggests that narrowly, no net Borough-wide need exists if full build out of permissions (i.e. at Ebbsfleet and Bluewater) is factored in. Nevertheless, qualitative factors may support new/ re-provided premises within redevelopments, particularly suitable locations close to areas of regeneration and residential growth, e.g. Dartford town centre.
- 2.53 Dartford Borough's progress in creating sustainable new neighbourhoods, re-using land and supporting local job growth and new retail and services should be sustained at suitable levels to meet housing and economic needs. Growth will be actively planned in a way that has sufficient flexibility but continues to enhance quality of life and a balance of uses and facilities. To continue to deliver the strategy of brownfield land recycling, and sustainably regenerating Dartford Borough, the rate and types of development and infrastructure delivery should be aligned. Direct full control over this by the local planning authority is not possible, but the Council can help to ensure that

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<sup>15</sup> Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail & Leisure Study, LSH (January 2021)

delivery occurs in a co-ordinated and timely way, for instance through provisions in plans for large sites.

- 2.54 Importantly, new homes created in recent years have predominantly been on brownfield land in the urban area. The Plan maintains the previous aim for 80% or more of homes to be on brownfield sites.

### Residential growth

- 2.55 Residential development needs to achieve objectives for a choice of high quality, affordable homes and to make good green places to live in the Borough. The focus on planned residential development through sites in the identified housing land supply in Dartford, including strategic allocations, is a very important part of the spatial and infrastructure strategies (policies S1 and S2). This will enable the Borough's growth to sustainably continue in a planned manner.
- 2.56 The government's standard methodology for local housing needs currently requires the provision of 750 dwellings per annum<sup>16</sup>. Development needs have been reviewed in the context of an economic and spatial strategy that is supportive of delivery of urban mixed use and residential development to maintain regeneration momentum; and where infrastructure investment, jobs and services occurs in parallel, in order to secure better local places, population needs and resident quality of life.
- 2.57 A Borough housing requirement of an average of 790 dwellings per year is set out in this Local Plan<sup>17</sup>. This level, and the associated spatial strategy:
- Is based on the actual developable supply of housing land, accounting for the confirmed regeneration potential to achieve sustainable new homes in the Borough (Table 1);
  - Provides for the national objectively assessed need for the Borough and includes flexibility;
  - Boosts provision of new homes and supports plans for new local communities to continue to materialise now in planned locations, by providing a sufficient deliverable supply for 5 or more years from now; and

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<sup>16</sup> HdH (2021) Dartford and Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment Update

<sup>17</sup> DBC (2021) Residential Requirement Report

- Is consistent with potentially supporting delivery of some unmet residential needs in the wider area.
- 2.58 This housing requirement equates to the average level of capacity of Dartford's suitable developable sites at 2031/32 (fifteen years into the plan period). A regeneration potential led strategy in the Core Strategy enabled a substantial uplift in housing delivery at planned locations. Maintaining this achievable regeneration focused strategy is in harmony with the Borough's longstanding sustainable development and growth objectives, and in accordance with national policy.
- 2.59 The requirement of 790 homes a year would be a large uplift on long term delivery in Dartford Borough (i.e. an increase of 32% from a previous average delivery rate of approximately 600 homes a year). An increase of this order, allied with policy M7, brings the prospect of increased affordable housing delivery, and supports economic development.
- 2.60 If projected over the plan period (to 2036/37 inclusive), the average requirement equates to a total of 15,800 dwellings. The current projected housing trajectory over the plan period is set out at Appendix C.
- 2.61 The identified Dartford housing land supply is almost exclusively made up of existing developable permissions plus sites found deliverable or developable in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>18</sup>. The SHLAA looks ahead long term, with sites identified and delivery projections made to 2037, and there are opportunities for responding to actual housing delivery as sites may materialise earlier. As a result of this, the housing requirement will continue to be satisfied and will be kept up to date and flexibly managed through planning permissions, Brownfield Land Register sites, and reflected in regular five year deliverable housing land supply statements and monitoring.
- 2.62 Positive actions in Dartford have resulted in progress on substantial regeneration sites that will continue to deliver new housing into the 2020s, and potentially longer. This means there is a very low reliance of delivery from more uncertain sources, e.g. land from unidentified (windfall) sites. This aligns with the delivery of sustainable development supported by infrastructure, through clear forward planning co-ordinated

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<sup>18</sup> Dartford Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, DBC (September 2021)

by the Local Plan and infrastructure planning. Unexpectedly high levels of development through significant additional homes on windfall sites (or other sources) will be closely monitored and the implications for the Local Plan, infrastructure, and brownfield land objectives reviewed.

- 2.63 The projected breakdown of housing supply sources to 2031/32 is set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sources of Housing Supply and Numbers of Homes**

<b>Source of housing supply:</b>	<b>Total contribution to 2017/18 to 2031/32 (inclusive) homes:</b>
Delivered so far	3,200
Allocated sites delivery (policies D4, D5, D6, E4 & E5)	5,800
SHLAA identified (including permissions), excluding allocated sites.	2,500
Other permissions and non-identified sites delivery allowance	400
<b>TOTAL housing supply 2031/ 32</b>	<b>11,900</b>
<b>TOTAL Housing requirement: 15 years at 790 homes per annum</b>	<b>11,900</b>
<i>To the nearest hundred</i>	

- 2.64 The predominance of Dartford Borough's housing supply is identified and well advanced, providing a choice of sites for the market to draw down and deliver. Delivery from sites that already benefit from a planning consent is projected to total approximately 8,000 of the new homes for the Borough. This total, for the full plan period, does not include the Ebbsfleet Central site (policy E4) where a fresh planning application is expected by the new landowner (Ebbsfleet Development Corporation).
- 2.65 The Plan's regeneration agenda means that there are likely to be other specific places with the potential to come forward to unlock additional sustainable development. They could complement the housing supply, i.e. further suitable sites at the growth locations. These longer term opportunities at Central Dartford and in Ebbsfleet Garden City (including as outlined within policies D7 and E6) are not certain/ available at present, but are regarded as sustainably able to be brought forward, potentially in the plan period. This is due to accelerated/ additional delivery potential at Ebbsfleet or new land suitable for regeneration becoming available in Central Dartford guided by the Local Plan policy, rather than at other unplanned locations. These offer future opportunities that can come forward in response to development market conditions.

### **Policy S4: Borough Development Levels**

1. Decisions on planning applications will ensure that levels of future development delivery are sufficient to provide for assessed housing needs and other development requirements, including for economic regeneration, and take account of infrastructure provision.
2. Large developments should be delivered at a phased rate in accordance with agreed masterplanning to provide a flow and complementary range of development, facilities and infrastructure. Achieving genuine variety within residential developments, through differentiation of housing tenures and types/ design, will create vibrant places, and also help maintain rates of new home delivery and Borough housing supply as planned.

#### **Housing requirement**

3. New homes are required to be delivered at an average rate of 790 per annum, with planning permissions and delivery closely monitored and managed. Decisions will be based on this requirement and the identified housing land supply in order to ensure a steady availability of deliverable land, and achievement of the planned supply at sustainable locations supported by infrastructure.
4. Planning decisions will have close regard to the target for 80% of the Borough's new homes in the plan period to be located on brownfield land.
5. A rolling five year deliverable supply of housing land will be maintained, including the applicable supply buffer (brought forward from within the Plan period to the level as required in the Housing Delivery Test).

#### **Town Centre, Community and Employment development**

6. Supporting the delivery of sustainable development aims and Dartford's economic strategy and regeneration areas, planning decisions will take account of the desirability of providing:
  - a) a balanced mix of land uses in the Borough and within neighbourhoods;
  - b) approximately an average rate of 22,000sqm per annum of new commercial, business and services uses, and community and learning uses (including offices, health facilities and schools); and
  - c) approximately an average rate of 25,000sqm per annum of new industrial/ distribution premises.

2.66 The planned development levels and delivery approaches can be sustainably accommodated within the Borough through application of the spatial strategy, infrastructure and climate change strategic principles outlined in policies S1 to S4. As an indicative overview, Table 2 broadly illustrates how/ where a mix of infrastructure and new premises and accommodation is expected to occur to meet needs. It shows

how the spatial strategy identifies sustainable locations that allow the continued maintenance of the Green Belt, and the achievement of development needs and regeneration objectives, as set out in this section.

**Table 2: Summary Illustration of Types and Locations of Development**

What	Where	When <sup>19</sup>	How
Homes	<p>Concentrated on specific sites identified in the housing land supply. This includes the following key areas; where, depending on regeneration progress, additional suitable residential sites may become available, or suitable land delivery may be accelerated by the market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ebbsfleet</li> <li>• Garden City</li> <li>• Central Dartford</li> </ul>	<p><i>Over a rolling 5yr period:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt;3,950 new homes (plus buffer and adjusted for performance to date).</li> </ul> <p><i>By 2032 (over 15 years):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11,900 new homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing sites under construction or with planning permission.</li> <li>• Maintaining a supply of specific deliverable sites</li> <li>• Providing an ample amount and variety of new housing land at sustainable locations in the housing land supply.</li> <li>• Identifying available and suitable brownfield land.</li> </ul> <p>Principal policies: S1, S4, D4, D5, D6, E4, E5, M9</p>
Employment	<p>Encouraged at locations across the Borough, particularly identified employment areas at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford (east of M25): 9 areas.</li> <li>• Other urban: 7 areas</li> <li>• South of the A2: 5 areas.</li> </ul> <p>Strategic commercial development is also expected at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford town centre</li> <li>• Ebbsfleet Central</li> </ul>	<p><i>By 2032 (over 15 years):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 8,000 to 16,000 jobs generated from planned new development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic expansions to areas at: Littlebrook/ The Bridge; Riverside/ Northern Gateway; Burnham Road and Crossways.</li> <li>• Completing sites under construction or with planning permission.</li> <li>• Sustainable intensification/ upgrade of the identified employment areas. Criteria for other proposals.</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> New infrastructure completions so far are not quantified here, but housing/ jobs/ floorspace totals also include completions since 2017.

What	Where	When <sup>19</sup>	How
			Principal policies: S1, S4, D2; E2, E4; M19-M21.
Retail and local services	<p>Maintaining the vitality and viability of a sustainable network of retail centres, and protecting/enhancing community services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford Town Centre</li> <li>• Bluewater</li> <li>• District Centres (8)</li> <li>• Local Centres (20)</li> </ul>	<p><i>By 2027 (over 10 years):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated gross need approximately 20,000sqm.</li> </ul> <p>(A greater amount could occur under current planning permissions, depending on economy and changing retail patterns).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewal of Dartford Town Centre including existing shopping centres</li> <li>• Defining and retaining a focused core frontage in part of Dartford High Street.</li> <li>• Maintaining smaller, more localised centres as part of Borough network. Includes potential redevelopment of under-used sites at smaller centres in the urban area.</li> <li>• New clusters to serve planned residential neighbourhoods. Planned new centres at Ebbsfleet Garden City include: 2 District Centres and a Local Centre to be built.</li> <li>• Appropriate evolution of Bluewater regional shopping centre.</li> <li>• Managing proposals for retail/leisure outside the network of retail centres.</li> </ul> <p>Principal policies: S1, D2-D4, D6, E2, E4, E5, M19, M22, M23.</p>
Community infrastructure	Where need from development exists, likely to include several locations in the urban area. The IDP and evidence includes additional provision for:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning infrastructure plans of service providers with planned growth locations.</li> <li>• Dartford's CIL income leveraging additional investment sources.</li> </ul>



What	Where	When <sup>19</sup>	How
	<u>Dartford</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1FE primary school expansion</li> <li>• New primary school</li> </ul> <u>Stone/ Greenhithe</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New secondary school completed</li> <li>• Primary healthcare facility</li> <li>• New primary school</li> </ul> <u>Ebbsfleet Garden City</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New 4FE secondary school</li> <li>• New 1FE primary school</li> <li>• Community Hub (Lifelong Learning Centre)</li> <li>• Health &amp; Wellbeing Centre (including primary care)</li> <li>• 1FE expansion of new primary</li> <li>• 4FE expansion of new secondary</li> <li>• 2 further primary schools</li> </ul> <u>Borough-wide</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A282(M25) Junction 1A</li> <li>• New Waste Transfer and Household Waste Recycling facility</li> <li>• New bed spaces in nursing/ residential care homes (Class C2).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2022/23</li> <li>• 2029-37</li> <li>• 2023/24</li> <li>• 2023-25</li> <li>• 2023/24</li> <li>• 2023/24</li> <li>• 2023/24</li> <li>• 2023/24</li> <li>• 2024-26</li> <li>• 2024-26</li> <li>• 2025-30</li> <li>• 2025-30</li> <li>• 2025-37</li> <li>• 2025-30</li> <li>• 2023-25</li> <li>• 2025-30</li> <li>• Over 300 bed spaces by 2037.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing further developer contributions to funding.</li> <li>• Securing on-site new provision where appropriate.</li> <li>• Working in partnership to retain land for timely service delivery.</li> </ul> <p>Principal policies: S2, D1, E1, M16-M18.</p>

2.67 Implementation is taken forward through subsequent sections of this plan, particularly sections 3 and 4 which set out the provisions for growth at the Borough priority development locations at Central Dartford, and Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe.

### **3. CENTRAL DARTFORD**

- 3.1 This section focuses on an area in and around Dartford town centre that is one of the two priority locations in the Local Plan. It covers the defined town centre and also an overlapping area of change to the north.

#### **Central Dartford as a Place of Change**

- 3.2 Dartford is unique in its setting and historical character, strategically placed within a flourishing County, and served by a range of transport links. Dartford town centre benefits from an expansive Central Park and also the River Darent running right through the town, providing surprisingly direct green access to Kent's countryside, the Thames Estuary and England Coastal Path. Dartford town centre is changing and on the cusp of major transformation, and the Council seeks to make the most of this opportunity and investment. It is critical that public and private sectors work well together to drive this renewal in order to achieve maximum benefit.
- 3.3 Dartford town centre and its surrounds are at the heart of a now economically buoyant Borough; but the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a move away from town centres and many urban areas as places to live and work, and the start of major changes in shopping. With investment priorities moving away from town centres, this impacted on associated cultural and leisure uses. However, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has seen a fresh period of change and recent growth in Dartford. There is now renewed interest in the town centre as a place to live and work.
- 3.4 The town centre has a very good choice of rail connections, with Dartford station now the busiest in Kent. It provides routes to a range of London terminus stations, cross London routes via the Thameslink service as well as links to the wider North Kent coast. Dartford station is within the pay as you go Oyster card network and is a very short journey away from the Crossrail terminus under construction at Abbey Wood. This has opened up Dartford, as a place of choice for new residents in the town centre and a connected location for businesses.
- 3.5 Dartford does not simply offer town centre living. It provides an opportunity to ensure a work-life balance that does not rely on the private car. There are vast areas of formal and informal open space within the town including: Central Park; the Fairfield Leisure Centre; gyms; Dartford Football Club; and easy pedestrian access into the countryside.

Town centre cultural attractions include the Orchard Theatre, Central Library and Dartford Museum.

- 3.6 Retail patterns are nationally now shifting further. There are moves in favour of more local facilities and shops, for instance with increased remote working. Dartford town centre is well placed to build on a retail offer based around convenient day-to-day requirements, and to provide new local services which may include food, household goods, healthcare, and wellbeing/ beauty, complemented by an expanded cultural/ leisure offer.
- 3.7 The Council is committed to improving the town centre environment and has embarked on a town centre regeneration programme, funded through government and contributions from new developments. This is creating new spaces for leisure, encouraging greater dwell time in the town. Attractive streets and public spaces particularly support a better quality food and beverage offer. The Council is currently completing the first phases of improvements to the public realm, including the creation of Brewery Square at Market Street and refurbishing the High Street.
- 3.8 It is hugely important that the town centre and its surrounds form a place where people can move around freely and safely in pleasant surroundings; an enticing and inviting place where people can live, meet and enjoy their leisure time; a place where the town's heritage is respected whilst responding to modern day needs and lifestyles.
- 3.9 Although Dartford is an evolving place, it is a historic town centre at its heart. Much of the town's historic street pattern has retained the alignment of the Roman roads, and the layout of the medieval market town is also still evident. The crossroads between the High Street, Spital Street and Hythe Street is still prominent within the town.
- 3.10 The majority of the town centre is within the largest Conservation Area in the Borough. This features approximately 40 listed buildings and structures, including coaching inns and historic pubs, civic buildings and other heritage assets. However, many functional post-war buildings, alterations and street changes obscure the town's history, and cut off potentially defining features such as the River Darent. More widely in Central Dartford, physical restrictions are still imposed by the ring road, the railway embankment and large footprint modern buildings. These create a growing need for new and improved public realm and walking/ cycling connections, particularly to open

up riverside settings, for the town centre to transform into a genuinely attractive place in which to live, spend time or money, or in which productively work or invest.

- 3.11 Given its historic development close to the River Darent, much of Dartford is at high risk of fluvial flooding. The area north of the railway line is also at high risk of tidal flooding from the River Thames. National policy allows development in flood risk areas where this provides wider sustainability benefits that outweigh the flood risk and where development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere (policy M4). The continued regeneration of Central Dartford is clearly a fundamental element of the Local Plan strategy, justifying sustainable development.
- 3.12 There are significant opportunities for greater residential accommodation as Dartford adapts to fundamental economic changes, notably in the retail and leisure sector. Relatively few people live in the town centre at present. However just north of the station and railway line, new homes have been constructed and have proved popular, as have commercial premises.
- 3.13 Dartford town centre has maintained a mix of local facilities, public and cultural services, shopping centres and traditional retail units, with vacancy rates decreasing. Evidence<sup>20</sup> further shows:
- General daytime visitors mostly go to Dartford for shopping, and particularly for food purchases (Sainsbury's and Aldi are the main shops). The street market and national retailers in the shopping centres (e.g. Wilko, Poundland and Primark) are also popular.
  - Dartford town centre has a clear but relatively localised catchment for retail and some services. Many travel to the town centre by car, but a high proportion also walk or come by bus.
  - The Orchard Theatre has a wide catchment extending well outside the Borough. However, few of the many visitors to the theatre use restaurants and bars in Dartford. The majority of those who visit the theatre either in the daytime or the evening do not visit Dartford town centre.
- 3.14 Transformation of the town centre will embrace rapidly shifting lifestyles and technology, work and travel habitats, and consumer and resident preferences, whilst respecting traditional town centre activities and the town's history. Under-used

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<sup>20</sup> Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail and Leisure Study, LSH (January 2021)

buildings provide opportunities for re-use, refurbishment or redevelopment. The positive qualities and environmental character of successful parts of the town need to be sustained and further revealed.

3.15 Prominent resources and factors vital to future prospects therefore include:

- The market town character and atmosphere, with popular street markets and the town centre's compact historic form.
- The accessibility and activity of the town deriving from its national transport connections, including a range of London destinations by train, and the local bus/ Fastrack network, generating visitors and pedestrian footfall.
- The mix of independent and multiple outlets, popular convenience anchor stores, and local food outlets.
- Momentum and recent investment progress, including tackling inefficient and tired public spaces, and redeveloping previously redundant and under-used land.
- The green spaces and setting of Central Park/ River Darent south of the High Street and tree lined ridges of the valley, with clear links and ready access to the countryside and Thames Estuary.
- The Orchard Theatre, the Central Library and Dartford Museum, the local arts/ cultural scene and creative industries.
- The range of leisure and recreation activities within Central Park and nearby, including the refurbished Fairfield Leisure Centre, athletics track and Park Run, open air theatre and bandstand, skate park and sports pitches, fishing lakes, David Lloyd leisure centre, Dartford cricket and football clubs, and community pitches.

3.16 The Council has supported significant developments to bring forward brownfield land and to secure Central Dartford's future vitality and economy. The recent and current (expected from planning permissions) scale of development, including approximately 1,200 homes built (since 2017) is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Current/ Recent Development and Permissions in Central Dartford**

Use	Quantity
Residential (dwellings)	2,000
Retail (sqm)	7,000
Office/ other business premises (sqm)	1,200
<i>To the nearest hundred, from 2017/18</i>	

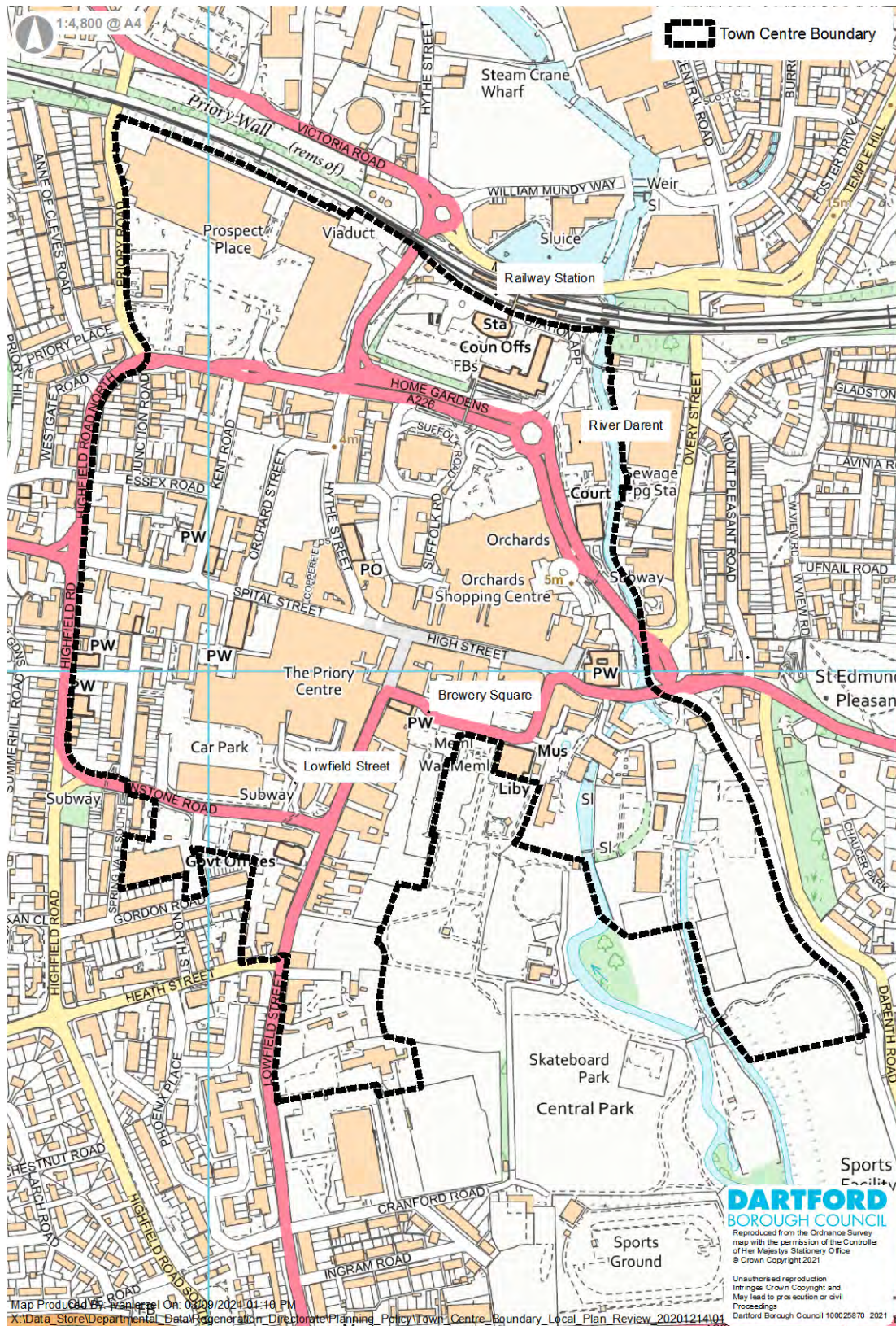
3.17 Additional new uses and developments will be actively supported to take forward regeneration of the area. In order to support and enable the sustained evolution of central Dartford, the following development requirements are apparent, and guide strategy in this Plan section:

- To grow a resident community with **choice of housing** for young and old, boosting the town centre economy, spending and local vitality, supporting a 24 hour sense of security.
- To plan land and funding for new **community facilities**, especially to serve new residential neighbourhoods.
- To continue and expand further **public realm improvements and improved cycling and walking** routes, including green and blue infrastructure.
- To provide modern **public transport** facilities, and better interchanges.
- To update **access** and vehicle parking strategy.
- To **renew shopping centres and other post-war large developments**, introducing new uses, better integrating with the town and removing barriers to movement.
- To deliver new/ replacement **premises of quality** to attract a wider range of retail, small businesses and evening uses.
- To **grow the cultural/ leisure** offer further, with the Orchard Theatre in particular acting as a catalyst to help further promote the town's arts and creative activities; with the potential to repurpose and reinvigorate under-used buildings/ spaces.

3.18 Central Dartford comprises the town centre boundary shown in Diagram 4 and the area policy in Diagram 9.



Diagram 4: Town Centre Boundary



## **Central Dartford Strategic Policies**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W5, I1, I2, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 86*

3.19 The policy approach driving the regeneration of Central Dartford is set out in this section. The Local Plan has an ambitious vision for Central Dartford:

### **Vision (Central Dartford):**

*Retaining a clear sense of its history, Dartford Town Centre's streets, open spaces and riverside, will be engaging and elegant; creating a place that is easy and enjoyable to use, walk around and experience. The vibrancy of the Town Centre will be supported by a diversified economy, new premises and more residents living in the town. Dartford will be the community heart of the Borough with a thriving, creative and innovative ambience, with the mix of its activities and its high quality environment giving many reasons to visit.*

3.20 This is an exciting time for Dartford, as the town is again becoming a desirable location for investment and as a place to live. For this to be secured and materialise fully to the benefit of the whole town and Borough, an up to date development strategy is essential. Looking ahead and considering change into the next decades is required to optimise prospects for the fundamental transformation necessary.

3.21 It is a pivotal stage, as alongside positive change there are the wider uncertainties that most towns face, e.g. shifts in shopping habitats, changes to office working practices/ locations, recent pressures on the entertainment/ leisure sector, and changes in travel, technology and the economy. A plan for the future needs to be responsive to this whilst increasing certainty. It can capitalise on the fact that there is flexibility to accommodate change in the future through a range of currently available or anticipated development and land options, and advanced investigations exploring future community infrastructure and transport provision in Dartford. To this end, policy D1 outlines the spatial framework for Central Dartford, and all developments must also comply as applicable with policies D2 and D3.



New uses and infrastructure

- 3.22 There are now clear opportunities and impetus to realise the vision for transformation of Dartford Town Centre and its surrounds. Significant diversification and growth of activities will create greater vibrancy and economic benefits. The delivery of this will be promoted by growing captive local expenditure for new local retail/ services, achieved particularly through creating new residential neighbourhoods and community/ cultural facilities in the town centre, allied with further local attractions in Dartford, including a cinema. The retail related functions of the town centre are summarised in the context of the Borough's network at Table 7 later in the plan. Development flexible to the requirements of business occupiers, and new infrastructure and communications, will secure Dartford's future economic growth. A focus on the growing arts/ cultural sector, and Dartford's productive history and industrial heritage to attract new creative industries, will also promote re-use of premises and a sense of vitality and refreshed identity.
- 3.23 Located between the High Street and Dartford railway station, the Orchard Theatre is a major attraction of vital importance to Dartford. It serves a much wider catchment area than the town centre and has benefitted from an increase in attendance rates. However, there has been little associated spend captured from these attendees. Dartford's development needs to build on the attraction and success of the theatre, as a clear point of differentiation from other competing locations, and to enhance the town centre as a place to spend longer, by providing complementary uses such as food and beverage. Specifically, a cinema and a mix of high quality bars and family restaurants would particularly help strengthen the town's daytime and mid-evening economy.
- 3.24 The benefits of these new economic activities and additional long term opportunities, such as new transport systems, need to be optimised by planning for town centre growth and the immediately adjoining area as a whole. It is anticipated that the impact of new railway services (e.g. Crossrail/ enhanced links from Central London and Abbey Wood) or a new railway station would be particularly beneficial for Central Dartford, given the scope for integrated public transport enhancements and enabling business investment in the town. It would also enhance the viability and therefore quality of development coming forward.
- 3.25 Integrated planning is at the heart of ensuring that new uses come forward along with appropriate new supporting infrastructure. Central Dartford provides an optimal

location for community services, co-locating with other uses and with the best public transport provision in the Borough. The Council will continue to explore all opportunities at sites, and with service providers, to achieve delivery of essential community uses, e.g. healthcare facilities and schools, to meet the needs of the growing population generated by development (see Diagram 2). Some of these facilities require relatively large amounts of land and delivery would only be possible on the largest sites in Central Dartford, and therefore require close consideration. It cannot be assumed that land remains available in or just outside the Central Dartford.

#### Existing development locations

- 3.26 Existing Central Dartford key sites, which were originally identified in the Core Strategy, are largely moving forward, but many sites remain available to respond to future development needs.
- 3.27 Change is evident to the south of the High Street where a focal new public space has been created adjoining Central Park, the first phase of upgrading the town's public realm. The new public space at Market Street, known as Brewery Square, creates a pedestrian friendly environment and new space for south facing outdoor street culture including space for tables and chairs and informal entertainment; and provides an attractive open setting for the Central Park main entrance and the listed building hosting the town's library and museum. Adjoining this, the first phases of redevelopment of the long vacant Lowfield Street sites are underway. The land is earmarked for continued redevelopment as the southern entry point for the town centre (policy D5).
- 3.28 Small site clusters off the High Street/ Spital Street are attracting renewed development interest, and should make an important contribution by supporting better and appropriate use of town centre land and complementing planned public realm improvements, brought forward in a co-ordinated manner. At the former Co-op/ car park site known as Westgate (policy D4), a resolution to grant permission was agreed in 2020. These areas feature on Diagram 5.

#### Further opportunities

- 3.29 This progress follows achievement of high profile investment in Dartford, including delivery of high quality riverside apartments immediately north of the town centre. To

sustain the transformation, a framework is needed to guide renewal of the highly accessible area near this development, as well as the sites north of the High Street. Policy D1 criterion 1 will balance the new buildings and spaces currently being delivered in the more southern parts of Central Dartford by delivering regeneration near the railway station and river on the north/ eastern edges of the town centre (policy D7). Nevertheless, development momentum needs to continue with the most prominent of currently available sites brought forward for delivery and completion.

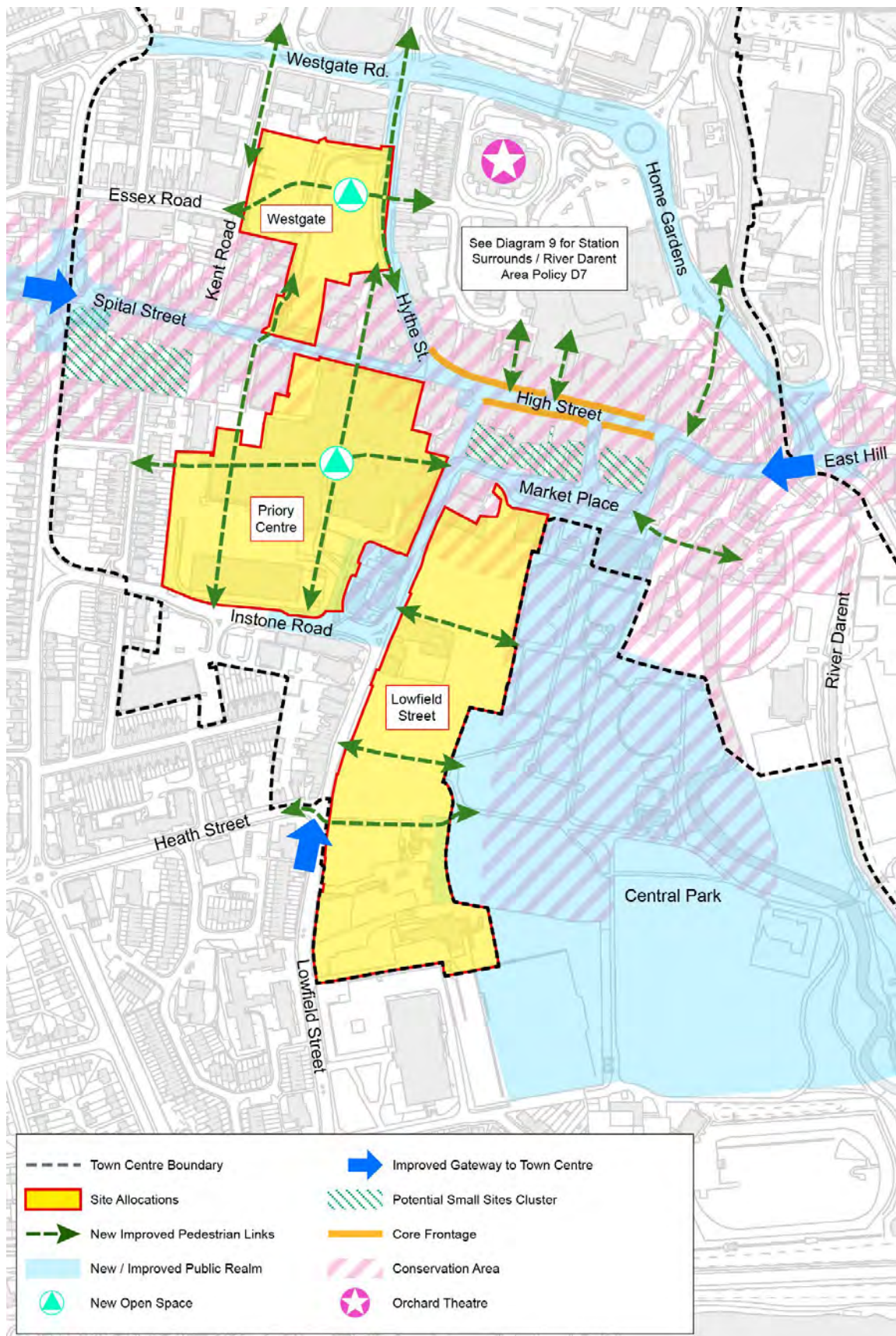
- 3.30 Future redevelopment/ refurbishment of unappealing spaces or buildings can complement identified sites. Development investment can repurpose vacant or under-used buildings to provide a more diverse and flexible mix of viable uses, including the potential for new creative, commercial and residential uses that meet the needs of customers and business, and better reflect current and predicted market trends.
- 3.31 Some of the most popular large retail developments often fail to enhance the town centre's streets, providing a setting that prioritises space for vehicles over encouraging shoppers and visitors, and lacking direct connections into the rest of town for linked trips for other services. The Council recognises that there is likely to be retail and wider economic regeneration needs. It will seek to use the opportunities for the renewal and redevelopment of shopping centres to provide higher quality mixed use environments that are well integrated, with larger facilities viable into the future.
- 3.32 The Dartford Town Centre Framework Supplementary Planning Document (2018) complements the strategy by setting out expectations and objectives for development coming forward, e.g. through movement, perception and design aspirations for the town centre, and local non-land use planning actions. It will continue to apply at least until the new Local Plan has been adopted. An update will be considered depending on progress of change, economic circumstances and government design policy. It has also informed the Council's ongoing major refurbishment of town centre streets and junctions to create better places, for pedestrians in particular, on the ring road and the main streets within it. Priority proposals to improve the town's environment are shown, along with the development allocations, at Diagram 5.

**Policy D1: Central Dartford Strategy**

1. The high quality transformation of Central Dartford is actively supported as a destination to invest, be productive and creative, visit for shopping, leisure and services, and as a place to call home. Valued, good quality buildings and spaces will be repurposed, enhanced and better used. Development in and around the town centre will bring an expanded range of activities and services to the town including cultural and creative facilities, increasing economic vitality and the choice of jobs, providing new infrastructure, and will grow the resident community. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) Current projects and strategic plans will continue to advance, leading to completion of: the sympathetic refurbishment of the town centre's key streets, public spaces and historic buildings; transport and movement improvements; the renewal of Lowfield Street/ Brewery Square (Market Street)/ High Street; and the successful redevelopment of the Westgate and Priory Centre sites.
  - b) There will be significant further progress in and on the edge of the town centre. It will change, with a focus on:
    - i. improving links across Central Dartford, removing some of the barriers to movement that have been created by large sites, and making existing routes attractive and safe;
    - ii. facilitating, and connecting with, an enhanced Dartford railway station/ public transport interchange; and
    - iii. opening up and creating safe links/ spaces to and along the River Darent, with a more natural river channel and setting.
2. The Council and partners will:
  - a) Promote redevelopment of large/ unappealing buildings and under-used land/ buildings where they are no longer contributing positively to Dartford's environment or commercial or cultural offer. Appropriate short term meanwhile use of vacant premises and/ or land is encouraged.
  - b) Support the strong contribution made by the Orchard Theatre, street market and independent traders, to retain Dartford's identity and vitality.
  - c) Plan ahead with providers and landowners to reserve land for public/ community service provision in advance of occupation of new dwellings.
  - d) Further enhance the public realm and connectivity, and the setting of heritage assets, with refurbished streets and green routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This will feature public spaces, squares or pocket parks as focal points for the town centre, with a high class street scene, public art and new riverside environment, and hard/ soft landscaping and shelter, including new trees.
  - e) Encourage access between the River Darent, the railway station and the town centre, particularly through wayfinding, upgrading of public spaces and currently unappealing environments, and overcoming severances to pedestrian and cycle movement created by the ring road (Home Gardens/ Westgate Street) and the railway embankment.

- f) Secure major transport investment to: mitigate the current adverse impacts of traffic congestion; increase public transport capacity and services, reducing dependency on car travel; and enhance walking and cycling. The Council will seek full integration of rail, bus and Fastrack services, particularly at a new railway station and with new rail services for Dartford.
- g) Seek parking that is flexible to use and promotes multi-purpose town centre visits. The Council will undertake a review of the parking strategy, looking at changing usage and the requirements of current and future residents, employees and visitors for short and long stay vehicle parking.

**Diagram 5: Town Centre Allocations and Strategy**





**Policy D2: Central Dartford Development Principles**

1. Development proposals in Central Dartford should:
  - a) Accord with Diagram 5 and the overall vision for Central Dartford, including by ensuring that development will not prejudice reasonable prospects for adjacent or nearby sites to come forward by virtue of overlooking or other outcomes, and contribute as required to local transport, public realm improvements, including public art reflecting local character and heritage, green infrastructure and social infrastructure requirements.
  - b) Support the town centre's role in providing jobs, retail/ leisure, cultural facilities and other local services, securing a wide mix of uses in the town centre. Proposals must seek to retain or promote market town features for the future, such as affordable space for independent traders, arts/ cultural industries, and new food and beverage uses/ other local businesses. Major development in the town centre should wherever possible provide:
    - i. flexible commercial premises, with space designed for local growth sectors, or businesses that will grow local professional/ managerial or high technology level employment; or
    - ii. suitable new retail/ leisure facilities complementing current successful activities, or strategic visitor/ shopper attractions (for example a cinema/ other significant cultural or day and evening uses); or
    - iii. community/ public facilities and local services to accommodate the requirements of Central Dartford's growing population, unless a lack of need is demonstrated.
  - c) Support the creation of a neighbourhood community with a mix of residential types and tenures.
  - d) Ensure integration of the scheme into the wider setting and movement patterns, including creating safe public open spaces and/or new pedestrian friendly streets. The sense of security of spaces and streets must be ensured, including for converted or extended buildings where features such providing front doors onto safe spaces and streets are expected.
  - e) Assess the heritage significance of the area and respond positively to local character and history, conserving and taking opportunities to enhance the significance of heritage assets.
  - f) Deliver a development that improves air quality and grows the proportion of journeys made by active and public transport modes. This should include:
    - i. the integration, layout and design of development having safe and direct non-vehicular routes through the town centre as well as through provision of suitable infrastructure; and
    - ii. parking arrangements with flexibility for changing needs and technology, and good cycle parking provision.

- g) Fully mitigate flood risk and ensure that the development is safe for the lifetime of the development, where located within an area at risk of flooding.



### **Town Centre Mix of Uses (D3)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 86*

- 3.33 As the principal town centre, a strong sense of vitality should be retained in the heart of Dartford, acting as a clear commercial and services hub for the Borough, providing a range of active uses. The aim of a market town feel, providing a mix of main town centres uses on a high street and new places to live, will support a good choice of cafés, restaurants, pubs/ bars, new business space, hotels, halls and community uses, including for health and education.
- 3.34 The town centre is expected to host redevelopments to provide a modern mix of units and major growth in the resident population/ local expenditure. Private investment should principally be for high quality mixed use redevelopment or re-use of small and larger sites, with uses benefiting the economy directly and through suitable new housing. Change in the town centre must however ensure that Dartford's character is maintained, especially through conversion of under-used space along the High Street/ Spital Street within the Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 3.35 The Core Frontage identified on the Policies Map and Appendix D comprises an area which is particularly important for shops, cafés and financial services, as well as hosting the street markets. This area, focussed around Dartford High Street, is expected to continue to be the heart of the town centre, with high levels of footfall especially during the daytime. It forms the primary shopping area required to be identified by national policy. Due to its heritage value, development is likely to be mainly for changes of use, and extensions to the rear/ upwards, which maintain a selection of small and medium sized units at street level. These may appeal to existing multiple retailers and independent businesses. All uses should maintain or sensitively refurbish original shopfronts where appropriate, and signage must be sympathetic in scale and form.
- 3.36 In some locations, regeneration is best achieved by repurposing high quality existing buildings for residential use. Elsewhere, it may be through redevelopment of brownfield sites for new homes. It is also envisaged that specialist accommodation, e.g. for older people, will come forward. Significant demand may come from younger people, including couples who may start families, and some other smaller households.

- 3.37 There is greater flexibility in the housing mix expected in the town centre than the rest of the Borough, as it may be a less possible for smaller developments to provide as many large homes (policy M8). In accordance with current viability evidence and Policy M7, it is anticipated that qualifying development should include 20% or more affordable housing, with a range of tenures likely to be feasible in the town centre, including shared ownership, First Homes, rental products; and also potentially build to rent. This recognises competing land demand and values, the costs of constructing some flatted developments in a highly built up area, and likely potential demographics associated with the locational characteristics of the area, on current evidence.

**Policy D3: Mix of uses in Dartford Town Centre**

1. A diverse mix of ground floor uses is expected in Dartford Town Centre. The Core Frontage identifies the Town Centre's streets that should be characterised by an active mix of uses at ground floor, high levels of daytime pedestrian activity, and a clear sense of history, all befitting a bustling market town. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) In the Core Frontage, changes of use, or redevelopment consistent with Conservation Area and other design/ heritage principles, for retail, leisure, services and other uses in use class E will be permitted where an active window display to the frontage is maintained if possible.
  - b) Elsewhere in the town centre, and at vacant units in the Core Frontage where sufficient effective marketing for Class E use has occurred, other main town centre uses, businesses and services will also be permitted, including food and drink uses, hotels, cultural, local community uses and other uses within use class F.
2. It is expected that residential development will occur principally through:
  - a) strategic allocations identified in policies D4, D5 and D6;
  - b) high quality conversion/ extension of upper floors or under-used buildings; and
  - c) new residential developments in the housing land supply, located in accordance with policy D7, or sites demonstrated to be suitable in the town centre.

## **Central Dartford Strategic Locations**

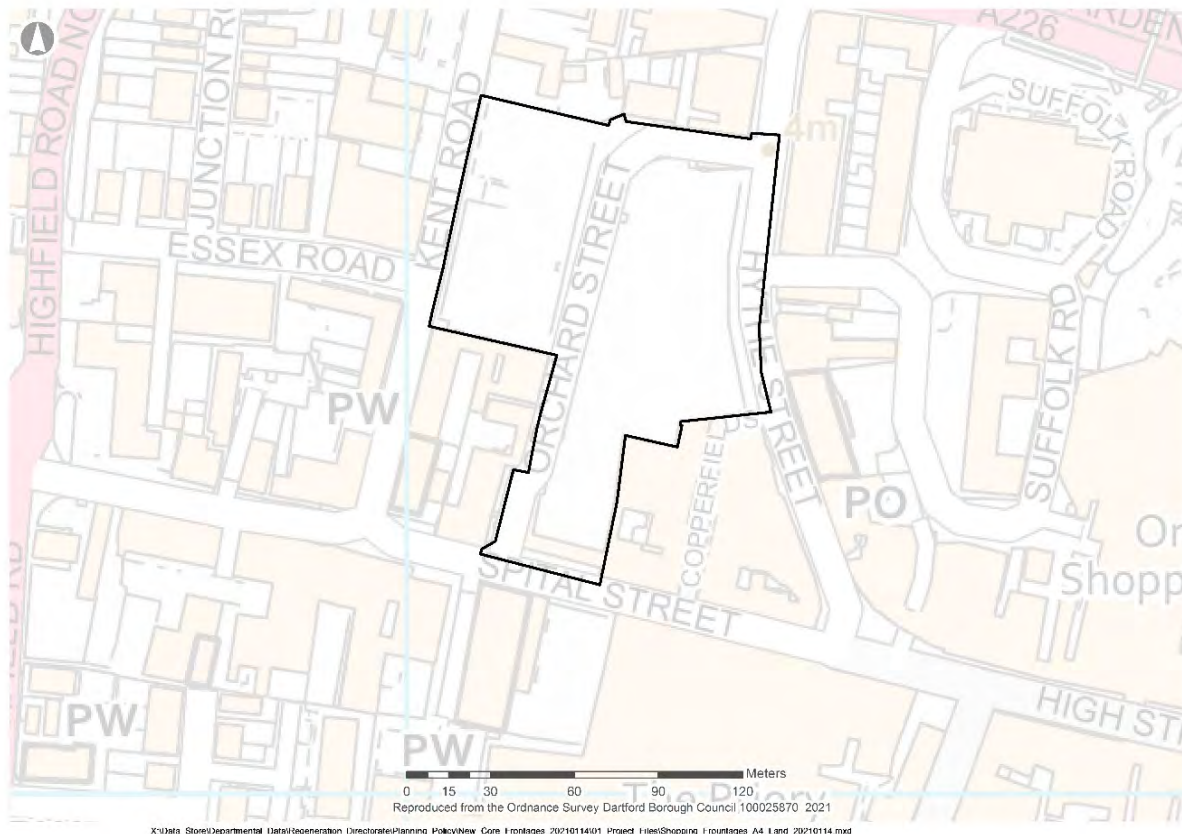
- 3.38 Three sites are identified as specific mixed use development allocations: Westgate (policy D4); East of Lowfield Street (policy D5); and Priory Centre (policy D6). These are complemented by an area development policy for the regeneration of Station Surrounds/ River Darent (policy D7).

### **Westgate Allocation (D4)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 105, 120*

- 3.39 The Westgate site is allocated for mixed use development, comprising essential town centre uses and housing (Diagram 6). The regeneration of the site is a key component for achieving the Borough's ambitions for new facilities in Dartford for visitors/ residents (e.g. leisure /community uses) complementing the nearby Orchard Theatre, providing new accommodation and renewal of redundant land.
- 3.40 The land is currently cleared, although the original Co-op department store façade has been retained. Development at the site will contribute to the town centre vision through new activities, and the strategic importance of achieving high quality site redevelopment; providing active street frontages, new public realm and enhanced integration of the town centre as a whole.
- 3.41 The site is located in an inner part of the town centre. It is situated off Spital Street, to the south, and fronts Hythe Street heading north towards the railway station and the Prospect Place retail area. To the east of Hythe Street is the Orchard Theatre. Development will have a key role in providing new frontages and achieving complementary leisure/ cultural daytime and evening or other uses for a vibrant and active town, attracting visitors and supporting the resident community.
- 3.42 Although the scheme benefits from planning permission (subject to the completion of a legal agreement), policy D4 guides implementation and ensures any development positively contributes to the vision and delivers the needs of the current and future town centre communities.

**Diagram 6: Westgate Site Allocation**



**Policy D4: Westgate Allocation**

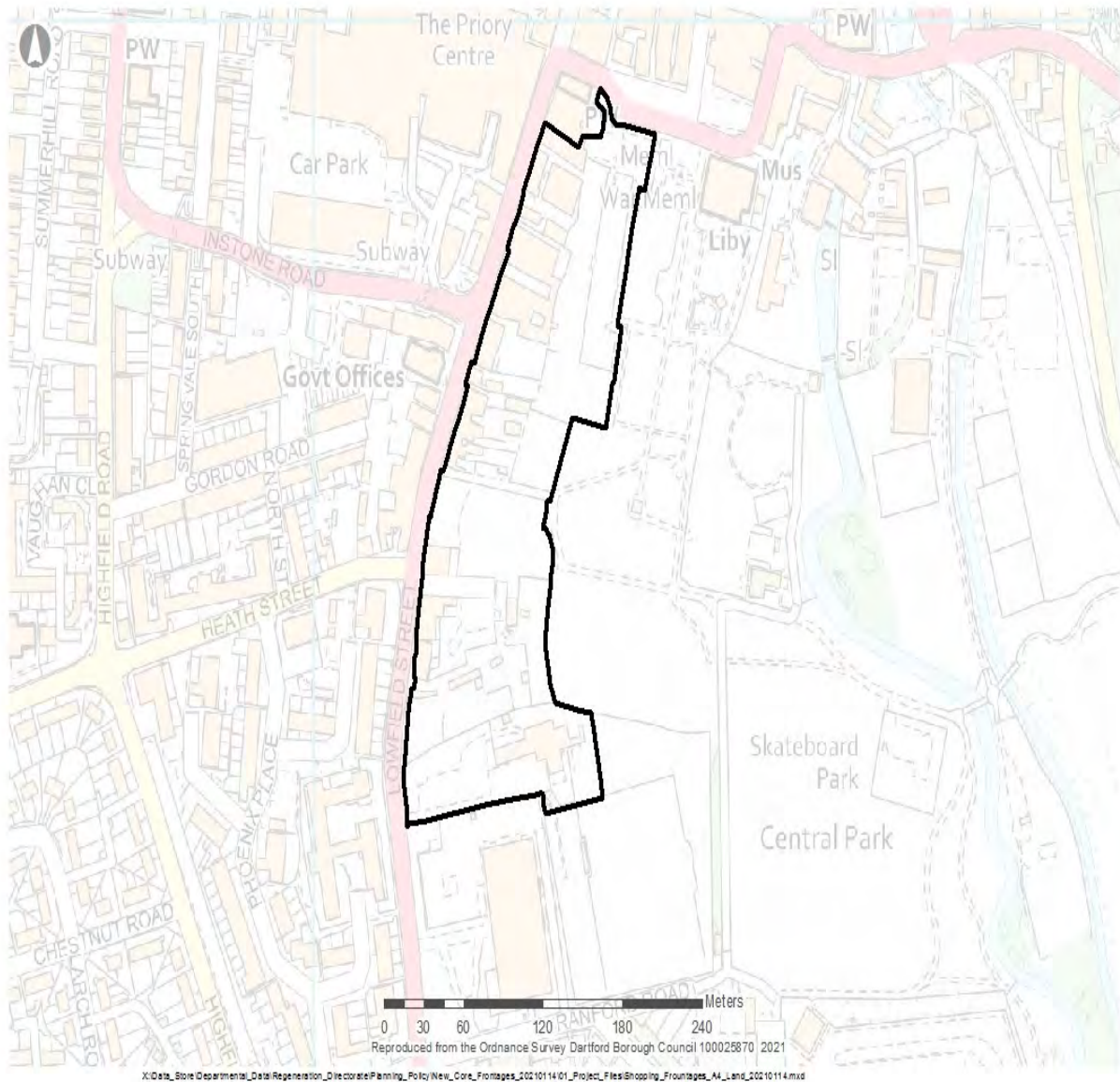
1. Development at Westgate should provide a mix of uses and enhance Dartford's leisure, visitor and mid-evening economy and/ or health and wellbeing offer.
2. Proposals should demonstrate through masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that they:
  - a) retain the former Co-op façade on Spital Street;
  - b) include active uses on existing street frontages and ensure safe public and private areas;
  - c) reconnect historic roads/ routes, ensuring an east-west pedestrian route across the site; and
  - d) feature a new public square.
3. Development is expected to deliver:
  - a) a cinema/ strategic leisure facility, or cultural/ visitor/ wellbeing/ community service/ shopping anchor use of equal significance;
  - b) 5,000sqm or more of uses within use class E, other main town centre uses, and/ or a hotel (within use class C1); and
  - c) 120 dwellings (or more).

### **East of Lowfield Street Allocation (D5)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I3, G2, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 105, 120*

- 3.43 Land to the East of Lowfield Street (Diagram 7) is allocated for residential-led mixed use development. The allocation intends to ensure that the site is brought forward/ completed together and is integrated into the existing function and character of the town centre. The regeneration of the land will improve vibrancy through the introduction of new residential communities, enhancing Lowfield Street and providing a clear sense of place and entry to the town centre from the south.
- 3.44 The site is a large area between Lowfield Street and Central Park, from Market Street in the north to Fairfield Leisure Centre in the south. The site is prominent and was largely cleared for retail development that did not materialise. More recently, the majority of the land has gained detailed planning permission for residential uses with some retail provision near the High Street. This part is now under construction.
- 3.45 Both Central Park and Lowfield Street provide key access routes into the town centre from the residential locations to the south and south east. Therefore, development must provide clear and high quality routes to/ from the park and along Lowfield Street.
- 3.46 It is expected that the development will enhance the existing public realm of Lowfield Street, facing the Priory Centre site (policy D6), and complement the newly created Brewery Square at Market Street. At the southern end of the site, the provision of community floorspace is expected in line with the needs of Central Dartford/ the Borough.

**Diagram 7: Lowfield Street Site Allocation**



**Policy D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation**

1. Development at Lowfield Street should continue to create vibrancy and an attractive environment in the south of Dartford town centre, and provide a clear, modern and appealing sense of entry to the town centre.
2. Proposals should demonstrate through integrated masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that it:
  - a) achieves the co-ordinated and comprehensive physical regeneration of the East of Lowfield Street, and permeability through to Central Park;
  - b) delivers significant good quality residential development;
  - c) provides active ground floor uses, with modern retail/ leisure units to the north, and new community use premises at the southern end;
  - d) enhances routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and improves the existing pedestrian environment along Lowfield Street;
  - e) avoids traffic needing to travel through Market Street to access the site;
  - f) provides a good quality multi-functional public realm which links to Central Park, with an appropriate boundary to the park where appropriate; and
  - g) respects the adjacent Listed Buildings and Conservation Area.
3. Development is expected to deliver:
  - a) 700 dwellings (or more);
  - b) 1,500sqm or more of retail/ leisure floorspace (use class E); and
  - c) new community premises at the southern end (use class F)



### **Priory Centre Allocation (D6)**

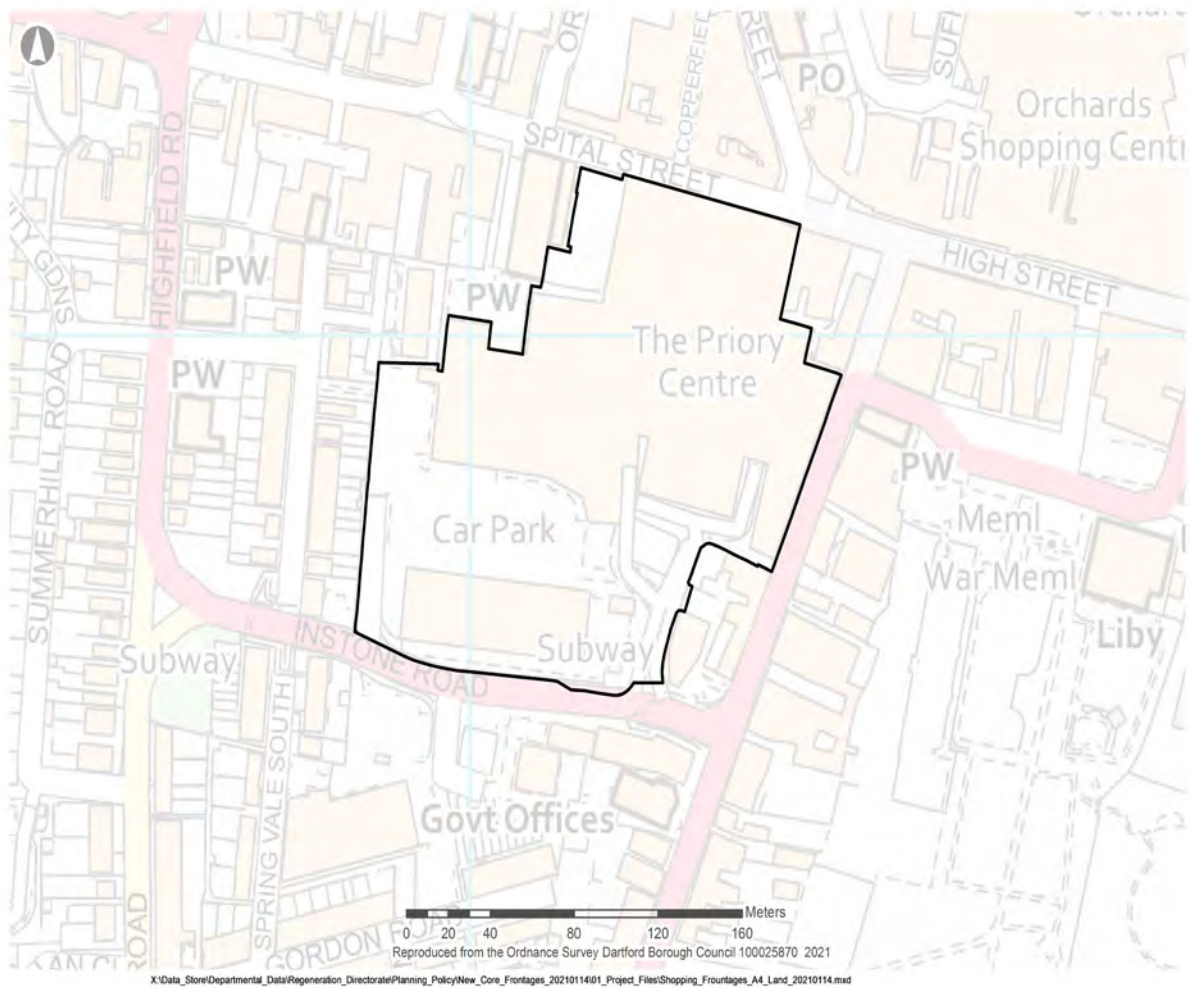
- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 105, 120*

- 3.47 The Priory Centre is allocated for mixed use development, with significant continuation of its existing retail functions (Diagram 8). The allocation is intended to produce a better quality urban environment, whilst retaining key anchor stores and making provision for smaller stores and independent retailers. In addition, the site is considered to be capable of accommodating new premises and uses that will hold strategic significance to the future of the town centre, as well as providing opportunities for townscape improvements and better pedestrian connectivity.
- 3.48 The site is located very centrally within the town centre and has frontages to Spital Street, Lowfield Street and Instone Road. It consists of the Priory Centre as well as a vacant site fronting Spital Street that currently has a negative impact on the character and vitality of the area.
- 3.49 Redevelopment of the post-war shopping centre and the inclusion of the site on Spital Street in the allocation provides an opportunity to enhance the overall character and layout of the area, and to improve the aspect along Spital Street. The development must be designed to integrate and positively contribute to the character and frontage of Spital Street and enhance the Conservation Area as a whole. The regeneration of the Spital Street frontage in this location will be complemented by the redevelopment of the Westgate site on the opposite side of the road (policy D4).
- 3.50 The regeneration of the Priory Centre provides an opportunity for significant new public realm and pedestrian route provision. Clear linkages through the site, from the south and south west through to Spital Street and beyond, as well as from west to east and including clear connections through to the Lowfield Street allocation (policy D5), are expected to be delivered as part of the redevelopment. At the south, Instone Road currently forms a vehicle dominated environment. Therefore, the regeneration of the site will contribute to the Council's vision for a legible and walkable town centre with a clear sense of place.



- 3.51 The site can also provide a new residential neighbourhood of high quality homes, supporting objectives for town centre renewal. It is the largest allocation in the town without permission, and suitable community service provision will be explored, secured and delivered as applicable.

**Diagram 8: Priory Centre Site Allocation**



**Policy D6: Priory Centre Allocation**

1. Development at the Priory Centre and adjoining land should provide a genuine mix of town centre and other uses; and create new open streets, public spaces and attractive pedestrian linkages from Spital Street to and along Instone Road and Lowfield Street.
2. Proposals should demonstrate through integrated masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that they:
  - a) achieve the co-ordinated and integrated redevelopment of the Priory Centre/ Instone Road and adjoining land, and one or more feature town centre square(s), complement adjoining and adjacent listed buildings, and enhance the High Street/ Spital Street part of the Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area;
  - b) provide significant active ground floor uses animating Spital Street and Lowfield Street as well as Instone Road and routes through the site; with viable new retail and leisure premises, including retention of large retailing anchors and space for independent traders;
  - c) include visitor accommodation or a new activity forming a major town centre attraction;
  - d) deliver a mix of good quality new houses and flatted development, and necessary land/ facilities/ contributions towards community service needs that arise from the development;
  - e) provide high quality public realm/ spaces, well landscaped with a variety of open functions and ensure that all public and private spaces and routes are safe and overlooked;
  - f) make use of existing levels and ensure that the development works with adjacent levels and land given over to the car park; and
  - g) respect neighbouring houses.
3. Development is expected to deliver:
  - a) 400 dwellings (or more);
  - b) 10,000sqm or more of retail/ leisure/ office floorspace (use class E), including large and small retail units; and
  - c) a hotel (within use class C1) and/ or 4,000sqm or more town centre attraction.

## **Station Surrounds/ River Darent Area (D7)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, I3, G2, G4, G5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 105, 120*

- 3.52 Additional area based policy is required to secure the future transformation of Dartford, co-ordinating regeneration of further land which is accessible and prominently located. Key land may become available in future in this area, and can complement current strategic sites (allocations set out in policies D4 to D6). This northern cluster of opportunities can provide balanced and sustained growth in Central Dartford, and realise the potential for place-making centred on the River Darent, and potentially help facilitate major railway service or station upgrades. These are set out in Diagram 9.
- 3.53 Principal attributes for the area as a whole that should be accounted for in masterplanning and regeneration proposals include the need for connectivity and environmental enhancement; centred on the River Darent flowing from south to north west, and the railway traversing the area from west to east on an embankment. Further severance created by the ring road should be addressed, including through delivering at-grade pedestrian/ cycle crossings. The area policy incorporates parts of the previous Northern Gateway site and other land, but excludes the Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 3.54 The Orchard Theatre will be retained, and potentially expanded. However, all development in the Station Surrounds/ River Darent area should recognise its potential in driving creative growth, pedestrian flows, and evening uses; and the desirability of development in its proximity promoting links through to the rest of the town centre, and including complementary cultural/ leisure uses.
- 3.55 Some sites are available and suitable for development now. These include the sites set out in Table 4, which cross refers to site label numbers in Diagram 9 and features sites with capacity for mixed use/ 15 or more dwellings.

**Table 4: Developable Sites in Station Surrounds/ River Darent Area**

Diagram 9 Ref.	Name	Size	Planned approach
1	Orchards Shopping Centre	1.7 ha.	To feature mix of town centre uses and unit sizes. Provision of significantly enhanced connections/ pedestrian environments linking directly north from the

Diagram 9 Ref.	Name	Size	Planned approach
			High Street to the Orchard Theatre and across the ring road at Home Gardens.
2	Station Mound	Approx 2 ha.	Suitable and available for redevelopment, including Dartford Civic Centre offices and under-used land immediately adjoining the railway station.
3	Victoria Road/ Upper Hythe Street Sites	Approx. 1 ha.	Significant potential to improve linkages to the river and the street scene, and a prominent entry point to the town centre. Steam Crane Wharf should provide active ground floor uses to the riverfront. Adjoining redevelopment on Upper Hythe Street should be sympathetically brought forward without impinging on realising the regeneration potential of the gasometer.

3.56 The Station Mound includes the Railway Approach road and station forecourt pedestrian access. Any development should explore how better integration can be created with bus/ Fastrack services, for pedestrians to the town centre, and to/ with the river and development north of the rail embankment. Network Rail consider there may be potential for railway services to be increased and, potentially, a replacement railway station/ public transport interchange to be constructed on the adjacent Prospect Place retail park immediately to the west (site E see below). This station relocation option should be properly explored but, in any event, Station Mound development should ensure that bus/ Fastrack and pedestrian/ cycle connections are optimised, particularly the ability for people to traverse the ring road and readily access the town centre.

3.57 Redevelopment of Station Mound provides opportunities to re-profile levels, creating an improved relationship to the Westgate Road/ Hythe Street/ Home Gardens junction, enabling enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre, and potentially allowing for an active frontage to be provided to Home Gardens. The redevelopment should also consider the reconfiguration of the roundabout at the Orchards Shopping Centre entrance to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment and improved public realm. Redevelopment principles in policies D1 and D2 are particularly applicable to the Orchards Centre (Diagram 9 Site 1).

3.58 Longer term development opportunities which are not currently confirmed as available include:

- The BT exchange building (Reference site A, Diagram 9): The site offers a significant opportunity for redevelopment to provide a safer and active route with architectural quality between the High Street and the Orchard Theatre.

Development should maximise synergy with the Orchard Theatre and the Orchards Shopping Centre, and provide a much improved street scene to promote pedestrian access to the High Street. An active frontage is needed to the north and the east elevations, and animating the route towards Hythe Street and to Bull's Head Yard.

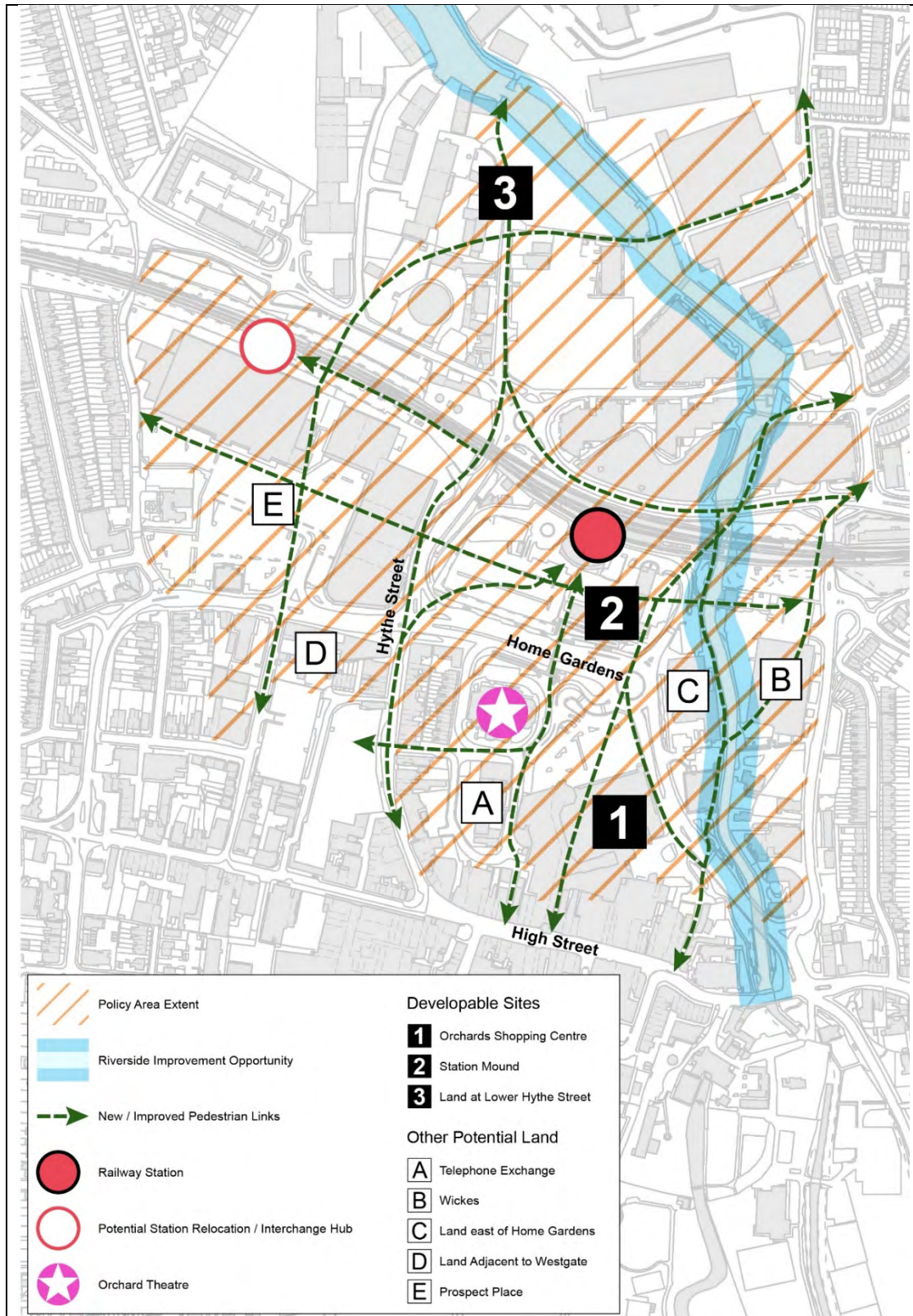
- Riverside sites- including Wickes, Overy Street, and land east of Home Gardens, (Reference sites B and C, Diagram 9): Redevelopment should provide attractive and safe pedestrian routes across the site and an improved safe, activated and accessible river frontage, including to improve the river as a green corridor for ecology and wildlife movement.
- Land adjacent to Westgate site (Reference site D, Diagram 9): This land provides an opportunity to integrate with the Westgate strategic site (policy D4) and provide enhanced frontages to Kent Road and to Westgate Road, which is a key route into and through the town centre, and to provide a complementary built environment to improve town centre linkages to Prospect Place.
- Prospect Place (Reference site E, Diagram 9): Although potentially most appropriately brought forward as part of a new public transport hub, there is still scope to explore a better integrated, more intensive, town centre type development and to improve the frontages onto the surrounding streets and in particular the east-west movement through the site. Specific opportunities, aside from possible railway station relocation, could potentially include redevelopment of the Westgate Road frontage, and redevelopment/ enhancement at the corner of the Hythe Street/ Westgate Road junction, creating more prominent premises at this gateway location. Retail and food and beverage uses would be appropriate on the ground floor on the south and east boundaries. Residential uses may be appropriate along the western boundary, respecting established housing. Subject to rail safeguarding, the service yard could also be redeveloped or could contribute to an improved pedestrian and cycle route along Hythe Street. A reconfiguration of the centre would also provide opportunities for improved access arrangements to the car park, reducing queuing on the road network.

3.59 Sites A to E are expected to feature on the Brownfield Land Register for new residential development when land becomes available, and complement the existing identified housing land supply. It is anticipated that they could collectively hold significant potential for well-designed development. In terms of the contribution towards new



homes, this is estimated to be of the magnitude of at least an additional 1,000 dwellings (not counted in the current housing supply).

**Diagram 9: Station Surrounds/ River Darent Area**



- 3.60 Elsewhere, land north of the railway station/ embankment has seen large scale residential-led redevelopment. Proposals should complement this with further uses to reinforce the neighbourhood community emerging in this area and broadening the range of residential accommodation, to increase cohesion and to support vibrant neighbourhoods. The loss of premises which support the neighbourhood will be resisted. Careful design and development of a suitable scale is particularly important where adjoining the existing built environment, both recent development north of the railway and established buildings and neighbourhoods.
- 3.61 Commercial uses east of the river and north of William Mundy Way (at Diasorin and the bus garage) within the D7 policy area may be retained whilst demand remains; intensification or redevelopment would need to take account of the new residential neighbourhood they now adjoin. To enable appropriate well-designed redevelopment on the part of Upper Hythe Street not fronting Victoria Road, the long established link between the river and the town centre is in need of sympathetic regeneration, and land at site 3 on Diagram 9 is subject to the area policy D7. Designated employment sites to the north of the area in policy D7/ Diagram 9 and Central Dartford have seen investment and will be retained or expanded (policy M21).

**Policy D7: Station Surrounds/ River Darent Area**

1. West of Central Road and Overy Street and including the northern part of the Town Centre (shown on Diagram 9) is an area containing highly accessible brownfield sites, with significant future potential for creating new neighbourhoods, facilities, links and environmental enhancements. Development in this area will be supported where it integrates with, and maximises the potential for, sustainable regeneration of Central Dartford.
2. Development will be permitted where it includes the following key elements:
  - a) Transforming the riverside environment into an attractive, safe, vibrant and resilient place, promoting outdoor leisure and onwards connections wherever possible. Applicable sites shall deliver high quality pedestrian routes along both sides of the River Darent, new landscaped public spaces, and seek to naturalise the River and its banks, where providing flood risk and ecological benefits, and, where appropriate, should include business uses which activate these spaces.
  - b) Improving Dartford railway station or access to it, and respecting safeguarded railway land. All opportunities for beneficial station relocation and/ or new railway tracks or infrastructure for additional services, and enhancing interchange with Fastrack/ bus services, should be fully explored. Development at or delivering a new railway station will be supported and should include new active uses supported by the high footfall.
  - c) Providing modern commercial facilities as part of mixed use redevelopment unless demonstrated to be unviable, particularly:
    - i. Any redevelopment of large footprint buildings where they are no longer viable in their current form should feature appropriate new active uses and be of a layout and design that provides permeability, with pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces, and greener links; or
    - ii. Complementing cultural and leisure uses at the Orchard Theatre/ Westgate allocation; or
    - iii. Meeting needs for flexible commercial floorspace, including co-working space and serviced offices.
  - d) Providing community facilities and alternative forms and tenures of new housing, additional to residential development under construction/ recently completed.
  - e) Contributing to new or improved pedestrian/ cycle routes across the ring road (Home Gardens and Westgate Road) and across the railway line/ access to Dartford Railway station, with attractive direct access routes to the High Street and Westgate allocation.
  - f) Providing sufficient quality pocket parks and other greenspace, clear walkable routes to existing open spaces and significant contribution to the green grid.
  - g) Ensuring that development is well and sensitively designed in proposing the efficient use of land, reflecting the town's character and heritage, and respecting other existing environmental assets and existing local residents.



## **4. EBBSFLEET AND SWANSCOMBE**

- 4.1 This section focuses on the other priority location in the Plan, the Ebbsfleet Garden City (which includes Swanscombe Peninsula). Swanscombe Town is also covered by this section.

### **Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe as Places of Change**

- 4.2 Ebbsfleet is a new Garden City taking shape in the east of the Borough, by Swanscombe. As well as its natural environment, this part of Kent has an extensive industrial heritage, which culminated in the cement industry dominating the area for several decades during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries.
- 4.3 Ebbsfleet has long been identified as holding large scale potential for a range of activities involving the re-use of land. The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) was formed in 2015 to co-ordinate, facilitate and oversee the delivery of the first Garden City for over 100 years. The Garden City encircles Swanscombe town and straddles the River Ebbsfleet, which forms the Borough boundary between Dartford and Gravesham. The EDC has planning responsibilities, and has worked with Dartford Borough in the production of this Local Plan.
- 4.4 Ebbsfleet Garden City will consist of homes, jobs and infrastructure, including major new greenspace. Rates of new development, predominantly housing, have grown substantially in recent years. New neighbourhoods have now been formed containing local facilities, including shops, schools and parks. Within Dartford Borough, these comprise:
- Castle Hill which is largely complete and is located at the eastern end of the area formerly known as Eastern Quarry (south of Swanscombe)
  - Ebbsfleet Green which is located adjacent to the A2 on the decommissioned Northfleet West Substation

These are within the southern part of the Garden City where the largest development area in the Borough is in creation. New neighbourhoods will continue to be established, with plans for Alkerden, which lies broadly in the centre of Eastern Quarry, and Ashmere, which is located at the western end. North west of Swanscombe, two smaller residential developments are in the pipeline (Croxtan and Garry, and Craylands Lane/ London Road).

- 4.5 In contrast, some parts of the Garden City have seen little development so far. It is over ten years since domestic train services from Ebbsfleet International Station commenced. However, the area around the station is largely undeveloped apart from large surface car parks which serve the station. Parts of this area which lie outside land notified for SSSI status provide a prime sustainable development opportunity known as Ebbsfleet Central, a very high Local Plan priority for delivery.
- 4.6 Swanscombe is a distinct historic neighbourhood, located near Greenhithe in the north east of the Borough but not designated as part of the Garden City. Bone fragments from the earliest humans known to have lived in England were discovered in this location and the area has extensive history of human settlement. It grew rapidly into a small town as the industry around it expanded and the railway arrived. The small railway station is located off the High Street in the east of Swanscombe, half a mile (less than a kilometre) from Ebbsfleet International Railway Station. The town is separated from Ebbsfleet Central and the International Station by an open environment and the dramatic topography created by the pits, cliffs and chalk spines of the area. Swanscombe has largely retained its own physical characteristics, with low levels of recent development. A well-established residential area and generous open spaces provide a quiet heart to Swanscombe. However south west Swanscombe is within the most deprived 10% of areas nationally and within Kent.
- 4.7 Swanscombe Peninsula is a large land promontory projecting towards the River Thames, with multiple distinctive environmental characteristics marked by a complex mix of past and present land uses. The Peninsula was used extensively in connection with the cement industry but also provided formal recreation for employees. This vast area still accommodates some existing employment uses on its southern boundary but now largely comprises low lying marshland, woodland, regenerated vegetation, spoil heaps, and disused jetties (but also a well-used inlet). Notably, it features very tall electricity pylons over the River Thames and the High Speed 1 Rail Link tunnel head. The Peninsula area is currently subject to developer proposals for an entertainment resort.
- 4.8 The open marshland and chalk cliffs of Swanscombe Peninsula provide distinctive landscape features. The area also has significant ecological and geological assets which have been recognised by the recent notification by Natural England of the nationally important Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI incorporates open mosaic and estuarine habitats which connect the Ebbsfleet Valley to the River Thames, and has been notified for breeding birds, vascular plants, invertebrates and geological features. At present (from the date of the notification) this land is treated as a SSSI until a final decision is made by Natural England.

4.9 Prominent resources and factors vital to future prospects in the area include:

- The opportunity for a genuine mix of urban and open/ natural spaces by Ebbsfleet International Station which creates a chance to achieve highly sustainable and accessible urban development.
- The natural environments and settlements provide the opportunity to integrate existing green and blue infrastructure with new and improved parks and walking/ cycling links to create a grid within and between Swanscombe, Ebbsfleet, the River Thames and the countryside south of the A2.
- The significant ecological assets are a key feature of the area with opportunities to enhance them for the benefit of wildlife, residents and visitors.
- The unique existing landscape, including dramatic chalk cliffs, open marshland and large landlocked water bodies, provides opportunities to create a distinctive Garden City.
- The strong local cultural, archaeological, geological and industrial heritage will enable the creation of new neighbourhoods at Ebbsfleet with a sense of place and history.
- Swanscombe can benefit from maintaining its existing positive and distinct character, with opportunities to improve access to better local facilities and public spaces.

4.10 The Garden City will feature several new neighbourhoods respecting these characteristics. Table 5 sets out the new dwellings projected to be provided for each site, in addition to the 1,600 homes built since 2017 mostly at Ebbsfleet Green and Castle Hill.

**Table 5: Current/ Recent Dwellings and Commitments – Ebbsfleet Garden City to 2036/37**

Site	Dwellings
Ebbsfleet Central allocation	2,000
Alkerden and Ashmere allocation	4,700
Castle Hill (remaining)	500
Ebbsfleet Green (remaining)	400
Croxton and Garry	200

Craylands Lane/ London Road (remaining)	100
<b>Total to 2036/37</b>	<b>7,800</b>
<i>To the nearest hundred</i>	

4.11 Residential communities need to be planned, completed and delivered alongside supporting services and infrastructure. Appropriate additional opportunities should also be explored to ensure the area features clear Garden City characteristics, and optimises its potential. In order to support and enable further growth and sustainable development of Ebbsfleet Garden City in forthcoming planning decisions, the following development requirements are apparent and guide strategy in this Plan section:

- To create a **21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden City** and a Healthy New Town at Ebbsfleet, within the environmental and urban fabric of north Kent.
- To drive the creation of new high **quality commercial** premises and to attract high technology/ professional and managerial employment to Kent/ Dartford, benefiting from a new commercial centre by Ebbsfleet International Station.
- To **enhance connectivity** by improving railway stations and services, expanding Fastrack and bus services, providing easier ways of moving between neighbourhoods in Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe, and linking to Gravesend, Greenhithe and the wider area.
- To plan development in a **strategic form** that provides relief to the built up character of the north of the Borough, including for Swanscombe town, ensuring that views are maintained to landscaped ridges in the area.
- To deliver a network of **quality open spaces** and excellent, strategically located, parks.
- To provide an area with consistently good **environmental performance** in its building design and construction.
- To achieve good quality **mixed use developments** on brownfield land and gateway sites within Ebbsfleet and, where appropriate, Swanscombe.
- To improve local **housing quality**, choice and availability to local families and other households, with a distinct local vernacular.
- To form new cohesive, sustainable neighbourhoods containing readily walkable **local facilities/ shops and social infrastructure**.

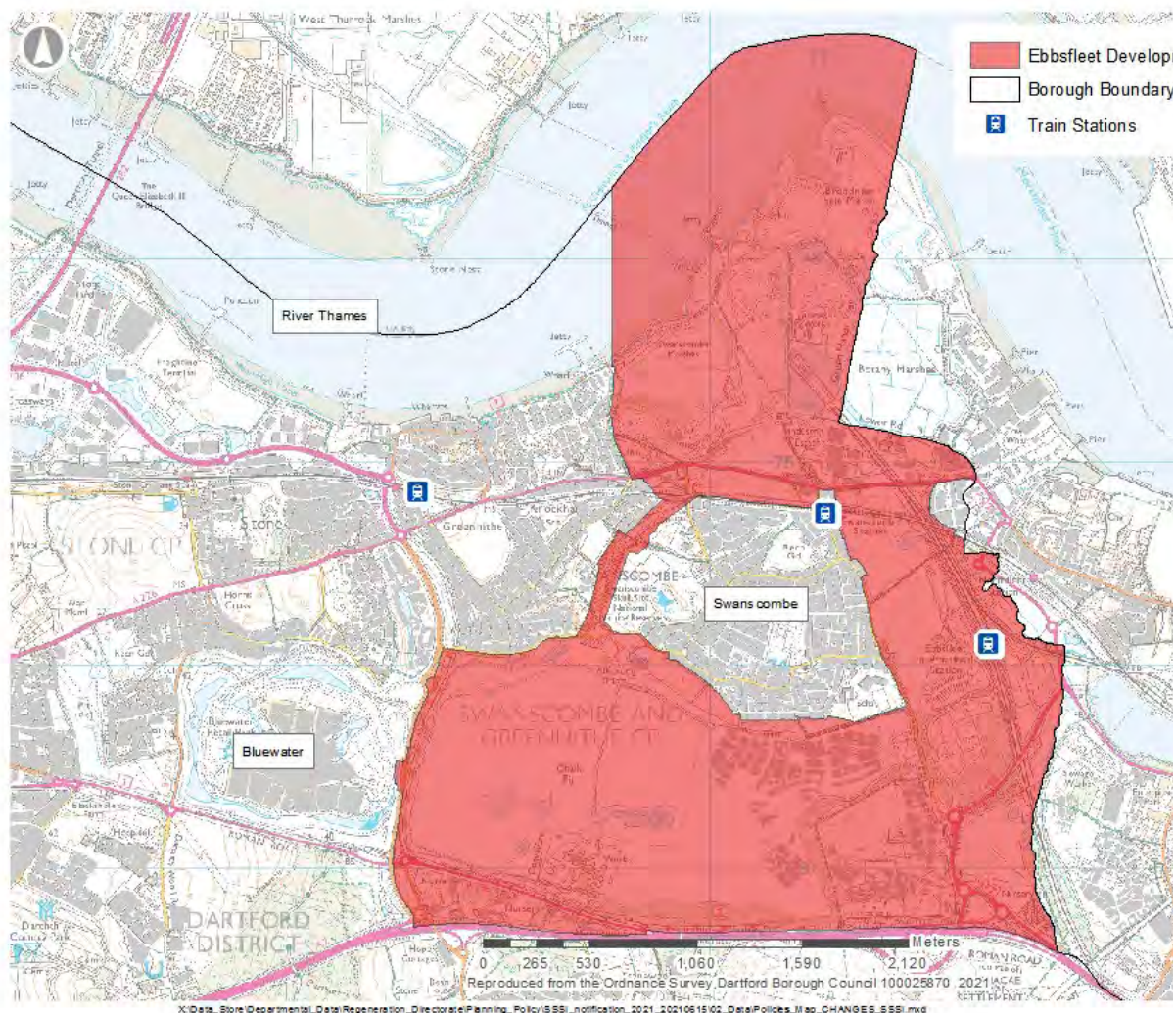
4.12 The EDC produced the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework<sup>21</sup>. This sought to assimilate the experience of almost 20 years of masterplanning in the area into a

<sup>21</sup> Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (2017)

shared ambition and structure to deliver a 21st Century Garden City, setting out delivery themes and area based approaches. Policies in this Local Plan section reflect some of the key elements from the Implementation Framework which will inform future masterplanning and planning decisions. There are a number of other documents produced by the EDC which inform the planning of the area, including the Design for Ebbsfleet Character Guide, the Public Realm Strategy and the Sustainable Travel Strategy.

- 4.13 The extent of Ebbsfleet Garden City is defined as the administrative area of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation in the Borough (shown on Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Ebbsfleet Garden City (EDC boundary) in Dartford Borough**



## **Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe Strategic Policies**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 73*

- 4.14 The policy approach driving the sustainable development of Ebbsfleet Garden City plus the settlement of Swanscombe (bounded by the Garden City) is set out in this section. The Local Plan has a clear vision for Ebbsfleet Garden City in the Borough which will apply for the whole period over which development will take place in this location, possibly extending beyond the plan period:

### **Vision (Ebbsfleet Garden City)**

*Ebbsfleet Garden City will be sensitively integrated alongside surrounding neighbourhoods and in a way which protects and enhances biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets. At Ebbsfleet, the central area and its rapid public transport connections will form a vibrant and enterprising urban hub: a genuinely dynamic place to work and live. The Garden City will be characterised by healthy, green and open environments; with high quality streets for walking and cycling. Ebbsfleet's new communities will be well linked, distinctive, diverse and thoughtfully designed, to reflect the needs, and cultural and landscape heritage, of the Borough.*

- 4.15 Ebbsfleet Garden City is now at a crucial point, part way through the stages of realising its long term regeneration and green growth ambitions. Work is now well underway at many of the locations planned to emerge and form the garden city. This progress needs to be accelerated and sustained, and certainty provided in the Local Plan alongside appropriate flexibility in a dynamic context. In particular, redevelopment by the International Station will be delivered, with new plans to create a transformational vibrant urban business and community hub (Ebbsfleet Central).
- 4.16 In the Garden City, the opportunity presented by the sizeable development land and its strategic connections must lead to sustainable urban level commercial, cultural, health and education facilities and commensurate parkland provision and ecological enhancement, guided by garden city principles applied for future needs. Ebbsfleet has to provide high quality walking, cycling and public transport connections and be integrated with surrounding areas. Design will be of a very high standard, reflect the



characteristics of the area and provide healthy, green environments, featuring exemplar developments and actions on climate change.

4.17 There are ongoing issues to consider, especially at Swanscombe Peninsula. Principally this pertains to the recent notification of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on extensive tracts of land in the north and central parts of the Garden City, and the uncertainty arising as a result of the proposal for a large entertainment resort on the Peninsula (London Resort). Whilst not yet formally approved, the SSSI as notified will need to be protected in accordance with policy M15. The London Resort is proposed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and an application for a Development Consent Order was submitted to the government in December 2020. The Council and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation have highlighted various matters that need addressing, including its impact on infrastructure, local communities, the environment and the delivery of development at Ebbsfleet Central. The government's decision on the project will not occur before the submission of the Local Plan.

4.18 Elsewhere in the area covered by this Local Plan section:

- The proximity of Swanscombe town to major development taking place within Ebbsfleet Garden City means that there are opportunities for residents to benefit from better access to Ebbsfleet's high quality public transport and services, in particular Fastrack routes and Ebbsfleet International Station. This will be achieved by ensuring that provision is made for improved or new pedestrian and cycle links between developments occurring in the surrounding area and Swanscombe.
- In the far south west corner of the Garden City is the Bean Triangle which lies within the Green Belt. It contains a mix of commercial uses and dwellings interspersed with ancient woodland and other trees. Located between major highways, there will be changes to road layouts and traffic flows in the area as a result of the current A2 Bean junction improvements. However, the area provides a link between development at Alkerden and Ashmere and the countryside to the south of the A2. Opportunities to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, landscaping and the overall quality in this area should be maximised.

4.19 To cohesively plan a sustainable and healthy modern Garden City, all developments must be designed to contribute to, and be integrated with, the Green Grid network

which will be delivered in line with Diagram 10. Development must facilitate convenient public transport access, and good active travel networks across the Garden City.

- 4.20 There is an identified need for additional pitches to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers in the Borough (policy M12). Given the amount of land within Ebbsfleet Garden City, it is considered that the Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation should fully explore potential delivery to provide sites for gypsies and travellers.
- 4.21 As part of the transition of the area, there may be the opportunity for temporary meanwhile uses such as community support facilities, business start-ups, pop-up shops, food growing, open spaces for public events, and cultural projects. Support will be given to their provision subject to the likely timescales of future development and the suitability of the use in the proposed location.
- 4.22 Policy E1 sets out the spatial framework for Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe, and policies E2 and E3 apply specific principles for developments in the two areas respectively.

### **Policy E1: Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe Strategy**

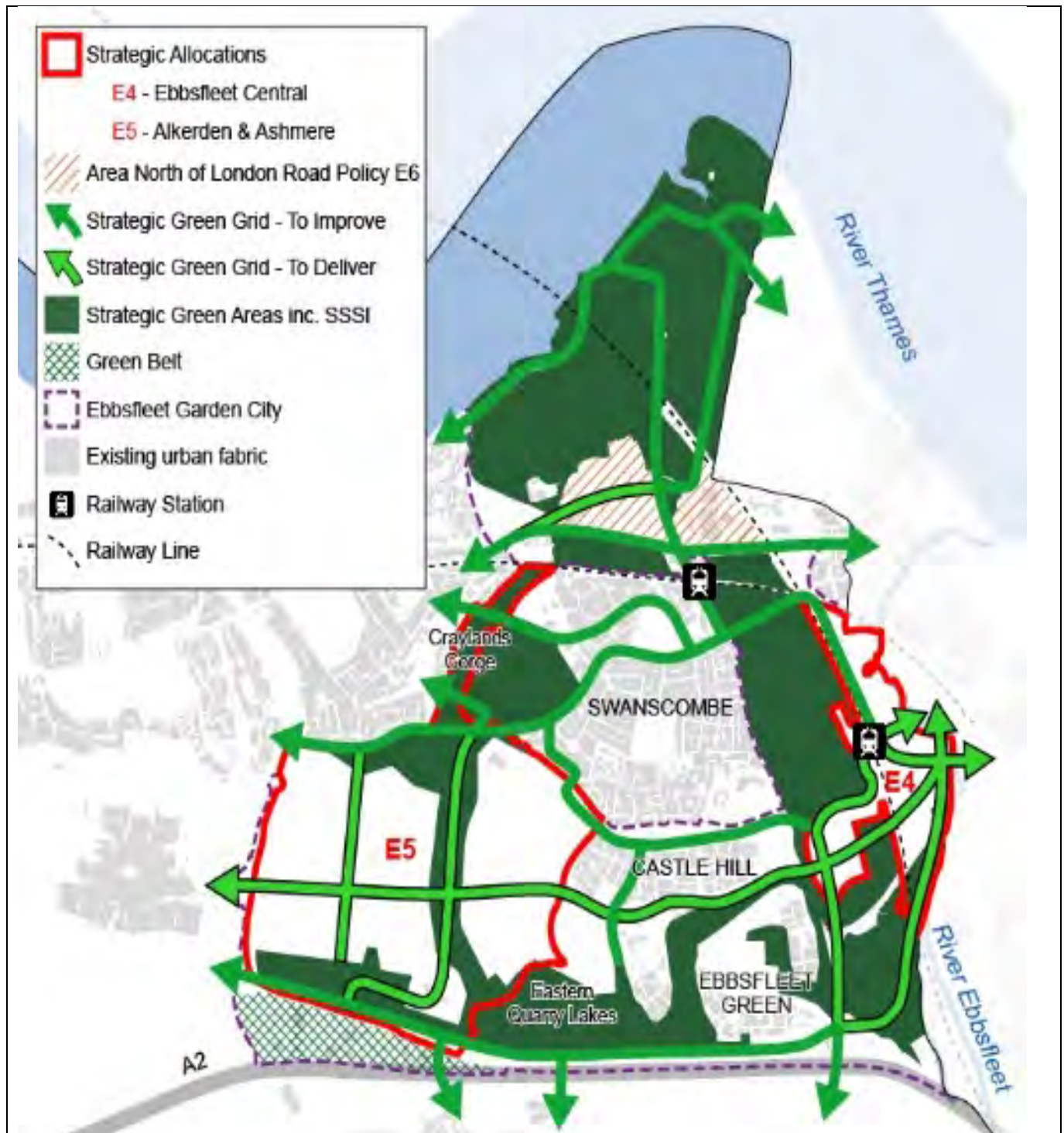
1. A 21<sup>st</sup> century garden city at Ebbsfleet will continue to be created, sensitively integrated into its environment and surroundings, providing high quality new greenspace, infrastructure, homes and business investment, and ensuring climate resilience. This will be achieved by the co-ordinated delivery of integrated and accessible sustainable transport, and well-designed and well-served mixed neighbourhoods. These will include workplaces, schools, health facilities and centres which serve and are well linked to neighbouring communities and towns, encourage walking and cycling, and are connected by modern public transport systems. It will become an important destination for recreation and leisure uses.
2. The creation of a new urban heart at Ebbsfleet Central around a transport hub focussed on Ebbsfleet International Station, and plans for new neighbourhoods at Alkerden and Ashmere, will be implemented. The neighbourhoods at Ebbsfleet Green, Castle Hill, and north west of Swanscombe will be completed. Further development may come forward at suitable land north of London Road, Swanscombe.
3. The ecological and geological interest of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be conserved and enhanced. In addition, biodiversity and geodiversity value will not be adversely affected by development. Opportunities will be taken to enhance the SSSI for the benefit of wildlife and people as part of the wider Green Grid network. All development will avoid impacts on the SSSI, supporting and complementing



the ecological features of the SSSI. There will be substantial improvements to natural and open spaces across the Garden City and at Swanscombe as part of the wider Green Grid network, including at Craylands Gorge, Eastern Quarry Lakes and the River Ebbsfleet.

4. The existing settlement of Swanscombe will remain distinct, retaining its character whilst seeking opportunities to improve its overall environment. Development in Ebbsfleet Garden City should ensure wherever possible that Swanscombe benefits from:
  - a) access to better facilities and public transport, including upgrades to the accessibility of, and services from, Swanscombe railway station (or a new station); and
  - b) improvements to existing connections and the delivery of new green walking and cycling connections, in particular linking in to improvements towards the River Thames and Ebbsfleet International Station.
5. At Bean Triangle, opportunities to improve environmental and landscape quality and walking and cycling connections to the wider area will be pursued, consistent with Green Belt principles.
6. Opportunities for providing pitches or plots for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople within Ebbsfleet Garden City will be actively explored to help meet the needs of the Borough.

Diagram 10: Ebbsfleet as a Garden City



**Policy E2: Ebbsfleet Garden City Development principles**

1. Development proposals in Ebbsfleet Garden City should:
  - a) Offer a genuine variety of types and tenures of homes that allows people from all communities to live in the area;
  - b) Provide accessible and attractive new District and Local Centres at planned locations, and community and public facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods. Facilities and open spaces provided as part of development will be protected to ensure that well-served communities endure;
  - c) Encourage an enterprising and inclusive local economy, supporting local businesses by retaining existing appropriate commercial uses with a viable future, and providing additional opportunities for locally based economic growth to provide jobs for residents;
  - d) Deliver open space and ecological enhancements as part of the Green Grid network which are consistent with conserving and enhancing the ecological and geological interest of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and to achieve healthy linked neighbourhoods. Development must support active lifestyles, including the provision of attractive opportunities for sports, exercise and to grow food, and help deliver a strong network of waterscapes and green corridors as defining features; and
  - e) Ensure no direct or indirect impacts on the SSSI, including near its boundary. Where it is necessary to avoid impacts, buffers will be created in between developments and the SSSI.
2. Proposals in the Garden City should be designed to:
  - a) Be of the highest quality, including beautifully and imaginatively designed homes and buildings which combine the best of town and country and exemplar developments;
  - b) Demonstrate how the location and layout of development contributes to the scale, legibility and walkability of the Garden City. Development should contribute and connect to the street hierarchy, enhance the public realm and enable walkability and cycling, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of travel;
  - c) Comply with the principles set out in the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, the Design for Ebbsfleet Guide, the Ebbsfleet Public Realm Strategy and the Sustainable Travel Strategy. Proper regard will be had to subsequent masterplans and design guidance documents;
  - d) Aim for zero carbon and energy positive technology to ensure climate resilience in all developments, with exemplar design and sustainable construction methods and/ or large or small development shown to be surpassing or in line with policy M3 requirements;
  - e) Include public art which reflects local character and heritage, following local public input;
  - f) Allow the provision of temporary meanwhile uses that enhance the character and vitality of the area where there are empty buildings or

cleared sites with no current prospects of being quickly brought into use/ construction; and

- g) Ensure that appropriate long term stewardship arrangements are put in place for all spaces and facilities used by the public and allow the community to engage and shape their area in a meaningful way.

### **Swanscombe (E3)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 130*

- 4.23 Swanscombe is a distinctive neighbourhood in the north east of the Borough. It is not part of the Ebbsfleet Garden City/ Development Corporation area. Whilst little major development is planned for Swanscombe itself, it is appropriate to set out some guiding principles for the future of the town in light of the known and potential changes that are happening around it. These take into account the need to protect the existing character of Swanscombe and opportunities arising from the new development which have the potential to benefit the town. The applicable area is indicated as “Swanscombe” in Figure 8.
- 4.24 The town is located next to ongoing and planned developments at Alkerden and Ashmere (policy E5), Ebbsfleet Central (policy E4), and at the smaller Craylands Lane and Croxton & Garry sites to the north west of the town. It also has the potential to be significantly impacted by the proposals for the London Resort on Swanscombe Peninsula, should they proceed.
- 4.25 In order to sustain the cohesion and sense of community in the town, it is expected that the existing residential character of Swanscombe will be maintained. However, there are some disused/ under-used former garage courts and other brownfield sites within the residential area which may provide opportunities for the small scale development of new homes subject to consideration of impacts on residential amenity and parking. A number of these already have planning permission and/ or are identified as suitable for development in the housing land supply (totalling less than 100 homes in the plan period). The provision of new family housing will be a priority within residential development. Part 2c of the policy expects existing family housing to be protected. Swanscombe has smaller sized homes than the Borough and County average, with a predominance of terraced houses and, to a lesser extent, flats
- 4.26 Swanscombe High Street contains a variety of shops and local services, as a result of which it is designated as a District Centre. There is also a small Local Centre providing a smaller cluster of shops around Craylands Lane/ Milton Road/ Milton Street. These are both identified on the Policies Map and policy M23 seeks to protect the function of

these centres. Major community services are also provided, for example in the south and north west of the town, and will be retained under policy M18.

- 4.27 There are significant issues with through traffic and on-street parking in parts of Swanscombe, particularly along the High Street, and there may be opportunities to improve the environment to benefit pedestrians and cyclists. Bus connections within the town are relatively limited. There is a critical need to improve Swanscombe railway station and its poor quality pedestrian access arrangements (policy E1).
- 4.28 Swanscombe has good quality sizeable parks within the town, and other green spaces, which will be maintained under policies M14 and M15. Swanscombe Heritage Park provides a significant historic and biodiversity resource, with Lower Palaeolithic human remains (Swanscombe Skull Site of Special Scientific Interest) and hosting scarce plant species and invertebrates (Alkerden Lane Pit Local Wildlife Site).
- 4.29 The proximity of Swanscombe to major development taking place within Ebbsfleet Garden City means that there are opportunities for residents to benefit from better access to the high quality public transport network there, in particular Fastrack routes and Ebbsfleet International Station. This will be achieved by seeking provision for improved or new pedestrian and cycle links between developments occurring in the surrounding area and Swanscombe (policy E1).

### **Policy E3: Swanscombe**

1. Swanscombe will retain and improve its distinct identity and positive characteristics, including the popular residential core, generous sized open spaces and approaches, and the local High Street.
2. The following principles will apply:
  - a) Facilities, including at the well-established High Street District Centre and other locations within Swanscombe, will be retained/ improved;
  - b) Environmental and infrastructure enhancements, including to upgrade public transport and walking/ cycling connections, will be sought; and
  - c) Existing single family dwellings will be retained, and proportionate redevelopment for new family homes will be supported at small brownfield sites.

## **Ebbsfleet Garden City Strategic Locations**

- 4.30 Two sites are identified as specific mixed use development allocations: Ebbsfleet Central (policy E4), and Alkerden and Ashmere (policy E5). These are complemented by an area development policy for Land north of London Road, Swanscombe (policy E6).

### **Ebbsfleet Central Allocation (E4)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 73, 105, 120*

- 4.31 Ebbsfleet Central (Diagram 11) is allocated for the creation and delivery of a mixed use commercial hub of activity of very high significance to the future economic, community development and infrastructure growth of the Garden City and the Borough. Development will be planned and integrated to achieve a new vibrant urban centre of relatively high density to support selected city-style employment and services.
- 4.32 Allocated land is located both east and west of Ebbsfleet International station/ the High Speed railway line from London St Pancras to the Channel Tunnel. Part of the north east of the development will be in Gravesham Borough. In terms of how proposals will be brought forward, it is expected that EDC masterplanning work will result in detailed proposals which have input from Dartford, Gravesham and other councils, local communities and relevant agencies. The development in Dartford Borough may continue beyond the Local Plan period, but there is expected to be substantial progress towards completing the whole development, particularly east of the station.
- 4.33 The development of land at and to the east of the station will be a priority in order to achieve a high quality, large scale dynamic and innovative business hub. This should provide for significant new employers and business sectors, attracting major professional or high value/ technology jobs to the Borough. Employment, visitor accommodation, health/ medical premises and varied active uses at or adjacent to Ebbsfleet International Station will be delivered, with a District Centre, public spaces and significant residential community; all set in an outstanding urban realm.
- 4.34 It is important that any future development reflects historic and natural features, and the setting of the site. Green infrastructure provision should be planned and designed

from the outset in all proposals. Sensitive application of Green Grid principles can help ensure sustainable integration of the built, natural and heritage environment. Diagram 10 should be applied. Green infrastructure should comply with Building with Nature, achieving excellent accreditation wherever possible. The River Ebbsfleet and surrounding marsh, scrub and grassy areas is a Local Wildlife Site and a park along the river will be expected to provide an enhanced greenspace which benefits people and wildlife.

- 4.35 Allocated land west/ southwest of the station, in particular, will need to take into account the nationally important ecological and geological interest of the adjacent notified Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the Scheduled Monument at Bakers Hole, ensuring that these assets are protected and opportunities to enhance their value are taken (policies E1 and M15). Development in this location is projected to start in the 2030s and is expected to deliver a sustainable, well integrated neighbourhood, including significant education and/ or other community services.
- 4.36 Access to high quality, sustainable forms of infrastructure is a key driver in planning for this location. In terms of education, as a minimum there will be a local primary school (2 form entry) plus other learning provision. New strategic medical facilities will also be delivered.
- 4.37 A highly integrated development will occur with land west and east of the site well connected through dedicated routes for walking and cycling and Fastrack/ buses, including bringing into use the existing bridge over the High Speed railway and via development at the station. There will be need for good sustainable connections to be provided with existing development in the Garden City, including Castle Hill and other nearby neighbourhoods (Diagram 10).
- 4.38 Ebbsfleet International Station provides High Speed train links to London, other parts of Kent and mainland Europe. There are also Fastrack services to Dartford, Bluewater and Gravesend, with opportunities to extend the network as development occurs. In order to fully realise the role of the station as a major transport hub, there is a need to improve pedestrian and cycling connections to Swanscombe and its station, and the new neighbourhoods in the Garden City. Development is anticipated to directly facilitate links to Northfleet railway station within Gravesham Borough.



- 4.39 The International Station is currently served by a significant amount of car parking which will need to be replaced in an efficient and integrated way as part of new development, including flexibility for changing requirements for station parking over the longer term.
- 4.40 The development should be an exemplar, and the allocation site is expected to be of high quality design and sustainable construction. In line with Garden City principles and policies E2 and M3, development must commit to significantly reduced energy use, including through the application of passive design measures. In doing so, the use of tools such as the Good Homes Alliance's overheating tool or RIBA's Health and Wellbeing tool are encouraged. Houses within Ebbsfleet Central should be generating 100% of their annual energy requirement on-site and flats should aim for 70-100%. Development will aim to divert 90% of construction waste away from landfill.

**Diagram 11: Ebbsfleet Central Site Allocation**



**Policy E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation**

1. Development of Ebbsfleet Central will be supported where it delivers a high quality, comprehensively planned, strategic Garden City hub. Within Dartford Borough, this will feature a full mix of activities which will all be well integrated in the wider area including: employment; health/ education; residential development; new open and public spaces; and major new transport and community infrastructure. The main focus will be development with an urban character close to Ebbsfleet International Station.
2. Proposals should be designed to:
  - a) provide at least 30% as open space, including varied and well equipped parklands befitting a Garden City;
  - b) ensure that there are no direct or indirect impacts on the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and that the ecological and geological interest of the SSSI is conserved and enhanced;
  - c) secure significant zero carbon and energy positive technology;
  - d) provide a new public transport hub with ease of interchange between rail services at Ebbsfleet International and other local rail stations, Fastrack and local buses;
  - e) secure the direct Fastrack route through the site linking Ebbsfleet International station eastwards and westwards via Alkerden and other developments to Bluewater;
  - f) integrate developments and deliver major new green, safe and attractive walking and cycling connections to both existing and new communities, connecting both sides of Ebbsfleet International Station;
  - g) ensure that appropriate car parking is provided for Ebbsfleet International Station; and
  - h) not preclude achievement of new or enhanced rail services in north Kent, including to other stations in Dartford Borough and direct to Abbey Wood.
3. At land by the east of the railway station, large scale commercial activity and infrastructure will be delivered, providing good quality businesses and jobs, strategic health and community facilities, a hotel, homes and a new District Centre. A first class public realm, urban greenspace and a public park along the River Ebbsfleet, which protects and enhances its ecological interest and creates a naturalised river and banks, will be created.
4. At land to the west of the railway station, proposals will be well linked to development by the east of the station and elsewhere in the Garden City, and ensure that there are no direct or indirect adverse impacts on the adjoining Site of Special Scientific Interest. Major mixed use development should include homes and community facilities, forming a connected and well-served new neighbourhood.
5. Development within Dartford Borough is expected to deliver the following within the plan period:

- a) Approximately 2,000 dwellings;
- b) Approximately 100,000sqm floorspace within use class E (predominantly offices/ flexible workspace, and a maximum 20% retail); and
- c) Substantial education, health and community facilities.

### **Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation (E5)**

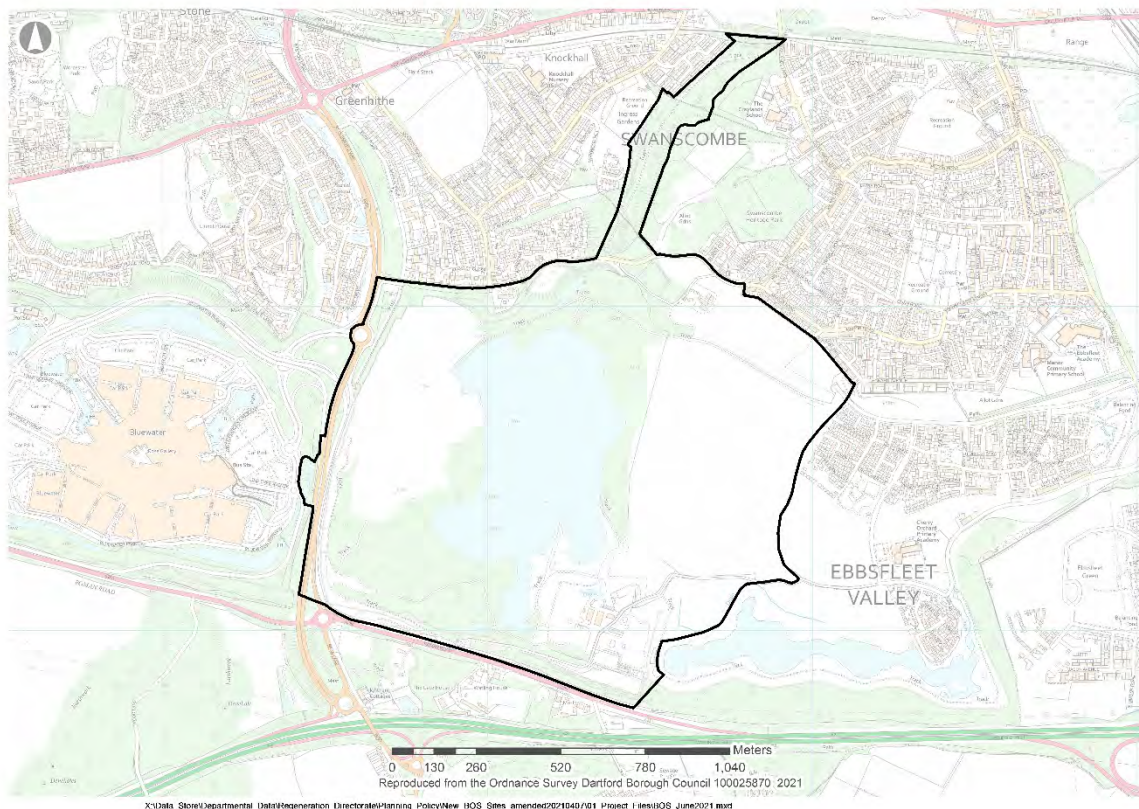
- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 73, 105, 120*

- 4.41 Development at Alkerden and Ashmere (Diagram 12) will complement and be well connected to Ebbsfleet Central and the neighbourhoods of Castle Hill and Ebbsfleet Green to the east. Alkerden and Ashmere already have a planning permission. However, several neighbourhoods are still subject to details approvals. Policy E5 sets out guideline principles and the key elements from the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework which should apply to future development coming forward and to ensure Garden City objectives are fulfilled.
- 4.42 Kent County Council and the EDC are taking forward a new tunnel to the west of Ashmere, providing a direct Fastrack, pedestrian and cycle link between Bluewater and the strategic transport hub at Ebbsfleet Central. There are also other opportunities to provide pedestrian and cycle links within the new neighbourhoods and linking the development sites to the surrounding areas.
- 4.43 Alkerden's District Centre and Ashmere's Local Centre are essential to the success of the new neighbourhoods, securing easily walkable services, facilities and jobs, meeting many day-to-day needs locally and creating a sense of place and active, healthy communities. Delivery of the centres must progress in the early stages of delivering residential development. It is expected that there will be a 2 form entry (FE) primary school at Ashmere and that the education campus and sports centre at Alkerden will include an 8 FE secondary school and a 2 FE primary school.
- 4.44 Diagram 10 is consistent with the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework and shows a network of open spaces and ecological corridors through the area. A number of these are within this allocation, including the Craylands Gorge linear park. The provision of green spaces in this part of Ebbsfleet, including major new parks, will be important to the Garden City's environment, and contribute to meeting the recreational and health needs of all residents regardless of age. They will help define the new neighbourhoods across these large sites and provide a significant contribution towards ensuring that Ebbsfleet is a green Garden City. Highly sustainable and innovative standards of residential design and construction are expected.



- 4.45 The scale of new accommodation, supported by local services and substantial new community facilities, is an opportunity that must be fully explored to create inclusive and diverse neighbourhoods. Alkerden and Ashmere must both feature a range of forms and types of residential development that add positively to the choice of new housing elsewhere in the Borough and the Garden City, in line with policy M8. Proposals at sustainable locations for older person's accommodation and residential care homes or other residential institutions within use class C2 will be supported. Given its characteristics and the limited other major opportunities in the Borough, it is also important that the site delivers land for significant amounts of custom/ self-build accommodation.

**Diagram 12: Alkerden and Ashmere Site Allocation**



**Policy E5: Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation**

1. Alkerden and Ashmere will form sustainable, active and well integrated neighbourhoods set in significant green infrastructure. The fulfilment of strategic Garden City development by prompt completion of mixed use centres and infrastructure will be supported, complemented by new diverse residential neighbourhoods.
2. Proposals should be designed to deliver:
  - a) A direct Fastrack route between Bluewater and Ebbsfleet Central;
  - b) Mixed residential neighbourhoods supported by the provision of centres with community facilities and local services. Alkerden will be a significant local hub for the Garden City with a District Centre which will include an education campus and medical/ healthcare provision. At Ashmere, a Local Centre will be provided;
  - c) Provision of significant custom/ self-build dwellings and other forms of residential and specialist accommodation, including for older people, well located to the Centres, to diversify housing supply and provide inclusive communities in the Garden City;
  - d) A fully connected pedestrian and cycle network, linked to Ebbsfleet Central/ Castle Hill, the surrounding areas and Bluewater, and the enhancement of connections to Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Stone and the countryside to the south of the A2; and
  - e) High quality new strategic and local greenspace, including at Craylands Gorge and other north-south ecological corridors, and a major park between Alkerden and Ashmere.
3. Development is expected to deliver:
  - a) 4,700 dwellings (or more);
  - b) Specialist residential accommodation; and
  - c) Approximately 10,000sqm floorspace within use class E plus significant community uses focused on a District Centre, and a Local Centre.

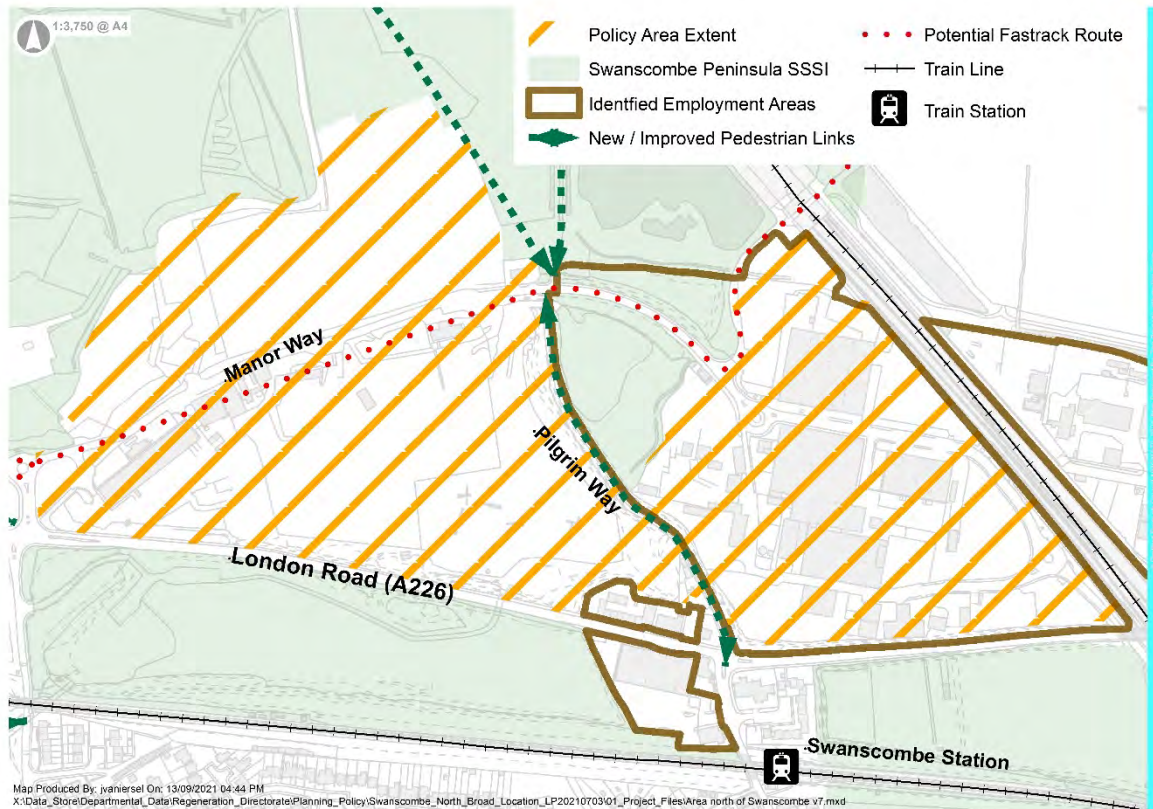
### **North of London Road Area, Swanscombe (E6)**

- *Strategic Objectives: I1, I2, I4, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 120, 179*

- 4.46 Policy E6 outlines the Local Plan position of guiding potential new suitable development for an area of over 20 hectares to the north of London Road, Swanscombe, within the Garden City. The location broadly covers potential brownfield development land between the High Speed 1 railway cutting in the east and the Croxton and Garry residential site near Greenhithe to the west (Diagram 13).
- 4.47 It currently comprises a mix of industry and open land on a small part of Swanscombe Peninsula, and forms part of the wider site put forward for the London Resort. In light of the uncertainty over the future of the area, it is appropriate for the Local Plan to provide a policy framework for appropriate development in the event that the proposed London Resort either does not get consent, or it gets consent but is not fully implemented. In the event that it gets consent and applicable development commences, a review of the Local Plan will consider the need to revise plan policies in response to projected impacts.
- 4.48 There is the potential for development which will improve the area but it is important that the nature and scale of uses is appropriate. The policy avoids the newly notified Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSi) but recognises its proximity and the need to protect and enhance the biodiversity interest of the site (policies E1 and M15).
- 4.49 Policy criteria seek to ensure that environmental, design and sustainable transport issues are fully taken on board in any proposals that may emerge in future. In particular, the policy requires any development to provide benefits to, and be integrated with, existing and proposed new communities in the vicinity (consistent with Diagram 10). In particular, Pilgrims Road provides an existing direct active travel link south to Swanscombe and its station, and needs improvement. Opportunities to upgrade Fastrack services in the area should be properly explored, including considering the feasibility of an additional or alternative dedicated route, likely along a Manor Way alignment. Development should be sensitively designed to deliver distinctive buildings and streets of a positive, safe and secure character, with a high quality public realm.

- 4.50 In the east, land shown as an identified employment area at Manor Way is included. The aim is to maintain local industry but provide opportunities to improve the environment and setting, and enhance linkages. Policy M21 also applies.

**Diagram 13 North of London Road Area, Swanscombe**





**Policy E6: North of London Road Area, Swanscombe**

1. Land north of London Road and off Manor Way has potential for regeneration. Development on this land will be supported where it sustainably makes efficient use of under-used land to benefit the wider area or improves the identified employment area. Any proposals will be subject to further investigation in relation to the suitability of the area for development and compliance with the requirements set out in criterion 2.
2. Any development in this area will need to:
  - a) ensure that the ecological and geological interest of the adjacent Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is conserved and enhanced;
  - b) ensure no direct or indirect impacts on the adjacent SSSI. Buffers will be created in between developments and the SSSI;
  - c) demonstrate suitably located and designed proposed uses, such as recreation, commercial uses or residential development, at an appropriate density;
  - d) be sensitively designed and achieve a good quality public realm to appropriately connect to its surrounds and the Garden City;
  - e) take account of and mitigate impacts in relation to: flood risk; land contamination; noise; air quality; minerals safeguarding; groundwater quality; and surface water drainage;
  - f) provide a high quality network of links to the wider area including improved pedestrian and cycle access to Swanscombe, the River Thames and Ingress Park (Greenhithe); and
  - g) be designed in a way which respects the local landscape, including views to the area from the north across the marshes and views of the roofscape from London Road.
3. In the event that consent is given to the proposed international scale resort and a Local Plan Review is triggered, it will consider the need to revise this and other policies in the Plan in response to projected impacts.

## **5. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

- 5.1 This section provides more detailed, topic based policies for all planning applications, helping to deliver the strategic policies and objectives in the previous sections. It starts with policies more focussed on design, housing and heritage matters (M1-M12), then sets out important Green Belt and environmental policies (M13-M15), and finally includes policies which detail the approach in relation to economic activities, infrastructure and community uses (M16-M24).

### **Good Design for Dartford (M1)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 126-136*

- 5.2 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development in Dartford Borough, ensuring that the Borough's regeneration not only uses land attractively and efficiently, but that development creates better, beautiful, greener and healthier places in which to live, work and enjoy spending time. The National Design Guide sets out the features in achieving well-designed places and helps demonstrate what good design means in practice. The recently published National Model Design Code expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. The Kent Design Guide, which is being refined, provides a locally based approach to developing good design and a core set of principles to guide and shape high quality residential developments. Additionally, developers should closely consider use of recognised benchmarks such as Building for Healthy Life, Secured by Design and Active Design to help demonstrate the outcome of design considerations.
- 5.3 High quality urban design is key to place-making and enhancing existing natural and built environments in Dartford Borough, ensuring a good quality of life for all residents and creating the right setting and conditions for communities and nature to flourish. Opportunities should be taken from the outset of planning developments to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, with active and creative design for desirable, integrated and sustainable places. Supported by policy criteria 1 and 2 below, principal outcomes in Dartford must include:
- Design that is beautiful.
  - Design that contributes to and respects distinctive townscape character, landscape setting and biodiversity.

- Design that is functional and fit for purpose.
- Design that is adaptable and resilient.
- Ease of movement.
- Successful public spaces.
- A mix of uses and tenures.

5.4 Locally, the full variety of the Borough's townscape and landscapes is often not readily apparent on mapping or through cursory examination. For example, there needs to be sensitive appreciation of Dartford in three dimensions. Prominent features defining towns, villages and the local countryside incorporate landmarks/ man-made structures, large open landscapes found Borough-wide, and other visual symbols including natural aspects such as riparian environments at the Rivers Thames and Darent. Dartford's determinants of its urban character include variety in the sense of openness or enclosure, with individual physical contexts (not least due to extensive quarrying) and bridges and tunnels. Addressing character and local topography should lead to enhanced designs that actively consider defining features, changes in levels and respecting positive attributes or overcoming inappropriate severances/ built forms. Local qualities should be well referenced/ applied in all relevant design contexts.

5.5 Design, architecture and construction materials should be high quality and capable of enduring to complement and enhance the valued character of an area and reflect or reinforce locally distinctive features. There are major opportunities on both small and large developments for innovative and beautiful design that respects and complements local character, particularly in Ebbsfleet Garden City where a range of guidance is available.

5.6 The Borough's historic environment should be recognised and appropriately respected through well considered development design in accordance with policies M5 and M6

#### Design and Dartford's High Quality Regeneration

5.7 Prominent developments such as Bluewater, Crossways Business Park (Stone), Ingress Park (Greenhithe) and The Bridge (Dartford) have had a positive regenerative effect in the Borough and raised the benchmark for quality in the area. Development should continue to raise the standard of design further in the contemporary context, and emulate the best quality developments in the Borough.

- 5.8 The scale of development potential in the Borough provides a particular chance for place-making. There are also further opportunities to promote the provision of distinctive designs and landmark developments through high quality architecture in appropriate locations that enhance views and raise the profile of the area. The quality of public realm is a Borough priority, particularly at public transport interchanges, large mixed use developments and central open spaces in Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City.
- 5.9 Allied with all the above, townscape and landscape factors, the details of site setting, the infrastructure context, and the regeneration/ conservation planning strategy should be fully assessed to determine how development potential can suitably materialise, taking account of constraints of the built environment (criterion 3 of the policy). Assessment of a wide range of strategic and local considerations may help guide the scale of the opportunity for larger sites in central urban areas, whereas in rural locations the more prevalent open physical environment may prevail as a determining factor in achieving appropriate design solutions. It is after this deliberative process that the suitable and sustainable amount of dwellings for the site area (density) should result for residential development.
- 5.10 Nationally described space standards will continue to apply to residential development in the Borough. However, the internal and external quality of all development will be closely assessed against design principles and policy requirements.
- 5.11 The careful design of developments, and the public and private realms created, can improve wellbeing and physical and mental health outcomes, and reduce inequalities. This can occur through active transport options, public and open spaces that encourage a range of people to socialise together or to keep fit/ active, enabling residential privacy, and featuring security measures where of overall benefit. Design should provide security and minimise opportunities for criminality and anti-social behaviour (criterion 4). In order to promote healthy living, Design and Access Statements should describe how health and wellbeing outcomes have been considered in the design of a development.
- 5.12 Design Codes will be used on larger, phased or multiple ownership sites, as they can help deliver high quality outcomes and a cohesive approach to delivery of the vision

across the site as a whole. Requirements for further supplementary guidance, including local design guides and codes, will be kept under consideration.

Signage and intrusive structures

- 5.13 Policy criterion 5 recognises that inappropriate advertising and other forms of new signage can have negative visual impacts. Applications for advertisement consent will be carefully considered. An Area of Special Advertisement Control is in place, especially in the open countryside, for greater control on the display of advertisements.
- 5.14 There is also a need to ensure that opportunities to reduce existing intrusive physical structures are maximised, particularly where these have a negative impact on widely visible landscapes in both the urban and rural areas. In this respect and given their particular visual prominence, opportunities to re-provide overhead wiring and structures underground at applicable development sites will be strongly encouraged.
- 5.15 Policy S2 supports the provision of infrastructure, and it is recognised that electronic and digital communications are an essential part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure network. However, telecommunications masts, buildings and structures can have adverse impacts on urban and rural environments. For this reason, the need for new sites should be justified, and equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged.

**Policy M1: Good Design for Dartford**

1. Development must demonstrate that it is designed in line with the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code, considers the principles of Kent Design, and satisfies all of the following locally specific criteria for good design in the Borough:
  - a) Responding to, reinforcing and enhancing positive aspects of the locality. Opportunities to create appropriately distinctive high quality and beautiful places should be taken, particularly using and enhancing prominent physical attributes which include the Borough's distinctive riverside environments, extensive open spaces, biodiversity assets, landscape and tree coverage;
  - b) Ensuring appropriate regard is had to heritage assets and that the character of historic towns and villages and Areas of Special Character are respected;
  - c) Facilitating a sense of place with social interaction, a physical environment encouraging health and wellbeing, attractive active environments and travel options, and secure, inclusive and integrated neighbourhoods through a mix of uses and careful design and layout that ensures that commercial and public facilities are well integrated within the site and the wider locality;
  - d) Providing permeability for the site to sufficiently connect to its surrounds and for the public to traverse the site, through clear pedestrian and cycle linkages and, where appropriate, active frontages, open streets, and a fine grain mix of buildings and spaces;
  - e) Reinforcing and enhancing good design by integrating new development with the public realm/ open space, and providing biodiversity gain and natural features including rivers and lakes/ ponds; and
  - f) Meeting the requirements set out in any supplementary local design guidelines which will be produced after public consultation consistent with these principles and national requirements, to be adopted as formal Supplementary Planning Documents or design codes.
2. Development must be shown to be suitable in terms of its height, mass, form, scale, orientation, siting, access, overlooking, overshadowing, articulation, detailing, roof form, and landscaping relative to neighbouring buildings and the wider locality. Materials must support a sense of place and relate well to the local character. Outstanding or innovative design which helps raise design standards in the wider area will be supported on appropriate sites which are not closely related to sensitive areas or assets.
3. The appropriate scale and density of development at a site should be the outcome of securing high quality development through a design-led process and demonstrated by agreed masterplans on large sites, having proper regard to:
  - a) the current built environment context including heritage assets;
  - b) the location of the site in the Borough and its characteristics:

- i) Assessment of development potential using locally specific design or conservation guidance documents, and fulfilling applicable Plan objectives for the area;
    - ii) Outside the urban area, design should, in particular, be sympathetic to local landscape and townscape character;
  - c) providing spacious, green and good quality developments including clearly meeting or exceeding nationally described space standards for new homes, and fulfilling policy for amenity space and green infrastructure provision; and
  - d) the principle of securing a mix of uses and residential types, achieving efficient re-use of land where appropriate, and delivering regeneration at urban locations well-served by public transport and services.
4. Public spaces in and outside buildings and all accommodation must be designed to be inclusive, safe and accessible for all Dartford's communities, including young, elderly, disabled and less mobile people. The design of buildings, open space and the private and public realm must be in accordance with active design principles and reduce the fear of, and opportunities for crime.
5. Signage and advertisements must be of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the building and locality, particularly in the designated Area of Special Advertisement Control, and must not have a negative impact on visual amenity, public safety or the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.



## **Environmental and Amenity Protection (M2)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 174, 183-186*

- 5.16 The location and form of development and impacts on the environment and amenity are principal considerations. Development should be designed and located where it will not have a negative impact on the existing natural, historic and built environment, and amenity or safety of an area.
- 5.17 Development should not be located where site conditions make it unsuitable for its intended use, unless it can be demonstrated that these can be remediated or mitigated. Sites where there is uncertainty about the safety or practicability of development might include development on or adjacent to landfill sites, within areas of poor air quality, or in close proximity to sites used for the storage of hazardous substances. It is particularly important that where people live helps support their health and wellbeing, and the policy seeks to ensure that residential amenity is protected.
- 5.18 Proposed development (the agent of change) which is incompatible with adjacent existing uses due to negative impacts, for example from industrial uses or odour from wastewater treatment works, may not be acceptable. Development will not be allowed where the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development would be infringed or where it is likely to prejudice the continuation of lawful operations of existing uses or prevent business growth or expansion, unless the impacts can be adequately mitigated as part of the development.

### **Pollution**

- 5.19 Addressing pollution and public health is a primary reason to adhere to the transport and spatial strategy set out in policies S1 and S2 to manage growth and development location, especially unplanned windfall development. Dartford Borough has a number of areas of poor air quality designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which are shown on the Policies Map. These are in areas where residential properties are located in close proximity to congested and/ or busy roads. The AQMAs are currently subject to review and the Action Plans are being updated. Air Quality Impact Assessments will be required for proposed developments which are within or

immediately adjacent to AQMAs, or where they have the potential to adversely impact on air quality, for example through additional traffic movements. Development in all locations will be expected to minimise pollution and meet national air quality standards.

- 5.20 Air quality mitigation will be required for all applicable developments and where the Air Quality Impact Assessment identifies the need, in line with national guidance. This may include increasing separation distances from sources of air pollution through the layout and design of development, planning in green infrastructure, or reducing emissions from sources such as transport and construction. Allowance should be made at the outset for designing an appropriate layout, including sufficient setbacks. Additional provision of sustainable or low pollution features should be considered, for example clearly surpassing standard requirements for promoting electric vehicle use. A comprehensive package of mitigation may be necessary.
- 5.21 Sufficient provision needs to be made to ensure that water infrastructure and pollution/ sewage management is in place to deal with the potential impacts arising. Water quality should not be impacted by pollution risks of development. Discharges must not overload the attenuation capacity of the underlying ground or drainage network and any receiving surface waters.

### Minerals

- 5.22 Policies apply on minerals (and waste) through plans adopted by Kent County Council that form part of statutory Development Plan for Dartford. Some parts of the Borough are in Mineral Safeguarding Areas under policy CSM 5 of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP), as amended 2020. Development in MSAs should be avoided where possible or otherwise will be considered in accordance with policy DM 7 of the KMWLP.

### Landfill Sites

- 5.23 Some areas, especially in the north of the Borough, are characterised by large scale open land set between existing residential communities. These areas often have been previously used for landfill purposes and have remained open land for many years due to ground stabilisation issues, gas emissions, and potential groundwater contamination associated with degrading landfill waste. Many of the sites are unsuitable for development in the short to medium term. In most instances, these sites are regarded

as greenfield land, and are not part of the planned housing land supply during the plan period (policy M9 would then apply). Detailed site investigations would be needed to indicate whether the land could be safely developed. Attempts to bring forward satisfactory development at these sites can present a range of special environmental and economic challenges in Dartford that need to be recognised from the outset.

- 5.24 In the event that proposals emerge, criterion 3 below applies; full detailed planning applications will be expected. Assessment of proposed development on gassing landfill sites will take into consideration the potential migration of the gas to adjacent areas and the resultant impact on public safety. There will also be a need to ensure that groundwater quality will not be adversely affected.
- 5.25 The first priority in assessing proposals is to ensure that development is appropriate; especially that any new residential development meets legislative requirements for safety. It is also very important that there is sufficient robust information at the point of determining planning applications, so that all the issues of feasibility and potential uncertainty can be recognised, and that there is detail available for reasonable confidence that the planned benefits will be realised if development commences.
- 5.26 Without major technical requirements clearly addressed upfront, there may be continuing uncertainty regarding the extent of gas emissions and/ or land stabilisation. Local experience suggests that the programme to bring forward satisfactory development in full can then become a longer term endeavour than initially identified. This is due to changing delivery timescales/ cost and viability, with potential impacts on meeting policy requirements, and the need to provide mitigations necessary to achieve sustainable growth in the Borough. For these reasons, sites which need to address potential gassing and land stabilisation issues will not be prioritised in decisions over sites where there are no such land conditions and associated viability implications.

**Policy M2: Environmental and Amenity Protection**

1. Development must demonstrate that it does not result in unacceptable material impacts, individually or cumulatively, on neighbouring uses, the Borough's environment or public health. Particular consideration must be given to the design of proposals in areas and subjects of potential sensitivity in the built and natural environment (including as highlighted on the Policies Map), and other potential amenity/ safety factors including:
  - a) air quality, in particular potential impacts within or immediately adjacent to air quality management areas;
  - b) water quality, including groundwater source protection zones;
  - c) intensity of use, including hours of operation;
  - d) anti-social behaviour and littering;
  - e) traffic, access, and parking;
  - f) noise disturbance or vibration;
  - g) odour;
  - h) light pollution;
  - i) overshadowing, overlooking and privacy;
  - j) electrical and telecommunication interference;
  - k) HSE land use consultation zones;
  - l) land instability; and
  - m) ground contamination and gassing.
2. Development must not materially impede the continuation of lawfully existing uses. Where impacts cannot be adequately mitigated, planning applications are likely to be refused.
3. Planning applications on or in the immediate vicinity of landfill sites must be accompanied by a full technical analysis of the site and its surroundings, in accordance with Environmental Health and Environment Agency requirements. Analysis must establish that landfill gas will not represent a hazard on development of the site or that development will not cause adverse impacts on groundwater. Development must clearly demonstrate that it can be safely, satisfactorily and fully achieved, including:
  - a) avoidance of risks to neighbouring uses/ the wider area; and
  - b) design quality, infrastructure provision, affordable housing and other policy requirements are not compromised as a result of high remediation costs or to allow for delivery uncertainties.

### **Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance (M3)**

- *Strategic Objectives: G2, G3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 155-158*

- 5.27 Under the Climate Change Act, the United Kingdom is now legally bound to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In Dartford Borough, 40% of carbon emissions come from the built environment<sup>22</sup>. The built environment is responsible for carbon emissions at the construction stage but also throughout its lifetime, depending largely on its quality, choice of materials and the way in which it is occupied and used.
- 5.28 Dartford's policy does not aim to dictate site design or construction details, but requires development to holistically and intentionally consider and act upon the opportunities for positive contribution to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. The policy seeks to embed an approach where climate change is considered from the outset and developments are intelligently designed with early stage assessment of impact and opportunities, with modelling wherever possible of options and their performance, to tackle issues in the most practicable form for the site. Both embodied and operational carbon should be included in assessments. This should then inform the appropriate uptake of efficient and viable technologies/ solutions.
- 5.29 Use of quality standards accreditation, such as the Homes Quality Mark by the BRE and with appropriate assessment tools (and modelling), is expected. Achievement of Passivhaus standards will be supported. However, where development impacts on the setting of a heritage asset, very careful selection of the most appropriate solution/ technology is required.

#### **Preserving Resources**

- 5.30 The design of residential development must consider how the occupants will interact with the building and how this will impact on their use of natural resources and need for heating and cooling. It is expected that residential dwellings will be designed with sufficient space and layout to increase the use of both recycling and composting. This includes early design for waste storage within individual units and also within serviced

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<sup>22</sup> Based on DEFRA emissions data from 2005 through to 2017

areas of flatted developments. Waste storage for flatted developments must provide sufficient access for collection vehicles.

- 5.31 Consideration must be given to the procurement and waste disposal of materials. During the construction phase, the re-use of materials on-site, or use of locally sourced materials, is expected wherever possible in order to prevent landfill waste and reduce vehicular trip generation.
- 5.32 Water efficiency is an issue of growing importance in south east England. The policy requires all new residential dwellings to achieve 110 litres per person per day (criterion 2 below) in accordance with Part G2 of the Building Regulations 2015. All developments should seek to make a contribution to challenging water scarcity. It is possible to achieve this in a number of ways, including installing water efficiency fittings within converted buildings or through incorporating water conserving planting into landscaping plans. Therefore this policy is not restricted to new build dwellings and will apply to all homes created. It is expected that information will be provided as part of planning applications to confirm how requirements will be satisfied. In addition, it is expected that good sustainable design and construction will fully explore the potential to build in features such as grey water recycling systems, particularly in large new development where scale and viability should allow.
- 5.33 All developments should be built of a high quality and design in order to improve their longevity, ensuring that they are robust, efficient and adaptable for future uses. Criterion 3 seeks to reduce the need to make additional alterations following construction as well as to ensure that the buildings are fit for life.

### Energy

- 5.34 The government have set out steps towards introducing a new Future Homes standard of significantly more sustainable residential design and construction. Pending this, the policy criterion 7 sets out a higher energy efficiency level in the Borough than existing Building Regulations Part L. This will be applied to major development until national proposals to go beyond this level of performance come into force, i.e. new Building Regulation requirements/ the full Future Homes Standard.
- 5.35 Dartford Borough has signed up to the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy 2020 which includes actions such as specific requirements for any new

development over 100 dwellings. Under Dartford policy, it is therefore further expected that there will be significant uptake of larger scale/ more advanced low or zero carbon technologies on residential schemes of 100 units or more (additional measures required to achieve performance outlined in the paragraph above); achieved consistent with latest sustainable technology solutions, and development scale and feasible options. This could include, for example, use of grey water recycling, combined heat and power connection/ networks, and/ or other systems taking significant advantage of the opportunities of designing or delivering at scale. In any event, the additional sustainability performance/ features should flow from proper assessment and pursuit of best practicable environmental outcomes.

- 5.36 Schemes should pursue passive design measures to optimise solar and daylight access and minimise risk of overheating/ reduce cooling demands. This will necessitate consideration of the orientation of façades in relation to the amount/ size of glazing, the type and design of balconies, and appropriately limited glazing areas to levels that meet good practice for daylighting levels without resulting in excessive overheating. To achieve this, suitable design solutions should be incorporated, such as avoiding exceeding 20-25% of glazing within the total façade wall area where south facing, with lesser proportions of glazing for other orientations. The design of development should balance daylighting/ solar access with the risk of overheating for dwellings, particularly single aspect apartments. This could be achieved, for example, by integrating external user-controlled shading on southern and western façades. Dwellings should always seek to maximise opportunities for natural cross ventilation, e.g. dual aspect with openable windows, ventilation shafts.

#### Non-Residential Development

- 5.37 In order to achieve carbon reductions, improved energy performance and water preservation, non-residential development over 1,000sqm will also be required to achieve BREEAM excellent standard. Due to water scarcity in the Borough, developments are required to meet the maximum available water credits in the excellent category, but the composition of the remaining necessary credits to achieve BREEAM excellence remains flexible. Securing BREEAM excellent standard will demonstrate that the environmental impacts of the development have been considered holistically and that all aspects of Policy M3 have been taken into consideration. Demonstration that the development will be able to achieve the excellent standard should be submitted with the planning application, and at pre-application stage if

appropriate. As and when the BRE update the requirements needed to achieve the excellent standard, it is expected that development will adhere to these and continue to achieve excellent ratings.

- 5.38 A passive approach should be applied for the non-domestic buildings, for instance prioritising natural ventilation.

#### Major Installations and Energy Storage

- 5.39 Proposals for solar farms and energy storage will be considered, with particular consideration given under criterion 9 to how landscape issues are addressed and impacts on the openness of the Green Belt. Turbines in the Borough can have an impact on aircraft and river traffic. Depending on their height, turbines and wind farms may require the consent of the National Air Transport Service (NATS) and the relevant airport authority in order to proceed through the planning process. There is also the potential for wind turbines near to the River Thames to have a detrimental impact on the Port of London Authority's navigation systems, particularly at Broadness/ Swanscombe Peninsula. Developers of wind turbine schemes or other schemes that may have a similar impact are encouraged to have early discussions with the Port of London Authority.

### **Policy M3: Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance**

1. The design, construction and whole life carbon cost of development must contribute to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change. This includes, but is not limited to, reducing embodied and operational carbon emissions, improving energy performance and preserving water. Applicants should demonstrate best endeavours to use recognised assessment tools/ quality standards.

#### Preserving Resources

2. All residential development must demonstrate delivery of the water efficiency level of no more than 110 litres per person per day for all dwellings created. In order to demonstrate high levels of energy performance and water efficiency, non-residential development over 1,000sqm must achieve the BREEAM excellent standard, showing that available water credits have been met.
3. Development should aim to increase a building's length of life and its adaptability for future uses.



4. Development materials should be carefully considered in order to reduce embodied carbon and reduce/ prevent waste in all development. Materials for construction should be recycled or re-used from within the site, or sourced locally, where possible.
5. All development should achieve a layout and design that enables re-use, recycling and composting for the future occupiers. Convenient and suitable arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials must be made.

#### Energy and Carbon

6. All residential development should incorporate passive design in order to optimise solar and daylight access and reduce the risk of overheating and the need for cooling.
7. Major residential development must achieve a minimum on-site reduction in regulated carbon emissions of at least 19 per cent beyond Part L of the Building Regulations, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not feasible. This will be required until such time that amendments are made to national legislation/ policy which have the effect of surpassing this level of performance. Large residential development of 100 dwellings or more should also demonstrate additional significant zero and/ or low carbon or sustainable technology features across the site.
8. At applicable sites, the appropriate technology and systems should be deployed to minimise impact on heritage and character.

#### Developments for Energy Generation and Storage

9. In determining applications for energy storage or small and large scale low/ zero carbon technology and installations, the economic and environmental benefits of the proposal will be weighed against the individual and cumulative impact of the development. Development will only be permitted in line with national policy and where the following factors have been satisfactorily taken into consideration where applicable:
  - a) Minimising landscape impacts and impacts on ecology and agriculture;
  - b) Shadow flicker and glare;
  - c) Electronic and telecommunication interference/ navigation and aviation issues; and
  - d) Ensuring installations are removed when no longer in use and land is then restored.

## **Flood Risk and Riverside Design (M4)**

- *Strategic Objectives: G5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 159-169*

- 5.40 The Rivers Thames and Darent are important parts of the Borough's character, and green grid. They now provide attractive environments to encourage walking/ cycling, as well as forming wildlife corridors and a landscape resource. In some locations, there is also potential for water based leisure activities such as sailing. Developments with a riverside frontage create opportunities to improve the landscape, habitats, access, leisure uses and flood defences along the rivers, which should be utilised. This aligns with the Thames Estuary 2100 strategy approach to riverside development.
- 5.41 Policy recognises (criterion 1 below) that areas adjoining the Rivers Darent and Thames provide the potential for developments to create high quality environments and places of vitality and recreation or natural/ historic interest. For example, designs could focus on land use and layout to improve access to or realignment of flood defences and improve the river frontage to provide environmental and public space enhancements. Furthermore, opportunities to provide safe and accessible facilities for sustainable river transport and water based leisure activities should be explored as part of regeneration projects, and riverside developments should seek environmental benefits through providing softer edges or re-naturalised banks. Regard should also be given to the Water Framework Directive and opportunities to protect and enhance UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats in development design.

### **Flood risk and Drainage**

- 5.42 The Dartford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>23</sup> identifies that fluvial and tidal flooding are the main sources of flood risk in the Borough, though surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding are also a potential risk. The fluvial flood risk mainly arises from the River Darent, and the tidal flood risk mainly arises from the River Thames and extends into the lower reaches of the River Darent. The SFRA includes maps showing the areas which fall within flood risk zones 2 (medium probability) and 3 (high probability). These are grouped together and indicated as flood risk areas on the Policies Map. Site specific flood risk assessments will be required for developments

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<sup>23</sup> Dartford Borough Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, JBA (February 2021)

in these areas, and for certain types of development not within identified flood risk areas. The SFRA sets out what matters should be addressed in the site specific assessments. It is important that development in flood risk areas does not increase flood risk or displace flood water and that development is designed to incorporate flood resilience measures such as raised finished floor levels and flood dispersal openings. It should be noted that flood dispersal openings do not include underfloor void areas.

- 5.43 There is a network of tidal and fluvial flood defences in the area. The Dartford Barrier and flood defences along the River Thames frontage protect the Borough from tidal flooding. Climate change will lead to changes to rainfall and sea levels as well as increasing the likelihood and severity of more extreme wet, dry and storm events. The SFRA considers the potential impact of climate change on flood risk in the Borough.
- 5.44 There are requirements for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) set out in criterion 6. These are management and design practices which enable surface water to be drained in a more sustainable manner and to mimic the local natural drainage. The installation within developments of SuDS measures such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, ponds and underground storage can reduce the impacts of urbanisation on flooding and reduce pollution of watercourses from run-off. They also provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity and create green spaces, contributing to the Borough's green and blue infrastructure network. Kent County Council, as the lead local flood authority, has a Drainage and Planning Policy document which sets out policies for sustainable drainage. The preference is for surface water run-off to filtrate into the ground before other options are considered. As much of Dartford Borough is within Groundwater Source Protection Zones, it is not always possible to include infiltration SuDS within developments given the risk of pollution of the drinking water supply.

#### Strategic Plans

- 5.45 The Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) Plan sets out a high level programme of flood defence infrastructure improvements which will be required over the next 100 years to manage rising sea levels and increased flood events. Initially, the plan within Dartford Borough is to improve the existing flood defence system. Development proposals within the tidal flood defence raising zone (shown in Diagram 2) must consider the need for space to inspect, maintain and raise the defences in future. In many circumstances, it will be appropriate for the developer to incorporate a raised flood

defence into the development. Where this is not the case, developers will be expected to demonstrate that their proposed works will not constrain the options for future raising of the defence. This may include geotechnical investigations and calculations. Early consultation with the risk management authority responsible for the defence (in most cases, the Environment Agency) should be undertaken to establish the preferred solution and how proposed development can complement this.

- 5.46 In the very long term before 2070, TE2100 includes options to improve the existing Thames Barrier or construct a new downstream barrier at Long Reach within Dartford Borough. Diagram 2 shows a strategic flood defence zone to indicate the broad area in which this could be located. This is largely within the Green Belt and part of the employment area at the former Littlebrook Power Station. The Council would need to consider the implications of any future plans for a new barrier in this location on the Green Belt designation in this area.
- 5.47 The South East Marine Plan was adopted in June 2021. This Plan includes some policies which will apply to riverside development coming forward along the River Thames and the tidal part of the River Darent.

**Policy M4: Flood Risk and Riverside Design**

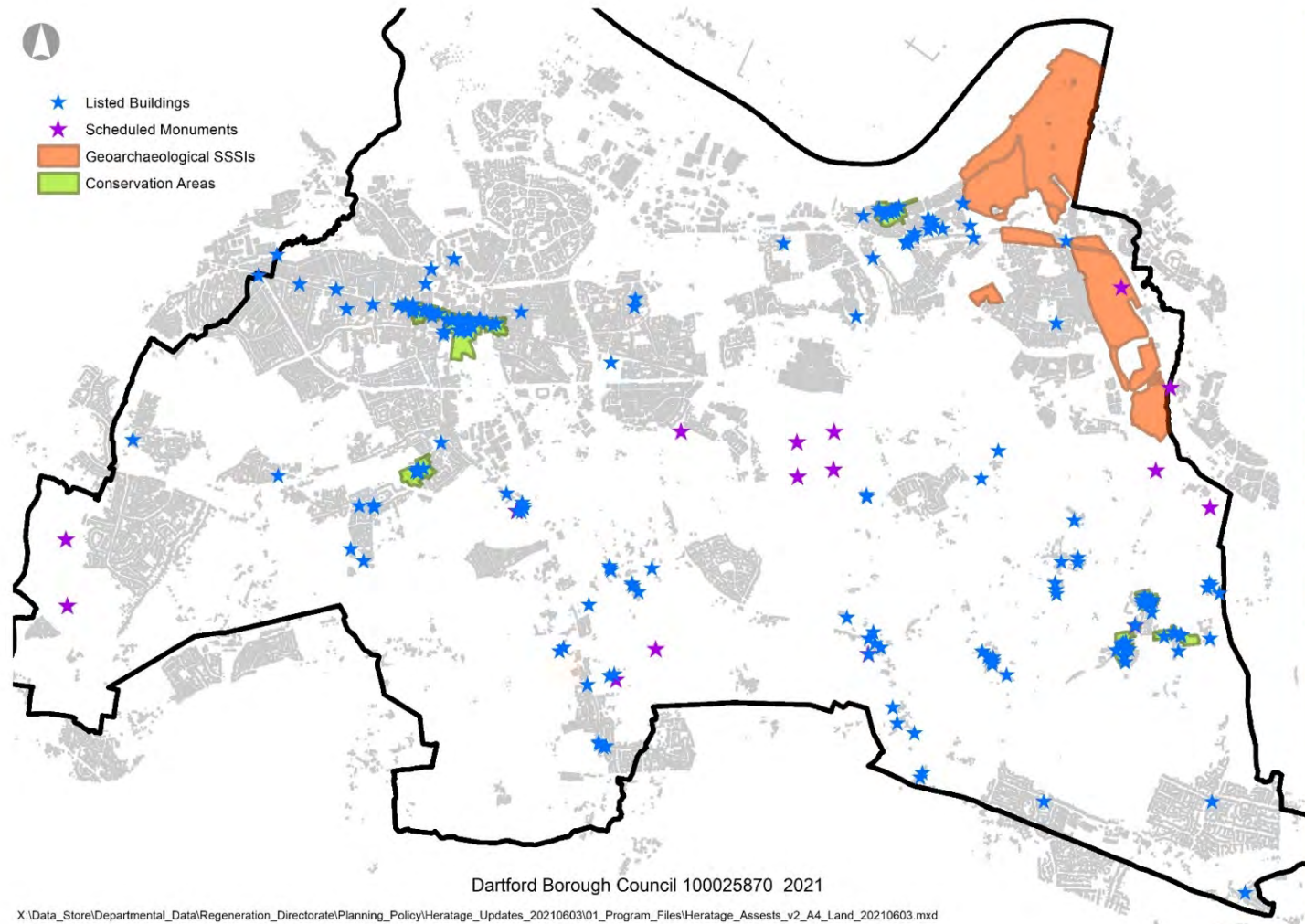
1. Development with a frontage along the Rivers Thames or Darent will be expected to fully explore the potential for improving: the riparian landscape; biodiversity; access and appeal for pedestrians and cyclists; and opportunities for river based recreation. This should be planned along with securing any flood defence infrastructure that may be required under criterion 2.
2. Development which is proposed on sites which fall partly or wholly within the tidal flood defence raising zone must not constrain the future management, maintenance and upgrading of flood defences and, where feasible, development must seek to contribute to the delivery of the Thames Estuary 2100 plan.
3. Planning permission for development will only be granted where:
  - a) It can be demonstrated that the site is safe from all types of flooding, now and for the lifetime of the development, taking into account the effects of climate change; and
  - b) It does not materially displace flood water or worsen flood risk elsewhere.
4. Where development is within an area at risk of flooding from any source, it will be required to:
  - a) Locate the most vulnerable development in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons for not doing so;
  - b) Include measures which reduce the overall level of flood risk at the site, where possible;
  - c) Provide a safe means of access and egress; and
  - d) Incorporate flood protection and resilience measures.
5. Development which is proposed on sites with a riverside frontage or providing access to flood defences must make sufficient space for the defences and for future river levels available where necessary, and provision for the future management, maintenance and upgrading of the defences.
6. All major development must incorporate multi-functional Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce surface water run-off and ensure that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Infiltration SuDS will only be acceptable where they will not lead to deterioration of groundwater quality in Groundwater Source Protection Zones. Where possible, SuDS should be multi-functional and deliver benefits to green infrastructure.

## **Historic Environment Strategy (M5 and M6)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 189-208*

- 5.48 Dartford Borough has a long history and varied heritage due to its location in the fertile Darent Valley, availability of natural resources and its relative proximity to London. There is evidence of prehistoric activity in the Borough dating back to the Palaeolithic period. The modern town of Dartford originated as a small Romano-British settlement on what is now Watling Street, the main road through Kent from London to Dover. There was then a Saxon settlement and a medieval market town before more rapid growth in the post medieval period and industrial expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 5.49 Some of the resultant heritage assets are still evident and the key ones are designated as listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and geoarchaeological Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These are shown in Figure 9. They are an irreplaceable resource and should not be unnecessarily lost through redevelopment. The local planning authority will seek to retain the Borough's designated heritage assets and enhance their significance wherever possible, ensuring that they are put to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Proposals leading to substantial harm or total loss of a designated heritage asset will be resisted, and will only be allowed on an exceptional basis.
- 5.50 Where an asset has been deliberately neglected or damaged, its deteriorated state will not be taken into account in decision making.

**Figure 9: Designated Heritage Assets**



- 5.51 There are also other assets of historic interest which are non-designated. Table 6 outlines the key criteria that will be taken into account to determine the historic significance of potential non-designated assets.

**Table 6 Significance of Potential Heritage Assets**

Criteria	Description
<b>Rarity</b>	Exemplifying a style, design, settlement pattern, or other quality that is uncommon to the locality, Borough or wider region.
<b>Representativeness</b>	Exemplifying a particular type, historical or architectural trend or individual represented in the Borough.
<b>Integrity</b>	Retaining a sense of completeness with little later alteration or addition.

- 5.52 Non-designated heritage assets may include a site or building, a group of buildings, or a distinct area. They are anticipated to take the form of historic, archaeological, architectural/ artistic, and/ or townscape/ landscape elements. This is explained in the following points, which should be consulted when considering the identification of possible non-designated heritage assets.

- **Historic:** Buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscapes that are of historic interest associated with local historic events or locally famous or notable people, civic, community or industrial activities of local significance; or which reflect the traditional functional character, or former patterns, of land use within the Borough.
- **Archaeological:** Monuments or places of archaeological interest that are identifiable and definable in extent; have the potential to retain well preserved deposits (both upstanding features or earthworks and sub-surface); and/ or relate to a significant phase of local development or local occupation or to a person of local significance. Archaeological interests are particularly important to the Borough, and it should be noted that under the NPPF lack of prior designation does not prevent such archaeological interests being assessed against designated heritage asset policy. Assessments of archaeological interest in support of planning applications will require a desk based assessment in the first instance, with a full site evaluation required if the need is indicated by the initial assessment. Where appropriate, archaeological features should be protected and retained in situ, or otherwise recorded, preserved and made available as a public record.



- Architectural or Artistic: Sites or buildings that are valued locally for special architectural or vernacular interest; have associations with a locally or nationally notable architect, designer or engineer; demonstrate design features of exceptional quality that may be characteristic of the local area; are of artistic interest for its conscious design; or have technical significance that displays exceptional innovation and craftsmanship.
- Townscape/ Landscape: A building, monument, site, place, area, landscape or open space which makes a positive visual contribution to character, helps define a sense of place or adds to the local distinctiveness of the area, in the context of Dartford Borough as a whole. These include:
  - Key landmark buildings and/ or structures including significant buildings on important routes into the area;
  - Buildings that create a vista, view or make a positive contribution to the skyline;
  - A group of buildings or the relationship between buildings;
  - Valued open spaces, including public streets and squares, parks, gardens, amenity spaces, and river corridors;
  - Trees, including avenues, special groups and single landmark trees;
  - Hedges; appropriate walls, fences or railings; and street surfaces and margins, for example, cobbles, setts and suitable grass verges;
  - Distinctive items of street furniture, for example, signposts, lamp columns and light fittings.

This assessment framework will also be used in any local list of non-designated heritage assets that may be introduced, which would be subject to public consultation.

- 5.53 It will be important to conserve and manage the Borough's rich and varied heritage and maximise opportunities to investigate sites further as they come forward as part of developments. The impacts of proposed developments on existing designated and non-designated heritage assets will be considered. The design of new developments will be expected to reveal or reference all heritage assets potentially affected by the proposals.
- 5.54 A heritage statement must accompany all planning applications affecting heritage assets. This must demonstrate the significance of the heritage asset to enable the impact of a development proposal to be assessed. Proposals affecting archaeological sites must be accompanied by a desk based assessment as a minimum. Applications

affecting designated heritage assets will be assessed in accordance with policy M5. Applications affecting non-designated assets will be assessed against the criteria contained in policy M6.

- 5.55 Dartford Borough has selected Areas of Special Character which are shown on the Policies Map. These may contain historic, archaeological, architectural or townscape interest. Development within these areas should establish the significance, as applicable, using evidence to ensure they fulfil policy objectives for non-designated assets. Evidence includes relevant information contained in the adopted Areas of Special Character Appraisal.

### **Policy M5: Designated Heritage Assets**

1. Designated heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Any harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification.
2. In determining planning applications, the local planning authority will pay close regard to:
  - a) the significance of the heritage asset;
  - b) the desirability of maintaining and, where possible, enhancing significance; and
  - c) the desirability of ensuring viable uses are found for heritage assets, consistent with their conservation.
3. Where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, permission will be refused unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the development is necessary for substantial public benefits to be achieved that will outweigh the harm or loss.
4. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

#### **Listed Buildings**

5. Development proposals affecting statutorily listed buildings must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Loss of or harm to a statutorily listed building or its setting will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in line with criteria 3 and 4.

#### **Conservation Areas**

6. Development proposals affecting a conservation area must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Proposals that would result in harm or loss of significance will be determined in line with criteria 3 and 4.
7. The demolition of any building in a conservation area will only be permitted where it is clear that it will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, and suitable redevelopment or landscaping/ restoration of the site is secured.

#### **Scheduled Monuments**

8. Development proposals affecting Scheduled Monuments will only be permitted where they clearly conserve the asset or enhance its significance. Proposals resulting in loss or harm will only be permitted on a wholly exceptional basis and in line with criteria 3 and 4.

#### Geoarchaeological Sites

9. Sites designated for their geoarchaeological interests, including the Swanscombe Skull SSSI and Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI, are irreplaceable and therefore will be protected and conserved.

#### **Policy M6: Historic Environment Strategy**

1. Development must contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of the Borough's historic environment. The local planning authority will work with developers on strategies to realise this in the context of site heritage opportunities and constraints.
2. Where heritage may be at risk, landowners will be expected to work proactively with the local planning authority in bringing forward proposals to preserve or enhance these assets, to facilitate their successful rehabilitation and seek their viable re-use consistent with their heritage value and special interest.
3. Development proposals which may affect the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets or their setting must demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved or enhanced as appropriate. Proposals must aim to reflect and interpret the historic character of a site and conserve its most significant historical and/ or architectural aspects.

#### Non-Designated Heritage Assets

4. The Borough's non-designated heritage assets include:
  - a) Archaeological sites, including sites holding an interest as defined in the NPPF;
  - b) Applicable sites within Areas of Special Character;
  - c) Sites with significant industrial heritage;
  - d) Land with historic landscape character;
  - e) Historic open space, parks and gardens; and
  - f) Assets that may be designated through a local list, produced after public consultation.
5. Development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets must establish the asset's significance. Development must conserve or enhance those aspects that have been identified as significant and should seek to better reveal an asset's significance.
6. In determining planning applications affecting non-designated assets, the effect of the proposal on the asset's significance will be taken into account. A balanced judgement will be taken having regard to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of any harm or loss of significance. Development resulting in a total loss of significance will normally be refused.

## **Affordable Housing (M7)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 62-65*

- 5.56 With many new neighbourhoods in creation in Dartford, a wide choice of housing must be available and accessible to meet the needs of local residents, providing diversity and a mix of house types and tenures. This will enable families and households to stay in the area when their circumstances change and a different type of home is needed, and assists in the achieving the planned steady delivery of inclusive Borough regeneration.
- 5.57 Developments should contribute to the creation of mixed communities in Dartford with a range of housing tenures to meet varying local need. Substantial residential development is occurring, largely on the basis of existing planning permissions, and will continue for several years. This means that new applications need to consider closely how future housing needs can be met, complementing the contribution to be made by sites which already have planning permission.

### **Thresholds and headline target**

- 5.58 Following national policy, affordable housing in the Green Belt or south of the A2 will not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, i.e. affordable housing is required for developments of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more. For sites in the urban area, the 15 dwelling previous threshold will continue to be used.
- 5.59 Reflecting future needs requirements, the planned residential sites and development delivery prospects, the Local Plan sets a headline target of at least 35% new housing on applicable sites to be delivered to meet the current national definition of affordable housing. This is necessary to increase rates of new affordable housing delivery over the plan period, accounting for Borough needs<sup>24</sup>. The headline affordable housing target should be factored into land values but, in any event, is expected to prove viable on most types of site without planning permission which form part of the planned housing supply of the Borough. However, in Central Dartford, factors such as

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<sup>24</sup> Dartford & Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment, HDH (October 2019)

competing/ existing suitable land uses mean a lower target applies for this key regeneration area.

### Tenures and delivery

5.60 A large range of tenures/ housing products now fall within the definition of affordable housing, including both rented and ownership based tenures. This incorporates housing products such as shared ownership, discounted market housing (including First Homes), and rent-to-buy. For some households, e.g. newly forming households needing help to enter the housing market, ownership based affordable housing tenures are likely to be an appropriate solution. However, for those with lower household incomes, there is an essential need for affordable rented housing. This will be tackled through a range of actions/ developments, including the Council's growing provision of new affordable housing. Criterion 1d of the policy supports suitable land proposed for 100% affordable rented provision, which should be available in perpetuity. Council-led (or other public/ voluntary sector) proposals for future affordable rented schemes approved in accordance with this policy are likely to play an important role in complementing accommodation financed through private development.

5.61 Projected Borough need requirements suggest that within the affordable housing provision, there should ordinarily be provision of a higher proportion of social/ affordable rented provision than intermediate affordable housing products. Subject to negotiation on individual sites and latest local need evidence, the indicative guideline is that development should include:

- 20% of total housing as social/ affordable rented tenures; and
- 15% of total housing as affordable home ownership products (including the First Homes provision).

Evidence shows that there is significant need for social/ affordable rented housing and that other needs could principally be met through ownership based intermediate affordable housing products. This includes First Homes or shared ownership homes provided at 25% equity.

5.62 The indicative tenure guidelines above accord with national policy requiring the provision of at least 10% of all new homes on major development sites to be available for affordable home ownership (with some exceptions for example developments providing 100% build to rent dwellings). Any First Homes arising from national guidance will form part or all of the proportion of affordable home ownership products.

The delivery of 20% of all homes as social/ affordable rented tenures and 15% of all dwellings as First Homes would accord with national guidance for one quarter or more of all affordable housing delivery to be First Homes.

- 5.63 There are often several considerations for sites in achieving successful affordable housing delivery, in addition to quantitative guidance, including:
- the local housing needs in the Borough and at the site, and, critically, the ability of those in housing need to sustainably afford the accommodation;
  - the capacity of the development to provide various types of affordable housing; and
  - the delivery and management/ maintenance of affordable housing, including the need for affordable housing to be feasible in scale, form and location for housing associations or other approved providers.
- 5.64 Affordable housing should be provided on-site and designed so that it is integrated with the other parts of the development. This ensures that there is a good distribution of affordable housing across the Borough and promotes social inclusion. However, it is recognised that on-site provision will not always provide the best solution due to factors such as the size and type of development, the nature of the site and impacts on the viability of development. Such cases will be exceptional and will need to be fully justified. The local planning authority will require off-site housing provision to be made or the payment of a commuted sum instead. The commuted sum should be equivalent to the financial contribution were the affordable housing to be provided on-site.

**Policy M7: Affordable Housing**

1. Residential development should aim for a genuine mix of housing to support inclusive neighbourhoods, with a range of rental and ownership options to meet local needs. Affordable housing should be provided in the following circumstances:
  - a) In the urban area, at developments proposing a gain of 15 dwellings or more.
  - b) South of the A2 and/ or in the Green Belt, at developments proposing a gain of 10 dwellings or more.
  - c) At residential development in the Borough of 0.5ha in size or more.
  - d) Any site proposed and justified in principle on the basis of delivering dwellings that are all rented affordable housing meeting priority local requirements will be supported, where it is sustainable in location and appropriate in scale.
2. Where residential developments are required to provide affordable housing in accordance with criterion 1, these should:
  - a) Provide a mix of affordable housing tenures, with a target for 35% or more of all dwellings to be defined as affordable housing, except in Central Dartford where the target is 20%;
  - b) Ensure that design layouts and facilities are not segregated, with no barriers to access or differences in appearance between different tenures; and
  - c) Make provision on-site. In exceptional circumstances where it can be justified that this would not be viable or practical, or where off-site provision would result in public benefits, provision on an alternative site in the Borough or a commuted sum may be considered.

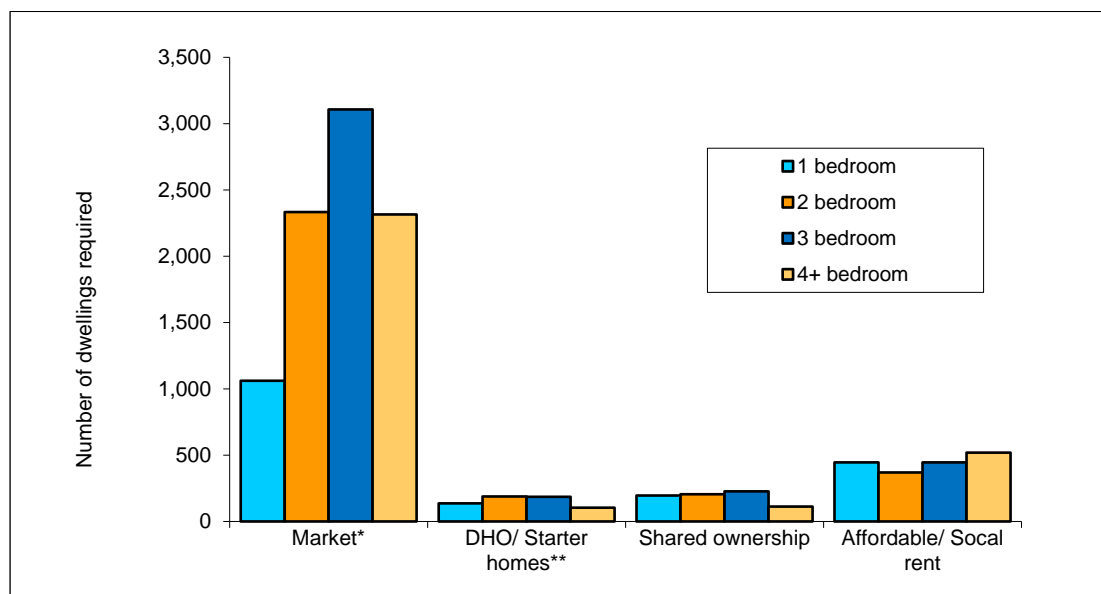


### **Housing Mix (M8)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4*  
*NPPF paragraphs: 62*

- 5.65 A range of residential development should occur, particularly on larger sites. Genuine variety in the type of new accommodation is a requirement of the Borough's development strategy (policy S4). Dartford's policy framework includes several measures for the provision of high quality dwellings of sufficient size and usability, appropriate to local needs. This includes minimum nationally described room sizes (policy M1) but also principles set out in the policy below in relation to overall size, adaptability and the specialist needs of the population.
- 5.66 The Residential Needs Assessment<sup>25</sup> considered the sizes of dwellings required to meet the needs of the Borough's population over the plan period. Figure 10 shows the expected overall aggregate mix of homes required. In terms of market housing, it is clear that the greatest need is for 3 bedroom homes, but with significant need for 2 and 4 bedroom homes. For affordable dwellings, the needs for different sizes of homes are more evenly spread.

**Figure 10: Indication of Mix of Dwelling Size (with Tenure)**



\* Market housing includes both owner-occupied and private rented

<sup>25</sup> Dartford and Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment, HDH (October 2019)

\*\* Discount Home Ownership figures in particular represent potential demand rather than a requirement

- 5.67 The local planning authority will expect all developments to provide new dwellings of a size which reflect these needs, and to aim for a good mix of houses and flats for families and individuals. However, for certain types of specialist accommodation targeted to local needs, e.g. retirement living, age restricted dwellings, extra care housing, it is recognised that it may be more appropriate for a greater number of 1 bedroom dwellings to be provided. In contrast to development coming forward in other parts of the Borough, in Central Dartford it is likely that many developments will feature primarily flatted dwellings. In this case, it will be required only for developments over 100 dwellings to provide family sized homes.

#### Accessible, Adaptable and Wheelchair User Dwellings

- 5.68 The provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings (M4(2): Category 2 of the Building Regulations) within new development creates homes which are step free and therefore accessible to most people. Provision of more accessible and adaptable dwellings will particularly benefit those with reduced mobility and enable more residents to stay in their homes for longer as their needs change.
- 5.69 It is a key objective for new dwellings to be designed to meet M4(2) standards, continuing the previous approach. There is a needs to ensure that needs will be fully addressed by the development delivered in the Borough. Currently, through sites with planning permission, some market housing developments are delivering significant levels of accessible and adaptable dwellings (including 100% provision), demonstrating potential for further additional high delivery levels on new sites.
- 5.70 Occasionally, there may be site specific circumstances where it is impossible for all dwellings to meet the M4(2) standards in full. This could be due to site topography or the need for raised finished floor levels to mitigate flood risk, for instance. Alternatively, it may be shown that it is not viable to include lifts, in particular on certain small flatted infill developments. In these cases, developers should provide an early but comprehensive justification on why the proposals do not meet the policy requirements. Reduced or non-provision will only be in exceptional circumstances where site specific circumstances negate such provision, or where dwellings are being built in accordance with previous permissions which had lower accessible housing requirements.

- 5.71 Some people will need homes which are suitable for wheelchair users (M4(3): Category 3 of the Building Regulations). It is clear that a growing ageing population, and those who will be unable to manage mobility activities, will increase the need for wheelchair user homes. On this basis, large developments will be expected to provide some dwellings which meet M4(3) wheelchair user standards. It is not anticipated that provision would be outside a range of 0 to 5% of dwellings, to be negotiated on the basis of latest information on need. This may be as part of the affordable housing element of the scheme.

#### Specialist Housing

- 5.72 The local planning authority supports the provision of older persons and nursing/residential care home spaces as part of the mix of housing within larger developments. Standalone specialist housing developments may be acceptable where there is need for the type and mix of accommodation proposed, and they are sustainably located.

#### Self-Build and Custom-Build Dwellings

- 5.73 As part of providing a greater volume, mix and range of new housing products, the government is promoting self-build and custom-build dwellings. The Council has a Self-Build register which lists those who are seeking plots for self-build housing in the Borough. This has been divided into two parts, with those in part 1 having an identified local connection to the Borough.
- 5.74 Whilst the provision of plots is not appropriate within flatted developments, it is expected that some provision will be made within developments with a large volume of houses to meet the requirements arising from the Self-Build register.

**Policy M8: Housing Mix**

1. All developments should provide an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes to create vibrant and mixed communities which meet the accommodation needs of the local population.
  - a) The majority of dwellings on all developments should provide 2 or more bedrooms (for specialist accommodation, a higher proportion of smaller units may be justifiable).
  - b) Major developments should include provision for 3 and 4 bedroom homes, except in Central Dartford where sites of 100 or more dwellings will be required to make provision.
2. All new build dwellings should meet the requirement M4(2): Category 2 – Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings. A limited proportion of dwellings to meet the requirement M4(3): Category 3 – Wheelchair User Dwellings is sought on sites of 100 or more dwellings. Only where it can be robustly demonstrated why it is not possible to contribute to these requirements will applicable developments be exempted.
3. The local planning authority supports, as part of mixed neighbourhoods, the provision of specialist accommodation for specific groups (such as age restricted dwellings) and care homes (use class C2) suitable for older and vulnerable people where sustainably located and need is demonstrated.
4. Major developments should make proportionate provision of plots for self-build or custom-build dwellings based on site size and the number of entries on the self-build register where appropriate to the character and form of the development.

## **Sustainable Housing Locations (M9)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, I1, I3, G1*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 119*

- 5.75 New dwellings on sites of all sizes should be sustainably located. To identify specific sustainable locations with potential for five or more new dwellings, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2021<sup>26</sup> (SHLAA) defines sites which are suitable and available for residential development. This land has been assessed through clear criteria consistent with this plan's strategic objectives, including access to local facilities and public transport, and has been found to be in a sustainable location and deliverable/ developable.
- 5.76 The principle of residential development at these identified locations is supported in the spatial strategy (policy S1) and will deliver a range of new land to boost the Borough's dwelling stock. The planned housing land supply is set out in the SHLAA with potential updates via the brownfield land register, plus statements showing the latest five year deliverable housing land supply information.
- 5.77 The predominance of new housing in the Borough is expected to be on land identified through these mechanisms and locations featured in the Borough's spatial strategy. Plan-led residential development locations are a fundamental part of Dartford's sustainable development (policies S1, S2 and S4, D3 to D7, and E4 to E6).
- 5.78 Sites not identified in the housing land supply are unplanned and considered to be windfall sites and - outside the priority growth locations covered by plan sections 3 and 4 - the policy provides the criteria necessary to confirm the unplanned residential sites that will be supported.
- 5.79 There is a strong imperative for all sites, large and small, to maintain the Borough's priority for development to be focussed on brownfield land. National policy gives substantial weight to suitable brownfield land within settlements and, in Dartford Borough, it is expected that greenfield land will only be needed exceptionally. Inappropriate windfall developments are a clear threat to achieving the plan's 80% brownfield land target (policy S4).

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<sup>26</sup> DBC (2021) Dartford Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Findings September 2021

- 5.80 Developments comprising one to four dwellings will form windfalls as they are too small to be pre-identified. These small sites provide little opportunity for mixed developments or on-site provision of facilities and infrastructure. Their acceptability as sustainable development locations should be demonstrated in terms of net benefits.
- 5.81 The individual or aggregate impact of larger windfall sites can have real potential to have an adverse impact on maintaining sustainable development. These sites may present challenges to infrastructure planning and, potentially, brownfield land re-use requirements. They can compromise the achievement of Local Plan regeneration, and healthy and walkable neighbourhood/ sustainable transport objectives. These have not been accounted for in infrastructure planning with no ability to plan ahead for sufficient capacity (e.g. to secure land nearby for a new school expansion/ site). Even with the possibility of land on-site, major windfall developments risk undermining planning by the Council and infrastructure providers to ensure that sufficient timely and accessible infrastructure is prioritised and delivered, to allow urban regeneration/ the identified development locations to be realised.
- 5.82 It is very important in this Borough for any new residential development to be located close to, or deliver on-site provision for, schools, shops, health facilities, and recreation facilities. Access to, criteria for provision of, good public transport services providing access to employment sites or destinations with a range of services will also need to be demonstrated. Good access to facilities, frequent public transport, and the provision of good quality pedestrian and cycling opportunities linking to facilities underpin the central Local Plan principle of encouraging a modal shift from car use to more sustainable forms of transport (policies S2 and S3). All developments need to show that the location is well integrated into safe walking and cycle routes.

Infrastructure and accessibility of medium/ large windfalls

- 5.83 For sustainable development aims to materialise, proper assessment is required of whether facilities and links are close by and convenient to use. Continuing the previous policy for windfalls of more than five dwellings, applicable walking distances in criterion 2b are those of sufficient quality and suitable in the Dartford Borough context to achieve substantial modal shifts from car dependency, using safe and attractive routes.

- 5.84 A high but achievable level is to be maintained in the Borough for accessibility to public transport services to ensure that this offers a genuine alternative choice for residents in preference to the car. The SHLAA uses a distance of 400m to a station or a bus stop with at least two buses an hour each way (or six per hour for greenfield sites over 1 hectare) and this same criterion will be applied to windfall sites. The usefulness of the service will also be taken into account, including the number of services available and the destinations served by these services, e.g. Dartford Town Centre, hospital, secondary schools, Bluewater, urban employment areas.
- 5.85 Developments should be within easy walking distance of community facilities along a usable and good quality route. A maximum walking distance of up to 800m to a range of public services and shops is the normal distance that will be applied in the Borough. This will take account of both existing provision in the area and relevant facilities that have been secured and are forthcoming.
- 5.86 Major developments (of 10 or more new dwellings) must be shown to give close consideration under criterion 2c to providing for needs arising for social, community and green infrastructure. This will normally relate to the scale of development proposed and should address the latest available information on infrastructure delivery in the Borough. This will include projections on capacity and will take into account both planned development and planned provision of infrastructure over the plan period. Applicable proposals must be supported by evidence on how the infrastructure proposed as part of the development is sufficient or provide an explanation of how impacts can be acceptably mitigated.

**Policy M9: Sustainable Housing Locations**

1. Sites located in accordance with the Central Dartford or Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe policies, or in the identified housing land supply (where the proposed number of dwellings is broadly in line with the projected site capacity), will be permitted for residential development.
2. At other locations, residential development will be supported where the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disbenefits, including the sustainability of the site's location. Unplanned windfall development within use class C3 involving a net gain of five or more dwellings should also show that:
  - a) It is located on brownfield land, unless it has been demonstrated that the site is necessary to rectify a lack of five year supply of deliverable housing land;
  - b) It is within easy walking distance of a range of community facilities including schools, shops, leisure and recreation services, and is well located with respect to walking/ cycling and good public transport to a choice of employment opportunities; and
  - c) In the case of major development, it is also shown to be sufficiently served by infrastructure, after allowing for the infrastructure requirements of the sites identified in the housing land supply.



## **Residential Amenity Space Provision (M10)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4, G2, G3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 130*

- 5.87 All residential dwellings are required to provide high quality amenity space for the primary purpose of enhancing the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents. The design, scale, functionality and performance of amenity space is of great importance; and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the factors set out in below, especially criteria 2 and 3, have been considered and incorporated.
- 5.88 For houses, the private amenity space is expected to be delivered through (at least) a single rear garden with direct access from the street and also through the house. However, where unavoidable site constraints dictate that a rear garden alone would not provide sufficient quality and/ or quantity, top-up private amenity space will be permitted in the form of a balcony or terrace. Balconies/ terraces can provide additional space but the majority of the private amenity space should be in the form of a garden. It is important there is sufficient usable open amenity space, including once allowance is made for the reasonable provision of accessible sheds/ storage needed by residents. This must allow for provision of soft landscaping, trees, habitats and breaks between houses. The design considerations set out in criterion 2 below are essential, in addition to the form and scale of provision.
- 5.89 When considering provision, the quantity and layout should reflect the character of the site and the area in which it is located as well as the size of the house and the number of expected occupants. In most parts of the Borough, it is expected that rear gardens should be generous in their provision and specifically designed to enable good provision of space for healthy and active life, and the practical and leisure needs of children and older people.
- 5.90 On average across a whole development scheme, an indicative guideline of at least 60sqm per house should be achievable. This must be allied with demonstration of good quality against the design criteria. Gardens of this size and greater have recently been delivered at sites such as Castle Hill and St Clements Way. Outside the urban area, much larger gardens should be delivered. Where sites are shown to be unusually physically constrained which impacts on what can be provided as a rear garden (e.g.

a small site within a retail centre), sufficient additional means of provision should be secured. This may be achieved through private communal open space within or near to the development and/ or through alternative types of private amenity (e.g. balconies or terraces).

- 5.91 For flatted development, private amenity space is expected to be delivered primarily through a balcony, winter garden, terrace, garden, or a combination of any of these options, in addition to necessary communal amenity space provision. These forms of provision should be flexible and attractive, fulfilling the design factors set out for resident wellbeing. It is intended that all residents have some access to private outdoor space. In flatted development, it is particularly important that space is well-designed with regard to materials, dimensions and access so that it is highly usable. The general aim for each flat, unless there is an overriding strong design reason, is to achieve approximately 10sqm or more of private amenity space. Balcony sizes should be proportionate to the number of bedrooms and expected number of occupants per flat and be larger for potential family accommodation. Provision should have sufficient depth (from the exterior wall outwards) to ensure that the space is usable and can accommodate furniture. The requirements set out in criterion 2 should still be considered and incorporated into design at an early stage. Where possible, the provision of gardens for ground floor flats will be encouraged.
- 5.92 These figures are indicative guidelines of quantity and not quality. They should not form a maximum assumed baseline level, rather a good design approach should be taken from the outset. Example figures are based on typical recent delivery and provide a potential expectation for what is likely to be feasible or exceeded on most sites.
- 5.93 The sizes, form and layout of all private amenity space should aim for broad consistency across sites, unless clear justification is provided, and should not be reduced based on tenure.

#### Communal Amenity Space

- 5.94 In addition to private amenity space, especially for flatted developments or where sites are not within walking distance to a public open space, communal amenity space should be provided on all large developments unless demonstrably unnecessary. Whilst communal provision is supported and encouraged, developments seeking to deliver only communal amenity space, with no private space, will not be acceptable.

- 5.95 High quality provision is expected in terms of both design and facilities, and well-located in relation to residents and features that determine usability, and if a positive or negative setting is created. Noise, privacy and security impacts should be thoroughly considered and mitigated. Small verge areas, narrow landscape strips or buffers and areas with no management or provision for leisure or play cannot be considered communal amenity space.
- 5.96 A contribution to the Green and Blue Infrastructure network is expected (policy M14). Depending on the nature of provision, and if well laid out, sited and appropriately managed, communal amenity space could potentially count in part or whole towards the requirements in policy M14. It should not all count as Green and Blue Infrastructure provision under that policy unless significant land is dedicated to, and managed for, biodiversity purposes within the communal amenity space.

**Policy M10: Residential Amenity Space**

1. Residential development must provide sufficient and high quality amenity space to meet the health, recreation and functional needs of occupants and to contribute to good design, wellbeing and wider environmental objectives. Sites should be laid out to provide for private amenity space requirements and contribute to multi-functional green infrastructure, where possible.
2. The design of all private and communal amenity types and spaces must be attractive, enable maximum functionality for the end users and be suitable to the location and character of the development. In this respect, the applicant must demonstrate how the following, as a minimum, have been taken into consideration and provided within the design:
  - a) Good sunlight and fresh air;
  - b) Leisure and recreation space;
  - c) Children's play needs;
  - d) Storage space sufficient for the needs of likely occupiers;
  - e) Relative privacy and tranquillity as appropriate to the setting;
  - f) Opportunity for food growing where possible; and
  - g) Accessible and secure entrances.
3. To achieve this aim, all new build residential development must provide a quantity of private amenity space that is:
  - a) Clearly ample for each house in a development. This should be predominantly a single area, provided through an attached (preferably spacious rear) garden; and
  - b) sufficient and highly usable in the form of a balcony, winter garden, terrace or garden for each flat in a development.

## **Residential Extensions, New Dwellings, and Garden Land (M11)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 62, 71, 130, 134*

- 5.97 The local planning authority is committed to providing a good mix of housing, maintaining the character of popular residential communities. New housing land will play a key role in meeting current and future housing needs, but guidance is also needed in relation to proposals for new dwellings on infill sites, backland sites and existing residential gardens, and for the conversion and extension of existing dwellings.

### **Conversions**

- 5.98 The conversion of houses and residential infill development can be appropriate but should not result in the loss of character and amenity. In order to prevent this, the plot size and spacing between buildings should reflect the historically dominant form in the area, even where this has been eroded by subsequent development. Decisions will take account of the potential impact of the proposal on townscape character. Such proposals also often intensify the use of the site and the street. This can have adverse consequences on residential character, for instance additional noise, increased activity and more refuse and recycling bins kept on-street to serve the individual households. It will be important to ensure that proposals do not have adverse impacts on highways and on-street parking and regard will also be given to policy M17.
- 5.99 In order to ensure that sufficiently sized existing housing stock is retained, conversions will only be allowed where the original property is more than 120sqm. Converted terraced dwellings are not normally capable of providing an adequate standard of accommodation and can have significant impacts on residential amenity. For these reasons, the conversion of terraced houses will be resisted in accordance with criterion 4.

### Maintaining Garden Land

- 5.100 Development should complement good quality living accommodation creating healthy communities with outdoor space provision creating attractive environments. In particular, a range of houses with gardens needs to be maintained.
- 5.101 A lack of choice of family sized homes in the local area will impact on the ability of the Borough to retain facilities and maintain mixed communities, and to attract the workforce needed to support the planned growth and diversification of the economy. The local planning authority is committed to maintaining existing larger family homes as part of providing a broad choice of residential accommodation.
- 5.102 Proposals for dwellings, and inappropriate extensions on residential garden land, can also have adverse impacts on character, and family health and wellbeing. All new dwellings should be set in commensurately sized plots for gardens/ open amenity space. This is particularly important in those locations identified as an Area of Special Character on the Policies Map that are distinguishable as established residential neighbourhoods. In accordance with national planning policy, the local planning authority will resist proposals which result in the unacceptable loss of garden land under criterion 2.

### Guidance for Householder Developments

- 5.103 Householder developments can create a number of potential site specific impacts. Criteria below have been retained in Dartford, and will continue to be referenced in the consideration of extensions, loft conversions, outbuildings and ancillary structures where planning permission is required. The text below sets out guidance for different types of extensions and outbuildings though each case will be considered on its merits.
- 5.104 Policy criteria 3a-3d set out guiding principles to ensure that householder development does not have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of adjacent and surrounding local residents in terms of loss of sunlight and daylight, overlooking and an overbearing impact as well as the visual amenities of the local area. Policy M1 will be given due consideration in the assessment of any householder development, with a particular focus on the local context.

- Rear extensions: Single storey extensions to the rear of semi-detached and terraced properties should generally not be greater than 3.5m in depth on a common boundary, unless it can be demonstrated that the larger extension proposed will have no adverse impact. Two storey extensions to the rear of semi-detached properties should be set in 2m from the common boundary at first floor level. Two storey extensions to the rear of terraced properties cause particular problems and will not normally be allowed unless it can be established that there will be no undue impact on adjoining properties.
- Side extensions: Roofs must match and tie into the existing roof, stepped down from the main ridgeline, unless this is not possible structurally or the proposed roof would have a better visual appearance. Two storey side extensions within 1m of a common boundary should generally have their front walls set back at least 0.45m at the point where it joins the existing building in order to retain the identity of the existing dwelling, and to ensure the extension remains subservient.
- Front extensions: With the exception of porches, extensions in front of the existing building line, and on corner and conspicuous sites, are particularly sensitive and are discouraged, being highly likely to result in a significant impact on the street scene.
- Loft conversions: Extensions to lofts should to be designed so that dormers do not dominate the appearance of the existing dwelling and create a top-heavy effect. Flat roof dormer extensions are unlikely to be appropriate on front roof slopes or roof slopes that are visible from public vantage points. If proposed at the rear of a property, they should be set in to the roof plane, down from the ridgeline and in from the side cheeks.
- Outbuildings: Outbuildings should be used only for purposes incidental or ancillary to the main dwelling and located sufficiently away from neighbouring properties without material adverse impact on the most used parts of neighbouring private amenity space (usually the area immediately to the rear of neighbouring dwelling). Height should be minimised, with limited or no accommodation in any roof space.

**Policy M11: Extensions, New Dwellings, and Garden Land**

1. Development must maintain a range of dwelling sizes and sufficient garden land, retain or enhance the character, local environment and amenity of established residential areas, and achieve satisfactory quality of development.
2. Development which results in an unacceptable loss of residential garden land will be refused. Proposals must demonstrate that they would not result in harm, individually or cumulatively, arising from:
  - a) loss of diversity in the stock of housing in the Borough; or
  - b) erosion of the local character; or
  - c) significant loss of residential garden land serving the health, recreation and/ or functional needs of the occupiers.
3. The extension of dwellings or the creation of new dwellings by infill or conversion must also ensure that they meet the following principles:
  - a) the historical pattern and form of development is preserved, and the design proposed is not visually obtrusive, with existing significant landscape features retained and/ or any loss mitigated;
  - b) access into the development is safe and facilitates ease of pedestrian movement;
  - c) access into the development does not create an undue disruption to the character and appearance of an existing road frontage or unacceptable disturbance to adjacent properties; and
  - d) the proposal does not materially harm existing residential amenity, including through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of daylight/ sunlight, visual impact, noise, increased level of activity and disturbance, or increased on-street parking.
4. The conversion of a single dwelling house of 120sqm or less original net internal floor space into two or more units and the conversion of terraced houses will not normally be permitted.



## **Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation (M12)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W3, W4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: See Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*

- 5.105 The National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires local planning authorities to assess the level of future need for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople pitches/ plots and to identify a supply of sites in Local Plans. The PPTS sets out the definition of what gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople means for the purpose of the planning policy. In summary, the policy clearly sets out that the requirements of the PPTS apply to persons of a nomadic habit of life other than those who have ceased to travel temporarily for specified reasons.
- 5.106 The Dartford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2019 identifies a need for 70 pitches for gypsies and travellers who meet the definition in the PPTS over the period to 2035, 48 pitches of which are needed within the period to 2024. The need for the period from 2019-2026 is 52 pitches. The Assessment did not identify a need for transit sites for gypsies and travellers. In terms of meeting the needs of travelling showpeople, it identifies a need for one additional plot up to 2024 with none needed in the longer term.
- 5.107 Since the GTAA was published, the Council has granted permanent planning permission for 18 additional gypsy and traveller pitches. This means that the number of pitches needed to meet needs in the next five years to 2026 has reduced to 34 pitches. The policy identifies actions that are key to addressing needs, particularly maintaining a five year supply of pitches and plots to meet the requirements.
- 5.108 The GTAA recognises that a number of sites are occupied by extended family groups and are not sub-divided into individual pitches. As such, in the short to medium term, the study recognises the likelihood that the accommodation needs of concealed or doubled-up adults and teenagers could be met through additional touring caravans or shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites. These would generally be equivalent to providing pitches, even if they are not formally set out as such.
- 5.109 The pitches and plots that will be accommodated in the shorter term on existing authorised and tolerated sites through intensification, or by small scale extensions to

them where there are known needs arising from these sites, is being verified. Evidence currently indicates that some of the required gypsy/ traveller pitches and the single travelling showpeople's plot could be accommodated on existing sites without the need for planning permission. Others would require planning permission and need to be allocated in the Plan to ensure delivery of additional capacity. In terms of the latter, additional pitches could be provided to meet needs within (i.e. intensifying) the Tennis Court site at Sutton at Hone, and by extending/ intensifying the site at Salinas in Darenth Wood Road. These are identified in the policy and on the Policies Map and removed from the Green Belt.

- 5.110 The Council is also confirming the broad locations and future sources of supply which may be suitable for additional gypsy pitches in the longer term. This could be through intensification or extension of other existing sites and/ or through making provision within strategic development coming forward within Ebbsfleet Garden City. As set out in policies E1 and M12, the Council is assessing the potential of sites in Ebbsfleet Garden City.
- 5.111 Further unidentified sites may come forward through the planning application process which meet the needs of gypsies and travellers who satisfy the planning definition. It is important that sites are appropriate in terms of scale, impact on residential amenity and landscape, providing a suitable living environment, and road safety. Sites should also be located close to education, health and community facilities, and accessible by public transport. These matters are addressed in criterion 2 of the policy.

**Policy M12: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation**

1. Dartford Borough will meet needs and maintain a Five Year Supply, with deliverable land to meet identified requirements for 34 gypsy and traveller pitches and 1 travelling showpeople plot to 2026. This will occur through a range of actions including:
  - a) Realising the potential for additional accommodation within existing authorised and tolerated sites, where needs arise;
  - b) Allocating land for additional pitches at Tennis Courts Sutton at Hone and Salinas Darenth Wood Road;
  - c) Actively seeking to identify deliverable non-Green Belt sites within Ebbsfleet Garden City; and
  - d) Determining planning applications expeditiously in line with national policy and the development management criteria set out in criterion 2.
2. Planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots will be assessed against relevant local and national policy requirements. Proposals located in the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with the balancing exercise set out in national policy, taking into account impacts on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, and having regard to relevant material considerations. All proposals must demonstrate that the site:
  - a) Is of a scale to accommodate, and has the potential to provide the facilities required for, future occupants in terms of amenity and in meeting site licensing requirements;
  - b) Is of a scale appropriate to the ability of the surrounding community to accommodate the development without significant detriment to neighbouring residential amenity, taking account of existing population size and density;
  - c) Is not in an area liable to flooding, and suitable drainage can be installed that does not lead to unacceptable risks to groundwater and/or localised flooding;
  - d) Is located reasonably close to a range of services and facilities;
  - e) Has the ability to provide appropriate safe vehicular access to the site and provides suitable parking and amenity areas; and
  - f) Is screened and visually integrated into the local and wider landscape, with careful siting within the site (including of any day rooms).

### **Green Belt in the Borough (M13)**

- *Strategic Objectives: G1, I1*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 137, 138, 147-151, 174*

5.112 The Green Belt is essentially characterised by keeping land permanently open. Dartford Borough's Metropolitan Green Belt has benefited from long term national and local policy protection which has restricted inappropriate development. An outcome of this has been to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and, to some extent, contributing to preserving the setting and historic character of some villages and rural settlements in the Borough. Moreover, the Green Belt has assisted in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, and has protected Dartford's valuable agricultural land.

5.113 The extent of Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. Nearly all of the Borough's countryside lies within the Green Belt, and the key principles are to resist inappropriate development and protect agricultural uses in line with national policy. The Green Belt is vital to development management and contributing to the strategy of urban regeneration and delivery of the development in Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City set out in policy S1.

5.114 There is a close relationship between protection of the openness of the Green Belt and conservation of the visual quality and character of the countryside landscape. The character of the Green Belt in the Borough varies from open estuarine marshland to traditional agricultural landscapes with hedgerow lined lanes. The Green Belt also provides an important recreation and ecological resource with opportunities for enhancements.

5.115 The criteria in this policy can also apply to the Protected Local Green Spaces (policy M14 criterion 2) identified on the Policies Map.

#### **Buildings in the Green Belt**

5.116 The NPPF recognises that the construction of new buildings is generally inappropriate in the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. National policy (NPPF paragraphs 149 to 150) sets out development that may not be

inappropriate. Some exceptions which may not be inappropriate include: extensions which do not result in disproportionate additions; suitable replacement buildings; new buildings for agriculture; facilities for outdoor sport and recreation; new buildings at cemeteries; limited infilling in villages in the Green Belt; limited affordable housing for local community needs; limited infilling or redevelopment of previously developed sites; and material changes in the use of land. Whilst these types of development may not be inappropriate, overall they should not conflict with the preservation of the openness and purposes of the Green Belt.

- 5.117 The extension of buildings, provided they are not disproportionate, may not be inappropriate in the Green Belt. In some cases, they may be necessary to maintain the viability of existing uses. In certain circumstances, there may be buildings within the curtilage of those proposed for extension. Their existing presence and proposed removal will only justify a larger extension where it is clearly demonstrated that they are lawful and cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and where their removal would reduce the harm to the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the proposed development. Replacement buildings need not be inappropriate provided that the replacement is not materially larger than the building it replaces, remains in the same use, and the open character of the Green Belt is maintained. Such development must be sensitively located and designed
- 5.118 The re-use of buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction is included as an exception to inappropriate development in paragraph 150 of the NPPF where the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. However, such re-use of buildings often also results in a change of use of the land around it which can have an impact on the Green Belt such as introducing various paraphernalia associated with the proposed use, structures, fencing, hardstandings and lighting required to facilitate the new use, as well as pressure for further development that requires planning permission. Any extensions proposed which are required to facilitate the use will also be considered with regard to the overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The re-use of buildings will be considered together with the impacts of the change of use of the associated curtilage.

Equine and Recreation Uses in the Green Belt

- 5.119 The Green Belt acts as an important recreational resource for a range of activities, including walking, cycling and riding. The network of routes identified as part of the Green Grid link together open spaces and routes across the Borough, including from the urban areas in the north to the countryside in the south.
- 5.120 Equine uses and structures in the Green Belt require suitable land and an acceptable location. Sufficient land should be available for grazing plus a separately fenced exercise area, proportionate to the quantity of horses. Lighting arrangements should be designed to avoid adverse environmental impacts, and the stable building, food/bedding stores and manure bay should not be in the proximity of neighbours where it would have a significant adverse impact on their residential amenity. Keeping or stabling of riding horses should be in reasonable proximity to bridleways or suitable riding facilities, e.g. a large paddock. The size of the stabling and facilities proposed should be appropriate to the size of the site and the need for the facilities. In order to avoid stables being constructed and then converted to dwellings, the conversion of existing stables to other uses is likely to be resisted in order to ensure the availability of such facilities in the area. If equine uses cease, there will be a need to remove associated structures to ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is maintained.
- 5.121 Equine development should be environmentally acceptable. Appropriate hedges with protective or other fencing must be provided and maintained. Proposals for the erection of stables should include details of an area appropriately designed and sited for the reception of soiled bedding material. Additionally, in areas particularly sensitive to pollution of groundwater, it is essential for stables to be connected to a main drainage system or cesspool. Safe and sufficient provision for access and parking should be made for equine vehicles.
- 5.122 The change of use of land to outdoor recreation can provide valuable facilities to support residents in the Borough. However, subdivision of the land, new access roads, paraphernalia associated with the use and the introduction of chattels such as caravans can erode the openness of the Green Belt and the quality of the rural landscape. For this reason, the Council will carefully consider the impacts of the proposed use itself and all associated works on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt and any potential other harm caused.

### **Policy M13: Green Belt**

1. Dartford Borough's Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map, and its essential characteristics are its openness and permanence. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will be resisted in accordance with national planning policy.
2. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and will only be approved in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
3. In assessing other harm, the local planning authority will use the following criteria:
  - a) The extent of intensification of the use of the site;
  - b) The impact of an increase in activity and disturbance resulting from the development, both on and off the site, including traffic movement and parking, light pollution and noise;
  - c) The impact on biodiversity and wildlife;
  - d) The impact on visual amenity or character taking into account the extent of screening required; and
  - e) Impacts arising from infrastructure required by the development.
4. Where developments are considered to be not inappropriate in line with national planning policy, they will be supported where they contribute to the objective of conserving the Green Belt as a recreational, ecological and agricultural resource. Such developments will also be assessed against the following criteria where applicable.

#### **Re-use of Buildings**

5. Applications for re-use of buildings must relate to lawful permanent buildings of substantial construction. The change of use of the curtilage to the building, any extension required to facilitate the change of use, and the impacts of such changes in use on the purposes of the Green Belt will be taken into account. The lack of demand for the existing lawful use will need to be demonstrated. In circumstances where character and scale are important to the local setting, excessive external alterations and additions will not be permitted.

#### **Replacement Buildings**

6. The replacement of a building will be permitted where:
  - a) The replacement building remains in the same use; and
  - b) The replacement building will not be materially larger than the existing building it replaces, taking into account bulk, height, massing and scale. As a replacement, the building should be limited to an expansion of no more than 30% volume of the original building\*.

#### Extensions to Buildings

7. Extensions to buildings remaining in the same use will be permitted where:
  - a) They are proportionate and subservient in appearance, bulk, massing and scale of the original building; and
  - b) The proposal would not result in a disproportionate addition to the original building. The extension must constitute no more than a 30% volumetric increase over and above the original building\*, and maximising the volume of the building to 30% will not be appropriate in every circumstance.

#### Infilling or Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites

8. Proposals for the infilling or redevelopment of previously developed sites must not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. Developments that lead to over-intensification of the site will not be permitted.

#### Changes of Use

9. Changes of use of land must not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing use. Consideration will be given to the impacts on the Green Belt in terms of other harms set out in criterion 3 and of the impacts of associated works.

#### Agricultural Development

10. Development must not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, disturb or damage soils of high environmental value, or impede the continuation of a lawfully existing agricultural development and/or land use.
11. Proposals for farm diversification, including shops, processing, workshops or sports and recreation, must be ancillary to the existing main use. It must be demonstrated that the activity is related to the main farm use and that the proposal will not create the need for new buildings or supporting infrastructure and facilities that may harm rural character.

#### Equine Development

12. Proposals for the use of land for horses or for the erection of stables and associated facilities and/ or operational development will be carefully considered. Assessment will include the location/ layout of all structures, the need for the size of structures and buildings proposed to serve the use of the land, and the quality of the structures, buildings and landscaping proposed. Structures, engineering works and buildings serving equine uses should be removed from the site when they are no longer in use and are no longer required to serve the equine use of the land.



Development for Outdoor Sport and Recreation

13. Proposals for outdoor sport and recreation must not adversely impact on the character and amenity of the locality or result in the deterioration of the land, landscape or biodiversity. The scale, siting, design, use and level of activity of built recreation development, together with the supporting infrastructure and services, will be taken into account when assessing the impact of a proposal.
14. Supporting infrastructure and facilities must not unacceptably harm local character. They must be directly associated with the main use and be of a scale, quality and design to minimise their impact.

## **Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space Provision (M14)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 92, 98-103, 154*

5.123 Dartford Borough is historically an area with a largely countryside or riverside setting, and is now seeing high levels of population growth. To ensure sustainable development, growth pressures must be managed alongside the creation of new or extensively improved green areas of wide environmental and local benefit. Specifically, the Borough has a network of multi-functional green space and water bodies (Green and Blue Infrastructure) which contributes to the wider Green Grid. It includes parks, playing pitches, rivers/ lakes, sites and habitats which are important for wildlife, other green areas and more urban landscaped public realm areas. Alone or in combination, they are essential to accommodating development that maintains the character of the Borough, with informal recreation, sport, amenity, landscape and biodiversity value, as well as having the potential to mitigate the effects of climate change.

5.124 More strategic areas of Green and Blue Infrastructure in the Borough include Dartford Park, Dartford Marshes, Beacon Wood and Darenth Country Parks, Dartford Heath, Joyden's Wood, River Darent and Sutton at Hone lakes. These are shown in the Strategic Green Grid Diagram (Diagram 3).

5.125 The opportunity needs to be seized for the development of major sites to provide high quality Green and Blue Infrastructure, public realm, connecting routes, and wildlife corridors. The longstanding strategy of requiring portions of development sites to contribute to Green and Blue Infrastructure will continue to be applied under criterion 1. This will provide benefits for residents and wildlife as well as opportunities to adapt to climate change and for improved air quality. This could consist of, for instance:

- Sports pitches and recreation areas
- Parks and landscaped public areas
- Communal amenity space for residents, if appropriate
- Play facilities for children of various ages
- New allotments
- Planted woodland
- Areas managed for biodiversity benefit
- Managed sustainable green drainage areas

Existing green spaces

- 5.126 A clear commitment to preserving green spaces is set in policy S3 (Climate Change Strategy). A number of the most significant green areas were previously identified consistent with national policy (Dartford's Protected Local Green Spaces), and are retained. Dartford's Borough Open Space designation has also been maintained, covering a wide variety of greenspaces. Both Protected Local Green Spaces and Borough Open Spaces are shown on the Policies Map and addressed below. The quantity and quality of existing local green spaces needs to be upheld/ increased through future development management decisions.
- 5.127 Protected Local Green Spaces are those open spaces which have special characteristics that make them the most important green places for local communities. The designated spaces meet the national policy requirements of being close to the community served, local in character and not extensive, and special in the local context due to their tranquillity, beauty or highly distinct recreational value. Protected local green spaces benefit from robust planning policy protection, forming an important part of Green Infrastructure. They are afforded the same policy protection as land within the Green Belt. Development proposals on Protected Local Green Spaces will generally be considered inappropriate unless very special circumstances are shown to exist, as set out in national and local policy.
- 5.128 Borough Open Spaces are made up a wide range of green spaces that have local environmental (e.g. recreational, amenity, landscape and/ or biodiversity) value. Some are publicly accessible but others have no public access. They include parks, playspaces, allotments, churchyards/ cemeteries, identifiable tree clusters or key greenspaces that may hold biodiversity value, current and former sports pitches, and linear green features such as railway embankments. There may be other open spaces such as playing fields and sports pitches which have not been specifically identified as Borough Open Space but are important for ensuring that local residents stay active and maintain good health, and other areas which are important for flora and fauna. Reflecting their special status and specific role in terms of protecting biodiversity and geodiversity, Sites of Special Scientific Interest are not included but are protected under policy M15.
- 5.129 In line with national planning policy, the presumption is against building on Borough Open Space, playing fields and sports pitches, and any other areas which are important for flora and fauna, and any loss must be justified by robust evidence.

However, some flexibility will be applied where development is intended to enhance the existing function of the open space (criterion 3a), for example ancillary buildings which benefit the users of the space, where appropriate alternative space will be provided or where there is a demonstrable surplus of provision in the area.

- 5.130 There may also be a need to retain more localised public amenity spaces which are not identified on the Policies Map. These include communal or small recreation/ play/ green spaces within residential areas. The need to retain such public amenity spaces will be more acute where there is limited usable alternative provision in the neighbourhood which is accessible on foot, or alternative provision is of demonstrably inferior quality or size. Where there are proposals which affect these spaces, the local planning authority will have regard to the need for the proposed development and the quality, quantity and function of the spaces in accordance with criterion 4 of the policy.

**Policy M14: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space Provision**

1. New development will be required to contribute to the Green and Blue Infrastructure network as follows:
  - Sites of 20ha and over: at least 30% of the site area
  - Sites of between 2ha and 20ha: at least 20% of the site area
  - Sites of less than 2ha will be considered on a site by site basis for a proportionate contribution

This should include multi-functional land, providing opportunities for formal and informal recreation, habitats and corridors for wildlife, native trees/landscaping, and other measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Ongoing maintenance and management of such areas will need to be demonstrated.

Where the provision of on-site Green and Blue Infrastructure or public realm open space is not appropriate or feasible, contributions may be sought for off-site improvements of open space in the vicinity of the site.
2. Protected Local Green Spaces will be retained (or enhanced) to maintain their openness and special local role. They must continue to provide high quality spaces to support attractive, distinctive and sustainable neighbourhoods. Development of Protected Local Green Spaces will be refused unless very special circumstances apply, considering national and Dartford Green Belt policy (particularly policy M13 criteria 1-3 and 13-14).
3. Borough Open Spaces will maintain their overall green environmental value. Development on Borough Open Space will not be permitted unless it is clearly demonstrated that one of the following criteria is satisfied:
  - a) Where the space will be retained in its current primary function, with development limited to a small proportion of land, the proposal must support or enhance the existing space in this overall green infrastructure role. The proposal must not lead to any significant loss or deterioration in quantity and level of open space provision.
  - b) Where development will result in a significant loss in the quantity of open space, like for like re-provision must be delivered within easy, safe and secure walking distance of the site, unless it is clearly demonstrated that the existing provision is surplus to current and future requirements for biodiversity and/ or the amenity and health/ wellbeing of residents. The replacement must be shown to be of an equivalent type and of equal or greater quantity and quality to that being lost.
4. Development of other public amenity space will only be permitted where a convincing justification is made. This must take account of:
  - a) the quality, quantity and function of the space relative to alternative provision in the locality; and
  - b) the benefits/ disbenefits arising from the proposed development.

## **Biodiversity and Landscape (M15)**

- *Strategic Objectives: G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 130, 131, 174, 175, 179-182*

5.131 Dartford Borough has a number of nature conservation sites which are designated as being of national or local importance. These are shown on the Policies Map. In line with national planning policy, the strongest weight of protection will be applied to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Marine Conservation Zones which are of national importance. The Borough's existing SSSIs include the Swanscombe Skull site (which is also a National Nature Reserve) and the ancient semi-natural woodland at Darenth Wood. The recently designated Swanscombe Marine Conservation Zone supports scarce species. Significant weight will also be given to protecting the biodiversity value of locally designated sites, including Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Roadside Nature Reserves.

### **Habitats Regulations**

5.132 The Thames Estuary and Marshes, Medway Estuary and Marshes and The Swale Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites, which comprise wetland sites of international biodiversity importance, are located outside the Borough but have the potential to be affected by some proposals in the eastern part of the Borough. Studies have shown declines in the numbers of birds using these sites which could be caused by human disturbance from recreational use of the marshes. The evidence shows that residential development within 6km and larger residential development between 6km and 10km of the SPAs and Ramsar sites could lead to an increase in recreational use. The 6km-10km zone affects proposed residential developments in the east of Dartford Borough and is shown in Figure 11.

5.133 Under the Habitats Regulations, there is a need for the local planning authority to screen for and, if necessary, carry out appropriate assessment for all proposed developments which have the potential to affect the biodiversity interest of SPAs and Ramsar sites. The assessments need to show if the development would have any potential significant impacts on the integrity of the SPAs/ Ramsar sites. If there are, the assessment needs to show how these would be avoided, mitigated, managed and funded.

5.134 The agreed existing approach within the Borough<sup>27</sup> requires developments of more than 15 dwellings within the 6km-10km zone to be screened for potential impacts on the SPAs and Ramsar sites and, if necessary, subject to full appropriate assessment. This approach will apply to the Ebbsfleet Central allocation (policy E4) and to other applicable residential developments coming forward in the zone where they have not already been subject to screening and/ or appropriate assessment. The guidance sets out the following options for potential ways in which impacts could be mitigated:

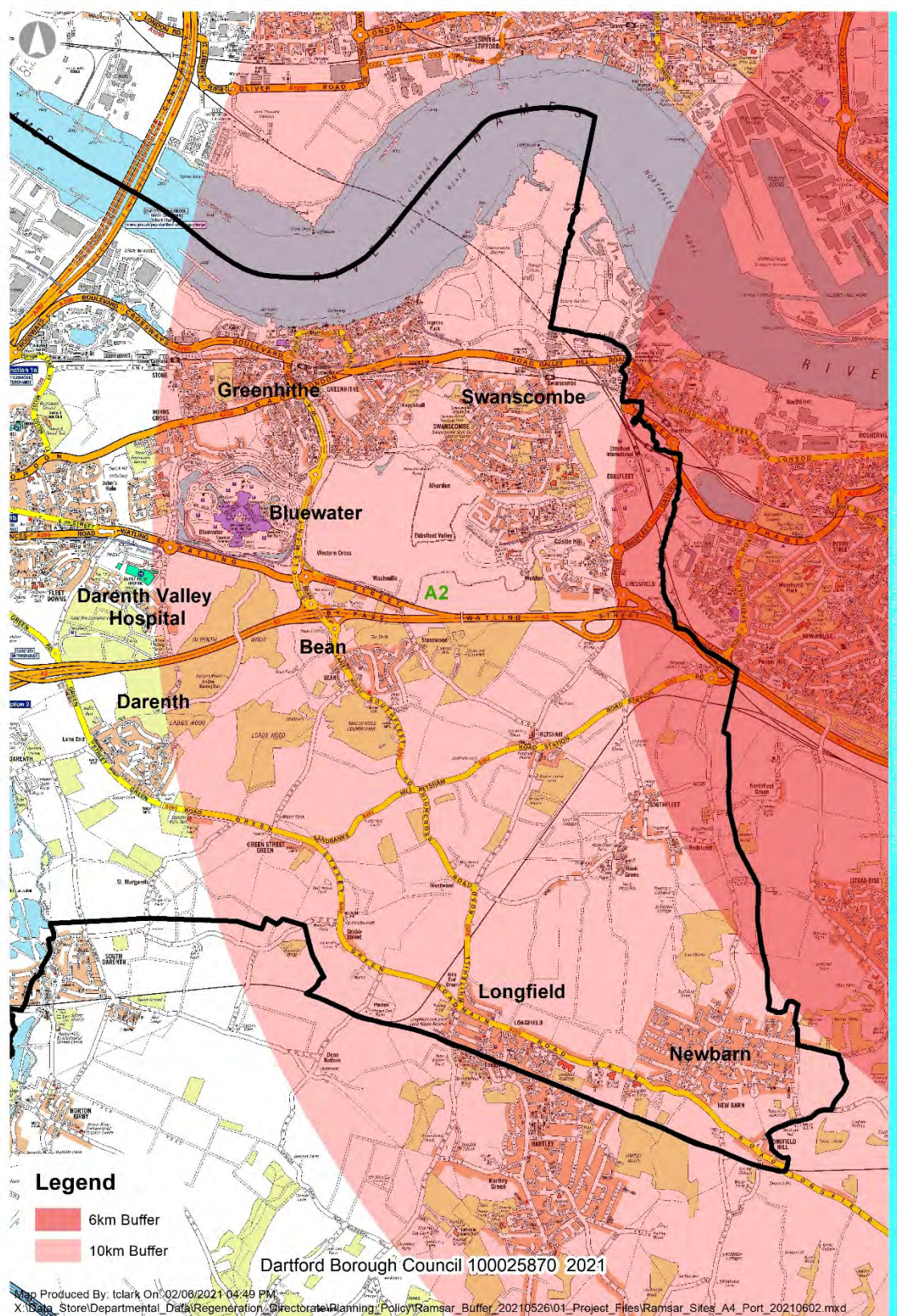
- Option 1: Payment of a tariff per dwelling, calculated as a proportion of that applied to developments within 6km of the SPAs and Ramsar sites. The tariff will be used to fund measures that are likely to have an impact on areas which attract less frequent visitors.
- Option 2: Provision of alternative greenspace/ bluespace within or close to the proposed development which provides a demonstrably suitable alternative to visiting the SPAs/ Ramsar sites.
- Option 3: Availability of demonstrably suitable alternative greenspace/ bluespace which may divert potential residents from visiting the SPAs/ Ramsar sites which could reduce or negate the need for tariff contributions.

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<sup>27</sup> This is set out in full in the Habitats Regulations and Large Sites in Dartford Borough – Guidance for Developers document, DBC (September 2021).



Figure 11: Areas within 10km of the North Kent SPAs and Ramsar Sites





Biodiversity and Habitats in Dartford

- 5.135 Priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types and were identified nationally on the basis of being the most threatened and requiring conservation. The Borough hosts a number of priority habitats, not all of which are protected by designations. These include the deciduous woodland at Beacon Wood Country Park. The Policies Map shows the larger areas of ancient woodland. Priority species are those which are the most threatened and require conservation nationally. In Dartford Borough, these include bats, dormice and great crested newts. The Kent Biodiversity Strategy focuses on certain priority habitats and species, with objectives and targets for improving them. In considering development proposals, the Council will ensure that priority habitats and species are conserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- 5.136 There are a number of important wetlands and water bodies in the Borough, including the River Darent and Dartford marshes. Protecting and improving the ecological quality of these will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Darent and Cray Catchment Plan. Development located close to water bodies should ensure that any potential adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated and that opportunities are taken to enhance them. Measures could include recreating the ecology of waterbodies where this has been lost and/ or establishing a significant natural habitat resource.
- 5.137 Some areas of the Borough have been identified as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) on the basis that they have good potential for biodiversity improvement and for connecting nature conservation sites, habitats and species. The BOAs include a variety of statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites, woodland, lakes, marshes, heathland and brownfield sites which are known to provide important habitats for invertebrates. These sites are set in an area which is fragmented by urban development and transport corridors.
- 5.138 The designated sites, priority habitats, key water bodies and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas form part of the Green Grid network.
- 5.139 It is expected that development will avoid any adverse impacts on existing biodiversity features, including designated sites, priority habitats and species, and waterbodies. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised, mitigated and, as a last

resort, loss or damage should be compensated in accordance with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy (policy S3).

- 5.140 As well as ensuring that existing biodiversity features are not adversely affected, developments should provide net gains for biodiversity. Measures to improve biodiversity value should be included within the site boundaries but, in the event that this is not possible, provision should be made within the Borough's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas or as part of agreed county-wide habitat creation or enhancement projects. It is anticipated that there will be a national requirement for developments to provide a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.

#### Landscape and tree coverage

- 5.141 It will be important for new development to reflect the characteristics of the local and wider landscape (criterion 3). Key characteristics of the Borough's urban landscape include the large undeveloped former landfill sites that provide green breaks in development and trees located on ridges that provide a backdrop to views from the Thames riverside. There are also marked changes in levels including cliff faces as a result of previous quarrying operations in the area. The south of the Borough generally is open, low and gently undulating. It includes significant areas of woodland, much of which is ancient woodland. The rivers are key landscape features, with the River Thames forming the northern boundary of the Borough and the valleys of the Rivers Darent and Ebbsfleet running from south to north.
- 5.142 Trees and hedgerows contribute to the appearance of the urban environment and rural landscape as well as increasing resilience to climate change and improving air quality. Tree coverage, hedgerows and other landscape features will be safeguarded as part of new development (criterion 4). Landscaping schemes will be expected to set out appropriate planting, management and maintenance strategies.

**Policy M15: Biodiversity and Landscape**

1. Development on sites designated for their biodiversity value will not be granted planning permission unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the biodiversity value will not be adversely affected by the proposals. Proposed development located on or in close proximity to designated sites, priority or other irreplaceable habitats or priority species, or with potential effects on them, must demonstrate that it will not adversely impact on the biodiversity value or ecological pathways. Residential developments of more than 15 dwellings located within 10km of the North Kent Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites will be subject to screening and, if necessary, assessment under the Habitats Regulations. This may require the implementation of mitigation measures to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the protected features of those sites.
2. Developments will be expected to protect and enhance biodiversity. In the event that development adversely affects any existing habitats, this must be replaced by compensatory habitat of a similar type, size and condition in close proximity to that which is being lost. The new national biodiversity net gain requirements will apply to all applicable developments. Local delivery of net gains should preferably be made by enhancing existing habitats and/ or creating new habitats on-site or, in cases where this is not achievable, off-site within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. These will need to be informed by and link to the Dartford Green Grid network and any Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
3. All new developments should be designed and laid out in a way which is sympathetic to their landscape setting. Major developments will be expected to deliver a landscaping scheme that is visually attractive, enhances biodiversity, uses native species, incorporates sustainable drainage measures, and helps to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This will need to incorporate the following elements:
  - a) New trees and other landscape features should be used to create attractive new streets and provide appropriate natural shading on buildings, at street level and on open spaces.
  - b) Planting of particular species should be considered to reduce the impact of air pollution.
  - c) Management and maintenance of the landscape for the lifetime of the development will be required to ensure that landscape and biodiversity features are maintained.
4. In all development proposals, including works to trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order, existing tree coverage, hedgerows and other landscape features should be retained wherever possible. If retention is demonstrated not to be feasible and/ or removal is justified, replacement provision should be of an appropriate native tree species or landscape feature which reflects the maturity, canopy cover and location of that being replaced.

## **Transport and Sustainable Travel (M16 & M17)**

- Strategic Objectives: W2, I1, I2
- NPPF paragraphs: 104-106, 110-113, 210

- 5.143 The need for an integrated transport approach to the location of development, together with effective transport policies to manage the effects of vehicular travel on the local and strategic road network, and to encourage higher uptake of sustainable travel, continues to be an essential part of the Borough's planning strategy (policy S2).
- 5.144 Improvements to the transport network are necessary to deal with the impacts of traffic arising from new development and overall traffic growth. Extensive collaboration is occurring between Highways England, the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC), the Council and Kent County Council (KCC) on further strategic highway and travel improvements.
- 5.145 The Council is also working with a number of partners, including KCC, EDC, Network Rail and Transport for London (TfL), to explore shorter and longer term opportunities to improve public transport, cycling and footpath links; including on the Green Grid, and for further enhancement of the Fastrack network<sup>28</sup>.
- 5.146 The scale of development can only be accommodated without adverse impacts on the highway network if a significantly increased proportion of journeys are made through more sustainable forms of transport. Upgrades are particularly necessary if windfall housing sites bring forward major unplanned development (policy M9). Proposals for major development must ensure that public transport services are provided in the early phases as applicable, and devise a long term programme of ensuring Fastrack provision or other applicable sustainable transport services, including on demand responsive services.
- 5.147 Railway station upgrades in the urban area are a priority, and should be well integrated with Fastrack/ bus and active travel links. Appropriate developments are expected to assist with this objective, including helping safeguard/ provide sustainable access to any Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) related railway service enhancements that may occur (policy M16 criterion 4). Major development located near to railway stations will be

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<sup>28</sup> DBC (2021) A Sustainable Transport Strategy for Dartford

expected to support/ contribute to any programme of station upgrades including measures to improve interchange arrangements between modes of transport, accessibility and passenger facilities.

5.148 National policy states that planning decisions should take into account whether significant impacts from development on the transport network in terms of capacity and congestion, or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

5.149 In Dartford Borough, after taking account of an assumed increased use of sustainable travel modes together with planned highway network mitigations, localised residual impacts on the highway network may still occur as a result of cumulative development. Therefore, development proposals should address any severe residual impacts on the local highway network that may arise. There are specific issues for Dartford Borough that require safeguards, for example the impact of incidents at the Dartford Crossing or on other strategic roads in the Borough and the subsequent severe conditions caused on the local road network. The extent of development for logistics/ warehousing, for example, is such that there is a need for large commercial operators to demonstrate that they have considered provisions to hold vehicles on-site when a major incident occurs on the Borough's strategic highway network.

5.150 National guidance should be referred to in considering the threshold at which transport assessments or statements are required. Their scope and preparation should be agreed in advance with the local planning authority, KCC as the local highway authority and/ or Highways England as the strategic highway authority, as appropriate.

#### Sustainable travel

5.151 The development of a comprehensive active travel network is sought to provide a genuinely viable alternative for shorter distance journeys, particularly enhancing connections within and between Dartford Town Centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City and to/ from these major urban centres and the adjacent existing communities/ new development. In particular, development at the Green Grid (policies S2 and M17) should directly support active travel links, including further interventions specifically related to the Borough's cycle network<sup>29</sup>. The Council is co-ordinating actions by

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<sup>29</sup> Cycle Network Development Study, Sustrans (February 2017)

developers and the public sector, and bringing together strategies by partners; in combination this should enable and encourage the proportion of journeys made by sustainable transport modes in Dartford Borough to increase over the Local Plan period.

5.152 The way in which development is designed, and the mix of uses included, can have a major effect on reducing travel and on the pattern and means of travel that the development generates. As a priority, developments should promote active travel and the use of public transport to minimise car use, especially for shorter trips. Opportunities in this respect must not be missed in the masterplanning and layout of proposals, particularly for destinations that are regularly used by residents, local workers and shoppers and at larger residential sites. Attractive active travel routes are required both within the development itself and providing links to the wider network. And to promote efficient public transport, where needing to be directly served by Fastrack or bus services, for example, careful design consideration should be given to routes to serve the whole development.

5.153 Streets make up the greater part of the public realm. The appearance of the street scene, massing of buildings and layout of estate roads can all be used to reduce vehicle speeds so that roads are made safer for all types of user. Better designed streets contribute to the quality of the built environment and play an important role in the creation of high quality attractive developments. The Manual for Streets<sup>30</sup> provides guidance on the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets, and development proposals should take account of this guidance. Large sites should justify and formulate a comprehensive strategy for the layout of the development, including its public realm, to create a sense of place and deliver a high quality built environment. This strategy should also include the measures to be put in place for the longer term management of the public realm.

5.154 The River Thames provides opportunities for the transportation of passengers and cargo. Whilst there are no passenger river services currently operating in the Borough, it may be possible and beneficial to introduce these (policy M16 criterion 5). Applicable riparian developments will need to demonstrate that the required provision of passenger river services will complement other public transport provision within

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<sup>30</sup> Manual for Streets, Department for Transport/Communities and Local Government (periodically updated)

Dartford Borough and that prospective passengers will be able to access services by means other than the private car.

- 5.155 At Greenhithe, Johnson's Wharf is safeguarded through the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Other wharves should only be considered for redevelopment if they are not viable for their continued use, or for cargo, sustainable transport, or marinas/ moorings/ boat yards. The developer will need to commission a viability study to be undertaken in consultation with the local planning authority and Port of London Authority. This includes sites that have land to access the wharf but are not proposing development on the wharf, or would otherwise sterilise active usage as a wharf.

#### Monitoring and Management Measures

- 5.156 In accordance with national policy, major new residential or trip generating development will need to be supported by measures such as effective a travel plan. It should contain a package of measures ensuring sustainable travel, linked to monitoring and management of targets. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that major new residential and employment developments are directly served by Fastrack, preferably by a dedicated route, or, where this is not possible, that improved provision is made to conventional bus services.

- 5.157 Travel Plans should accord with policy M17 criterion 2, feature travel specific management/ monitoring actions and include:

- clear long term objectives;
- devoted measures to increase active and sustainable travel to and from the site;
- benchmarks and specific targets to enable regular monitoring and review of outcomes; and
- mitigation measures in the event that targets are exceeded, requiring either direct implementation by the developer or the payment of contributions for their implementation.

There should be a timetable for the delivery of measures and review to ensure that the timescale set for fulfilment of objectives is achieved, including the identification of additional measures to be applied if regular review indicates that outcomes are not being achieved in line with anticipated timescales. Measures could include the provision of incentives for residents or employees to use more sustainable forms of

transport such as subsidised fares, car share schemes, and assistance in the purchasing of cycles.

### Access and Safety

- 5.158 Criteria 3 and 4 of policy M17 recognise there needs to be suitable and safe access arrangements for vehicles (including where applicable, loading/ unloading), and for sustainable transport and active travel modes; and also that other essential transport requirements should be addressed within developments, including for cyclists. These should be incorporated into the proposed design/ layout and facilities provided.
- 5.159 New accesses onto the highway network should be located and designed so that they operate safely, without unduly affecting the free flow of traffic. They should make a positive and sensitive contribution to the local street scene and be sympathetic to local amenity and the environment. New accesses must be designed to accommodate the volume of traffic and types of vehicle likely to use them, and provide for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities, as well as efficient public transport operation. At large development sites, this should be considered with the detail of the street hierarchy and character areas. Access arrangements for the emergency services, both from the adjacent highway network and within the development itself, must be given special consideration (for larger sites, early consultation with the emergency services is recommended). The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges<sup>31</sup> provides further guidance on all aspects of the life cycle of highways and highways structures. Developers will need to meet the requirements of the highway authorities for any roads and structures that are to be adopted by them.
- 5.160 In creating new accesses, existing pedestrian facilities must not be degraded. Dropped kerbs at pedestrian crossings, entry treatments and tactile paving can all be used to provide convenient and safe crossing points for more vulnerable road users.
- 5.161 Lengths of continuous dropped kerb can encourage footway parking, which creates problems for pedestrians, and also reduces the positive definition of the footway for people with impaired sight. Highway design and the public realm must account for the needs of those less mobile, including wheelchair and mobility aid users.

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<sup>31</sup> The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Department for Transport (periodically updated)



### Parking and Electric Vehicles

- 5.162 Development proposals should not impede the free flow of traffic on the existing road network or create hazards to traffic or other road users. Careful management of parking demands generated by the development is required to avoid uncontrolled spill-over into nearby residential areas, with provision in accordance with Dartford Borough's latest Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). In locations where on-street parking is already under pressure, development that does not incorporate adequate off-street parking has the potential to result in inconsiderate and unsafe on-street parking. This can lead to narrowing of the usable road space resulting in obstructions, in particular for emergency vehicles, and impacting on the safety of pedestrians, particularly those with impaired sight and mobility, and cyclists. The approach to on-street parking (potentially also off-street parking) is expected to be updated, firstly in the urban area, including in Central Dartford (policy D1 criterion: 2g).
- 5.163 The need for off-street and on-street parking spaces must be considered alongside the impact of provision, including possible detriment to the local and wider areas where front gardens are lost. Planning applications for potentially inappropriate loss of front gardens for parking will be closely examined, given the highway and environmental impact of such proposals individually and cumulatively. To avoid potential increases in the risk of surface water flooding, parking spaces in front gardens should make use of permeable paving materials. Parking surface treatments should always be consistent with the maintenance of groundwater quality in the Borough.
- 5.164 In order to reduce carbon emissions, the national strategy is for conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans to be gradually replaced by electric vehicles, with all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2030. There needs to be infrastructure in place to encourage the take up of electric vehicles and applications for development should take into account the need to ensure an adequate provision of parking spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. The Parking Standards SPD already requires the provision of electric vehicle charging points for residential development with on-plot parking and consideration is to be given to providing charging points within residential communal parking areas and within employment, retail and leisure developments. The local planning authority wishes to ensure that developments are future proofed and make sufficient provision for electric vehicle charging points to avoid the need for expensive retrofitting at a later date. Parking relates principles are set out in policy M17:5 below.

### **Policy M16: Travel Management**

1. Development must be appropriately located and make suitable provision to minimise and manage transport impacts which arise. Proposals must also include appropriate vehicular access arrangements to the new development, and measures for active and sustainable travel. A Transport Assessment will be required on applicable proposals.
2. Localised residual impacts on the highway network that are forecast to occur after on-site mitigations should be addressed by well-designed off-site deliverable transport measures. Development will not be permitted where the localised residual impacts from the development on its own, or in combination with other planned developments in the area, result in severe impacts on one or more of the following:
  - a) road traffic congestion;
  - b) air quality;
  - c) safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users;
  - d) excessive pressure for on-street parking.

#### **Public transport**

3. New major development sites should include layouts that allow for routes into and dedicated routes within the site for Fastrack, buses and taxis. These should ensure good connections to make community services and jobs easily accessible to all users/ employees, and assist the feasible and efficient operation of transport services. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) Large developments at applicable locations must make early provisions for Fastrack, through extension or improvement within or outside the site, where consistent with additional potential demand and to benefit the existing and planned Fastrack network.
  - b) Where appropriate, major developments will be required to facilitate new or extended conventional bus services if required to address demand that would arise.
4. Land required for potential improved rail connectivity between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet International is safeguarded and development which will prejudice this will not be permitted. In the event of delivery of a significant rail infrastructure intervention to provide Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) services or to directly facilitate better access to Abbey Wood, a Local Plan review will ensure that sustainable regeneration and transport network integration opportunities are maximised. Any re-provision of railway stations on the North Kent line should enhance the capacity, quality and safety of the stations, and promote sustainable modes of onward travel through integrating ticketing/ facilities supporting all public and active transport modes.

#### **Rivers**

5. Proposals should capitalise on all feasible opportunities to promote enhanced movement on and alongside rivers, including travel for passengers, products and the transportation of construction materials and waste. Development must not unacceptably adversely affect the operation of safeguarded wharves. Proposals for alternative development at existing non-safeguarded wharves will not be supported unless that facility is no longer viable or capable of being made viable for waterborne transport.

**Policy M17: Active Travel, Access and Parking**

1. Development must be of a design and layout to promote walking, cycling and public transport use through provision of attractive, well-designed and safe routes which address the needs of users. Segregated cycle routes should be considered where possible. Guidance set out in the Manual for Streets, or any future equivalent, must also be applied. Bespoke access and transport approaches may be agreed at large regeneration sites, where forming a suitable alternative.
2. Transport assessments and travel plans must take account of applicable guidance by Kent County Council. A travel plan will be required where there are anticipated significant or negative impacts of transport movement arising from a development. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) Travel plans should set deliverable actions for the promotion and delivery of safe and attractive active travel and public transport measures to increase their uptake, and reduce demand for less sustainable/ efficient forms of transport.
  - b) An effective and robust travel plan should feature clear measures and actions to enable objectives to be met, including ongoing monitoring/ review with additional measures applied where outcomes are not being achieved, taking into account the operational characteristics of a development, and be capable of applying over a prolonged period as necessary.
3. Adverse effects from the travel and movement issues associated with any development, including on amenity or the environment, must be minimised. Development will be supported where the layout and siting of all forms of access is acceptable in terms of residential amenity, highway capacity and safety, free flow of traffic, cycle and pedestrian provision, and visual impact. Provision should be made at applicable developments for loading, unloading and the turning of service vehicles to ensure highway and pedestrian safety.
4. Development must ensure that the following requirements are met:
  - a) Provision is made for safe and convenient access to footpaths and cycle routes, with public rights of way protected including, where opportunities exist, delivering new or upgraded routes between key facilities, the Green Grid network, and to existing neighbourhoods. Urban area and village footpaths/ cycleways must be safe, overlooked and well lit.

- b) Supporting facilities for cyclists, including secure cycle parking/ storage and lockers, are provided, and in major developments which attract significant numbers of people (such as schools and large scale employment, retail and leisure developments), changing areas and showers should be included.
  - c) Design features are provided for people with mobility and sensory difficulties, especially at road crossing points, public transport stops and changes in level on walking routes.
- 5. Development must provide an appropriate level and form of vehicle parking provision, taking into account any existing provision as relevant to the development, and in full accordance with the applicable Parking Standards SPD. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) Electric vehicle charging points must be provided for all new residential properties with dedicated/ allocated parking spaces, and for a proportion of parking spaces provided as part of new employment, leisure and retail development. Charging points or cabling to allow their future installation must be provided for all shared car parking spaces provided on new residential developments.
  - b) The conversion of front gardens for car parking is only allowed where it includes provision of a vehicle crossover and only where the garden is capable of accommodating a parking space in accordance with the parking bay minimum standards set out in the SPD, plus space for soft landscaping, and with unobstructed pedestrian access to the dwelling. New car parking must make use of appropriate permeable paving materials, in line with the SPD, and water quality protection objectives where applicable.

### **Community Uses (M18)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W5, I3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 84, 92, 93*

- 5.165 The pace of change in the Borough means community infrastructure provision is a central part of securing sustainable growth (policies S2 and S4). Well located social and community facilities and services help people, including vulnerable groups, to meet their day-to day needs locally and encourage increased levels of sustainable and active travel. In addition, such facilities contribute to a sense of community, quality of life and wellbeing in the neighbourhood.
- 5.166 Community facilities encompass buildings and spaces used for a variety of purposes including health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual and cultural needs of the community. These include: healthcare facilities; dentists; schools and further education facilities; nurseries and other early years facilities; space for the arts; museums; libraries; post offices; community halls and other public meeting venues; theatres; cinemas; indoor based sports and recreation facilities; cemeteries; crematoria; and places of worship. In relation to public houses, policy M24 will also apply.
- 5.167 At strategic scale sites, community facilities should be provided in a timely way to support new communities and, as far as possible, nearby neighbourhoods, to encourage cohesion. Facilities should be flexible but focussed on the Borough's community needs.
- 5.168 The retention and improvement of local community facilities is important across the Borough. Community spaces should be expanded/ upgraded to meet the needs of new development, with significant investment expected in the urban area. The definition includes some facilities often necessary for, and highly valued by, villages or the local community such as applicable convenience shops and public houses.
- 5.169 The Local Plan retains and safeguard existing spaces/ facilities where there is a continuing need/ demand for these (criterion 3), and to ensure that, as the local population expands and demand is forecast, such facilities are retained and do not require future re-provision.

5.170 Any proposals which would result in the loss of facilities will need to be robustly justified by supporting evidence. Consideration will be given to:

- The size, range and quality of existing facilities, specialist provision, accessibility and catchment.
- The importance of the facility in meeting the needs of all or specific sections of the community, taking into account current comparable provision, established benchmarks and robust assessments of need.
- Whether the particular need/ demand addressed by the facility can be adequately met by another existing or replacement comparable community facility within reasonable distance of the existing, and, where relevant, new catchment.

5.171 Alternative solutions should include a full search for another operator/ provider and, where applicable, exploration of appropriate community based solutions such as the potential for listing as an Asset of Community Value and the potential for the community to actively manage and maintain the facility/ land. All aspects of evidence should take account of planning growth in the Borough as appropriate. There should be sufficient effective marketing as defined in the glossary.

**Policy M18: Community Uses**

1. New community facilities will be supported where they are in an appropriate location and of a type, scale and design to reflect the needs of the existing and emerging communities they will serve. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) New services should be sited close to the population they will serve, with reference to access routes for active and other forms of travel, and a suitably locally based catchment for the facility provided.
  - b) Wherever possible, new facilities must be provided and designed in a way that allows benefits to be shared by existing and new communities, and to be operated flexibly by a variety of users.
  - c) Strategic developments must normally provide social and community facilities, with access to required facilities at an appropriately early stage. Land will be secured until a facility is in operation as set out in criterion 3. Where permanent provision is not possible from the outset, temporary provision will be sought for first occupants.
  - d) Large scale new community uses that attract the majority of users travelling in from outside the Borough must demonstrate the local need for the scale of the proposal, unless delivering an essential public sector service or shown to be required to serve the neighbourhood community.
2. Development of existing community facilities/ land for non-community purposes will be refused unless there is clear evidence that:
  - a) the facility is not needed by the existing and future community; and
  - b) all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve a community use, including exploration of appropriate solutions to retain the facility with operators/ service providers and, where appropriate, the local community. Consideration should include any potential future demand arising from new development located within the catchment area of the facility/ use.
3. Specific land that has been earmarked for community facilities through planning obligations, other formal agreements, approved planning permissions, or identified in Dartford's published infrastructure planning documentation will be safeguarded until a community facility is delivered or agreement is reached that land for a community use will not be required.

## **Sustainable Economic Locations & Local Business/ Skills (M19 & M20)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W2, I1, I4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 81, 82, 84, 87, 88, 90, 91*

5.172 The Borough has balanced significant population growth with major economic development. The framework set out in the Core Strategy provided a very large pipeline of new jobs and commercial space for the growing urban communities. This will continue; the Borough will need development management decisions for future that deliver the right employment in the right place, balanced with environmental impacts (including from travel generation by employment uses). A positive approach to regeneration of retail centres is also required, maintaining and improving local services and enhancing neighbourhoods. Outside the urban area, a range of identified employment areas and retail centres provide for business.

5.173 National policy encourages Local Plans to proactively enable economic development, including the identification of areas for economic regeneration and sites/ criteria to accommodate growth. The Dartford Local Plan takes this positive approach and will maintain the Borough's successful record of attracting jobs, business investment and resilient retail centres. The economic strategy (policy S1) retains the network of identified employment areas that are the focus of recent investment and new strategic extensions, aiming to increase the quality and sustainability and range of new jobs.

5.174 The identified employment areas in the Borough are performing well, with low vacancy levels. The Local Plan therefore maintains these and guides growth, reflecting their role which supports suitable clusters of industrial premises and offices; with a strategy of retaining their overall purpose within the context of using land for business more effectively (intensification) and strategic extensions. This allows them to evolve in response to sectoral changes, local employment and economic development needs. Digital infrastructure, including excellent fibre network coverage, is promoted. Redevelopment should also reduce adverse impacts of the sites on:

- climate change and congestion, mitigating/ reducing dependency on private cars/ goods vehicles; and
- residents and the local environment/ landscape.



- 5.175 A range of sustainable economic locations are supported in the spatial strategy/ the crucial principles set out in policy M19. Dartford Borough's priority growth locations (Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet) and large and accessible purpose built designated employment areas are well placed to attract managerial, professional and high technology employers currently under-represented in the Borough; bringing in sectors targeted in national policy to increase productivity.
- 5.176 Dartford Town Centre is a very sustainable and suitable location for office uses/ business start-ups and is a high priority for economic regeneration, with very good public transport and labour market accessibility, a choice of development sites and existing provision, and a range of supporting services. Creative industries often emerge in unplanned urban locations due to social factors or where accommodation has not yet been renewed, e.g. secondary parts of town centres, and growing clusters will be supported.
- 5.177 Ebbsfleet Central (policy E4) will attract major inward investment and provide commercial space newly designed to meet future business needs. It will feature a new public transport interchange and be accompanied by a range of supporting functions.
- 5.178 There have been significant changes in the nature of shopping provision nationally. Online expenditure has grown and the traditional bricks and mortar presence has receded. Many retailers have collapsed or scaled down due to financial pressures, and the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of change. However, some smaller centres and convenience retailers have performed relatively well, and may benefit from shifts towards home working for example. In terms of retail and leisure uses, retention of local provision in centres in the Borough is essential to the strategy of providing facilities and day-to-day uses in a convenient network of places that are easy for residents and workers to walk to.
- 5.179 The network of retail centres provides local jobs and secures a walkable mix of services, and this will be retained (Table 7). The centres meet large scale residential growth and create/ maintain a heart for new and existing communities. Dartford Town Centre and Bluewater (policy M22) are complemented by more local urban and non-urban clusters which currently comprise the following:
- District Centres at Dartford, Swanscombe, and Longfield; and
  - a series of smaller Local Centres.

This network of centres has maintained low vacancy rates and is expanding with growth at Ebbsfleet, and will be supported in future (see also policy M23). Sequential testing, and impact assessment for proposals over 280sqm, will apply for proposals at other locations. Development will accord with the role of the centre as set out in Table 7.

#### Large proposals and strategic investment

- 5.180 Ample economic development land is (or will become) available in the identified employment areas or priority growth locations. However to further support growth, Policy M19 (criterion 3) addresses national policy with criteria for genuinely exceptional investment significantly benefiting the Borough that may emerge, and is shown to be necessary and important to locate elsewhere. Therefore the policy includes requirements providing additional flexibility, a potential exemption in response to potential future major economic opportunities. Although inapplicable to most economic developments, provision is made for extraordinary future proposals, for unforeseen strategic opportunities that may arise in new sectors, technology and future innovation.
- 5.181 Policy M20 seeks to ensure that local economic benefits accrue directly from very large developments that may emerge within the Borough. Very large commercial developments should proportionately provide some smaller business units or appropriate premises to support small or medium sized enterprises in the Borough wherever possible, and explore applicable local training opportunities. Development needs to provide a genuine mix, taking appropriate account of site specific circumstances to meet labour force and business needs.
- 5.182 For proposals with a high employment levels, consistent with sustainable travel strategy and policy M19 aims, it is very likely that a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be required in accordance with policy M17. In appropriate circumstances, a Framework Travel Plan with a clear pathway for production and submission of detailed travel plans at a later stage, where clarity on development details and occupation is not yet available, will be acceptable. It is important that detailed travel plans for particular buildings/ occupiers are subsequently produced and managed relevant to job generation and business operation, with clarity about who is responsible to ensure compliance.

**Table 7: Role of Retail Centres**

<b>Centre</b> (* indicates not yet built)	<b>Retail Function</b>	<b>Typical Services Provided</b>	<b>Main Customer Draw</b>	<b>Implications for Change</b>
<b>Dartford town centre</b>	Town centre	Weekly convenience and comparison (particularly within the Core Frontage) shopping, leisure, culture/ recreation, hotels, community, education, health and education, social care and service facilities.	District level population; town centre employees, regional catchment for Orchard Theatre and associated facilities. Railway station and Fastrack users	Diversify uses, grow independent retailers, expand the cultural and leisure offer; meet demand for new food and beverage for family dining and the evening economy, support cultural /leisure uses in the town centre.
<b>Bluewater</b>	Regional shopping centre	Specialist comparison shopping, top-up convenience shopping, outdoor and regional indoor leisure, hotel.	Regional level catchment, UK and international tourists linked by Fastrack to Ebbsfleet International and Greenhithe stations	Bluewater will evolve to maintain its competitive position whilst ensuring it remains complementary to local town centres. Extant permission remains for approximately 25,000sqm retail floorspace which, if built out, is to be predominantly for comparison goods retailing.
<b>Dartford (multiple), Longfield Swanscombe, Alkerden* and Ebbsfleet Central*</b>	District centre	Top-up convenience shopping, usually anchored by a local supermarket, allied with community (health, education etc.) and service facilities including cafés/ restaurants.	The local settlement, visitors to community facilities, public transport users and nearby neighbourhoods.	New centres will promote walkable settlements with convenience retail and health/ education facilities proportionate to their size, accessibility and function. Elsewhere, changes are to maintain viability of centres. This includes, where appropriate, development to enhance the public realm or mixed use redevelopment to provide ground floor modern commercial/ service units.
<b>Multiple across Borough including Ebbsfleet Central*, Ashmere*, Ebbsfleet Green, Castle Hill</b>	Local centres	Top-up convenience shopping and other small shops, other local businesses and services;	The immediate neighbourhood	New centres will promote highly walkable settlements, with small convenience retail and local services proportionate to their size and function; potentially with neighbourhood services in the vicinity, e.g. primary school. Elsewhere, maintain viability of centres through diversification of uses for commercial, business and services.

**Policy M19: Sustainable Economic Locations**

1. New business and services in use classes B and E will be supported where appropriately located and designed, with major developments to be accessible by good public and active transport, at:
  - a) Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City; or
  - b) Identified employment areas; or
  - c) The network of retail centres (Table 7).
2. Outside the network of Retail Centres, and where not in accordance with Identified Employment Area policies, developments classified as main mown centre uses must be accompanied by:
  - a) a sequential assessment; and
  - b) an impact test for developments of 280sqm gross or more.
3. Strategic investment proposals for large new research and development facilities, offices or high technology industrial premises, of a form not already provided in the Borough, will be supported where sustainably located at Central Dartford, Ebbsfleet Garden City or at/ adjacent to identified employment areas. If there is no prospect of accommodating the development at these locations, such uses may exceptionally be considered elsewhere where:
  - a) it is robustly evidenced that clear substantial local benefits are secured, including through the scale and type of new employment opportunities generated and improved sustainable transport provisions; and
  - b) there is a demonstrable extraordinary economic need for the development in the Borough.

**Policy M20: Provision for Local Business and Skills**

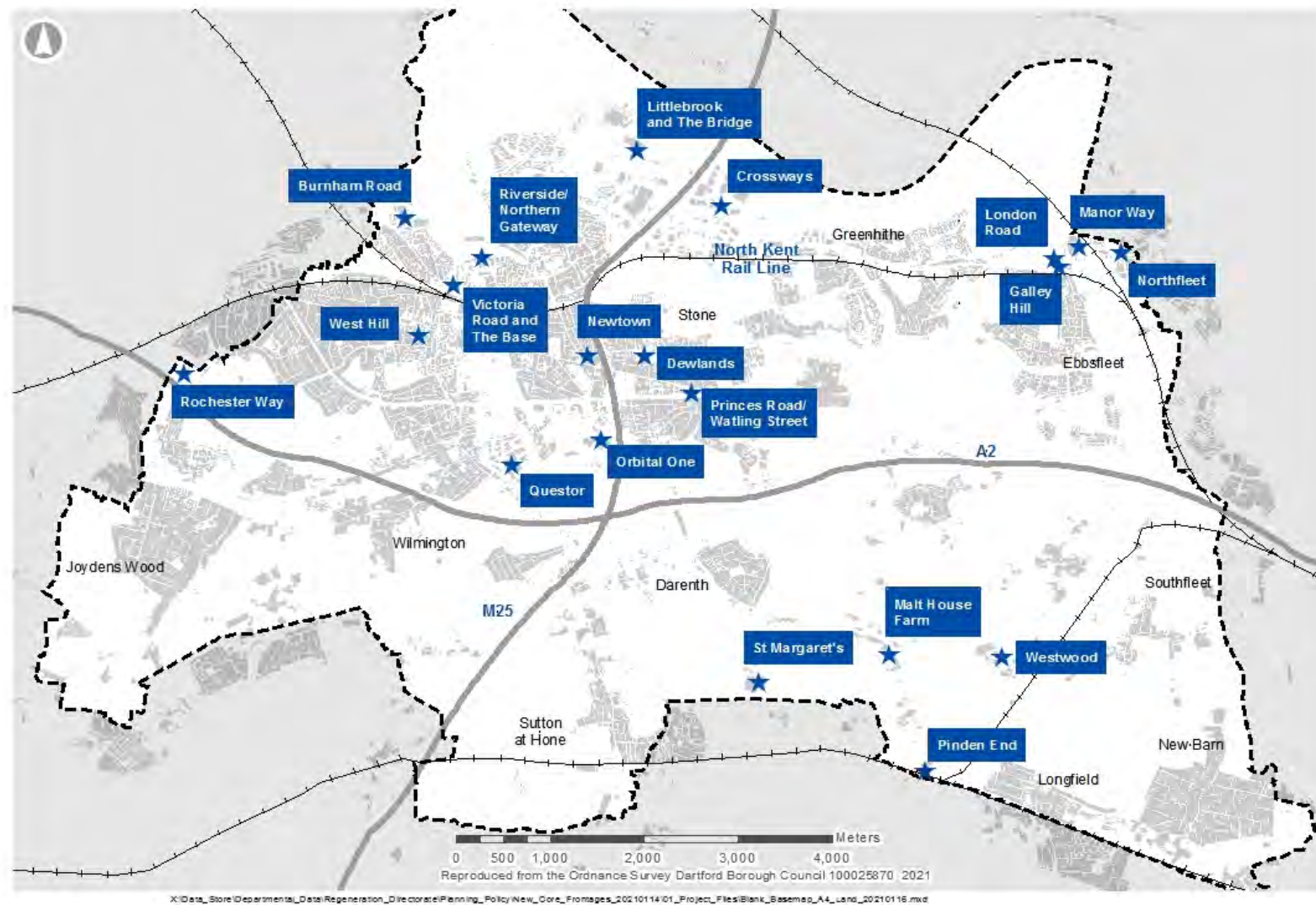
1. Large proposals for offices, industrial/ distribution, retail/ leisure and other uses in use classes B and E exceeding 20,000sqm gross, should contribute to the accommodation needs of local businesses and training needs of the Borough's workforce. Applicable developments will be permitted where they:
  - a) include a mix of premises/ commercial land commensurate with total site size which deliver:
    - a proportionately significant number of small units or premises designed to provide for local start-up/ 'move on' business accommodation; or
    - premises/ land that is shown to be constructed for, or targeted to, the needs of the Borough's small/ medium sized enterprises, including through premises available to rent or buy at a discount, or employment land premises delivered in a form to secure local businesses (potentially including land predominantly for open storage); and
  - b) secure the delivery of local skills training or apprenticeships and work placements within the completed development itself or through construction/ the supply chain.

### **Identified Employment Areas (M21)**

- *Strategic Objectives: I1, I4, W2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 81, 82, 84*

- 5.183 Policy M21 covers the identified employment areas shown in Figure 12 and detailed on the Policies Map. These are an important part of Dartford's spatial and economic strategy (policy S1). They include high quality business parks such as Crossways and The Bridge which attract major investment and employment. At these locations in recent years, there has been investment in new light industrial units, and the distribution/ warehousing (use class B8) sector has attracted significant development to modernise and expand its stock. A choice of established urban industrial/ commercial clusters and business premises outside the urban area is also provided.
- 5.184 The policy sets out a supportive approach for employment proposals at the identified employment areas. It builds in further development opportunities to allow necessary strategic growth to occur and for suitable diversification. However, in Dartford Borough it is clear that the overall mix of uses should remain industry/ distribution/ office focussed because introducing non-employment generating uses is generally harmful to existing businesses, the overall future development strategy and commercial investment.
- 5.185 All development should maintain or enhance the visual amenity of employment areas. Well located and good quality landscaping within and at the exterior of sites should be provided.
- 5.186 The designated employment land across the Borough includes a varied range of new and older industrial and commercial clusters. New development sites, in particular, are expected to achieve high quality premises/ jobs, meeting economic needs for the future, and high environmental/ sustainable travel standards. To achieve common economic and environmental objectives throughout these identified employment areas, the policy is largely structured around whether development proposed is a more industrial or service based activity, and appropriate conditions will be applied.

Figure 12: Identified Employment Areas



### Industry and Distribution

- 5.187 Policy M21 criterion 2 will apply for development within Classes B2, B8, E(g)(iii) and applicable sui generis development, promoting mixed industrial development where the site is functionally and environmentally improved to create a better quality site. The policy provides for both a future supply of distribution, and general industrial, space - for the range of needs in the Borough to be addressed through new developments. Industrial developments should be sited and designed to minimise impacts on the health and amenity of adjoining uses and to ensure the compatible operation of different activities within areas. Large industrial sites within use class B8 often necessitate good distributor road and/ or strategic road access. However, appropriate mitigations or river access should be shown to be fully explored, including where significant intensification of activities or premises is proposed.
- 5.188 There are further requirements for harmful or nuisance creating activities, mostly likely to arise from those within use class B2 and sui generis uses and from goods vehicles impacts from developments within use classes B8 and E(g)(iii). Transport policies, including policy M16, will require close consideration. Development to successfully enclose, and enable expansion of, industrial processes is promoted; preventing unacceptable impacts or conflicts between different uses. Proposals at the Manor Way identified employment area featured in Ebbsfleet Garden City policy E6, will need to conform with policies M15 and M21 below as applicable, to maintain the local economy and improve the environment and accessibility.

### Services

- 5.189 Policy M21 criterion 3 applies to proposals for offices, research/ development processes and other service based and administrative or other non-industrial business activities, e.g. applicable activities within use class E. These uses are central to the economic strategy and the potential to diversify the range of jobs in the Borough, including for new managerial/ professional employment or supporting growth sectors. Employment levels can be grown and areas improved through investment to update and better use existing employment sites. Economic development objectives are often served by proposals that locate close to, or include facilities designed to, attract knowledge/ data-driven, high technology and creative industries.

- 5.190 In Dartford Borough, a number of urban identified employment areas include headquarters, purpose built offices or other commercial facilities containing large scale provision of managerial or corporate support employment. However, it is important that proposed uses with high job densities are very well located to public transport or alternatively provide measures to achieve reduced car dependency. Service business uses may also locate in retail centres, consistent with policies, including D3 and M22-M25.
- 5.191 At present, the largest clusters of employment in the Borough are generally located in close proximity to the strategic highway network and the Fastrack network, for example Crossways Business Park. However, local railway stations and services are less well connected to some large employers. Under strategic policies, these locations must develop in a form that genuinely promotes increased public transport uptake and enhanced active travel links.

Supporting facilities and other business uses

- 5.192 Large business parks and urban industrial estates may benefit from selected new small walk-in services for local employees, in accordance with criterion 3b of policy M19 and consistent with maintaining the retail network. In assessing the suitability of these supporting uses, the lack of existing provision, and scale of existing employment in the locality and worker needs, will be considered as part of determining if provision is necessary. Limited and targeted facilities and services visited by employment in the vicinity that support the functioning of identified employment areas, such as workplace childcare facilities, sandwich shops/ cafés and small scale convenience goods provision, must not adversely affect the status or operation of the employment area. Proposals must achieve the objective of reducing overall levels of vehicle generation. Development should be for walk-in customers and of modest scale. A proliferation of these supporting uses will be prevented, especially where this may harm the vitality and viability of nearby centres or Dartford town centre.
- 5.193 Policy M19 criterion 2 will also apply to proposals for retail and other main town centre uses, so any proposals over 280sqm would also require a retail/ leisure impact assessment. A need in the immediate area should be clear and is unlikely to be justified at employment areas with low levels of employees, e.g. low density industrial sites, or outside the urban area. Outward facing site locations on the edge of the employment



area are unlikely to be appropriate, although food/ drink provision on riverside locations may bring benefits to leisure walkers.

- 5.194 Criterion 4 of the policy acknowledges that hotels may support large office clusters and similar uses. However, these should be well located to Fastrack stops/ railway stations or provide a suitable Travel Plan. New facilities should be justified on the basis of the sequential test, particularly given the need to deliver new hotels in the priority Central Dartford area.

### **Policy M21: Identified Employment Areas**

1. Identified employment areas will be maintained and developed for additional high quality, accessible and affordable commercial premises, and a more diverse range of new jobs in line with the Plan's economic strategy, with improved transport provision and environmental benefits achieved. Additional business floorspace will be supported where proposals meet criteria 2 or 3.

#### Industrial development proposals

2. Development for industrial or distribution uses will be supported where they will improve the commercial quality, functional operation and environment of sites. Proposals will be expected to:
  - a) Be designed to be of a form to reduce adverse impacts through new suitably scaled and designed buildings and layouts, landscaped buffers, and other environmental improvement or physical regeneration measures across the site; and
  - b) Achieve better management of:
    - i. Harmful or nuisance creating activities, including from dust, paint or other chemical over-spray, glare or light spill; or
    - ii. Goods vehicles access, parking, waiting (including for loading and unloading) on amenity, safety and congestion, as applicable.

#### Services business development

3. Development for other service based business premises will be supported where they enhance and sustainably intensify employment sites in line with the economic strategy. Proposals will be expected to:
  - a) For major development for office or research and development, be located within easy walking distance of a railway station or Fastrack stop, or, failing this, the Travel Plan should achieve measures that demonstrate significant reductions per job in private vehicle movements during peak hours.
  - b) For supporting businesses for visitors, be located and designed for use by employees of other businesses in the identified employment area, and not individually or cumulatively undermine the operation and status of the employment area or nearby centres in the retail network.

#### Other proposals at Identified Employment Areas

4. Where a need from businesses in the vicinity is shown, hotels will be supported if the proposal supports sustainable transport, and the sequential test is passed in relation to alternative in centre and edge of centre locations. Non-job generating development will not be permitted within identified employment areas.

### **Bluewater (M22)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 86-88, 90, 91*

- 5.195 Bluewater was planned and delivered as a high quality development to lead regeneration and economic development in the Thames Estuary. Opening in 1999, it soon became established as a premier regional shopping centre in a unique setting. At approximately 150,000sqm (gross) floorspace in total, it remains predominantly in its original built form.
- 5.196 Bluewater is a large employer in north Kent, and an important component of the economy. Bluewater's evolution as a regional centre is supported to maintain its quality in the face of competition, and distinctiveness against other centres, subject to assessment of applicable proposals.
- 5.197 The strategy first set out in the Core Strategy included criteria in relation to sustainable travel, maintaining Bluewater's design integrity and parkland setting, supporting the success of nearby Ebbsfleet, and Bluewater's role in providing an offer distinct from nearby town centres, with assessment taking into account neighbouring town centres and regional considerations. The principle of Bluewater needing to evolve appropriately, maintaining its quality and competitive position, continues to be salient.
- 5.198 In accordance with these considerations, planning permission was granted<sup>32</sup> for up to 30,000sqm additional retail floorspace at Bluewater, within the centre as shown on the Policies Map. This followed the opening of new regional scale facilities in south east England/ London, most notably Westfield Stratford by Stratford International Station (one train stop from Ebbsfleet International).
- 5.199 Subsequently, there has been an acceleration of consumer trends, with a national decline in demand for a bricks and mortar retail presence. By mid-2021, only approximately 5,000qm of comparison goods retail floorspace in the above permission had been constructed. The Local Plan aims to promote the economic and regional role of Bluewater, but also suitably recognising in a time of accelerated retail change the

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<sup>32</sup> Reference 16/01207/OUT

important requirement of securing delivery of sustainable development and regeneration at other centres, including Dartford town centre.

- 5.200 The Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail and Leisure Study<sup>33</sup> concluded that Bluewater should retain its regional shopping centre status, and notes the importance that the centre maintains its distinct role (see the Plan's retail network in Table 7). The Study supported, in principle, development such as the recent 'Hangloose' planning permission for outdoor recreation (which utilises Bluewater's special features such as cliff face and water features), hotel use and commercial leisure uses that cannot be accommodated in centres such as Dartford town centre.
- 5.201 A wider range of uses may therefore sustain Bluewater in future (policy criterion 2 below). However, larger scale regional style retail/ leisure is expected to continue to be prominent. For new retail/ leisure development, close consideration is required of overall implications as set out in criterion 3. In accordance with the outputs from the Study, the sequential approach will be applied to indoor leisure proposals at Bluewater. Mostly within use class E or sui generis use, this incorporates leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses, including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls.
- 5.202 National policy includes a default 2,500sqm threshold floorspace level in new development for the application of impact testing. This is regarded as appropriate within Bluewater. It allows assessment and evaluation of regional retail/ leisure considerations to be focussed on applicable proposals. Where necessary, regard may be had to relevant recent planning applications and the cumulative total of proposed floorspace at Bluewater, to avoid the threshold being inappropriately circumvented (whether deliberate or unintentional).
- 5.203 All retail/ leisure assessment/ testing must recognise its regional role, and be undertaken in consultation with neighbouring local and strategic authorities.
- 5.204 Bluewater is a generator of substantial travel movements. Impact on the highway network needs to be minimised through a range of measures, particularly providing better sustainable transport options for employees (policy M22 criterion 2b). The centre

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<sup>33</sup> Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail and Leisure Study, LSH (January 2021)

is a hub for buses and has existing Fastrack services. It will soon benefit from the new Fastrack link towards Ebbsfleet International Station; the need for additional bus/ Fastrack services and/ or an enhanced interchange facility should be reviewed under development proposals that may emerge at Bluewater. Development must ensure safe and attractive pedestrian environments in and out of the centre, and especially at the bus hub. Dedicated cycling routes through the site and secure cycle parking should be delivered.

- 5.205 A principal way by which Bluewater can maintain its distinctiveness and attractiveness is by maintaining its high quality outdoor environment. Development outside the main shopping centre building may be appropriate as part of planned diversification. However, this should be designed and managed in a sensitive form in order to retain and avoid adverse impacts on the characteristic cliff faces, water features and other ecological and landscape assets of Bluewater.
- 5.206 Development should be delivered in close alignment with the planned role of Bluewater. Planning controls (for example, necessary restrictions on uses within use class E) may be required to be put in place and retained over proposals to ensure that the outcome of development is as anticipated and in line with the justification for the proposals and the function of Bluewater.

**Policy M22: Bluewater**

1. The appropriate evolution of Bluewater, to maintain its economic contribution, quality and distinctiveness as a contemporary regional centre, will be supported subject to assessment of local and regional implications as set out in criteria 2 and 3.
2. Development for activities including those in use classes C1, E and F at Bluewater will be permitted where:
  - a) Proposals do not individually or cumulatively undermine its role as a regional shopping centre, and are shown to be necessary to maintain or enhance its quality and performance relative to other regional centres/ competitors;
  - b) Impact on the highway network is minimised, and improved access by and to public and active transport is secured where appropriate. Measures to be featured in a robust Travel Plan should include: high quality/ expanded interchange facilities; support for further Fastrack services where feasible; segregated and safe walking and cycling routes; and secure cycle parking. Particular focus should be given to measures to increase uptake of sustainable travel by employees and nearby communities;
  - c) The original design integrity of the centre is maintained; and
  - d) The parkland setting is maintained and enhanced as a recreational and biodiversity resource and as flood risk mitigation;
3. Development for retail or leisure use also needs to demonstrate that the proposal:
  - a) Is of a use and form demonstrated to be consistent with Bluewater's role (Table 7), and offers activities and premises that create an overall experience that is distinct from that of nearby town centres; and
  - b) Is acceptable after evaluation through impact assessment for retail/ leisure proposals over 2,500sqm (gross), and sequential testing for indoor leisure, which will take into account neighbouring town centres and regional implications. Assessment/ testing shall be carried out in consultation with neighbouring local and strategic authorities.

## **District and Local Centres & Food and Drink Establishments (M23 & M24)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, I4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 84, 86, 93, 106, 185*

### **District and Local Centres**

5.207 The economic strategy, quality of life in neighbourhoods, and sustainable travel and development principles, all require that the vitality and viability of smaller and local clusters of shops and services is maintained. As shown in Table 7, a network of accessible smaller centres will act as the focus for local retail and community services in the Borough. These centres are important to the sense of place and social cohesion of local neighbourhoods, and help to reduce car dependency by providing services close to homes. This applies both to established communities and new neighbourhoods.

5.208 The overall existing character of these centres, and the implications of Table 7, are typically as follows:

- District Centres are accessible larger clusters with a range of commercial and community uses, featuring public facilities which attract visitors, and often contain important provision of local food/ convenience services. They should remain mostly in service, business and community use.
- Local Centres (formerly Neighbourhood Centres) are smaller and as a whole are more diverse, but play an essential role in neighbourhoods across the Borough. Given their scale, they should retain - at least - two units of service, business and local essential community use.

5.209 It is important that District and Local Centres can evolve and diversify as appropriate but continue their essential function (Table 7 and policy M23 criteria 2 and 3). This is often through change of use, but some centres, especially larger ones, may warrant mixed use partial redevelopment. This should improve the role, environment and vitality of the centre (policy M23 criterion 1). As prominent places within individual neighbourhoods, any opportunity to enhance their local environment should be explored in order to support their vitality, and to enhance their appearance and operation for pedestrians and visitors. In the event that sites within these centres come forward for redevelopment, it is expected that retail or other active (Class E or F) uses

will be provided on the ground floor, even if they are not currently occupied by such a use.

- 5.210 At these locations, residential use above and potentially behind ground floor shops is more likely to comply with policy M9, but must be well-designed and not generate adverse impacts on the centre and its surrounds, and must give full consideration to all issues including access and refuse collection arrangements.
- 5.211 The policy will apply to the District and Local Centres identified on the Policies Map and specified in Appendix D, and to new centres planned at Ebbsfleet shown on the Key Diagram (Diagram 1). The planned new centres should be built out and managed to fulfil their expected role. At all centres, if provision of key uses is moderately below the amount set out in policy, this does not automatically justify alternative uses. Their performance will be monitored accordingly.

#### Food and Drink Establishments

- 5.212 Food and drink uses are generally promoted in principle in the network of retail centres. Even in these locations however, some particular businesses (especially evening focused activities such as hot food takeaways, public houses, bars and nightclubs) can have an adverse impact on residential amenity. This is particularly the case where they are located in less active locations, especially outside the retail centres. Policy M24 seeks to protect residents and the function of centres.
- 5.213 Most notably, hot food takeaways can have a highly detrimental impact on residential amenity, so should not be located outside designated centres. They can also adversely affect the function of retail centres when clustered together, leading to the loss of shops and services. Criteria in M24: 2 will apply.
- 5.214 In recognition of their history and community value, public houses now benefit from increased planning protection. Policy M24 criterion 3 safeguards pubs proposed to be lost to non-essential community use unless they have been demonstrated to be unviable as a public house or essential community use within use class F2. Policy M18 criterion 2 will also apply for longstanding community public houses, e.g. historic coaching inns or pubs located in the heart of their village/ small settlement.



### **Policy M23: District and Local Centres**

1. Mixed use development within District and Local Centres will be acceptable where:
  - a) At ground floor level, one or more viable modern commercial/ community units are provided for suitable active uses in line with criterion 2 or 3 as applicable, and is of proportionate scale and form to the vitality and purpose of the centre (Table 7); and
  - b) It is demonstrated to improve the local environment of the centre.

#### **District Centres**

2. Change of use for use class E, F or service sui generis use will be permitted at District Centres where:
  - a) more than 50% of the ground floor units are currently in use classes E and F use; or
  - b) the existing unit is vacant and has been demonstrated to be not viable for use class E, F or service sui generis use through sufficient effective marketing.

#### **Local Centres**

3. Change of use will be acceptable where two or more units within use classes E or F2 are to be retained within the Centre and:
  - a) the prospective activity is not already provided within the centre, and is non-residential; or
  - b) the existing unit is vacant and has been demonstrated to be not viable for any use class E use through sufficient effective marketing.

### **Policy M24: Food and Drink Establishments**

1. Hot food takeaways, nightclubs, bars and public houses will only be acceptable where the following criteria are met, taking account of potential cumulative impacts:
  - a) there will be no material detrimental effects on the residential amenity of neighbours;
  - b) there will be no material detrimental effects on the local environmental quality as a result of noise, vibration and smells; and
  - c) access, servicing and parking arrangements for the proposal will not result in an adverse material impact on the safety and traffic flows or cause unacceptable increases to traffic and parking.
2. The local planning authority will seek to prevent the inappropriate location or clustering of takeaway premises. Hot food takeaways will normally be acceptable only within the designated network of retail centres, and will normally be refused adjacent to an existing or approved hot food takeaway unit (other than at Bluewater).

3. The proposed loss of public houses in the Borough will only be acceptable where sufficient effective marketing of the premises has been carried out which demonstrates that it is not viable as a public house or for local community (use class F2) use.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

6.1 Section 6 sets out how policy delivery can be secured and verified.

### **Local Plan Implementation**

- 6.2 An effective and proportionate implementation and monitoring framework is essential to ensure that it is shown that planning decisions achieve the amount and type of development that is required, in the right place and at the right time. It also means that any risks to the delivery of the plan delivery are highlighted promptly so that correcting action can be implemented in good time. This may, after review, include steps to produce replacement policies or a new plan.
- 6.3 Applying policies in the Local Plan in development decisions and in determining planning applications will be principal ways in which the strategic objectives and vision of this Plan are implemented. Nevertheless, other factors will influence achievement, including investment by both the public and private sectors, delivery of infrastructure and the actions of developers, businesses, councils and agencies within the Borough. The clear strategy in this Plan (notably policies S1 and S2) assist.
- 6.4 Landowners and developers are important partners in the regeneration of the Borough. Much of the land in the regeneration areas is held by private landowners and their commitment and active involvement is required to implement the regeneration the Borough needs. The Council will continue to foster these relationships and work together with external partners to bring forward the Local Plan vision.
- 6.5 Development management (M1- M24) and strategic (S1 – E6) policies will provide the basis for determining planning applications, along with the National Planning Policy Framework and other relevant plans/ policies. Planning conditions and obligations will ensure that sufficient measures are in place to make development acceptable, including affordable housing.
- 6.6 The Council will also consider, when appropriate, the use of compulsory purchase powers to enable land to be developed, redeveloped or improved to help deliver regeneration consistent with this Local Plan. The Council will usually try to negotiate

with the owner, but, if the owner refuses to sell, the Council can start the process that will allow it to buy the land or property.

- 6.7 Selected implementation documents produced by the Council and which support the delivery of the plan are set out in Table 8.

**Table 8: Key Implementation Documents**

Which Document?	What Function?	When Produced?
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)	Demonstrates progress in implementing the Plan by reviewing development delivery in accordance with the objectives of the Plan. Additionally, the AMR reviews progress as set out in Local Development Scheme and in relation to the Duty to Cooperate.	Annually (December)
Five Year Deliverable Housing Land Supply Statement	Demonstrates the projected housing delivery for the forthcoming five years applying closely the national definition of deliverable housing land, in order to analyse and determine housing supply.	Annually or more frequently
Brownfield Land Register	Can add to the existing land supply/ support housing delivery; Part 1 – lists brownfield sites that are appropriate for residential development. Part 2 – goes further to include some sites from Part 1 after public consultation that are thereby given a consent (permission in principle) for housing.	Annually (December)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule	Sets the rate of CIL charges in the Borough to collect funding in support of infrastructure delivery.	Annual indexation information. Work to consider a full new Schedule will commence after Plan adoption.
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)/ Design Codes	In line with Local Plan policies, providing additional context to help achieve plan objectives.  Design codes add information on the design of developments in local areas, following detailed public consultation.	The need for review of existing SPDs will be considered after Plan adoption. The production of local design codes are now a requirement of national policy.
Housing Action Plan	Housing Action Plans are required if there is a failure to meet the Housing Delivery Test (HDT). The Action Plan sets out how future delivery will be increased in order to ensure the needs are met.	As required under HDT results.

### Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 6.8 Neighbourhood plans are not produced by the Borough Council but should support the delivery of strategic policies set out in the Local Plan, i.e. policies set out in sections 2-4. Once formally in place, a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the statutory development plan.
- 6.9 There is currently one confirmed neighbourhood plan area in the Borough, at Stone. National policy states that the Local Plan should provide an indication of the housing requirement for the neighbourhood plan area. Consistent with the capacity based approach outlined for policy S4, this totals around 1, 500 dwellings for Stone over the plan period to 2036/37, approximately 200 dwellings of which have already been delivered. St James Lane Pit, a large site with outline planning permission, accounts for the greater part of the expected Local Plan future delivery in the area.

### Monitoring Framework

- 6.10 The outcomes of monitoring against the identified targets will be reported annually in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will propose actions to deal with identified issues as appropriate.
- 6.11 In addition to the indicators in the framework set out in Table 9 below, qualitative data may be used to provide a greater understanding of progress being made in implementing the Plan's strategic objectives.
- 6.12 Additionally, the overall performance of the plan's policies will be considered through reviews of appeal decisions and of applications granted as a departure from the Local Plan. The AMR is also required to report on Dartford Borough's Duty to Cooperate activities, but the outcomes of agreed Local Plans/ Statement of Common Ground by neighbouring authorities on redistribution of development will also be monitored on an ongoing basis and inform Dartford's strategic planning activities and AMR.
- 6.13 A comprehensive monitoring framework is set out on the following pages, and will be reported in the AMR. This identifies targets for key policies in the plan, specific triggers which would indicate that targets may not be met. A number of contextual indicators are also included which, whilst not linked directly to the application of the Local Plan's

policies, will provide helpful understanding of broader trends at play in the Borough. There are also a variety of further monitoring indicators addressing the full scope of the Local Plan.

6.14 The monitoring framework is structured around the plan's 14 strategic objectives, which are grouped around three themes:

- *Objectives for the wellbeing of communities (W1-W5).*
- *Objectives for infrastructure and economic investment (I1-I4)*
- *Objectives for a green and attractive environment (G1-G5)*

**Table 9: Monitoring Framework Data**

SO	Monitoring Theme	Key Indicator/Source
W1	<b>Achievement of cohesive, safe, walkable and attractive neighbourhoods</b>	Gain or loss of: education, healthcare, and major community use facilities. Cumulative performance in delivery against a supply rate of approximately 22,00sqm per annum use class E and class F floorspace.
	<b>Delivery of suitable types of dwellings</b>	% dwellings constructed within the year that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 bedrooms or more</li> <li>• not compliant with Nationally Described Space Standards (NDDS)</li> </ul> Number of completions for custom/ self-build.
W2	<b>Improved air quality</b>	Data from the air quality monitors within the AQMAs
	<b>Reduced need to travel</b>	% Vacancy rates within District Centres; Progress in completing new District and Local Centres.
W3	<b>Provision of sufficient housing</b>	Five Year Deliverable Housing Land Supply Statement; Housing Delivery Test; Residential permissions and completions for the year; % homes delivered on sites under 1 hectare
	<b>Delivery of affordable housing</b>	% of dwellings in the year completed/ transferred for affordable housing occupation, out of applicable sites
	<b>Provision of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Pitches</b>	New pitches provided in the year; Five year traveller pitch and travelling showpeople plot supply and context
W4	<b>Provision of whole of lifetime residential homes</b>	% dwellings constructed not meeting Building Regulations Category M4(2) requirements
W5	<b>Provision of opportunities for culture, art, leisure and sports</b>	New use class F permissions/ completions; and other applicable major developments

SO	Monitoring Theme	Key Indicator/Source
I1	<b>Brownfield development</b>	% new dwellings built on brownfield land over the plan period.
I2	<b>Implementation of new, or enhancements to, the cycle/ pedestrian network</b>	Applications providing or improving cycle/ pedestrian pathways, in or outside development boundaries Green Grid
	<b>Improvements to traffic management</b>	Fastrack usage data and network improvements; Highways project delivery including STIPS annual report.
I3	<b>Achievement of a vibrant Dartford Town Centre</b>	Number of completed residential units within Central Dartford; Net gain in use class E floorspace within Dartford Town Centre; Net gain in use class F floorspace within Dartford Town Centre; Vacancy rates of Core Frontage; Progress on new visitor uses, i.e. new leisure, culture and hotel facilities; Property market information on rents within Dartford Town Centre; Completed development and/ or projects within the monitoring year that provided new or enhanced public realm or green infrastructure in Central Dartford
I4	<b>Retaining a prosperous economy with a good choice of jobs</b>	Cumulative performance in delivery against a supply rate of approximately 25,000sqm per annum use class B2/ B8 floorspace; Property market information on commercial rents; Nomis data on number of businesses
G1	<b>Appropriate Green Belt development/ Green Belt retention</b>	Type of development permitted in the year in the Green Belt, including on appeal.
G2	<b>Provision of sustainable and high quality building design</b>	Exemplar or best developments completed in the year in terms of new architecture, innovative or sustainable design or outstanding greenspace provision.
	<b>Enabling the enjoyment of the historic environment</b>	Change in the Buildings at Risk register.
G3	<b>Adapting to Climate change and reducing Dartford's Carbon footprint</b>	% of residential developments not completed to the higher water standards of 110 litres per person per day;
		% of major development completed where 19% emissions performance beyond Part L of the building regulations was not planned.
		Number of non-residential completions that achieved BREEAM Excellent standard
		A-C rating trends in Energy Performance Certification

SO	Monitoring Theme	Key Indicator/Source
G4	<b>Promotion of sustainable environments and habitats and provision of biodiversity net gain</b>	Improvements at BOS and PLGS land. ] developments achieving 10% Biodiversity net gain; Mitigations/ contributions for North Kent internationally important biodiversity sites
G5	<b>Creation of attractive and accessible riversides</b>	Delivery of public realm or open space along the river corridors, or known improvements to river water quality or flow.
	<b>Action preventing flood risk</b>	Developments refused due to flooding issues; Progress on flood defence delivery or strategic flood risk evidence actions

6.15 Infrastructure delivery is essential to achieving development sustainably, and various documents are produced by the Council to report on forward planning, financial and delivery situations. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is maintained which sets out key infrastructure projects. It also indicates anticipated costs and potential funding sources for each project. Expected delivery is based on partnership working throughout the Local Plan process. The IDP is a live document that the Council will review on a regular basis to reflect the current circumstances and to inform the development management process. The Infrastructure Schedule contained in the IDP sets out an overview of the key infrastructure requirements necessary to support regeneration in the Borough and promote delivery of the first infrastructure priorities for successful implementation of the Plan.

6.16 The Council will also report on the progress against five year infrastructure delivery aims to ensure that the specific mitigations needed to support the growth set out in the Plan are coming forward. This will draw from the applicable current IDP, current key aspects of which are outlined in Table 10.

**Table 10: Infrastructure Aims and Potential Main Projects**

Infrastructure Provision	Potential Main Projects
1. Highway, public realm, public transport and walking/ cycling improvements to enhance access to and movement within Dartford town centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City.	Dartford Town Centre Regeneration Fastrack expansion/improvement
2. Major improvements to the strategic road and rail network within and through the Borough.	M25(A282) Junction 1a Railway station improvements
3. Improvements to the Borough's flood defences and its resilience to the effects of climate change.	TE2100 Project, River Darent



Infrastructure Provision	Potential Main Projects
4. Improvements to the provision for education and learning to meet the needs of a growing population through all ages and abilities.	Alkerden Secondary School Ashmere Primary School Ebbsfleet Central Primary School
5. Improvements to the provision of health and wellbeing facilities.	Ebbsfleet Central Health facility, Stone/ Greenhithe facility
6. Additional community facilities and improved capacity of services for social care, sports and recreation and leisure.	Eastern Quarry Community Hub
7. Environmental improvements through the upgrade of existing and creation of new green infrastructure.	Green Grid developments New landscaped public realm providing usable open space at strategic allocations

## Local Plan Review Process

6.17 The need for a new Plan will go through a formal review process depending on:

- Annual monitoring results, including Duty to Cooperate activity in Dartford Borough and adjoining areas; and
- Specific triggers set out in Table 11

**Table 11: Triggers for Local Plan Review and Reporting Dates**

Issue	Trigger for review	Date to report
<b>Whole Plan updating</b>	Age of plan	Set: 2027, 2032, 2037
<b>Housing delivery</b>	Three successive years of HDT results below 75%	Earliest possible: 2025
<b>Inappropriate use of greenfield land</b>	More than 50% of cumulative housing delivery (in plan period) is on greenfield sites	Set: 2025, 2027, 2030, 2032, 2035
<b>Adverse impacts on infrastructure and sustainable development</b>	More than 50% of cumulative housing delivery (in plan period) is on unplanned windfall sites	Set: 2025, 2027, 2030, 2032, 2035
<b>London Resort development proposal</b>	If DCO permitted, within 6 months of start of on-site construction of the access road	If applicable, estimated approximately 2023-2024 or later
<b>Substantial new railway infrastructure for the north Kent Line.</b>	On government approval of a specific heavy rail project serving Dartford from Abbey Wood Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) station	If applicable, estimated approximately 2024 or later

6.18 Local planning authorities must review their Local Plans (and Statements of Community Involvement), and decide if they need updating, at least once every five years from their adoption date. This is to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Most plans are likely to require

updating in whole or in part at least every five years. Reviews should be proportionate to the issues in hand and are likely to focus on:

- conformity with national planning policy;
- changes to local circumstances, such as a material change in local housing need;
- Housing Delivery Test performance and whether the authority can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites for housing;
- whether issues have arisen that may impact on the deliverability of key site allocations;
- appeals performance;
- plans adopted by neighbouring authorities;
- significant economic changes that may impact on viability; and
- whether any new social, environmental or economic priorities may have arisen.

6.19 If, after this review, it is established that policies do not need updating, clear reasons will be published. It may not be necessary to revise the entire plan in whole, in which case a list of which policies need updating will also be published, and an updated Local Development Scheme (showing a plan programme to adoption) produced.

6.20 The Dartford Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is due to be fully reviewed by January 2026.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A – Continuity between existing and new policies**

<b>Core Strategy 2011 policies (and directly related Development Policies 2017 policies)</b>			<b>This new plan: Principal policy references</b>
<b>Policy number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Directly related DP policies</b>	
CS1	Spatial Pattern of Development	-	<b>S1</b>
CS2	Dartford Town Centre	DP14-16	<b>D1-7</b>
CS3	Northern Gateway Strategic Site	-	<b>D7, M21</b>
CS4	Ebbsfleet to Stone Priority Area	-	<b>S1, E1, E2, E5</b>
CS5	Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site	-	<b>E5</b>
CS6	Thames Waterfront	-	<b>S1, M4, E6</b>
CS7	Employment Land and Jobs	DP20	<b>M19, M20</b>
CS8	Economic Change	-	<b>S1</b>
CS9	Skills and Training	-	<b>M20</b>
CS10	Housing Provision	DP6	<b>S1, S4, M9</b>
CS11	Housing Delivery	-	<b>S2, S4</b>
CS12	Network of Shopping Centres	DP14	<b>S1, M19, M22-25</b>
CS13	Green Belt	DP22	<b>M13</b>
CS14	Green Space	DP24	<b>M14</b>
CS15	Managing Transport Demand	DP3, DP4	<b>M16, M17</b>
CS16	Transport Investment	DP3, DP4	<b>M16, M17</b>
CS17	Design of Homes	DP8	<b>M1, M10</b>
CS18	Housing Mix	DP8	<b>M8, M10</b>
CS19	Affordable Housing	DP9	<b>M7</b>
CS20	Gypsies and Travellers	DP10	<b>M13</b>
CS21	Community Services	DP21	<b>S2, M18</b>
CS22	Sports, Recreation and Culture Facilities	-	<b>M14, M18</b>
CS23	Minimising Carbon Emissions	-	<b>S3, M3</b>
CS24	Flood Risk	-	<b>S3, M4</b>

<b>Core Strategy 2011 policies (and directly related Development Policies 2017 policies)</b>			<b>This new plan:</b>
Policy number	Name	Directly related DP policies	Principal policy references
CS25	Water Management	DP11	<b>M4</b>
CS26	Delivery and Implementation	DP1	<b>S2</b>
<b>Selected Development Policies 2017 policies (less closely related to CS policies)</b>			<b>This new plan:</b>
Policy number	Name		Principal policy references
DP2	Good Design in Dartford		<b>M1</b>
DP5	Environmental and Amenity Protection		<b>M2</b>
DP7	Borough Housing Stock and Residential Amenity		<b>M11</b>
DP11	Sustainable Technology and Construction		<b>M3</b>
DP12	Historic Environment Strategy		<b>M6</b>
DP13	Designated Heritage Assets		<b>M5</b>
DP18	Neighbourhood Centres		<b>M23</b>
DP19	Food and Drink Establishments		<b>M24</b>
DP23	Protected Local Green Space		<b>M13</b>

## **Appendix B – Glossary of terms**

Reference to other glossary definitions is shown in *italics*.

<b>Active Travel/ Transport</b>	Healthy modes of personal movement, principally walking and non-motorised bicycles.
<b>Adoption</b>	Formal and final approval of a planning policy document by a Local Planning Authority, at which point it comes fully into legal force.
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full definition. Housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/ or is for essential local workers). Includes affordable housing for rent, <i>starter homes</i> , discounted market sales housing, and other affordable home ownership products (including shared ownership and First Homes).
<b>Amenity</b>	A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character, quality of life, comfort or enjoyment of an area or dwelling. May include, for example, open land, trees, historic buildings, wider environmental factors and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.
<b>Ancillary</b>	Ancillary use can be seen as a subsidiary or secondary use or operation closely associated with the main use of a building or piece of land. Ancillary uses will be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account case law and legislation at that time.
<b>Appropriate Buffer</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full definition. A buffer of 5%, 10% or 20% above the housing requirement set out in Local Plan policy S4 for the purpose of maintaining a five year supply of <i>deliverable sites</i> . The percentage used depends on factors including the extent of under delivery of housing over the previous three years (measured through the <i>Housing Delivery Test</i> ) and whether the five year supply is being used to justify a Local Plan.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
<b>B Use Class</b>	Comprises uses within use classes <i>B2</i> and <i>B8</i>
<b>B2 Use Class</b>	General industry
<b>B8 Use Class</b>	Storage and distribution
<b>Backland Sites</b>	Landlocked sites behind existing buildings, such as rear gardens and private amenity space, usually within predominantly residential areas. Such sites often have no street frontages.
<b>Borough Open Space</b>	Green spaces that have identified environmental (e.g. landscape, biodiversity, recreational or amenity) value. Some are publicly accessible but others have no public access. They include parks, playspaces, allotments, churchyards/ cemeteries, current and former sports pitches, linear green features or other sites with features of potential biodiversity value such as railway embankments, and well landscaped public realm areas.
<b>Brownfield Land</b>	Land that has been previously developed as defined in the <i>NPPF</i> , plus sites found to be <i>deliverable/ developable</i> in the <i>SHLAA</i> which were previously used for quarrying and may not fully meet the formal <i>NPPF</i> definition.
<b>Brownfield Land Register</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full definition. Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential

	development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017.
<b>Building Regulations</b>	A separate statutory process to land use planning which ensures that structures are constructed to certain standards, including energy efficiency standards. Building Regulations approval is required for most building work in the UK.
<b>C1 Use Class</b>	Hotels
<b>C2 Use Class</b>	Residential Institutions
<b>C3 Use Class</b>	Dwelling houses
<b>Communal Amenity Space</b>	Space which is provided and managed for the communal benefit of residents within a housing development. It will usually comprise local spaces that provide neighbourhood facilities for play and/ or rest or areas that provide visual amenity. It includes both hard and soft landscaped areas such as a hardstanding area with seating and green spaces containing managed vegetation.
<b>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)</b>	A charge on development to help the Council to raise and pool contributions from developers to fund a range of infrastructure to support new development, e.g. schools, health facilities and transport improvements. The CIL rates which apply locally are set out in a Charging Schedule.
<b>Community Facilities/ Land</b>	Community facilities encompass public, private and voluntary sector buildings and spaces used for a variety of purposes including essential neighbourhood and local services, social, health, education, cultural, spiritual and sports uses that support vibrant communities. It includes land identified for the provision of such buildings and spaces in future.
<b>Conservation Area</b>	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Conservation Areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
<b>Deliverable Sites</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full definition. Sites that are available now, offer a suitable location for development now and are achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years.
<b>Design and Access Statement</b>	A short report accompanying and supporting a planning application explaining how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrating that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users.
<b>Developable Sites</b>	Sites that are in a suitable location for development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.
<b>Development Management</b>	The process whereby a local planning authority determines whether to approve or refuse a planning application.
<b>Ebbsfleet Development Corporation</b>	Organisation established by central government administering regeneration and most planning applications in a defined area, in Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs, at Ebbsfleet Garden City.
<b>E(g)(iii) Use Class</b>	Light industrial uses.
<b>E Use Class</b>	Commercial, Business and Services – includes most shops, cafés and restaurants, financial and professional services, most indoor sport and recreation, health services, day nurseries and crèches, offices, and light industrial uses.
<b>F Use Class</b>	Comprises uses within use classes <i>F1</i> and <i>F2</i>
<b>F1 Use Class</b>	Learning and non-residential institutions – includes art galleries, museums, libraries, exhibition halls, places for religious worship, law courts

<b>F2 Use Class</b>	Local community uses – includes shops of less than 280sqm selling essential goods and at least 1km from similar shops, community halls, most outdoor sports and recreation, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, skating rinks
<b>Fastrack</b>	A fast and high quality bus network, serving the major development sites and linking residential areas with public transport interchanges, employment areas and the main shopping centres. It operates partly on a dedicated track consisting of bus-only roads, on-street bus lanes and priority at junctions.
<b>First Homes</b>	Dwellings sold at a discount of at least 30% against the market value to people who meet the First Homes eligibility criteria where the first sale price is no higher than £250,000 after the discount has been applied, further restrictions apply as set out in government guidance.
<b>Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>	Green and blue (water) spaces, many of which form part of the <i>Green Grid</i> and serve many purposes. These include: designated nature conservation sites (including <i>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</i> and Local Wildlife Sites); priority habitats (as defined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan); Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; roadside nature reserves; rivers/ lakes; <i>Protected Local Green Spaces</i> ; <i>Borough Open Spaces</i> ; open spaces within new development; other green open, landscaped and amenity spaces (including filled and grassed former landfill sites); and more urban landscaped public realm areas.
<b>Green Belt</b>	An area of open country in which development is strictly controlled under national policy for its openness and permanence. The Green Belt affecting Dartford Borough is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt which encircles Greater London.
<b>Green Grid</b>	An interconnected multi-functional network of <i>Green and Blue Infrastructure</i> , habitat/landscape corridors, footpaths, cyclepaths and non-motorised public rights of way. The Grid enables people and wildlife to be well connected: within the urban area in the north of the Borough; to and along the Rivers Thames and Darent and other watercourses; to and from the countryside to the south; and to <i>Green and Blue Infrastructure</i> networks beyond the Borough's boundary.
<b>Greenfield Sites/ Land</b>	Sites/ land that has not previously been used for development. This includes sites which were previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time, and can also include residential gardens. However this classification does not necessarily apply to land which was previously used for quarrying activities (see <i>Brownfield Land</i> definition).
<b>Groundwater Source Protection Zones</b>	Areas which provide groundwater sources of drinking water. Zones are classified to indicate the level of risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution to groundwater in the area based on the behaviour of groundwater and underground factors. See the Environment Agency's website for further details.
<b>Heritage Asset</b>	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority, including local listing.
<b>Housing Delivery Test</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full details. Measures net homes delivered in the Borough against the homes required, using national statistics and Borough data. Sanctions vary depend on the degree of % shortfall.
<b>Housing Land Supply</b>	<i>Deliverable and developable sites</i> capable of accommodating five or more new dwellings. These are identified in the <i>SHLAA</i> and expanded/

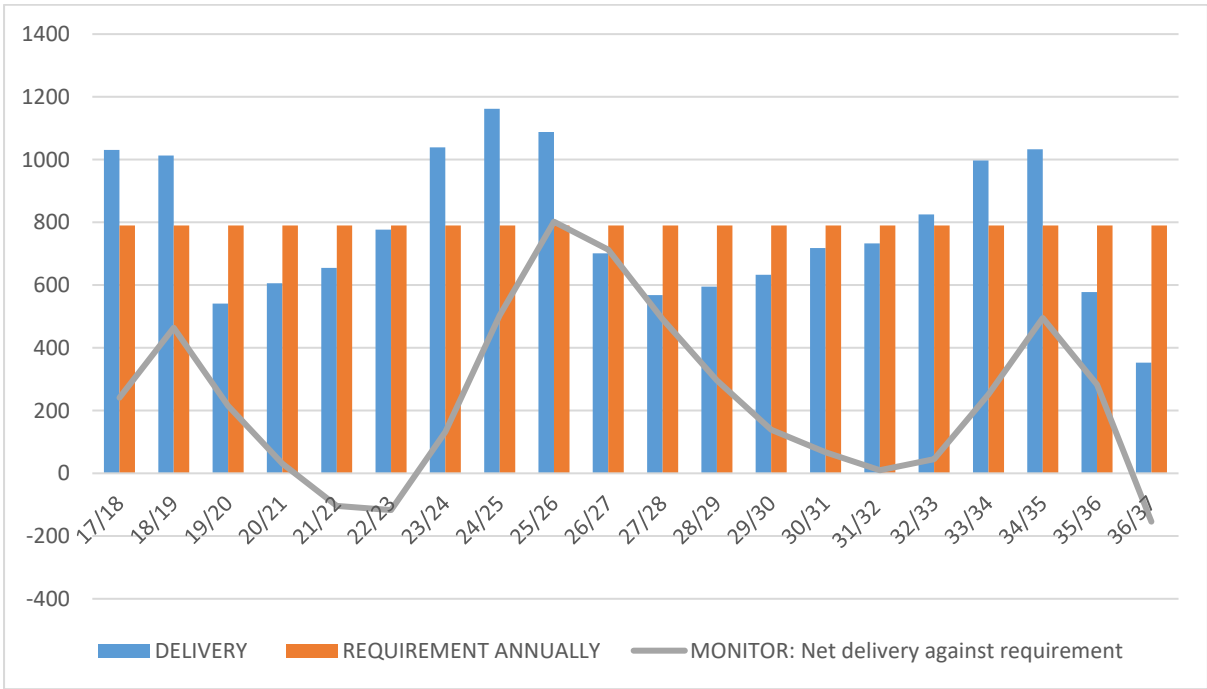
	updated via the <i>Brownfield Land Register</i> . Regular statements confirm the latest five year deliverable housing land supply position.
<b>Identified Employment Areas</b>	Areas identified on the <i>Policies Map</i> with a general commercial land use character.
<b>Infill/ Infilling</b>	Development of dwellings or other buildings on vacant or under-used sites within a developed area.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	A collective term for physical, community and <i>green infrastructure</i> provision, including built structures and services such as roads, public transport, electricity, sewerage, water, schools, health facilities, telecommunications and recycling and refuse facilities.
<b>Landmark</b>	Visible object, feature or development that is distinctive in the nearby environment. It may act as a point of reference to assist orientation or create a visual focus in the urban or rural landscape.
<b>Listed Building</b>	Building or other structure of special architectural or historic interest identified and included on a list by Historic England under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All Listed Buildings are assigned a grade (I, II* or II).
<b>Local List</b>	A list of <i>heritage assets</i> that make a positive contribution to local character and sense of place. They are identified by the local planning authority using local selection criteria.
<b>Local Nature Reserves</b>	Places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
<b>Local Wildlife Sites</b>	Identified by Kent Wildlife Trust, these are sites which are important for the conservation of wildlife in Kent and Medway. Each site has a defined boundary and may support threatened or important habitats or wildlife.
<b>Main Town Centre Uses</b>	Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
<b>Major Development</b>	Housing development of 10 or more homes or on sites of 0.5 hectares or more. Non-residential development with a floorspace of 1,000sqm or more or on sites of 1 hectare or more.
<b>Marine Conservation Zone</b>	Zones designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They protect a range of nationally important, rare or threatened habitats and species.
<b>Masterplan/ masterplanning</b>	A plan which provides comprehensive guidance on the overall development of a (usually large) site. It sets out the mix and arrangement of future land uses, and may also include design principles, landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation, and integration with the surrounding built and natural environment. Masterplanning is usually undertaken as an intermediate stage between policy allocation and the submission of a detailed planning application.
<b>Mitigation</b>	Appropriate measures which, as a minimum, offset any adverse impacts of a proposed development.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>	The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 sets out government's planning policies to guide the preparation of plans and decision making on planning applications.



<b>Original Building</b>	Original building means a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 where it was built before that date, and as it was built when initially built after that date, and in the same lawful use.
<b>Policies Map</b>	Shows the location of sites and designations to which Local Plan policies relate on an Ordnance Survey base map.
<b>Protected Local Green Space</b>	Designated areas that have special protection against development. They are green areas of particular importance to local communities because of characteristics such as recreational value or tranquillity, and are not large areas of land.
<b>Public Amenity Space</b>	Open space with public access or in public sector ownership. It may include more localised spaces such as small greenspaces on residential estates of clear communal benefit, greenspace of local but distinct landscape merit, or public open spaces providing neighbourhood facilities for play and/ or rest enjoyed by residents.
<b>Public realm</b>	Those parts of a city, town or village, whether publicly or privately owned, which are available for everyone to use. This includes squares and parks.
<b>Ramsar Site</b>	A wetland of international importance especially for waterfowl under the Ramsar Convention.
<b>Retail Impact Assessment</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> . Assessment of the potential impacts of proposed retail development on existing retail centres.
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	A historic building or site identified for protection in a schedule compiled by Historic England under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
<b>Section 106 legal agreements</b>	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a Local Planning Authority to enter into a legal agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are used to support the provision of infrastructure, such as highways, and affordable housing. Section 106 has been scaled back since the introduction of the <i>Community Infrastructure Levy</i> .
<b>Self-build and Custom-build Dwellings</b>	Self-build dwellings involve individuals or groups of individuals finding a plot and co-ordinating the design and construction of the dwellings for them to occupy. Custom-build dwellings involve commissioning a developer to construct new homes using a bespoke design for individuals to occupy.
<b>Service Sui Generis Use</b>	<i>Main town centre uses</i> which are not within the <i>E</i> or <i>C1</i> use classes. Includes pubs, hot food takeaways, cinemas, bingo halls, launderettes, taxi or vehicle hire businesses, betting offices, pay day loan shops, and other applicable service sector facilities for visiting members of the public.
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</b>	Areas designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to conserve their wildlife and geology where it is of special interest. The sites are protected by law from damage through development or unsuitable management or other activities.
<b>Special Protection Area (SPA)</b>	Internationally important area protected for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory bird species.
<b>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)</b>	Identifies sites with potential for residential development and assesses whether they are suitable, available and achievable, i.e. <i>deliverable/developable</i> , for housing development over the plan period.

<b>Sufficient Effective Marketing</b>	Continuous proactive marketing for a period of 12 months or more, using a professional agent and an appropriate range of online, on-site and other advertising media. Throughout the 12 month period, the asking price should be shown to be reasonable for the property and location, and to reflect the market value of the uses currently required under policy.
<b>Sui generis Use</b>	Uses which do not fall within the nationally specified use classes B, C, E or F. Includes theatres, large houses in multiple occupation (more than 6 people sharing), hostels, petrol filling stations, shops selling and/ or displaying motor vehicles, scrap yards, retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, amusement centres, casinos, funfairs, waste disposal installations, drinking establishments with expanded food provision, venues for live music performance, concert halls and dance halls.
<b>Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</b>	A document which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. A SPD can be used to provide further guidance for particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Development Plan.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, taking into account economic, social and environmental objectives.
<b>Windfall Sites</b>	Sites put forward for development without having been positively identified for housing through the plan preparation process. They include all 1-4 unit sites for infill development within the urban area as these will have been too small to be considered in the <i>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment</i> ; although larger windfall sites are occasionally put forward.

**Appendix C – Housing trajectory**



## **Appendix D – Retail Centre Addresses**

Frontages of existing centres are shown on the Policies Map but, for the avoidance of doubt, addresses are set out in the tables which follow. Frontage policy includes the full site boundaries fronting the highway, even if the shop is set well back or the site not in current shop/ services use. The Policies Map also includes Bluewater and town centre boundaries.

### **Dartford Town Centre Core Frontage**

<i>Dartford Town Centre</i>	
2 – 64 High Street	9 – 51 High Street

### **District Centres**

<i>Dartford West</i>	
33 – 43 Dartford Road	84 – 98 Dartford Road
105 – 143 Dartford Road	West Hill County Primary School
<i>Dartford East</i>	
18 – 20 The Brent	1 – 21 The Brent
68A – 106 East Hill	75 East Hill
<i>Temple Hill Square</i>	
1 – 49 Temple Hill Square	2 – 50 Temple Hill Square
Temple Hill Library & Home Start	Temple Hill Youth Centre & Dartford Gym
<i>High Street Swanscombe</i>	
1 – 6 The Parade High Street	40 – 58 High Street
Methodist Chapel, Milton Road	23 – 57 High Street
The Old Fire Station & Church Road Hall, Church Road	2 – 4 Stanhope Road
<i>Longfield</i>	
5 – 65 Station Road	2 – 36 Station Road
67 – 81 Station Road	48 Main Road
<i>Hawley Road/ Lowfield Street</i>	
1 – 17 Hawley Road	291 – 301 Lowfield Street
Primary School & Children's Centre, Oakfield Lane	Scout Hall, Oakfield Lane
6 Hawley Road (Orange Tree PH)	

### **Local Centres**

<i>Burnham Road, Dartford</i>	
99 – 105 Burnham Road	
<i>Sutton-at-Hone South</i>	
196 – 202 Main Road	43 Main Road
208 – 220 Main Road	
<i>Henderson Drive, Dartford</i>	
171 – 177 Henderson Drive	137 Henderson Drive

<i>Colney Road/St Vincent's Road, Dartford</i>	
79 St Vincent's Road	146 – 154 Colney Road
116 – 122 St Vincent's Road	145 – 149 Colney Road
144 – 150 St Vincent's Road	
<i>Mead Road, Dartford</i>	
1 – 11 Mead Road	Veterinary Centre, Mead Road
<i>Sutton-at-Hone North</i>	
71 – 77 Main Road	
<i>Darenth Hill/Green Street Green Road, Lane End</i>	
70 – 72 Watchgate	76 Watchgate
<i>Craylands Lane/ Milton Street, Swanscombe</i>	
40 Craylands Lane	10 – 14 Craylands Lane
123 – 139 Milton Street	
<i>Horns Cross, Stone</i>	
285 – 293 London Road	116 – 122 London Road
<i>London Road West, Stone</i>	
44 – 64 London Road	
<i>Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet</i>	
67 – 79 Cherry Orchard	Castle Hill Community Centre
<i>Ebbsfleet Green, Ebbsfleet</i>	
Mortimer Square, 2-4 Talbot Lane	Redrow House, 6-12 Talbot Lane
The Spring River, Talbot Lane	
<i>Fleetdale Parade, Dartford</i>	
2 – 46 Fleetdale Parade	
<i>Birchwood Parade, Joydens Wood</i>	
1 – 10 Birchwood Parade	
<i>Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood</i>	
62 – 70 Summerhouse Drive	
<i>Chastilian Road, Dartford</i>	
29 – 39 Chastilian Road	30 – 38 Chastilian Road
<i>Shepherds Lane, Dartford</i>	
36 – 44 Shepherds Lane	
<i>Pinewood Place/Oakfield Lane, Bexley Park</i>	
1 – 5 Maplehurst Close units (R1, R2 and B1-3)	