

Dartford Borough Local Plan

'Preferred Options' Stage

Public Consultation Document

New Local Plan: Preferred Options

January 2020

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. Introduction to consultation and document

About Local Plans

1.1 The Local Plan sets out the vision and framework for the future development of the area. This includes addressing development needs and supporting infrastructure as well as conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places. Dartford's population and economy have been growing as part of a longstanding strategy to regenerate the urban area, limit congestion and improve public transport, and protect the Green Belt.

1.2 Planning policies need to plan for 'sustainable development', this means a balance over time to:

- protect and enhance Dartford's environment;
- provide for the community's needs; and
- help build a strong and competitive local economy

1.3 We need to ensure that we continue to meet the Borough's development needs in a sustainable way, take account of changes to national policy, and keep the plan up to date. The Local Plan plays an important role as the legal basis for deciding whether to approve or refuse new development proposals. For these reasons, we are reviewing our Local Plan to update the development strategy and policies for the Borough to 2036.

1.4 Without an up to date Local Plan, there is a risk of many more planning decisions being taken by central government, rather than Dartford Council. This is because, where the Council (or Ebbsfleet Development Corporation) does not grant planning permission, developers have a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Appeals are much more likely to succeed where Local Plans are outdated and fail to make sufficient provision for housing.

1.5 The Local Plan will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector to assess if it is:

- positively prepared- a strategy which seeks to fully meet the area's development needs;
- justified- appropriate taking into account reasonable alternatives (options) and based on evidence; and
- consistent with [national policy](#).

About the Public Consultation

1.6 In 2018, we carried out a '[Strategic Issues' consultation](#) to guide the scope of the Local Plan Review. This focussed on the longer-term big picture development issues. [Public responses](#) to this first 'Strategic Issues' Local Plan review consultation in 2018 on the new plan have been taken forward in this document.

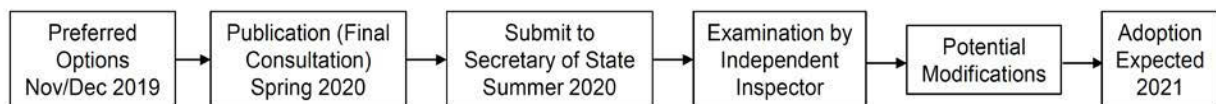
1.7 We are now consulting on our 'Preferred Options' which outlines current thinking on what the direction the Local Plan Review may take. This document sets out:

- a summary of the Borough's places and people (chapter 2)
- Vision and Objectives (chapter 3)
- Main Plan Options (chapter 4)

- Preferred Policies Approach (chapter 5)
- Policies to be Retained (chapter 6)

1.8 The preferred options take on board public consultation feedback and the results of the technical work carried out up to this point. The emerging 'direction of travel' for the Plan is supported by a [Sustainability Appraisal](#) which assesses the impacts of the vision, objectives, main plan options and the preferred policies approach against a number of sustainability objectives.

1.9 We need to do further technical work. This, together with the responses to the Preferred Options consultation, will inform our 'Publication' Draft Local Plan (when final consultation occurs). The diagram below sets out the stages and timescales of the Local Plan up to its anticipated completion in 2021.



1.10 At this stage, it is important to get the views of local residents, businesses and the organisations that provide infrastructure and services for the Borough. The Preferred Options document asks a series of questions on the various options and preferred approaches. We welcome your comments on these.

1.11 **The consultation runs from 10 January 2020 until 21 February 2020.** Responses should be emailed to localplan@dartford.gov.uk or sent to Planning Policy Team, Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford DA1 1DR by noon on Friday 21 February 2020.

1.12 This stage of public consultation is conducted under Regulation 18 of the secondary legislation.

2. Summary of the Borough's Places and People

2.1 The Local Plan Review will consider Dartford's own unique characteristics, based on evidence, and form proposals for the sustainable development of the Borough in line with national policy. Some key aspects of Dartford Borough's social and economic characteristics, and local settlements, are highlighted below.

- Dartford Borough covers an area of 7,600 hectares, the smallest, but most densely populated, Borough in Kent. Situated within the Thames Estuary, Dartford stands at the pivotal point between Greater London and Kent.
- Dartford has major national and international connections via the strategic road network, including the M25; Dartford crossing and the A2; and rail services, including from Ebbsfleet International Station (a 17 minute journey time to London St Pancras International).

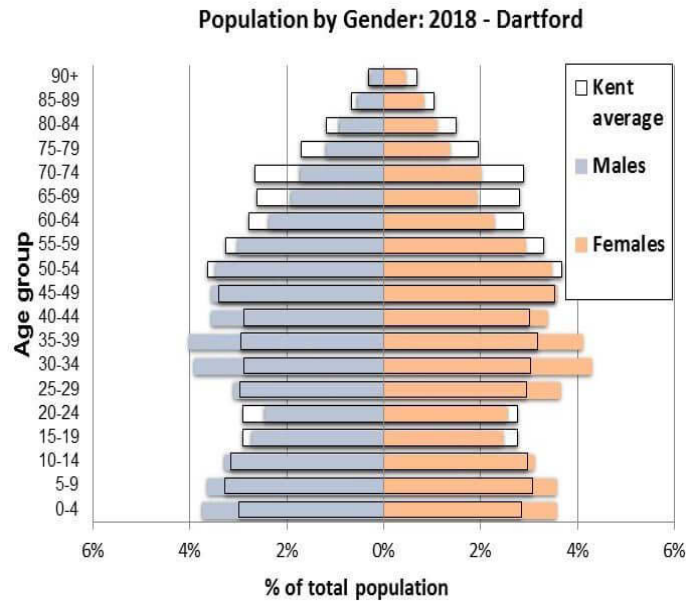


- Dartford Borough has two distinct areas. North of the A2 is a largely built-up area, containing 70% of the population, which stretches from Dartford town in the east (adjoining Bexley London Borough) through to the growing communities at Ebbsfleet (adjoining Gravesham Borough). To the south lies an area of open countryside with 12 villages and a number of small hamlets.

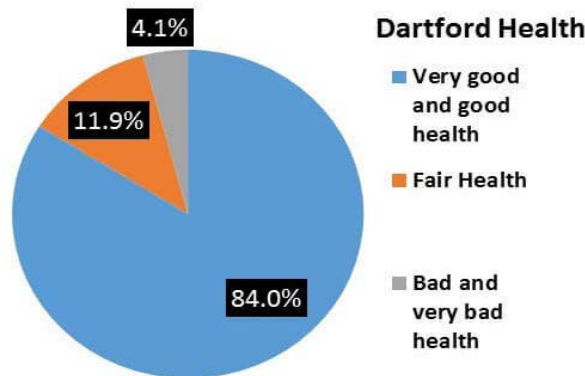
People in Dartford Borough

2.2 Dartford has a population of 109,709 (ONS, 2018 Mid-year estimate). There are some 15.1 persons per hectare in Dartford. In comparison, the Kent average is 4.4 people per hectare.

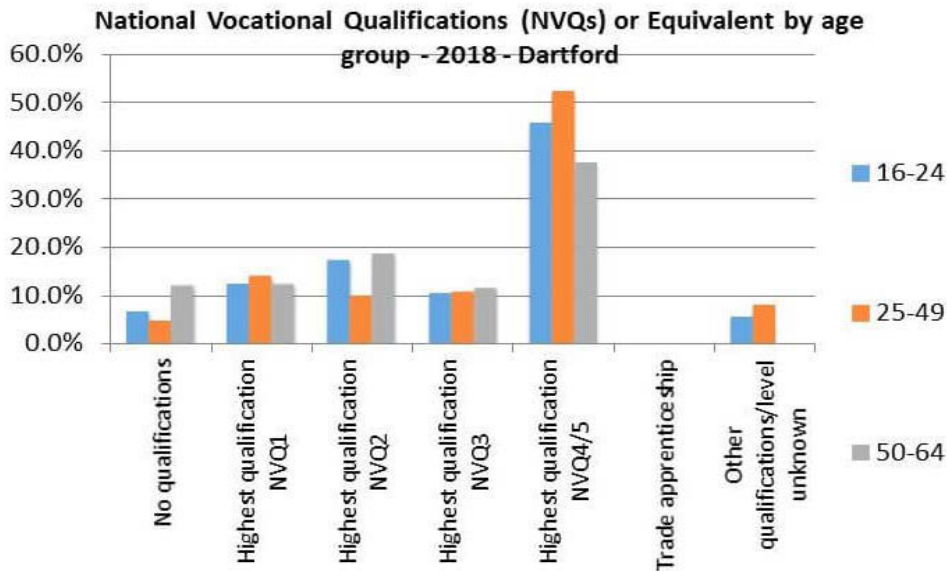
2.3 The average life expectancy in Dartford is 81 years, which is in line with the Kent and England averages (ONS). The average age of 37.7 is lower than the Kent and regional averages.



2.4 One in seven (14%) of people in Dartford find their day-to-day activities are limited by illness, below the English average of 17%. Likewise, compared with England as a whole, Dartford has an above average number of people in very good / good health (Census, 2011).

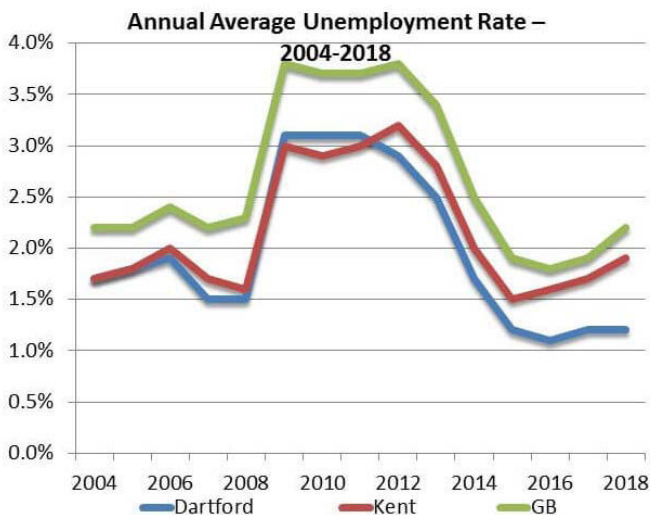


2.5 Dartford's population has some good levels of educational attainment. In 2017, 55% of children achieved a strong pass (Grades 9-5) in English and Maths, higher than both the Kent and England (43%) averages. Nearly half (46%) of people living in Dartford have NVQ4/5 level qualifications (degree and above). This is above the England (39%) and Kent (35%) averages. However, more than one in ten of those over 50 have no qualifications.



Source: APS

2.6 The wholesale and retail is the largest employer of people living in Dartford, with 22% of the population employed in the sector (BRES). As with many economic indicators for Dartford's population, Dartford's unemployment rates are better than average and over the years have improved relative to Kent as a whole.



Source: Claimant Count

2.7 The socio-economic make-up of the Borough is diverse. Nevertheless, over two in three (70%) of Dartford's population can be loosely characterised as falling within the following 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;
- **Family Basics** (Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet).

Source: Experian Mosaic/ KCC

Places in Dartford Borough

Full factual profiles of the environment, economy, and social makeup of individual places in the Borough are available online.

NORTHERN 'URBAN AREA'

2.8 The area to the north of the A2 in the Borough is largely urban in nature, comprising Dartford town centre to the west, and the settlements of Stone, Greenhithe and Swanscombe to the east.

2.9 The northern part of the Borough has seen significant residential and commercial development in recent years, most notably at The Bridge and to north of the Town Centre, along with the development of Ebbsfleet Garden City. Ebbsfleet will be a new hub of activity for the borough in the east.

Dartford

2.10 A historic and growing market town, 51,000 people live in the north-west of the borough around Dartford. This total is increasing and accounts for nearly half of the Borough population.

2.11 The town, situated in the River Darent valley, has long served as a focal point for the region. Dartford's High Street follows the alignment of the Roman Road and with historic coaching inns and other Listed Buildings, forms the core of the largest Conservation Area in the Borough. One of the main amenities is the large Central Park, providing a range of outdoor facilities and a location for popular events for the Borough.



2.12 Over a third of the Borough's employee jobs are located within the Dartford area, with 11 Identified Employment Areas in the vicinity. Dartford railway station is a major public transport interchange for the wider area.

2.13 A programme of town centre investment is improving its infrastructure, streets and spaces; capitalising on Dartford's heritage, culture and transport connections.

Stone

2.14 Stone has grown from a village with a historic castle and rich industrial heritage into an area that includes a railway station, the Crossways business area, and the Bluewater regional shopping centre.



2.15 Over a third of Dartford's jobs are located in this area. Although there are some local areas that are amongst the top 20% most deprived in England.

2.16 Over the period 2011 to 2016, the population of this area has increased by over 200 per year. It has an average age of 34 and a significant constituency of young renters and aspiring homemakers who benefit from good transport links.

Greenhithe

2.17 The historic settlement of Greenhithe sits on the banks of the Thames and has seen major residential development at its eastern end at Ingress Park in an attractive landscaped setting around the old Abbey.

2.18 The area has a relatively youthful population profile, with 75% under 50. It has a significant segment of young educated people who are renting or first-time buyers. The area is served by Greenhithe station and Fastrack bus services, along with a variety of facilities and services. Only 3% of the Borough's employee jobs are located in this area.

Swanscombe

2.19 Swanscombe is a small town in the north-east of the Borough, with an average age of 34. It contains Swanscombe Heritage Park; the site where bone fragments from the earliest humans known to have lived in England were discovered.

2.20 Large open spaces and a residential area form a quiet heart to the town. Swanscombe station is located on the High Street along with local retail and community facilities. However, parts of the town are in the top 20% most deprived areas in England.

Ebbsfleet

2.21 Ebbsfleet is a new Garden City that is taking shaping in the former chalk pit quarries and brownfield land in the east of the Borough.

2.22 In 2015 a development corporation was formed to coordinate and speed up the delivery of homes, jobs and infrastructure in the area. New neighbourhoods are being formed containing local facilities, including shops, schools and parks. Within this area, Ebbsfleet International Rail Station provides high speed services to London and to mainland Europe, whilst Swanscombe Peninsula, contains some industrial uses and large of areas of low-lying marshland.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA

2.23 The area to the south of the A2 is rural in character and lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.



Longfield and New Barn

2.24 The largest village in Dartford, Longfield contains several shops, community facilities, a 14th century church, schools and larger detached dwellings.

2.25 Primarily in linear form, bounded by undulating agricultural land to the north and the village of Hartley in Sevenoaks District to the south. Longfield railway station provides access to London, and Medway and Kent stations to the east. Half the population are aged over 50. New Barn is residential in nature, with a larger population than Longfield.

Wilmington

2.26 A large village just to the south of Dartford, Wilmington has over 4,000 residents with an average age of 44. The village has three secondary schools and two primary schools, along with North Kent College, a Further Education institution which serves the wider area.

Southfleet

2.27 Southfleet is a small rural village grouped around a crossroads. The village includes the Ship Inn, a 14th century church, along with many other historic buildings and a primary school. The village is surrounded by agricultural land.



Joyden's Wood

2.28 Joyden's Wood is situated in the south west edge of the borough and includes a large tract of ancient woodland.

2.29 The neighbourhood contains an infant and junior school and has bus services to Erith via Bexleyheath. Two shopping parades serve the local population, along with a well-used community centre.

Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley

2.30 These two villages are located on the River Darent approximately 2 miles south of Dartford, and have a combined population of 4,100 with an average population age of 43.



2.31 The National Trust property St John's of Jerusalem is in centre of this area. Local shops and a primary school, serve the area. Local housing is characterised by semi-detached homes.

Bean

2.32 Bean is a compact village, located approximately 3 miles southeast of Dartford. The village is primarily made up of semi-detached and terraced homes.

2.33 Bean has a public house, village hall, convenience store, school and GP surgery serving the village. In addition, the 28 hectare Beacon Wood Country lies just to the south of the village.

Darenth

2.34 Darenth is approximately 2 miles south-east of Dartford to the east of the M25. The village has a church, GP surgery, school, convenience store, community hall and a public house.



2.35 To the north of the A2, the 100-hectare Darenth Country Park serves the wider area, providing a large area of woodland and open space, with the Darent Valley Hospital beyond.

3. The Dartford Local Plan's Vision and Objectives

Building on the strengths and opportunities of Dartford, a vision of what we would like the Borough to be like at the end of the Local Plan Review period (2036) is detailed below, followed by objectives to guide the achievement of this desired future.

3.1 Vision to 2036

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's towns and villages will be well connected and recognised for their prosperity.

Local residents will be able to access a choice of homes to suit their needs at different stages of their life, through a diverse range of accommodation available in a variety of types and tenures.

Neighbourhoods across the Borough will be attractive, healthy, secure, environmentally resilient and low-carbon, and will benefit from excellent built and natural environments. They will afford access to local facilities, the open countryside and the riverside.

The identity and quality of life of Dartford's established towns and villages will be retained and enhanced.

New neighbourhoods will be sensitively integrated with existing communities and the local environment, bringing new services, public greenspaces and attractive waterside settings. They will be served by convenient healthcare, education, sports and other community and cultural resources, as well as good employment and shopping opportunities.

The Borough's communities will benefit from investment and planned development, providing them with new and upgraded facilities, including convenient and reliable transport links and community and recreational facilities.

Retaining a clear sense of its history, Dartford Town Centre's streets, open spaces and riverside, will have been further rejuvenated, creating a place that is easy and enjoyable to walk around and experience. The Town Centre will be the community heart of Dartford Borough with a thriving, creative and innovative ambience, with the mix and diversity of its offer giving many reasons to come and visit it. The vibrancy of the town centre will be supported by more residents living in the town.

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. Ebbsfleet Garden City will be sensitively integrated alongside surrounding neighbourhoods, and be characterised by healthy, green and waterside environments. Ebbsfleet's new neighbourhoods will be well connected, distinctive and thoughtfully designed, to reflect the cultural and landscape heritage of the area.

3.2 Local Plan Objectives

Dartford's Local Plan Review will pursue the following social, environmental and economic strategic objectives to deliver the 2036 vision:

SO 1

- *promoting cohesive, safe and attractive neighbourhoods, with a real sense of place that reflects the area's heritage, and whose residents enjoy a choice of homes suited to their needs and easy access to local everyday facilities*

SO 2

- *reducing the need to travel by locating new services and jobs close to where people live, and public transport services; and protecting valued neighbourhood shops and community facilities*
- *facilitating a range of upgrades to the transport network; and a choice of sustainable travel options, with a convenient and reliable public transport system linking existing and new residential areas to key destinations and facilities in the Borough, together with a cohesive walking and cycling network*

SO 3

- *continuing regeneration within the northern urban area through the re-use of brownfield land to meet future housing and employment needs, as well as supporting services*
- *providing a clear contrast with the urban area, and the maintenance of the positive character of the Borough's rural villages and countryside, through the protection and enhancement of Green Belt countryside*

SO 4

- *requiring residential accommodation, buildings and services to be located and designed to provide whole lifetime options, with an array of accessible living environments and facilities catering for people as their circumstances change, to enable residents to continue to living in their own home or within the Borough*

SO 5

- *achieving an attractive and vibrant Dartford Town Centre with a mixed and diverse offer including a strong retail core, new homes, community facilities, a flourishing day and evening economy and an enticing cultural and leisure offer, within an elegant and engaging public realm*
- *delivering a choice of modern business premises, high quality jobs and a variety of commercial, community and residential premises at Ebbsfleet and other well connected locations in Dartford, including suitable premises for local businesses*

SO 6

- *promoting high quality built design and open space provision in new development so that Dartford's new neighbourhoods and historic environments are enjoyed by current and future generations*

SO 7

- *creating resilient rivers and environments along the Thames Waterfront and the River Darent corridor in Dartford, sensitively used for leisure and movement*
- *giving the people of the Borough the opportunity for active and healthy living with an enhanced green network of landscaped paths, cycle routes, countryside links, open spaces and natural environments*

SO 8

- *ensuring the Borough is resilient and able to adapt to the effects of climate change, through an increase in the proportion of water efficient buildings, the uptake of domestic and small scale renewable energy, and promoting biodiversity and flood resilience*

SO 9

- *encouraging development that provides a wide range of opportunities for residents to enjoy first class cultural, art, leisure and sports pursuits*

Question 1. Do you support the proposed Vision and Strategic Objectives? If not, how do they need refining and why?

4. Summary and Main Options for the Plan

4.1 This chapter provides a summary of current proposals and identifies some of the big topic issues where the Borough faces real choices.

4.2 A high-level summary of the overall preferred approach for the Local Plan Review is followed by the Main Plan Options. These highlight key planning policy topics and development locations that need to be considered as we plan for the Borough's future.

Summary of Content and Preferred Options

4.3 As a result of having reviewed local consultation feedback and undertaken further research and investigation, a number of preferred planning approaches have been formulated. These are summarised below:

1. *Optimising Brownfield land in locations well served by public transport.*
2. *Repurposing shops for new uses and redeveloping selected areas in and around **Dartford town centre** to transform and regenerate the town's appeal and activities.*
3. *Maintaining the strategy for **a green Borough** through requiring new development to provide sufficient open space and retaining existing green space planning policy protections.*
4. *Creating a distinctive mix of uses to provide a lively urban heart around the International Station at the **Ebbsfleet Central** site.*
5. *Encouraging both sensitively integrated development and ecological improvements at suitable land within **Swanscombe Peninsula**.*
6. *Locating development so as to minimise the need to **travel**, providing new walking and cycling infrastructure, and exploring the best options for public transport improvements to provide a real travel choice.*

4.4 These preferred Main Plan Options are explained below. The alternatives against which they can be considered are shown alongside them.

4.5 Chapter 5 contains more detail on the policy approach, including:

- A. ***Maintaining the Green Belt** and a pattern of new development focussed on Dartford Town Centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City.*
- B. *Planning for **new homes** at a gradually reducing rate (in comparison with recent figures), whilst accelerating forming new neighbourhoods at priority regeneration centres; and setting strict approval criteria for unplanned housing developments (to manage infrastructure impacts).*

- C. Working with public bodies to secure funding and land to deliver new health facilities and schools, and reviewing if the Community Infrastructure Levy (the mechanism through which developers contribute to **local infrastructure**) can be revised.*
- D. **Supporting Dartford Town Centre** and Bluewater through an increase in residents living and shopping in the area and by introducing suitable new uses and creating quality public spaces.*
- E. Promoting a high quality Garden City and mix of new facilities at **Ebbsfleet***
- F. **Providing more jobs** at business locations that are well served by public transport and at the former Littlebrook Power Station.*
- G. Updating policies to protect the **natural environment, open spaces, parks and gardens**.*
- H. New proposals to **address climate change**, including enhanced flood defences.*
- I. Increasing the level of **affordable housing** expected at new major residential developments.*
- J. **Ensuring more spacious homes** that can to be adapted to meet the physical needs of residents over their whole lives are built and designed.*
- K. Taking a planned approach to managing **Gypsy/ Traveller accommodation** in Dartford.*

4.6 Some Local Plan policies introduced in 2017, such as the protection of the historic environment and heritage assets, are performing well and no specific changes are proposed. These policies are covered in Chapter 6.

The Main Plan Options

4.7 The main options for the Plan examine where it is essential to update or amend the current approach and consider different ways forward. They are set out at this public consultation stage to indicate the ways these big issues could be tackled locally through the Local Plan Review.

4.8 The public, the infrastructure providers and the landowners are likely to have clear views on the best way to address these challenges. We want to hear these views as well as your comments on the other options (alternatives) identified.

Local Consultation So Far

4.9 Public involvement continues throughout the process of preparing a Local Plan. A 'Strategic Issues' consultation in 2018 was the first step in the Local Plan Review process. It reviewed the performance of existing Local Plan documents, looked at available evidence, and asked open questions on the economic, social and environmental development of the Borough. The headline views on key matters are set out below:

| <i>Brownfield land:</i> | <i>Dartford Town Centre:</i> | <i>Ebbsfleet central area:</i> |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Many consultees recognised the importance of brownfield land and felt that, as a finite resource, it needed to be used efficiently. To support regeneration and protect the Green Belt, the current approach could be taken further by making more efficient use of land and optimising the density of development. ➔ Some expressed the view that a reliance on brownfield sites might be insufficient to support the development needs of communities outside the northern urban area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ The importance was stressed of getting suitable redevelopment of available sites. ➔ Some considered that there could be opportunities to increase residential accommodation through (for example) taller buildings, subject infrastructure and greenspace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) felt the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework should be taken as the starting point. The EDC expressed the view that the aspiration for this area should be the creation of a vibrant mixed-use community. ➔ Consultees also sought a major centre for healthcare, Further Education provision, and/or leisure/cultural attractions. ➔ The landowner expressed their support for a flexible policy position which allows for a residential-led development with around 4,000 homes. |
| <i>Swanscombe Peninsula</i> | <i>Green space:</i> | <i>Transport:</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Consultees often noted that there was uncertainty surrounding the proposals for the development of an entertainment resort on the site. Some concerns were expressed about the potential impacts of the resort on the local area, businesses and the development of Ebbsfleet Central. ➔ The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) considered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Respondents support seeking environmental net gain and plan positively for green infrastructure and biodiversity networks. ➔ Consultees support provision of accessible and multifunctional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ A number of respondents commented on the need for updated evidence on transport matters, taking into account the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing on Dartford. Other respondents raised concerns about traffic congestion and supported measures to address this. ➔ There was general support for better provision for cyclists and pedestrians, and |

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| <p>that a policy could support a mixed-use development on the peninsula integrated with the surrounding area.</p> <p>➔ The potential theme park developer asserted that its proposals should be seen as an important catalyst for regeneration in the area – bringing brownfield land into beneficial use and providing a significant boost to the economy, as well as infrastructure.</p> | <p>space as part of new development, providing a healthy and safe environment for all ages.</p> | <p>improving the Fastrack and bus services.</p> <p>➔ Overcrowding was identified by respondents as the most important issue facing rail services. Support was expressed for a possible Crossrail Extension to Ebbsfleet and the continued safeguarding of this route.</p> |
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4.10 The following sections consider the various ways these themes could be tackled and highlight the Council's current preferred option. Each theme summarises the existing local policy and important national policy that should be closely evaluated when considering the appropriate direction for the Local Plan. For the preferred option, the Local Plan Review document's most pertinent strategic objectives are listed. The pros and cons of the alternative options are identified to allow their evaluation.

4.11 Further details of the preferred approach are set out and broken down in chapter 5 and additional information can be gathered from the [Sustainability Appraisal](#).

Main Plan Options 1: To what extent should brownfield land in the Borough be used for new homes and jobs?

4.1.1 Using previously developed 'brownfield' land is a well-established principle in planning. It offers long-term benefits and is often consistent with sustainable development objectives. It seen as a way to meet regeneration and development needs without building on land used for farming, outdoor recreation or that has remained 'natural'. Brownfield land is usually, but not exclusively, found outside the parts of the Borough designated as Green Belt.

4.1.2 The location of available brownfield land matters. For brownfield land to be sustainable for development, proximity to trains and buses and access to jobs, education, health and day-to-day services are critical factors.

4.1.3 As it is increasingly being reused for new development, previously developed land is not coming forward as quickly in the Borough. This precious resource needs to be used effectively and viably to help meet development needs, meaning residential densities that are below an appropriate level for a particular location must be avoided.

4.1.4 Development pressures on brownfield land need to be managed. If new brownfield land is created through community or industrial premises becoming vacant due to alternative uses generating a higher financial return, the loss of services or businesses can have a negative impact on local people. Planning policy needs to achieve a balance so that a variety of functions are retained within neighbourhoods.

4.1.5 The approach to brownfield land influences major decisions over the level and distribution of new development across the Borough.

National policy to apply:

4.1.6 National policy states there should be a clear strategy for accommodating development needs, making as much use as possible of appropriate brownfield land. Planning policies should promote effective use of land to meet the need for housing and other uses, taking into account:

- the need for different types of housing, local market conditions and viability;
- the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services;
- the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting; and
- the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4.1.7 Where there is an identified need and land is not protected under Local Plan policy, Local planning authorities should be positive in response to proposals for alternative uses on developed land. This is particularly the case for employment and housing developments and for new schools and health facilities.

4.1.8 The government attaches great importance to Green Belt land for its openness and permanence, preventing urban sprawl. The purpose of the Green Belt includes preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, safeguarding the countryside, and assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in fully evidenced and justified exceptional circumstances.

4.1.9 Government policy requires sufficient land to come forward to meet housing need in the local authority area and to significantly boost the supply of homes nationally. The standard 'Local Housing Need' method is the starting point for setting the target rate of new housebuilding for the Local Plan.

4.1.10 The Local Plan should be informed by a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The purpose of the SHLAA is to identify a suitable supply of housing sites. There must be specific deliverable housing sites for the first five years of the Plan, with developable sites or broad locations identified for years 6-10 (or, where possible, up to year 15).

Current local policy to review:

4.1.11 Dartford's existing strategy is based on developing the areas with the greatest regeneration potential. This led to a focus on a series of 'priority areas' across the urban north of the Borough (policy CS1). In addition to these areas, the Core Strategy focused its allocations on two, largely brownfield, strategic sites, which have seen significant progress:

- Policy CS3: Northern Gateway Strategic Site (see also Main Plan Options 2)
- Policy CS5: Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site (see Main Plan Options 4)

4.1.12 In the wider urban priority areas, larger areas of greenfield and brownfield land with redevelopment potential were identified. This included some small to medium sized parcels of land (without the detailed boundaries of an allocation on the Policies Map). Many of the brownfield or quarry sites that were suitable have come forward, with the notable exception of St James Lane Pit, proposed for homes and greenspace under policy CS4.

4.1.13 The Borough's existing policy for unplanned housing sites that come forward (windfall developments for 5 or more homes) expects them to be located on brownfield land (policy DP6). Development on brownfield land within the Green Belt is restricted under policy DP22.

Main Options (1): To what extent should brownfield land in the Borough be used for new homes and jobs?

| A | B | C |
|---|--|--|
| Options: | | |
| <p>1A [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Brownfield land should be used to its greatest extent across both the urban and rural areas of the Borough. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopting a positive approach to unplanned 'windfall' development on brownfield land; • consideration of brownfield sites in the Green Belt; • nearly all homes being on brownfield land; • higher residential densities; • redevelopment of most industrial areas; and more frequent redevelopment of existing houses. This may take the form of demolition for flatted development, or new homes on larger gardens in the rural area. • Probably more development activity than option 1b | <p>1B [THE PREFERRED OPTION] Brownfield land should be used to full extent in locations that are very well served by public transport This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a renewed focus on the development of brownfield sites in the most sustainable locations that have yet to come forward; • an aim of achieving at least 80% of new housing on brownfield land; • selective mixed-use redevelopment of some employment areas that are well served by public transport; and • remaining within current (Core Strategy) development targets | <p>1C [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: The use of brownfield land not a strong priority. Non-Green Belt land (including some greenfield sites) could be encouraged for development. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering urban locations outside, but not in or next to the major centres and railway stations (i.e. away from Ebbsfleet and Dartford town centre); • reconsideration of (not necessarily publicly accessible currently) open urban land: for example at Greenhithe/ Stone; and • an increased proportion of development on greenfield land. • Probably more development activity than option 1b. |
| <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimises the need for the development of greenfield land. • Maximises the scope for regeneration. • Has a Borough-wide scope, depending on where brownfield land is available. • For high-density development in the urban area, it is likely to be consistent with the options supporting public transport e.g. 6A or 6B. | <p>A major advantage of this option is the efficient use brownfield land combined with the location of development in places where people are not heavily dependent on cars.</p> <p>See Chapter 5 Preferred Policies A, B, D and E</p> <p>Accords with the following plan objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>continuing the regeneration of the northern urban area through the re-use of brownfield land to meet future</i> | <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some potential sites are situated near public transport. • Does not rely on Green Belt land. |

| Cons: | <i>housing and employment needs, as well as supporting services</i> | Cons: |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parcels of Green Belt or garden land outside built up areas that are poorly served by facilities and public transport could be brought forward for development Infrastructure for windfall development cannot be planned for, placing a strain on community services. Costs of preparing challenging brownfield sites may result in poor viability, leading, in particular, to a reduction in affordable housing provision. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>providing a clear contrast with the urban area, and the maintenance of the positive character of the Borough's rural villages and countryside, through the protection and enhancement of Green Belt countryside</i> <i>facilitating a range of upgrades to the transport network; and a choice of sustainable travel options, with a convenient and reliable public transport system linking existing and new residential areas to key destinations and facilities in the Borough, together with a cohesive walking and cycling network</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land that is not well served by key facilities and public transport could be brought forward for development. Without town centre scale facilities or major transport hubs with a choice of destinations within walking distance, many journeys are likely to continue to depend on private vehicles. May impact on the delivery of regeneration elsewhere in the urban area, particularly at Dartford Town Centre and Ebbsfleet. Large developments may erode the distinct identities of neighbourhoods in the urban area. |
| Option 1A | Option 1B | Option 1C |

See the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) for further assessment of all options.

Question 2. Which option do you prefer, and why?

Main Plan Options 2: How to ensure Dartford is a thriving town centre?

4.2.1 Dartford is a place with a historic town centre firmly at its heart. In common with other towns across the country, its centre needs to adapt to fundamental changes in the retail sector. Where there is excess retail space, new uses can be introduced and other town centre activities can expand to keep the centre thriving.

4.2.2 In recent years Dartford town centre has generally performed well in attracting visitors and new businesses. It has maintained a mix of services and shops, with vacancy rates decreasing. Two indoor shopping centres host many of the town's national multiple retailers but are poorly configured to meet current demands and recent growth in Dartford. Away from the High Street, but within the town centre boundary, the Prospect Place retail park accommodates retailers such as Asda Living, M&S Simply Food, TK Maxx and Matalan.

4.2.3 Significant work has been carried out to enhance parts of the town centre environment and some of its amenities. Central Park, the Museum, the Library and Fairfield Pool have all been extensively upgraded.

4.2.4 Furthermore, £12million of funding has been secured towards transport and public realm projects. Works have started in Market Street to create a new public space connecting the High Street and the Central Park. The historic Acacia Mansion House is being integrated into the town centre and opened up to wider public use. In addition, the pedestrianised High Street is to be upgraded and improvements are planned for walking and cycling routes into the town centre.

4.2.5 The Council's stage 1 application to the national Future High Streets Fund aims to repurpose retail space and diversify the town centre, and was successful in summer 2019. A final bid is being worked up.

4.2.6 Town centres retain an important role as convenient providers of services and jobs in well-connected locations and as a social hubs. Planning policies, together with wider actions and investment, can encourage this by supporting a flexible mix of active uses, planning for environmental and transport improvements, and protecting heritage assets. Moreover, a strategy to increase the number and variety of people living, working and visiting the town centre provides expenditure and footfall to sustain retail and leisure facilities.

4.2.7 Since the production of the Dartford Core Strategy, there have been big changes in the retail sector. The trend of visiting town centres as a leisure experience, as much as a shopping expedition, has accelerated. Online expenditure has grown and the traditional bricks and mortar High Street presence has receded. Many traditional retailers have collapsed or scaled down due to financial pressures.

4.2.8 A significant factor in Dartford town centre and its current prospects is the increase in the population living in the vicinity. Up to now, residential development has primarily been delivered north of the railway line, in the Northern Gateway (policy CS3) area. The level of priority given to expanding the town centre's residential community and its contribution towards increasing local expenditure to support local shopping and services will be a central consideration in the Local Plan Review.

4.2.9 Major redevelopment is underway at Lowfield Street which will bring new residents and facilities to the southern end of the town centre. The scheme regenerates a large disused site and, in addition to 548 dwellings, it provides retail units, office space and a café/micro-brewery.

4.2.10 There is another major town centre scheme proposed at the Former Co-Op and Westgate Car Park (Hythe St/ Kent Rd) site. Proposals include a hotel, health hub, multi-screen cinema, and bar/restaurants, as well as the creation of a public square.

4.2.11 Decisions need to be taken regarding how to continue to support existing shops and attract new services and facilities. Redevelopment would significantly transform sites that may be under-used or run-down and options exist as to how far new development should be used to further regenerate the town centre. Consideration is needed as to whether new facilities, homes and jobs within walking distance of the centre should be positively encouraged.

National policy to apply:

4.2.13 National planning policy states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Some of the things this entails are:

- defining a network and hierarchy of town centres and promoting their long-term vitality and viability, allowing them to diversify and a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflecting their distinctive characters;
- defining the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, as part of a positive strategy for the future;
- retaining and enhancing existing and creating new street markets; and
- allocating a range of suitable sites for town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead.

Current local policy to review:

4.2.14 Dartford Town Centre was identified as a priority area for regeneration in the Core Strategy. The aim was to strengthen and consolidate its role as a shopping and service centre and to broaden its appeal, particularly in terms of leisure, culture and recreation. An increase in jobs and homes was supported in order to increase its vibrancy (policy CS2) and a policy of capitalising on its cultural assets was promoted. The consolidation of town centres uses on and adjacent to the High street was sought, together with the better integration of the uses within distinct areas of the centre.

4.2.15 Current policy DP15 reiterates encouragement for transformational town centre redevelopment to provide additional attractions and improve the public realm.

4.2.16 The Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD was adopted in July 2018. This elaborates the vision and strategy for the regeneration of the centre. It provides a more detailed basis on which to realise the potential of the town centre.

Main Options (2): How to ensure Dartford is a thriving town centre?

| A | B | C |
|--|---|--|
| Options: | | |
| <p><u>2A [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]</u> Support extensive radical change through promoting residential redevelopment in and around the town centre (including at high densities), achieving a rapid expansion of residents in the town centre and new premises for businesses and shops. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a significant increase in development; • the identification of additional sites for major redevelopment, potentially turning parts of the existing town centre into residential communities • identifying scope for tall buildings and new public spaces; and • a significant increase in local consumers and commercial and leisure activity. | <p><u>2B [THE PREFERRED OPTION]:</u> Encourage redevelopment of selected areas in and around the town centre where this will achieve significant diversification of activities over time, a substantial new residential community, and the transformation of the attractiveness of Dartford town centre through creating new places and spaces. This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updating the current approach which has the town centre as a location for strategic regeneration in the Borough and taking forward actions to achieve the high quality town centre environment outlined in the Framework SPD; • expecting new development to include a mix of residential accommodation (including for older people), community facilities to serve the new population, and units which will appeal to operators of successful commercial leisure provision (for example food and drink premises) and future retail anchors. • using new developments to bring back traditional-style open streets for pedestrians, with an attractive network of routes linking new public spaces and squares; • targeting areas that no longer contribute positively to the town centre or environments with a transformative potential (e.g. the riverside); • creating a high quality environment to live, work and relax in (especially at prominent gateway locations on the edge of the town or by upgrading unappealing buildings or places); | <p><u>2C [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]</u> The consideration of new development proposals on a case-by-case basis, based on a looser vision which aims for gradual regeneration with limited direction on where and how redevelopment should occur. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modest scale change in the town centre; • piecemeal development, with new uses mostly only being delivered where they can be accommodated within existing premises (through a change of use); and • new residential accommodation through the change of use of buildings (e.g. upper storey conversions). |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development would also occur through changes of use to repurpose existing premises and find an enduring mix of uses for historic and other buildings. | |
| Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully capitalises on the centre's access to facilities and public transport, thereby reducing reliance on the private car. Potential to support the town centre economy by increasing expenditure and encouraging new retail/leisure operators. Facilitates a choice of new premises, appealing to businesses and providing employment opportunities. | <p>A major advantage of this option is promoting new development to improve the town's facilities and environment, whilst coordinating regeneration that secures: the mix of uses the centre needs, new residents, and maintaining Dartford's heritage.</p> <p>See Chapter 5 Preferred Policies A, D and E</p> <p>Accords with the following plan objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>achieving an attractive and vibrant Dartford Town Centre with a mixed and diverse offer including a strong retail core, new homes, community facilities, a flourishing day and evening economy and an enticing cultural and leisure offer, within an elegant and engaging public realm</i> | Pros: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the existing character of Dartford town centre (though this could decline over time if there is a lack of investment). |
| Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive development could impact on the historic environment and character of Dartford town centre Potential to overload the capacity of services, particularly in the short term (e.g. rail services). Little land to provide some necessary community facilities (e.g. schools). | | Cons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer opportunities to improve the performance and environment of the town centre (e.g. no new public spaces) with the overall risk of decline. An inability to target development to the most appropriate areas and take advantage of opportunities for coordinating redevelopment, potentially |

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|---|
| | | <p>leading to new buildings, streets and uses that fit less well with needs of the town centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to capitalise on the centre's access to facilities and public transport. • Strategy would not attract inward investment. |
| Option 2A | Option 2B | Option 2C |

See the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) for further assessment of all options.

Question 3. Which option do you prefer, and why?

Main Plan Options 3: What strategy is most likely to retain and deliver improvements to green spaces?

4.3.1 Most of land in the Borough is green i.e. farmland, green urban spaces or predominantly natural in character. Green spaces come in many forms such as form of sports pitches, parks, and recreation grounds, informal open space and woodland. As well as providing recreational facilities, green spaces can help to address climate change, provide nature habitats and areas for flood alleviation, and contribute to the setting of historic places and buildings. Trees and woods can provide a cooling effect, reduce the risk of flooding, and function as an excellent store of carbon.

4.3.2 Some green spaces fulfil a variety of valued functions simultaneously. Furthermore, the value of existing open spaces can be enhanced through linking individual green areas and incorporating green elements in new development in a wider green network.

4.3.3 The Metropolitan Green Belt is a defining element of the Borough and will be retained in the Local Plan. However it is not a primary purpose to improve the quality of green areas. Other tools are required in the Local Plan to achieve this. In Dartford, there are 27 Local Green Spaces, mostly in the urban area, which benefit from the highest level of policy protection. There are also designated Borough Open Spaces which cover a fifth of land in the Borough. These protect green spaces in recreation use or those of potential nature conservation value which are not already protected though designations such as SSSIs and Ancient Woodland.

4.3.4 The green space strategy and policy framework needs to be determined. Thought needs to be given as to how to encourage appropriate collective management of land and how to maximise its contribution to people's quality of life and the environment. Real alternatives exist as to how to maintain and deliver improvements to the Borough's green spaces.

National policy to apply:

4.3.5 Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless certain conditions are met.

4.3.6 Plans should take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure.

4.3.7 Green infrastructure is defined as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Current local policy to review:

4.3.8 Existing policy CS24 recognises the importance of identifying and implementing green infrastructure to manage and mitigate flood risk. Policy CS14 aims to put in place a Green Grid and sets out minimum requirements for the percentage of green space provided in new developments. It also seeks to protect biodiversity and makes reference to important sites, habitats and species. There are also current policies on the protection of local green spaces (DP23), maintaining other open spaces (DP24) and a more detailed policy on nature conservation and enhancement (DP25).

4.3.9 As well as the formulation of new policy, part of the preferred approach is the retention of selected existing policies (with some essential updating). For further details on these see chapter 6.

Main Options (3): What strategy is most likely to retain and deliver improvements to green spaces?

| A | B | C |
|--|---|--|
| Options: | | |
| <p>3A [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Alter the network of green spaces in local planning policy to indicate priority and non-priority areas for securing greenspace and possible improvements. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a streamlined sites approach, after assessment of their multifunctional benefits, usability or potential for improvements; and a reduced emphasis on the geographic network and the amount of land protected, with some land potentially repurposed. | <p>3B [THE PREFERRED OPTION]: Maintain the existing strategy for a green Borough through requiring new development to provide sufficient new open space and retaining the existing green space designations, but consolidating how policies are presented.</p> <p>The aim, where possible, would be to renew and simplify the framework and priorities for improvements.</p> <p>Alongside current provisions, there would be a refined integrated policy for new green space, tree provision and improvements, retaining the current requirement for the proportion of new greenspace to be higher on larger development sites.</p> <p>Policy on green spaces and trees could include a reference to the role that they play in mitigating the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>The approach to protecting residential gardens from development would continue.</p> | <p>3C [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Increasing the amount and extent of Borough Open Space to provide greater policy protection and to green Dartford further.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying additional land for open space protection; and applying criteria to restrict the development of this land. |
| <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusses provision on the areas most in need. Prioritises resources on opportunities for multifunctional benefits. | <p>A major advantage of this option is the combination of the continued protection given to open spaces and the environment with an updated the policy framework for the Borough's green spaces.</p> <p>See: Chapter 5 Preferred Policies F and G</p> | <p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential improvements to public amenity and biodiversity resources. Increasing the amount of green space and enhancing the protection for land which has a role in mitigating the impacts of climate change. |
| <p>Cons:</p> | | <p>Cons:</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of locations with improved greenspace provision would not be felt equally across the Borough. • The focus for what constitutes an improvement could be contentious in some locations. For example, conflicts could potentially arise between recreational and greater public access benefits, versus ecological gains. • The hierarchy may not provide clear direction as to the level of protection spaces further down the scale benefit from. | <p>Accords with the following plan objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>giving the people of the Borough the opportunity for active and healthy living with an enhanced network of landscaped paths, cycle routes, countryside links, open spaces and natural environments</i> • <i>ensuring the Borough is resilient and able to adapt to the effects of climate change, through an increase in the proportion of water efficient buildings, the uptake of domestic and small-scale renewable energy, and promoting biodiversity and flood resilience</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced two years ago, with no overall apparent change in circumstances apparent across the Borough since, widening this designation may mean further broadening of criteria; possibly watering down the quality of land covered. • May restrict some forms of improvements, particularly new/improved facilities on sports pitches and parks. • Does not tackle real factors, which largely fall outside the scope of planning, that make a difference in achieving 'on the ground' environmental improvements. For example management, particularly if the space is in private ownership. • Restricts the land available for redevelopment, potentially affecting the continued regeneration of the Borough. |
| Option 3A | Option 3B | Option 3C |

See the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) for further assessment of all options.

Question 4. Which option do you prefer, and why?

Main Plan Options 4: What is the best future for the Ebbsfleet Central area?

4.4.1 The importance of this area, known as Ebbsfleet Central, for redevelopment was recognised in 2011 through a strategic allocation in the Dartford Core Strategy. This emerging Local Plan will cover land across Ebbsfleet that is within Dartford Borough, although the Council does not have responsibility for deciding planning applications in this area.

4.4.2 Although outline planning permission for major redevelopment was granted in 2002 and despite the fact it is ten years since domestic High Speed One rail services to London St Pancras International opened, apart from railway related uses such as car parking, the area around Ebbsfleet International Station is largely undeveloped. The current situation contrasts with the progress in bringing forward homes and new uses at the nearby Ebbsfleet Green and Eastern Quarry parts of the overall Ebbsfleet area in Dartford.

National policy to apply:

4.4.3 The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) was formed by government in 2015 to take lead responsibility for development in the northeast of the Borough (and part of Gravesham Borough). The Ebbsfleet area is sponsored by Government to become a Garden City to add ambition, quality and pace to planned development between Dartford and Gravesend. The EDC will decide any planning application submitted for Ebbsfleet Central in line with the Local Plan Review and applicable material considerations.

4.4.4 National planning policy supports planning for larger scale development, and recommends clear expectations are set and maintained for the quality of development 'such as by following Garden City principles'.

Current local policy to review:

4.4.5 The strategy outlined in the Dartford Core Strategy is for the creation of a high density business district adjacent to Ebbsfleet Station. This would involve a mix of uses, including residential, generating activity in the daytime, evenings and weekends and ensuring a lively area. Around the station the vision is for a high quality public realm with landmark buildings.

4.4.6 In 2017 the EDC produced the non-statutory Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework to shape its work and support delivery. Across the area it covers in Dartford and Gravesham, the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework has a vision for:

- a 'healthy new town';
- a new commercial centre;
- a garden grid of parks;
- a regional transport hub, incorporating Fastrack as a world class rapid transit system for north Kent; and
- up to 15,000 new homes.

4.4.7 Ebbsfleet Central is the centrepiece of regeneration within Ebbsfleet Garden City and is planned through the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework to become a dynamic new heart for Ebbsfleet, a major commercial hub and a centre of excellence for medical education and learning.

Main options (4): What is the best future for the Ebbsfleet Central area?

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| Options: | | |
| <p>4A [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Provide a high-density business district adjacent to Ebbsfleet International Station alongside a mix of uses, including residential, to generate a lively daytime activity. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing the current policy approach of focussing on the provision of: • high quality, highly accessible jobs, and • supporting uses. | <p>4B [THE PREFERRED OPTION]: Create a distinctive mixed and lively urban heart for Ebbsfleet Garden City and the wider area. The provision of a range of uses in higher intensity Garden City form, provided through the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, including substantial city centre level commercial space, community uses, open space, and residential accommodation. It is expected to feature a key health/education and/or leisure/culture facility. This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a new strategic allocation as a major mixed-use city-centre style site with a range of employment, community and residential uses; • creating a major transport hub around the international station; • ensuring that a variety of prominent open spaces and public facilities are provided to support the city-centre style development. | <p>4C [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Support a residential-led development. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainly residential development alongside supporting facilities to serve the local community; • development in excess of current housing targets. |
| Pros: | A major advantage of this option is that it is an achievable means of bringing forward many types of new jobs and services not already present in the Borough | Pros: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly improves the amount and quality of jobs available in the Borough. • Fully capitalises on the international and local public transport links. • Acts as a driver for the regional economy. | <p>Accords with the following plan objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>delivering a choice of modern business premises, high quality jobs and a variety of high quality homes at Ebbsfleet and other well connected locations in Dartford, including suitable premises for local businesses</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very significant increases in the homes available in a highly accessible location. • Alleviates potential future pressure to develop in less sustainable locations, including greenfield sites. • May be highly economically viable, maximising affordable housing contributions. |

| Cons: | | Cons: |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence that this approach is achievable and deliverable as the market for office space has changed since the Core Strategy was published. Loss of a significant opportunity, if no development occurs by the international railway station, creating continued uncertainty on the future role of the area. Continuation of the current 'parkway' transport role of the station and surrounding area does to improve sustainable transport. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>continuing the regeneration of the northern urban area through the re-use of brownfield land to meet future housing and employment needs, as well as supporting services</i> <p>See Chapter 5 Preferred Policies A, B and E</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to capitalise on the presence of the international station as a hub for high quality transport and jobs. May result in Dartford no longer being self-sufficient in employment terms, resulting in further commuting out of the Borough. Likely to create a 'dormitory town' and does not help to achieve a Garden City. |
| Option 4A | Option 4B | Option 4C |

See the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) for further assessment of all options.

Question 5. Which option do you prefer, and why?

Main Plan Options 5: What is the best future for the Swanscombe Peninsula area?

4.5.1 Swanscombe Peninsula is within the EDC area in the north eastern corner of the Borough. Bordered to the east by Gravesham Borough and to the west by new development at Greenhithe, the Peninsula extends south down to Swanscombe Town and the Ebbsfleet Central area. It is a large riverside area, with singular environmental characteristics, marked by a complex mix of past and present land uses.

4.5.2 Much of the land has been subject to an emerging proposal for the major London Resort theme park development. The scheme promoters have stated:

When complete, it will be three times larger than any other park in the UK. Two theme parks and a resort water park will be set over 535 acres, the equivalent of 136 Wembley Stadiums.

National policy to apply:

4.5.3 The government has given the London Resort developers the opportunity to apply for planning permission under a special national development consent process for National Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Under legislation for this process, statutory consultation is required, and significant documentation prior to that.

4.5.4 A note from the Planning Inspectorate (March 2018) indicated the proposals were for a stand-alone theme park comprising around two-thirds of the whole proposal, with subsequent phases providing additional hotels and other development. A total of 3550 hotel rooms were proposed. Development constraints include contaminated land, ecological mitigation, and transport, particularly access to the strategic highway network.

Current local policy to review:

4.5.5 The Core Strategy (policy CS6) outlines a range of development opportunities that may be appropriate within the Swanscombe Peninsula, subject to safeguarding the ecologically important Black Duck Marsh from development and the realisation of extensive investigations. These include:

- potential for residential development as part of mixed-use schemes;
- the provision of community and facilities and local shops, integrating it with the neighbouring Ingress Park development in Greenhithe;
- employment uses;
- and the use of the wharves and jetties for goods and passenger transport.

It also supports outdoor leisure provision, subject to compatibility with adjoining uses and the impact on town centres.

4.5.6 The Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework (EIF) is a non-statutory guidance document by the EDC. It does not replace adopted local policy. It envisages "a landmark green space for Ebbsfleet, pioneering the sensitive integration of development on the peninsula within an open estuarine ecological park". The EIF stipulates that, in responding to development proposals for Swanscombe Peninsula and any future entertainment resort, the EDC will seek to ensure (amongst other things):

- existing ecological assets are retained where possible and adequate ecological mitigation is provided either within the peninsula or off site;
- flood risk is fully taken into account and the risk of flood in other locations is not exacerbated by proposals;
- the capacity and resilience of transport networks including roads is evaluated;

- existing employment is retained, if appropriate, or relocated;
- full public access to the Thames Waterfront is retained, served by enhanced recreational walking and cycling facilities; and
- noise, air quality and other impacts on surrounding residential areas are minimised.

Main options (5): What is the best future for the Swanscombe Peninsula area?

| A | B | C |
|--|---|---|
| Options: | | |
| <p>5A [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Support the development of an internationally important entertainment resort. This would comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major theme parks; • hotels; and • supporting uses such as restaurants. | <p>5B [THE PREFERRED OPTION]: A strategy to encourage both sensitively integrated, lower density mixed uses and ecological improvements. This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring any development sites are only located on brownfield land or, if necessary, on the least sensitive locations; • retaining jobs locally; • delivering improved transport/high quality linkages with Swanscombe town and its station; • directing development away from and helping facilitate a proposed estuarine ecological park as part of the Garden City and the wider green network of the Borough. | <p>5C [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Refrain from proposing acceptable potential uses but formulate policy criteria to provide a basis for dealing with proposals that may be put forward. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not planning for any significant change in activity on the Peninsula within the plan period; and • tests would include river navigation, flood risk, hydrology, traffic, parking, ecological, retention of existing businesses, and other potential impacts. |
| Pros: | A major advantage of this option is the protection of key environments and the overall character of the Peninsula, alongside complementary development to contribute to a Garden City for the area and the regeneration of the Thames Riverside. | Pros: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant direct and indirect economic benefits. • Could provide a major focus for investment and regeneration in the wider area. • Potential for investment in greenspace or enhanced access to peninsula/ riverside. • Potential to reuse or transform relatively | <p>See Chapter 5 Preferred Policies A and E</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of existing local businesses. • Limited ecological or infrastructure impacts. |

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| rapidly sites in and around Swanscombe that have stood disused or underused for many years. | Accords with the following plan objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>continuing the regeneration of the northern urban area through the re-use of brownfield land to meet future housing and employment needs, as well as supporting services</i> | |
| Cons: | | Cons: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty on when and whether the development will come forward or be completed. This inhibits the ability to plan for the future of the area. Potential for significant transport impacts on the local highways network. To be consistent with preferred option 6B on public transport, there would be a need for major upgrades to Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe railway stations. A new dedicated access route to the A2 could jeopardise the future role of Ebbsfleet Central, contrary to preferred option 4B. Potential for adverse environmental, social and infrastructure impacts as a result of the introduction of large numbers of visitors and employees into the area. Loss of existing businesses which may not be replaced. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunity to implement measures to positively manage the ecological and recreational resource. Lost opportunity to remediate degraded and contaminated land, rehabilitate the area, and realise its economic and community potential. Does not contribute to the creation of Ebbsfleet Garden City. Fails to support the regeneration of Swanscombe or deliver public transport enhancements. Inconsistent with preferred option 1B on brownfield land. |
| Option 5A | Option 5B | Option 5C |

See the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) for further assessment of all options.

Question 6. Which option do you prefer, and why?

Main Plan Options 6: How can Dartford plan for a better transport network?

4.6.1 Traffic congestion and poor air quality are significant problems in the Borough. Currently car dependency is driven by public transport deficiencies and many local journeys rely on the strategic road network, notably the A2 and M25.

4.6.2 Highways projects aim to address these issues. Currently local scale schemes are complemented by major highway projects such as the advanced proposals for upgrades to the Bean and Ebbsfleet A2 junctions and, outside the Borough, the Lower Thames Crossing which aims to ameliorate conditions at the Dartford Crossing. However, despite the future benefits of these measures, responding to the demand from private vehicles for extra capacity is unlikely to be enough.

4.6.3 The Fastrack bus system has seen passenger numbers rise but needs to grow further to enable continued development. Public sector-led plans to connect Bluewater directly with Ebbsfleet Garden City through a tunnel link served by the Fastrack service are moving ahead and it is expected to open in 2021.

4.6.4 The appeal of rail travel is reduced by issues around facilities at some of the Borough's stations and line capacity. The network capacity at key rail junctions into London has already been exceeded, resulting in slow running trains and poor reliability. With the roll-out of 12-car trains we will have reached the physical limit of what can be achieved with the existing rail infrastructure. Beyond improving current rolling stock and signal upgrades, meeting demand will require wholesale upgrades to infrastructure and networks

4.6.5 Over the last few years new cycle route provision has been secured within new developments and across the Borough with idea of linking new residential areas with local destinations. Dartford is aiming for comprehensive cycle route network to provide a genuinely viable alternative for shorter distance journeys.

4.6.6 Aside from the Lower Thames Crossing route, which is at an advanced project planning stage, the other major identified transport initiative which would benefit the Borough is the potential Crossrail extension. This project looks at extending Crossrail from its current terminus, under construction at Abbey Wood, through the London Borough of Bexley to Dartford (and Ebbsfleet). The rail upgrade would be of a sufficient scale to substantially increase the capacity of the network, with high frequency services integrated into the London transport system and would significantly improve access to central London and Heathrow. It would also involve the comprehensive redevelopment of a number of railway stations. The local partnership of authorities has recently been awarded resources by central government to investigate the potential of the scheme further. The delivery and timing of the scheme depends on significant additional work and securing government support.

4.6.7 A clear Local Plan strategy has an important role to play. Uses that generate significant movements of people, such as schools, healthcare and large shopping or employment areas, need to be well located with a realistic choice of travel modes. This means good walking and cycling links and access to public transport.

4.6.8 There are also options around the prioritisation of infrastructure projects for instance, the appropriate emphasis to put on different modes of travel and the need to ensure a 'package' of large long-term new schemes are delivered alongside a number of small schemes. Furthermore, the Local Plan Review looks to 2036 and therefore needs to consider changes in the need to travel significant distances, consumer demand and preferences, service provision, technology and health impacts associated with distinct transport modes. Finally, the achievement of a successful, sustainable

transport planning strategy involves working with the EDC, the County Council as local highway authority, the national Highways England, bus companies, train operating companies, Network Rail and others to deliver it.

National policy to apply:

4.6.9 National planning policy advises that transport should be considered from the outset of development proposals and Local Plans.

Local policy to review:

4.6.10 The strategy of minimising the need to travel also recognises the importance of the location of the bulk of development close to good public transport. The focussing of higher density development at sites that are conveniently located for rail stations and high frequency bus services is also consistent with the efficient use of land.

4.6.11 Alongside forming new policy, retaining selected existing policies (with some essential updating) is part of the preferred approach. For further details on these see chapter 6.

Main Option (6): How can Dartford plan ahead for a better transport network?

| A | B | C |
|---|---|--|
| Options: | | |
| <p>6A [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Require the Local Plan's transport and planning strategy to be centred on major new rail provision.</p> <p>Provision is unconfirmed but it is expected to result from work exploring how to deliver extra capacity and new stations and, hopefully, how to address journey times. It would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prioritise this workstream now in order to formulate proposals as quickly as possible; and then put together a new long-term strategy consistent with the rail proposals that emerge. <p>It is not expected this would be feasible outside the Borough's existing urban area.</p> | <p>6B [THE PREFERRED OPTION]: Continue a strategy focussed on where development is located and taking forward beneficial transport schemes (e.g. Fastrack/buses, key road junctions). Continue in parallel to explore the best ways to secure a major modal shift in transport choice over time. Policies would minimise the need to travel through planning for development that has easy walking or cycling access to schools, healthcare, shops and jobs. This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to ensure that development is located in areas that are well served by public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure. Residential proposals and, in particular, employment growth would be strongly directed towards locations | <p>6C [ALTERNATIVE OPTION]: Focus Local Plan strategy heavily on securing new development that will help fund new highways schemes.</p> <p>There is not currently a high level of certainty on the funding of further improvements. However, the aspiration would be for development to unlock resources and support an extra tranche of new road infrastructure projects in the Borough. This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> further new junctions delivered in connection with additional development. |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Development options in this area would be explored further based on a shift in approach and behaviour from the provision of significant new rail infrastructure. This is most likely to take the form of a Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension scale level of improvement or an intervention of comparable magnitude.</p> <p>This could involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awaiting further elaboration of the new transport project before the plan could move forward; • joint strategic planning, for instance, in the form of a plan worked up in parallel with Bexley Borough; and • increased levels of development and residential density (in excess of current housing targets) to help fund the scheme. | <p>with good public transport and normally avoided elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing to support highway improvements on major roads, e.g. A2 junctions at Bean and Ebbsfleet, and the local highway network where these would tackle congestion and improve quality of life — strongly advocating the delivery of the Lower Thames Crossing (east of the Borough). • securing improvements to Fastrack/bus routes (including linking Ebbsfleet to Bluewater) and the walking and cycling network. • considering the environmental, economic and social advantages and disadvantages (such as air quality impacts) that new infrastructure schemes — particularly the Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension — would bring to the Borough's residents, businesses and towns. • also exploring complementary solutions through other additional strategic schemes such as Junction 1a at the Dartford Crossing (and potentially other M25 junctions). | |
| <p>Pros:</p> | <p>A major advantage of this option is the reduction of growth of demand on transport networks (in particular roads) whilst also updating transport infrastructure in both the shorter and long term.</p> | <p>Pros:</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses new development in areas served by improved rail services leading to transformative change in terms of the type and amount of development and to people switching away from private vehicles. | <p>See Chapter 5 Preferred Policies A, C, D & F.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps to overcome uncertainties in the funding of additional highways infrastructure, • It could attract businesses to Borough which prefer to locate near major highways, bringing more jobs. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is in line with options e.g. for town centre revitalisation, including preferred options such as 4B Ebbsfleet. Effective infrastructure planning and forward planning of development, generating land values that can be captured for public benefits. | <p>Accords with the following plan objectives:</p> <p><i>facilitating a range of upgrades to the transport network; and a choice of sustainable travel options, with a convenient and reliable public transport system linking existing and new residential areas to key destinations and facilities in the Borough, together with a cohesive walking and cycling network</i></p> | |
| Cons: | | Cons: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A scheme that delivers the investment for a transformation in rail provision that would significantly change travel behaviour has yet to be confirmed. Local Plan delay and uncertainty in the interim. It limits options for the future of the Borough at an early stage. Potential adverse impact on local townscape character and amenity, subject to design of the transport scheme and mitigation measures. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is contrary to national policy which seeks to reduce car use and encourage the use of alternative forms of transport. Adverse impacts on congestion and air quality. Impacts on the regeneration of brownfield sites. Growing uncertainty over the future need for and use of private cars. Car ownership may be less attractive to future generations of drivers by the 2030s. |
| Option 6A | Option 6B | Option 6C |

See the [Sustainability Appraisal](#) for further assessment of all options.

Question 7. Which option do you prefer, and why?

5. Preferred Policies Approach

5.1 This chapter puts forward Preferred principles to guide policies for the Local Plan Review. It details how each of the preferred options set out in the previous chapter (main plan options themes 1-6) will be delivered.

5.2 For each topic area there are consultation questions where your views would be valued. Some of these include an indication of alternative approaches that could be taken in order to deliver plan objectives; or you can respond identifying and justifying other reasonable options.

5.3 Each topic in the sub-headings below do not necessarily represent a single proposed policy for the Plan. Matters have been grouped by topic and it is likely that at the point when policy wording is drafted in full, individual policies will be separated out from the principles outlined.

5.4 At present, the overall approach to the amount and location of development in the Borough is set out in the Core Strategy from 2011. It has fulfilled its fundamental aims well in many respects, but requires general updating as set out below. The recent (2017) Development Policies Plan has more detailed policies to help guide decisions on planning applications. Refinements to some of its 'DP' policies are proposed here (although Chapter 6 sets out approximately half of its policies are considered generally up to date and expected to be replicated in the Local Plan Review – for example policies DP12 and DP13 on heritage and conservation).

Local Consultation So Far

5.5 As noted early in the previous chapter, a variety of responses were received from the first 'Strategic Issues' Local Plan review consultation in 2018. These have helped formulate the approaches in this chapter. As shown below, views span aspects (environment, economic, and social/community) of sustainable development:

Environment

- *It was noted there is a need to take account of measures in the Environment Agency's TE2100 Plan and make sure existing drainage infrastructure and flood defences are more resilient, including through setting development back from them.*
- *Statutory bodies recognised that that flood risk can be reduced by through green infrastructure (including trees) and Sustainable drainage systems (SDS).*
- *Some respondents noted that air pollution is a significant issue in the Borough and that this should be considered when planning for future development.*

Economy

- *The plan should reflect changes in retail habits such as online shopping.*
- *Views were expressed that the Council should consider land for industry and logistics and the quality commercial space.*
- *There was support for new economic growth focused on locations that are well served by public transport, walking and cycling connections.*
- *Some respondents considered that new economic growth should reflect the local skills and experience of the resident or future workforce.*

Social/ community

- *Infrastructure providers and statutory and local bodies considered the Local Plan should plan for education provision and health facilities through safeguarding or identifying sites.*
- *Some respondents considered that information on required the size, type and tenure of housing may need updating, particularly affordable housing.*
- *The importance of specialist housing to support specific needs for older and disabled people and to assist in downsizing was noted. Kent County Council referred to the need for extra care housing and residential care homes.*

A. Pattern of development and Green Belt in the Borough

A0 This section outlines the preferred approach to the overall location of development within the Borough, the Green Belt, and specific priority centres for redevelopment. It takes forward main plan option 1B on brownfield land, and other preferred options.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Strategic Objectives | SO1-SO3, SO5 |
| Top national policy references | NPPE paragraphs: 8, 72, 103, 133-134 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Appraisal (LUC, 2019) • Draft SHLAA Report and Compendium (DBC, 2019) • Strategic Issues Consultation Document (DBC, 2018) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant |

Local Strategy and Aims (A):

A1 The Local Plan Review will seek a pattern of development that clearly maintains the openness of the Green Belt and is positive to brownfield land reuse at the most sustainable locations. Infrastructure provision will be planned alongside new development, with the need to travel minimised and public transport improvements supported, the vibrancy of towns and local facilities enhanced; and with neighbourhoods resilient and adaptive to climate change.

A2 New services, jobs and homes are planned to be delivered together through mixed use development (coordinated with services and infrastructure on-site or nearby). This requires resisting poorly located or unnecessary and unforeseen proposals that lack the range of facilities, infrastructure or quality to achieve urban regeneration where required.

A3 The focus will be on brownfield land at areas with most sustainable regeneration potential in the northern urban area. Priority is given where in close proximity to public transport and key community services. Development will be strongly resisted at the Metropolitan Green Belt (south of/ near to the A2 and at Dartford Marshes), and directed away from ecologically sensitive sites, to protect the environment and character, and to complement targeted regeneration in the north of the Borough.

A4 The Local Plan Review will set out that the main opportunities for development are centred on two 'Priority Regeneration Centres' within the north of the Borough at:

- Dartford Town Centre
- and Ebbsfleet Garden City.

A5 These two areas provide the best opportunity for renewal of existing land and buildings, delivering major sustainable development for the Borough as a whole, with higher order facilities of good public transport, employment, public services and shopping/ cultural services.

A6 With the Borough's Priority Centres for Regeneration, employment generation, essential services (for instance health hubs and secondary schools), retail/leisure and cultural attractions of large numbers of people, will be concentrated at the locations well served by trains and high frequency buses; and other development should occur in close proximity. New proposals in locations where current transport facilities are relatively limited and do not offer an attractive choice of travel modes

between private vehicles and walking/cycling or public transport services will not be preferred over available alternatives.

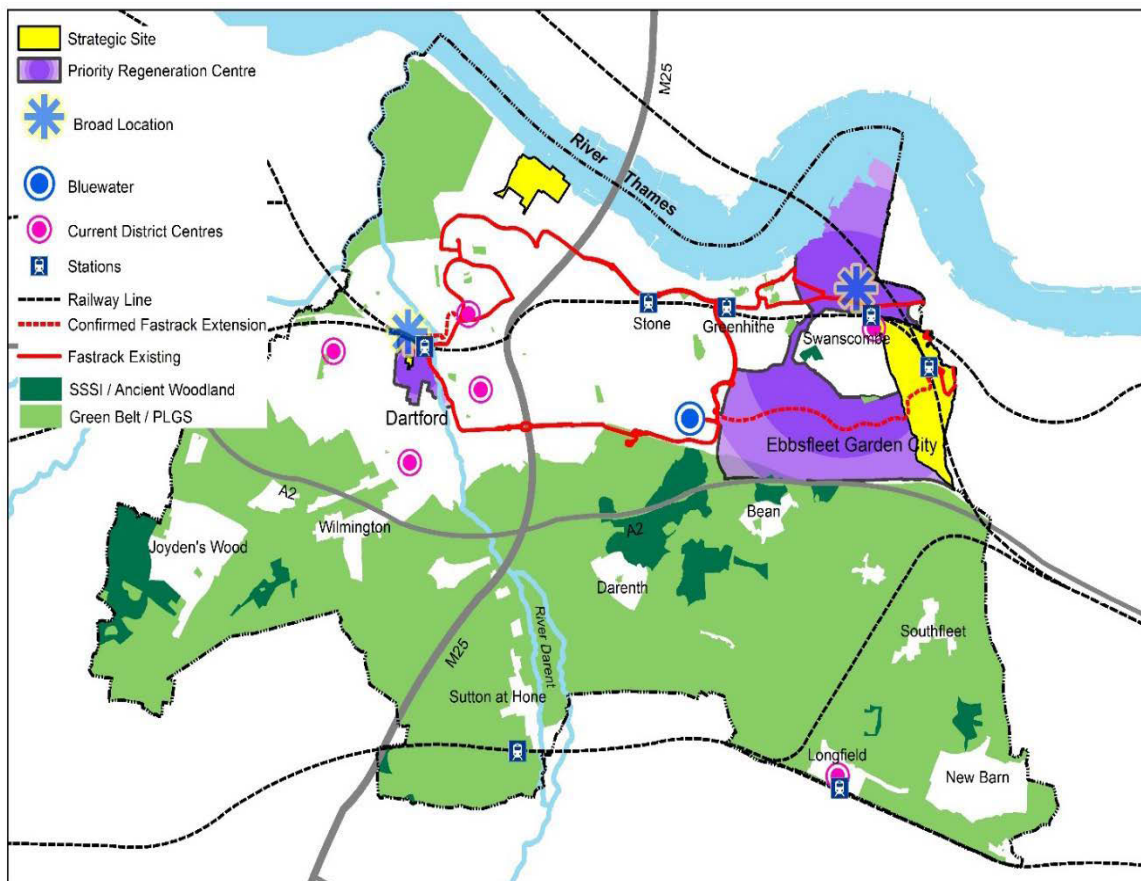
A7 Economic development will be led by existing identified employments locations, and specific planned areas of commercial growth, well located to the labour force and new housing. An improved transport network should be available for major job growth proposals.

A8 Through a clear pattern of development and policies in the Local Plan Review, designated and non-designated heritage and natural assets will be appropriately conserved for the future. Development will be distributed to maintain and be served by a network of open spaces (including Protected Local Greenspaces with strict requirements akin to rural Green Belt) and proposals should also feature design to deliver new tree planting, biodiversity, recreational and other upgrades.

Locations/ Delivery Methods (A):

A9 The Priority Regeneration Centres will lead a renewed focus on regeneration in the most sustainable locations that have not fully come forward. The Local Plan Review will update and push forward plans to deliver infrastructure, environmental improvements and beneficial growth in Dartford Town Centre and in the Ebbsfleet Garden City. New homes in these locations will bring increased vitality and local expenditure helping to support investment in new facilities, jobs, getting around, and open spaces. Appropriate and necessary smaller-scale current brownfield locations for mixed use development, outside the Borough's Green Belt, may be brought forward in a planned way over time subject to infrastructure and environmental impact (for example, suitable land within Swanscombe Peninsula).

A10 A Key Diagram to illustrate this long term sustainable development pattern for Dartford has been prepared in draft for the Local Plan Review:



URBAN AREA OUTSIDE THE PRIORITY REGENERATION CENTRES:

A11 In other parts of the urban area, the focus in this Local Plan Review is expected to be on consolidating improvements to social infrastructure, the riverside and local environment and other strategic upgrades to maintain quality of life. Employment locations will be maintained - and in some instances - will accommodate new businesses, including through a strategic allocation under consideration at Littlebrook (see Part F). A strategy of guiding development (unless exceptional reasons exist e.g. to facilitate delivery of essential new infrastructure) to those areas where development can bring positive sustainability and regeneration benefits will see limited major sites activity in this part of the urban area. Stone and Greenhithe, for instance, have accommodated new development and growth on brownfield land and have existing planning permissions which are still to come forward.

A12 This applies to neighbourhoods in the urban area away from the Priority Regeneration Centres, identified employment areas and Bluewater. Including outer parts and established residential communities at Dartford town, along the Borough's central section of Thames Riverside and much of Stone and Greenhithe, future development should meet local priorities for:

- Urgent new accommodation needs for replacement GP and healthcare premises, and potential critical future school requirements.
- Better bus provision, expansion of Fastrack, improved cycle and walking routes, and upgrade of rail services, including the stations at Stone and Swanscombe.
- Taking an approach that puts residential safety and amenity first, for instance when considering contamination and protection of groundwater and the environment, subject to sufficient housing provision in the Borough as a whole.
- Enhancing the appeal and functionality of land along the Rivers Thames and Darent to improve walking, cycling, flood resilience and biodiversity, as well as providing links between the river and residential communities. New development will be expected to explore the potential for an enhanced landscape and experience for pedestrians, and whether the outdoor recreation enhancements or small scale river-focussed leisure services can be accommodated. Any proposal must safeguard land facilities as required for future flood infrastructure and possible increased use of the River for sustainable transportation of passengers, cargo etc.
- Enhancements to small shops and facilities at District/ Neighbourhood centres.
- New open space provided alongside all other uses proposed, so that development of the area is matched with access to a green and open environment for residents and works. Deliver open space upgrades or environmental benefits such as significant tree planting; and retaining residential gardens, and seeking a real range of garden sizes and new provision in any residential development.
- Development should be proportionate to public transport/ accessibility, on brownfield land, and demonstrate all new residential accommodation proposed is designed to meet local housing needs.

A13 These requirements are also applicable to Swanscombe Town. Swanscombe can benefit from better transport and walking/cycling links and integration with its surroundings. Retaining its positive characteristics (including a clear existing residential core, generous greenspace provision and an active local high street) opportunities may exist to provide modern facilities, new family homes at some small-scale brownfield sites, and (in particular) at gateway locations to the town. The town must become well connected with, and benefit from, any improvements or new facilities at Swanscombe Peninsula; direct access to the riverside should be improved. Development is proposed adjoining the

town through the Local Plan Review at the Ebbsfleet Central and Swanscombe Peninsula (see part E), which must be well integrated with Swanscombe.

A14 Unnecessary development on landfill sites (currently addressed in policy DP5:3) will be avoided, in order to protect the environment, residents, infrastructure and design objectives, is proposed to be retained.

GREEN BELT/ OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREA:

A15 There will be no strategic release of greenfield Green Belt land for major new development.

A16 Villages south of the A2 will only accommodate appropriate proportionately small scale brownfield development focussed on local needs. Development strategy is limited to non-Green Belt land and where located in walking distance of clusters of facilities, railway stations and well served bus routes; and if well landscaped, sensitively designed and not of excessive scale. New development would have to demonstrate compliance with Green Belt national and local policy; or alternatively come forward within villages (not covered by the Green Belt) designed in a way that has an acceptable impact on the village.

A17 A concept of spreading growth across the Borough was evaluated as a technical alternative option via the formal Sustainability Appraisal process; but is not considered by the Council consistent with objectives, feasible or sustainable development for Dartford Borough. It has therefore not been pursued and is not put forward as a specific proposal feature of public consultation.

Question 8. Do you support the approach of:

- ***focusing development on the two Priority Regeneration Centres of Dartford Town Centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City***
- ***some brownfield development at sustainable locations in the rest of the urban area (where very well served by public transport) especially for community uses***
- ***small scale brownfield development in the villages***
- ***no strategic release of Green Belt land?***

If not, what are the reasonable alternative options for the distribution of development and what evidence do you have to support this?

B. Development delivery and housing location criteria

B0 This section outlined the preferred approach to how development and infrastructure is planned to occur overall, housing levels and the approach to planned and unplanned residential development proposals.

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Strategic Objectives</i> | SO1-SO3 |
| <i>Top, national policy references</i> | NPPF paragraphs: 60,67-68, 73-35 |
| <i>Current/ future evidence</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford 2019 Five Year Deliverable Housing Supply (DBC, 2019) • Draft SHLAA Report and Compendium (DBC, 2019) • Dartford and Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment (DERNA) (HdH, 2019) • Infrastructure Delivery Plan (DBC, being updated) |
| <i>Summary change from existing</i> | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant |

Local Strategy and Aims (B):

B1 Achieving focussed regeneration - to enhance local quality of life and neighbourhoods - means plan-led sustainable development in line with the clear principles, Green Belt retention and Priority Regeneration Centres set out in part A.

B2 The Local Plan Review will adopt this place-based approach and to this end shall use all applicable current planning tools in national policy, particularly for Brownfield land delivery and to protect openness, character and the environment.

B3 The existing housing pipeline and Dartford's specific future housing needs are the most relevant factors to guide the Local Plan Review. 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.

B4 Levels of housing delivery in the Borough increased significantly after the last national economic recession (and hit approximately 1,000 dwellings a year). These levels exceed projected local housing need and are not considered sustainable over the lifetime of this Plan. Not least as sources of brownfield land cannot be regarded as infinite.

B5 Infrastructure delivery and growth should be aligned, both in terms of timescale and location. New community and transport infrastructure has come forward in the Borough to address the growth which has taken place. Looking to the future, the expectation is that it be front loaded and materialise early on regenerating areas. Certain facilities (for example health, and transport and water infrastructure) are at risk, at present, of lagging behind in some locations.

B6 There is a need for infrastructure provision to catch up with the demands already placed on it. Moreover, cohesion of new and existing neighbourhoods needs to be consolidated and be given a chance to form. Given the major changes already seen across some of the urban area, social integration needs time to take root and for development to sustainably continue at an appropriate pace.

B7 The Local Plan Review will set a clear housing target, potentially in the form of a range, recognising the relatively high level of remaining planning permissions, in order to aid infrastructure planning and based on capacity for sustainable development in line with Dartford's needs. It is expected the spatial strategy principles outlined (in A) will meet the national Local Housing Need level (currently set at 797 homes a year) for at least 10 years. Delivery rates are projected to reduce over time.

B8 The DERNA study sets out how the government's methodology results in a quantified need of 797 homes per year for Dartford. Homes in excess of the government's Local Housing Need figure shall only be built to assist delivery of plan objectives, particularly at the two Priority Regeneration Centres or where proposals elsewhere provide particular benefits. It is expected to be appropriate to maintain the limit on average housing growth levels from the Core Strategy of 865p.a. within the new plan period, providing clarity for residents, infrastructure providers and developers.

B9 A higher Local Plan Review housing target, for instance based on 1,000p.a. homes would represent a 25% increase over the government's current Local Housing Need calculation. This could not be accommodated consistent with the Preferred Options set out.

Question 9. Is the approach of planning for the provision of 797 – 865 homes per year appropriate or should an alternative upper figure be used? What evidence do you have to support the use of an alternative upper figure?

B10 Equally importantly to the overall level of housing, a target shall be set for a high proportion of homes to be built on brownfield land. This policy will likely upgrade and update the current 80% expectation within the Core Strategy.

B11 The housing target and infrastructure planning will be based on plan-led supply, and the planned supply shall be the focus of housing delivery, with these sites always prioritised over unplanned 'windfall' development.

B12 Policy will support a range of housing sources and types to maintain a suitable level of housing supply relevant to local needs. Housing sites will be planned to bring an appropriate range of site sizes and smoothly phased development and infrastructure over the plan period.

Locations/ Delivery Methods (B):

B13 Sustainable development to meet the Borough's needs will be delivered on brownfield land, strategic allocations and Priority Regeneration Centres whilst maintaining the Green Belt. Existing town/local centres and employment areas will be maintained, commercial and other uses areas well served by public transport will be appropriately intensified. The delivery of suitable growth will be supported by developer contributions and the infrastructure delivery plan/infrastructure funding statement.

B14 In reflection of local needs and in order to focus planning and coordination of growth and new infrastructure, land allocations for homes/jobs in the Local Plan Review will continue to be selected strategically (see the Appendix). Strategic allocations will concentrate on those sites shown to be:

- Consistent with the proposed pattern of development/ Green Belt (see Part A) and
- Deliverable in bringing the forward essential infrastructure such as new healthcare and schools in a timely manner, and/or demonstrably of strategic significance in delivering regeneration or meeting commercial or community needs.

B15 At the Priority Regeneration Centres, the detailed proposals of the strategic allocations are complemented by sustainable 'broad locations': additional opportunities that may be potentially developable for beneficial mixed use development throughout the plan period.

B16 To help smooth development activities over time and economic cycles, developers must increase the variety and differentiation of housing types and tenures. The largest residential sites in Dartford should not be narrowly focussed on a narrow set of housing products similar in form, style and size, and must be appealing or available to a broad range of residents. These are also strong aims towards successful and integrated neighbourhoods (See section J on housing type and mix).

BOROUGH-WIDE HOUSING SUPPLY:

B17 Housing supply will be managed by maintaining a mix of land including through sites under 1 hectare in size, large mixed sites, addressing the Housing Delivery Test, and proactively using planning and regeneration tools (particularly within Ebbsfleet Garden City).

B18 The draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) compiled by Officers has reviewed potential housing land against clear criteria. No greenfield land in the Green Belt was found suitable in the assessment or is proposed for housing in the Plan. In terms of the key brownfield or urban area sites, the largest identified as developable outside the two Priority Regeneration Centres, and where development has not started, is at St James Lane Pit, Stone. This benefits from an outline planning permission. This is not currently proposed as a strategic allocation.

B19 The Local Plan Review will reflect that existing planning permissions and sufficient new sites have been identified in the draft SHLAA to provide a varied range of new housing sites over the plan period. The SHLAA can inform the Brownfield Land Register, and to help bring forward sites to maintain a Five Year deliverable land supply over the Plan period.

B20 Insufficient evidence has been found to confirm the status of further quarry sites in Stone and Greenhithe as developable or deliverable. Major residential development in this area would not align closely with a focus on two Priority Regeneration Centres. The following medium/ large sites in the urban area are regarded as available by the landowner, but currently considered by the Council to be unsuitable and do not feature in planned housing supply in the plan period (from the draft SHLAA):

- 'Biffa' land, Knockhall Chase, Greenhithe [SHLAA REF: 34]
- 'Little Hythe', north of London Road, southeast of Greenhithe station [SHLAA REF:87]
- 'Stone Pits 9/9a', south of London Road, Stone [SHLAA REF:140]

B21 Also not proposed is the brownfield site in the Green Belt at Hawley Road Garden Centre, south of the A2.

Question 10. Should any other major sites/broad location options (in addition to Ebbsfleet Central and Dartford Town) be shown as suitable for mixed use development? If so, why?

B22 Reflecting Dartford's clear strategy for brownfield-led regeneration in sustainable locations, and large existing stock of permissions, and specific infrastructure requirements, unplanned 'windfall' housing sites (those not confirmed as deliverable/developable in the SHLAA) require careful management. Unplanned windfall residential development may be acceptable where the design of proposals and type show local benefits outweigh disbenefits, and one of the following circumstances apply:

- The land is at the Priority Regeneration Centres (excepting Bean Triangle which lies in the Green Belt);
- The land is featured on the Brownfield Land Register, produced in line with regulations and which draws selectively from the SHLAA in Dartford,
- The proposal is wholly for local needs affordable/ social rented housing;
- If there are shown to be insufficient sites under 1 hectare, in line with national policy, available in the Five Year Deliverable Supply of housing land; or
- Where 1 to 4 homes are proposed (too small to be identified through the SHLAA) and in full accordance with all other policy requirements.

B23 Where unplanned windfall development for housing is proposed at larger sites over 1 hectare (or 30 dwellings) further criteria must also be satisfied to manage demands on infrastructure. It is anticipated requirements would include all of the following:

- The council is unable to demonstrate a Five Year Deliverable Supply of housing land,
- The site is north of the A2, brownfield and well served by public transport and local services,
- Whether the development proposed is shown not to have an adverse additional impact on the management of infrastructure capacity, or the achievement of the sites identified as developable in the SHLAA or the allocated sites.

B24 Where housing is proposed wholly or partly on SHLAA sites, and at a level 30 dwellings or more in excess of the capacity set out in the SHLAA, the excess will be treated as larger windfall development and the above paragraph will apply.

Question 11. What are your views on the preferred approach to unplanned windfall housing proposals and why?

C. Infrastructure

C0 This section outlines the preferred approach to the Local Plan and related planning tools in coordinating new infrastructure provision locally, and relevant funding matters such as the approach to Dartford's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It takes forward main plan option 6B on transport.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Strategic Objectives | SO1, SO2, SO8 |
| Top national policy references | NPPF paragraphs: 8, 91-92, 94, 102-104 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Delivery Plan (DBC, being updated) • Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (DBC, 2014) • Cycle Network Development Study – Dartford (Sustrans, 2017) • Viability assessment (to be commissioned) • Dartford Local Plan Transport Study (PBA, forthcoming) • C2E A Corridor for Growth –Prospectus |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant |

Local Strategy and Aims (C):

C1. New services and facilities must be provided in a timely manner and investment must be commensurate with the scale and needs of the Borough's communities. The Council will lead the local infrastructure coordination process and work in partnership with service providers to identify and secure delivery of high-quality infrastructure alongside new development. The Council will expect the major service providers, whether for highways, public transport, utilities, health and social care, education or other community infrastructure, to use this support to maintain a package of large and smaller scale service upgrades throughout the plan period and across the Borough.

C2. Dartford planning decisions will encourage well-connected mixed-use development to reduce the need to travel, as well as the co-location of facilities in accessible locations and the provision of multipurpose spaces. Seeking to reduce as far as possible carbon emissions and air pollution from travel.

C3 The Local Plan Review will ensure that new development provides for:

- a choice of appealing and sustainable transport options, with good public transport and feasible and attractive walking and cycling networks; future proofed for changing demand for practical and efficient electric vehicle charging infrastructure,
- parking demands generated by the development, avoiding uncontrolled spill-over into nearby residential areas
- community facilities, as part of major development proposals, where needed to meet generated demand;
- the provision of the necessary high speed telecommunications infrastructure;
- environmental mitigations necessary, particularly to reduce pollutants and emissions
- design to realise the flood defence and climate change strategy for the area.

C4 The Local Plan Review will consider allocating essential community use provision as required, where there is an acute shortage of available land for the infrastructure necessary to meet growth

needs. This will be guided by the location of planned growth, evidence from service providers, and the areas of search shown on the Diagram.

C5 Urgent needs for new health and education facilities exist. The Council will push forward through the Local Plan Review the further detailed discussions for securing the land and funding necessary for delivery of new services with the Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS) Kent County Council and landowners.

C6 Transport strategy will be supported by the strengthened focus in the Local Plan Review on where development is located, and taking forward beneficial transport schemes. In parallel to current proposals, infrastructure and strategic planning will continue to explore the best ways to secure a major modal shift in transport choice over time.

C7 Junctions improvements on strategic highways, including through constructing the Lower Thames Crossing, will be supported to ameliorate conditions at the Dartford Crossing and elsewhere. This should be allied with a package of upgrades on the local road network to alleviate congestion pressure points. The Council will push for new highway schemes, particularly at the Lower Thames Crossing (outside Dartford) and A2 upgrades at Bean and Ebbsfleet, to be completed and in a timely manner; it will work with partners to take forward and help deliver further junction upgrades for the highway network to be identified in the Dartford Transport Study, expected to include J1A and potentially junctions further south of the Dartford Crossing.

C8 The Local Plan will support a comprehensive cycle and pedestrian route network to provide a genuinely viable alternative for shorter distance journeys, particularly enhancing connections within and towards Dartford Town Centre.

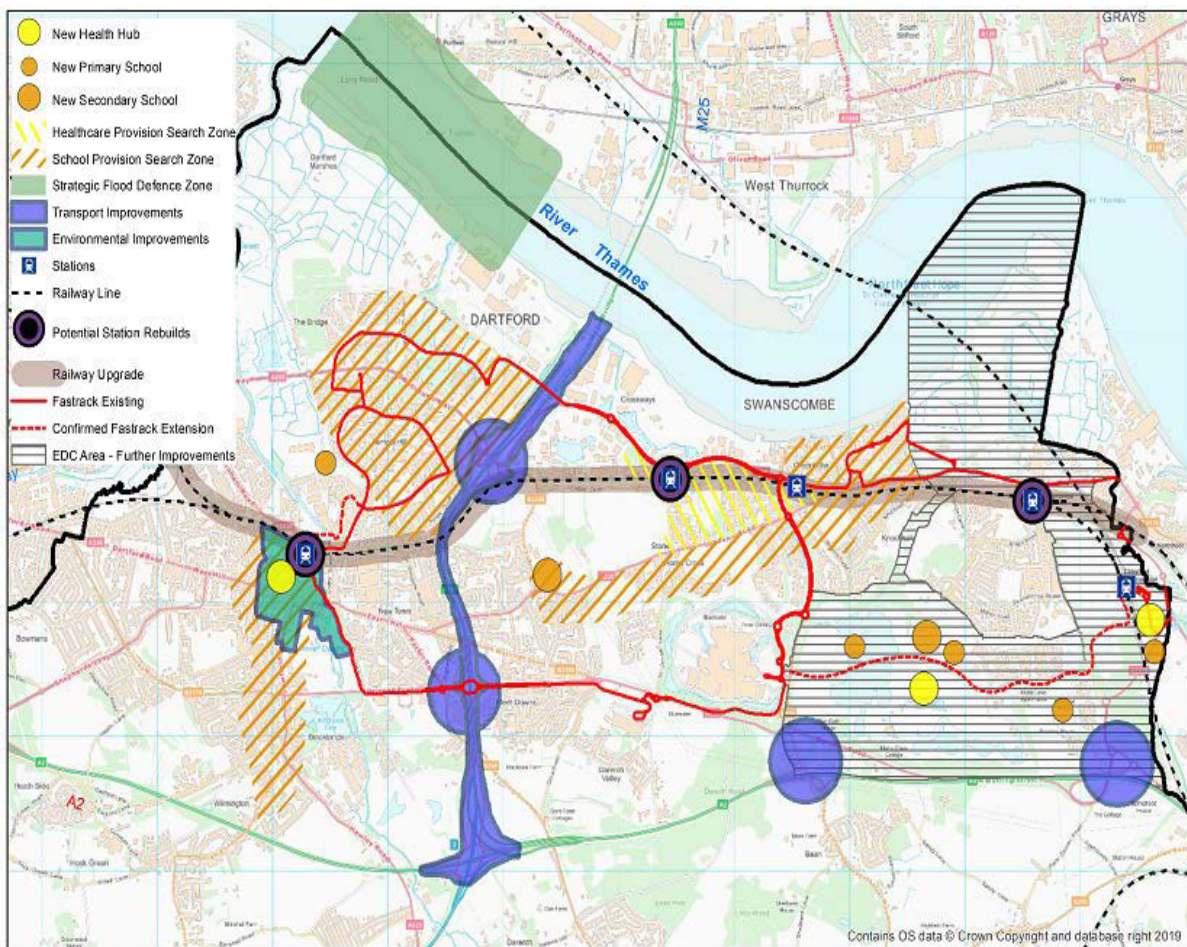
C9 The Council will continue to contribute to the local partnership exploring the potential of an extension of Crossrail (the Elizabeth Line) from its current planned terminus at Abbey Wood to Dartford Borough. This will be based on the following principles for Dartford:

- Delivering the high quality transport service and connectivity required to meet current and future travel demands.
- Securing an upgrade delivering better quality trips and journey time savings for local residents, based on an alignment similar to the North Kent line, serving current and future growth in the north of the Borough by new train services (additional capacity) for Dartford, Stone, Greenhithe, Swanscombe and Ebbsfleet.
- Achieving significant modal shift away from reliance on private vehicles; and associated transport, environmental and social benefits i.e. demonstrating the project would help shift a significant volume of local and commuter journeys onto rail, reducing congestion.
- Supporting regeneration and the creation of new jobs and increased productivity, particularly at Dartford Town Centre.

Question 12. Do you have any comments on Dartford's continued involvement in exploring the potential of the Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension to the Borough, and what this may mean for broadening the public transport options and supporting further regeneration in the Borough?

Locations/ Delivery Methods (C):

C10 The following diagram indicates some but not all the new infrastructure considered likely to be necessary in the north of the Borough over the plan period (or beyond). This is first draft for consultation purposes, which will be reviewed and refined in the Local Plan Review. It shows that several specific junctions or sites are identified, and in detailed design stage, to deliver new highway and social infrastructure. Some schools in Dartford are open whilst permanent buildings are under construction. At Dartford town centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City, several further schemes to improve the environment, transport physical and social infrastructure are programmed, but are not shown here individually. In certain instances (for example healthcare and education) where multiple new facilities are expected, but the location of the site deliver services in later phases has not been confirmed, an indicative general area of search is shown related to where need is currently expected to arise. The diagram is a longer-term indication and therefore does not address funding or land availability requirements.



C11 The Council will use the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to help support the services and infrastructure which are required as a result of development in the Borough. CIL will continue to be levied on applicable infrastructure, but CIL can only form a limited part of the mix of funding needed to meet the Borough's infrastructure needs.

C12 The Council will review the case for an update of CIL Charging Schedule alongside finalising the Local Plan. This would require new modelling of the economic viability of bringing forward different types of development on different types of land.

C13 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) outlines the main Borough infrastructure projects currently being actively planned, and gives details of when they are expected to be provided, and background on who is responsible and how it will be funded. Transport, education, and health are all identified as areas to be funded via CIL in the IDP. The IDP will be updated; and be revised under government proposals for infrastructure funding statements.

C14 The current Dartford CIL governance model, based on annual consideration of local needs/requirements of service providers and available funding will be maintained.

C15 Expenditure of the neighbourhood element of CIL must be optimised. The Council will encourage CIL monies received by Parish and Town Councils in the Borough to contribute towards essential strategic community infrastructure such as new health facilities. Parish and Town Council funding for localised, non-strategic infrastructure upgrades should still nevertheless work in close partnership with the County and Borough Councils to deliver priority smaller interventions e.g. improvements to pavements, crossings, bus stops, residents parking schemes etc. The Borough Council will put forward further open and inclusive arrangements for expenditure of the neighbourhood element of CIL in unparished areas, consistent with neighbourhood in those localities, and corporate and Local Plan objectives.

C16 Section 106 agreements/planning obligations will continue to be employed to secure necessary site-specific measures and affordable housing.

C17 The Council will produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement annually, working with the EDC, Kent County Council and others, which will:

- Report on the previous financial year's CIL and section 106 agreement receipts.
- Reflect priorities on infrastructure and affordable housing in line with the Local Plan
- Outline the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the authority intends to fund, either wholly or partly, by CIL or planning obligations.

C18 The Local Plan will identify land or safeguard areas and facilities for future infrastructure needs as necessary:

- Safeguard routes on the Policies Map for major transport infrastructure, such as Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension and Fastrack.
- The principle will be retained of protecting existing community facilities and identifying available land for future facilities (currently expressed in policy DP21).
- In order to accommodate the TE2100 plan to tackle flood risk in the Thames Estuary and climate change implications, the Council will:
 - Protect the Dartford Marshes development through Green Belt policy and land at Long Reach, which may be needed for a new Thames Barrier
 - Consider policy for riparian design principles to safeguard areas around the existing flood defences for future improvements, and to benefit ecological networks.

TRANSPORT:

C19 Additional to the aforementioned highway projects, there will be actions on walking and cycling, and securing public transport upgrades. Consideration will be given to how to deliver potential cycle network interventions suggested in the Network Development Study.

C20 It is proposed to further explore with partners improvements to railway services; starting with prioritising upgrades for Dartford, Stone Crossing and Swanscombe stations. This is regarded as necessary by the Council even if not taken up through the Crossrail extension project.

C21 If a Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension level of railway upgrade were to be confirmed after Dartford adopts the Local Plan Review, it is expected this would trigger a widespread review of planning strategy, connections to stations and Borough transport planning.

C22 The Local Plan Review will support measures for further bus infrastructure and Fastrack priority and expansion measures, for example at strategic junctions at Dartford and at the Swanscombe Peninsula (complementing the confirmed link between Bluewater's bus station and Ebbsfleet Garden City through the new tunnel).

C23 It is expected the Dartford Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be partially or wholly reviewed in line with the Local Plan Review's transport strategy.

C24 Policies will be positive to proposals for sustainable transport on the Thames, and provide criteria in relation to operational wharves and to maintain effective navigation.

C25 Additional actions will be identified in the Dartford Transport Study and included in the Local Plan/ supporting documents.

Question 13. What infrastructure (in addition to that set out in the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan) is necessary to support the delivery of development in the new Local Plan and how can land needed for this be secured? What evidence do you have to support this?

D. Town centres and retailing

D0 This section outlines the preferred approach to Dartford town centre, and retailing across the Borough including Bluewater. It takes forward main plan option 2B.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Strategic Objectives | SO4-SO6, SO9 |
| Top national policy references | NPPE paragraphs: 85-87, 118, 122, 127, 192 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD (DBC, 2018) • Draft SHLAA Report and Compendium (DBC, 2019) • Dartford Retail and Leisure Study (LSH, forthcoming) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant: |

Local Strategy and Aims (D):

D1 Redevelopment in and around Dartford Town Centre will:

- Bring forwards significant new residential development, increasing local expenditure
- Transform the range of activities, and repurpose underused shops and spaces, for other purposes, to diversify town centre uses
- Create new spaces and places, including open streets and squares, integrated within the town's historic fabric, to generate a high quality environment attractive and safe for pedestrians, and a town clear and easy to move around.

D2 The aim is to secure an appropriate transformation of Dartford Town Centre, providing an enticing and inviting place where people want to live, work or visit; enjoying meeting, shopping, culture and leisure time in the day and evening. The Local Plan Review will guide transformation over time, co-ordinating public sector investment, notably in refurbishing streets and spaces, alongside requirements for private development to contribute to upgrading the town.

D3 Town Centre development should create places responding to modern day needs and lifestyles whilst the town's heritage (and traditional activities such as the street market) are respected.

D4 Development will embed history, culture, innovation and creativity into the town centre through creative and sensitive design, and making provision where appropriate for animated new spaces possibly including public art. Development will be encouraged to interface with digital enterprise and Smart Technology, so that the town centre responds to future change.

D5 Dartford Town Centre policy will actively promote a diversification of uses and activities, addressing potential for new leisure uses. High quality residential, including for older people, and job generating development (for instance offices and hotels) will be sought. These new town centre uses will be complemented by new infrastructure and supporting functions, with a focus on development to unlock delivery of essential priority uses, most particularly for healthcare/education, and for new public transport facilities.

D6 For the Town Centre, the Local Plan Review will build on existing proposals and investment to set policy for the future management of change in order to:

- Secure rejuvenation of land and spaces not fulfilling its potential as part of the town centre; taking advantage of the ability of the area to accommodate new development in a very highly sustainable location.

- Provide new business premises and retail, leisure and cultural services to complement the attractions of the town centre, and encourage uses which improve the evening economy. Provide a boost to local expenditure on shops and services through injecting new residents and life into an area with a limited resident population.
- Encourage the delivery of suitable transformative proposals to update or remodel retail and leisure at Priory and Orchards Shopping Centres and Prospect Place, particularly to fulfil shopping, mixed use and movement/ transport aims. Seeking the provision of buildings which are flexible in order to meet the rapidly changing needs of the retail sector.
- Enhance movement and linkages between Dartford town centre and adjoining areas, particularly across the railway line and along the River Darent. The river in particular provides significant opportunities for walking and environmental enhancements. This could integrate both recent development and new communities with the town centre, and neighbourhoods in Temple Hill and Newtown with the town centre.
- Support the delivery of major investment in Dartford railway station and its services, and bus transport interchanges.

BOROUGH RETAIL/LEISURE:

D7 The Local Plan Review will be informed by a new Retail and Leisure Study. This will provide an overview of the demand and need for retail and commercial leisure uses in the Borough. It will also consider the future role for Bluewater, taking into account impacts on neighbouring town centres.

D8 The existing network of shopping centres will be retained, unless the Study directs otherwise. The network comprises:

- Dartford Town Centre
- Bluewater regional shopping centre
- Ebbsfleet (updating required)
- District Centres, in the urban area and at Longfield
- Neighbourhood Centres, Borough-wide

D9 Bluewater, opened twenty years ago, is part of regeneration and major growth in the Thames Estuary area. It is a unique facility located in one of the Borough's former quarry sites, offering shops of a quality and scale not seen before in North Kent. The Core Strategy's approach is to acknowledge its position as a regional centre, including it within the Borough's network of centres (so retail proposals for the regional centre are not required 'sequentially' to be directed towards local town centres).

D10 It is proposed to maintain this approach: Inspectors of successive Local Plan documents have supported the strategy. Alongside other locations, implications of extensive restructuring in the retail sector are being reviewed in the Dartford Retail & Leisure Study. It is necessary to consider how the objective of a distinct role from other town centres is delivered and secured allied with maintaining Bluewater's long term function in the face of increased competition with other regional centres.

Locations/ Delivery methods (D):

DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE:

D11 Major mixed use brownfield regeneration is expected at Dartford Town Centre. The Local Plan Review will clearly encourage appropriate redevelopment in selected parts of the town centre and its surrounds, including where there is low demand for the current use.

D12 In and around the town centre, redevelopment is expected include new homes but also to upgrade Dartford's offer through building on existing local cultural facilities through a new cinema, restaurants and daytime and evening food/beverage providers, and possibly other modern indoor recreation activities such as activities for families, gyms and so on. Some shopping areas can be redeveloped to provide modern units in an attractive setting, which will appeal to operators of successful leisure services (for example food and drink) and future retail 'anchors'. Along with how to retain/achieve better retail premises this is subject to assessment of market demand through the Dartford Retail and Leisure Study.

D13 The Local Plan Review will set out that the approach to the Town Centre is a key part of the positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in the Borough. This is not least as the town centre regeneration is taking place in and around the largest Conservation Area in the Borough, and listed buildings on the former Roman Road and elsewhere, such as at Acacia Hall. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. The design of proposals and the scale of development affecting heritage assets or their setting will have to be justified with an assessment of impact taking into account the significance of the assets, in line with national policy. Any harm to the significance of a heritage asset e.g. the Conservation Area would require a clear and convincing justification.

TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION LOCATIONS:

D14 Policy for Dartford Town Centre will update and take forward development opportunities in the current Dartford Town Centre and Northern Gateway Priority Area. This will take build on its status as a proposed Priority Regeneration Centre for the Borough, drawing from the range of sites outline in the Core Strategy, and emerging potential indicated in the Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD and Local Plan evidence (such as outputs from the SHLAA).

D15 Redevelopment at Dartford Town Centre will be required to, through the Local Plan Review:

- Demonstrating clear transformative benefits, with a major and direct contribution to regeneration objectives expected. This can occur through delivering on a range of development ambitions (criteria in current policy DP15 may be expanded but at present these include achieving additional town centre attractions, and enhancing the choice and stock of modern retail/leisure premises).
- Secure an appropriate mix of uses. Successful cultural/leisure attractions such as the Orchard Theatre should be complemented, and their further potential unlocked. The area is also expected to include a mixed residential development for range of needs and ages; and community and public facilities to serve the new population. Major development would usually be expected to be in the form of significant residential, office or hotel uses on top of business/active ground floor uses. Residential development should clearly contribute to Local Plan objectives, including for older people or town centre commercial vitality.
- Ensure that development is sensitively designed in proposing the efficient use of land, reflecting the town's unique historic character and providing a complementary mix and scale

of uses to adjoin existing built environment (both recent development at the Northern Gateway and elsewhere, and established buildings and neighbourhoods).

- Upgrade the public realm and connectivity for shoppers, visitors, workers and residents within the town centre, from adjoining areas to the town centre and along the River Darent, supporting the achievement of the movement objectives in the Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD. A new network of green streets and routes for pedestrians linking new and recent developments should result. This will feature public spaces and focal points for the town centre providing a high class street scene, and hard/soft landscaping and shelter (including new trees planting).
- Takes full account of flood risk, and improving air quality.

D16 One strategic site is proposed to feature in the Local Plan Review in the town centre currently (see Appendix). The **Hythe Street and Kent Road site** is central to transforming Dartford Town Centre's evening economy by providing an improved offer to families and visitors. It will be allocated for:

- Leisure uses, to include a cinema, food and drink uses; plus a hotel
- A new primary care health-hub
- Residential development
- Development to retain the Co-op façade on Spital Street, provide active uses on street frontages and incorporating a new public square.

D17 Central to the town centre, near the Orchard Theatre and development opportunities, and strategically located, proposals for this cleared site are being drawn up in detail and are considered deliverable. The Hythe Street/ Kent Road site will contribute uses that are demonstrably strategically significant to the Borough. It is anticipated the development would deliver cultural, retail and residential floorspace including c100 bedroom hotel, up to 3,500sqm of A3/A4 (food/drink) premises and c.120 homes.

D18 The Local Plan Review will include policy supportive of a series of further transformative potential sites, subject to further investigation of securing high quality development, infrastructure and land release:

- There are clearly opportunities to remodel or redevelop shopping centres, achieving improvements to links and the local environment, plus modern leisure/ retail premises. Dartford Town Centre includes two purpose built indoor shopping centres – the **Orchards Shopping Centre** and the **Priory Shopping Centre**. These have both been assessed in the draft SHLAA and found to be suitable for mixed use including significant new residential. They can continue town centre regeneration by following on from and integrating with current redevelopments e.g. Priory Centre and the under construction Lowfield Street scheme.
- In their response to this Local Plan's previous consultation, Network Rail indicated that there may be an opportunity to build a new Dartford station on the straight section of line behind B&Q. No details have emerged but this could be compatible with significant opportunities for development, especially at the **Station Quarter** site and at **Prospect Place**. It may assist developing the current Station Quarter for residential, hotel, office and/or community development. It could also provide an opportunity to better connect Prospect Place with the Station Quarter and Hythe Street and provide more active street frontages.
- Additionally, the Framework SPD notes possibilities in the long term at various further locations within the town centre, the larger ones of which include, Wickes, BT Exchange, potential town centre 'gateway' sites; plus also highlighting smaller but prominent sites in the core of the town centre. These could also be indicated as relevant in the Local Plan Review.

D19 The benefits of these, and possible additional opportunities, need to be optimised by planning for town centre growth (and the immediately adjoining area) as a whole. There has been a huge increase in developer confidence in investing in Dartford, which should be maintained throughout the Plan period with a long-term framework of further potential to create new places and neighbourhoods. Significant regeneration is coming forward in the south of the town centre, which can be balanced by the potential north of the High Street. A zone in the existing town centre or near the railway station will be pivotal, particularly to deliver links and new uses connecting with major residential development underway at the Northern Gateway.

D20 Therefore a broad location policy with criteria promoting redevelopment, and providing principles achieving a flexible, responsive and proactive approach may feature in the Local Plan Review. This can enable all beneficial key development opportunities to be planned and delivered over time, including the redevelopment of locations/uses that may emerge in future as no longer contributing positively to the function and environment of the town.

D21 This broad location is shown on the key diagram, and additional illustrations would be expected for the Local Plan Review. To support the wider local economy and existing industry, designated employment sites are not expected to be covered where demand is present, with the exception of land immediately on Hythe Street not fronting Victoria Road, and potentially parts of West Hill. Plans will need respond to, but not undermine, any progress on major future investment to deliver a new railway station and/or new railway service on the North Kent Line.

D22 The Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD 2018 complements these plans (e.g. through bespoke movement, perception and design aspirations for the town centre, and to integrate local non land use planning actions). It will continue to apply until at least until after the new Local Plan has been adopted, whereupon an update will be considered.

Question 14. Do you support the preferred policy approach and key development sites for Dartford Town Priority Regeneration Centre? If not, what are the reasonable alternative options and what evidence do you have to support this?

BOROUGH WIDE & BLUEWATER:

D23 The Policies Map with the Local Plan Review will define:

- Dartford Town Centre (which may be amended) and Bluewater boundaries.
- A focussed, primary shopping area in Dartford Town Centre. The current extent of primary plus secondary frontages (policies DP15 and DP16) will not be taken forward, reflecting national planning policy change.
- District and Neighbourhood centres.

D24 The 'town centres first' approach will continue when retail is proposed in harmful locations, i.e. outside Dartford Town Centre and Bluewater and other applicable centres in the shopping network. This sequential test shall apply in line with national policy, whereby town centre uses will only be allowed outside centres in the network if it is proven no site available/suitable within the centre.

D25 An appropriate type and level of new retail and leisure floorspace, guided by the Dartford Retail & Leisure Study, will be achieved through mixed use, repurposing of premises or other development within the centres. It is anticipated the centres shall retain shop uses and accommodate further eating out and appropriate leisure and cultural uses, with flexibility to secure additional residential, community services and business spaces. Although Dartford's local centres continue to have very low vacancy levels, the current significant policy flexibility - building in 'future proofing' - is anticipated to be retained (see chapter 6).

D26 It is proposed to retain a local retail impact threshold in line with national policy, alongside applying the sequential test. This sets a requirement for technical justification for larger out of centre retail proposals, and in 2017 for Dartford was set for proposals over 500sqm (policy DP14). This will be confirmed in light of the findings of the final Dartford Retail & Leisure Study.

D27 Existing Bluewater policy is to maintain a distinct role from nearby town centres, and to continue to promote its physical integration with growing communities. Connections with surrounding areas will be significantly enhanced on opening of the Fastrack and pedestrian/cycling direct link to Ebbsfleet/ Eastern Quarry in 2021. Building on this, a shift in transport modes, away from private car use, will be sought at Bluewater through further measures.

D28 It is appropriate to consider the future policy approach to Bluewater in the context of supporting all town centres, and securing its own future regional role. Refinements to parts of the current policy, to sustainably create more of a balance of uses, may be necessary in future in order to maintain Bluewater's regional relevance and function. In any event, a distinct role from other town centres nearby will continue to be supported in policy in the context of a changing retail market.

D29 For 18 years very limited floorspace was added at Bluewater until planning permission was granted in 2017 for 30,000 sqm of retail expansions (part of which has been implemented). However, regional shopping facilities are not immune from shifts in retail behaviour occurring nationally. Bluewater has a higher proportion of goods retailing as part of its overall floorspace compared to a number of regional facilities, this may suggest commercial scope to amend the overall profile of uses within the centre. It faces newer entrants to the market, for example one stop on the High Speed 1 line at Stratford City, and in future, the permitted Westfield scheme at Croydon (also located off the M25).

D30 The new Retail and Leisure Study is evaluating alternative options at Bluewater and outputs from the Study will inform the Local Plan Review's approach.

D31 At this stage, it is anticipated that the following principles may apply:

- The focus for retail planning will be on internal remodelling and repurposing existing space. Future retail expansion (if any) is expected to be of a significantly lesser scale than the permitted extension. The Local Plan Review will maintain a specific requirement for retail assessment for applicable proposals within Bluewater, to scrutinise the impacts on town and regional centres in the wider area, in consultation with other authorities. New controls over the form/size of retail units may be applied.
- It is proposed to explore new policy to indicate the type and/or scale of leisure provision that is and is not appropriate. Subject to this, the provision of leisure and hotel uses which are not capable of being accommodated in nearby town centres could be feasible.
- There may be opportunities for other types of development within the site, i.e. residential, sports/ outdoor recreation, small scale employment.

D32 The Local Plan Review will set requirements for any Bluewater planning application concerning further assessment of transport impacts and the impact on its unique local environment and setting (including maintaining all key aspects Bluewater's landscape setting, cliff faces and water features).

Question 15. Do you support the preferred approach for retail and commercial leisure development, including for Bluewater and Dartford Town Centre? If not, what are the reasonable alternative options and what evidence do you have to support this?

E. Ebbsfleet Garden City

E0 This section covers updated proposals for the Ebbsfleet area to achieve a high-class and highly sustainable Garden City, including on the Swanscombe Peninsula and near Ebbsfleet International Station (it proposes a strategic site at Ebbsfleet Central). It takes forward main plan options 4 and 5.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Objectives | SO1-SO6, SO9 |
| Top, national policy references | NPPF paragraphs: 72, 122, 127, 170 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework (EDC, 2017) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / <u>Limited</u> / <u>Partial</u> / Significant |

Local Strategy and Aims (E):

E1 Development in Dartford falling within the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) must achieve a high-class 21st Century Garden City. All development should contribute towards the sustainable development themes of quality neighbourhoods, healthy environments, a civic community, connected people and places, and an enterprising economy.

E2 The extent of the Regeneration Priority Centre at Ebbsfleet includes all parts of Ebbsfleet Garden City which fall within Dartford. It includes the Ebbsfleet Central Strategic site and the Swanscombe Peninsula broad location. It also includes the new neighbourhoods at Eastern Quarry and Ebbsfleet Green with planning consents in place/under construction.

E3 Levels of new development, including housing, have grown substantially in the most recent years. At the Garden City, delivery rates are expected to increase further in the 2020s.

Locations/ Delivery methods (E):

E4 Development for high quality new communities and open space provision, and supporting infrastructure, will be supported in Ebbsfleet Garden City, in line with The Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, and where:

- Recognising potential to apply Garden City principles.
- Consistent with a focus on mixed use provision and new services and jobs at identified local centres and (particularly) Ebbsfleet Central.
- Making best use, or contributing to the extension, of investment in public transport, particularly Fastrack and rail services; with a well-designed walking and cycling network. At Eastern Quarry, supporting the delivery and ongoing success of the Fastrack link to Bluewater must be a central part of all proposals.
- Neighbourhoods are efficiently designed to make best use of land for significant new greenspace provision and quality homes. A strong network of waterscapes and green corridors are to be provided as a defining feature for Ebbsfleet's streets, parks and neighbourhoods.
- Development is unified with the existing environment, planned around Ebbsfleet's unique landscapes, lakes, riverside and topography and cultural heritage.
- Proper regard is had to the Ebbsfleet Public Realm strategy and Design for Ebbsfleet documents.

E5 These criteria should guide all development in the area, including at Eastern Quarry. For new proposals at Ebbsfleet Central/ Swanscombe Peninsula they apply in addition to the policy requirements below.

EBBSFLEET CENTRAL SITE:

E6 Ebbsfleet Central, around the International Station, will be the vibrant heart of Ebbsfleet and a major commercial hub. Land is allocated in Dartford Borough at Ebbsfleet Central (see Appendix) in order to deliver a transformative development in line with the Implementation Framework, including:

- ***A dynamic city centre mix of uses including employment, health, leisure, education, residential, restaurants/bars, and retail; plus potentially a centre of excellence for medical, education and learning purposes.***
- *An urban heart providing a focal centre of community and activity complementary to the offer provided at Dartford and Gravesend Town Centres and Bluewater.*
- *Major new public open spaces and parks demonstrating Ebbsfleet's Garden City role.*
- *A transport hub, providing ease of interchange between services at Ebbsfleet International and Northfleet stations, and Fastrack and local buses, with major enhancements to walking and cycling connections. Development should be designed and phased not to preclude a Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) extension terminus, and to facilitate re-provision of station car parking.*

E7 The development land, structural green space and key connections are expected to be laid out as follows:



Ebbsfleet Central Concept Schematic (EDC, 2019)

E8 At Ebbsfleet Central it is expected over 3,000 dwellings and approximately 30,000sqm of community uses (class D1); and 12,500sqm of retail (class A1) and approximately 100,000sqm of business, principally office development (Class B1); will be provided over time within Dartford Borough.

SWANSCOMBE PENINSULA:

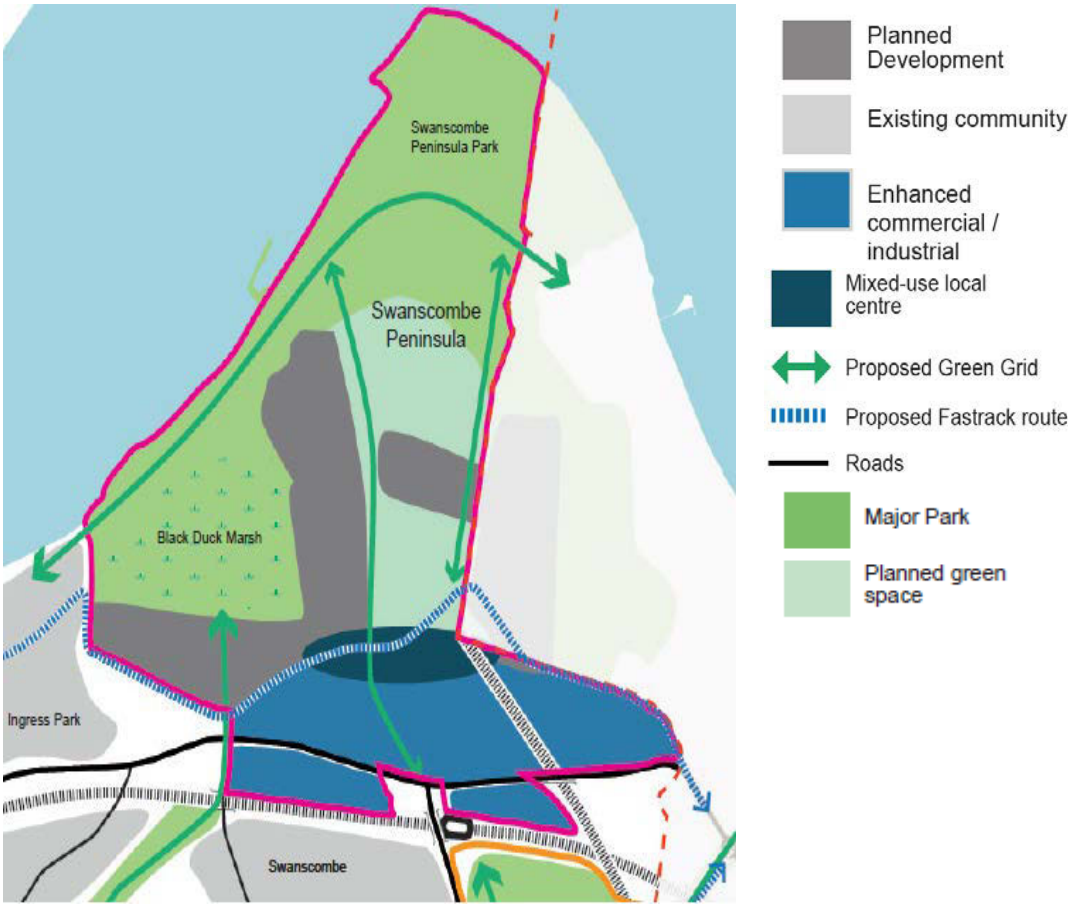
E9 Development at Swanscombe Peninsula is likely to be dealt with by a criteria based area policy, which can acknowledge the highly varied nature of the land, look long-term and be flexible to land availability, current infrastructure uncertainties and potential action to address existing site constraints. This broad location will be shown indicatively on the Key Diagram of the Borough, and is expected to focus on brownfield land in the south/ centre of the Peninsula (predominantly west of High Speed rail/ tunnel) and to the north of Swanscombe Town/ Ebbsfleet Central area. Land being developed at Croxton Garry and west of Craylands Lane is not included in this area.

E10 The aims of the broad location policy will be to:

- *retain local jobs and enhance local employment opportunities*
- *deliver improved transport links including Fastrack;*
- *ensure any development sites are only located on brownfield land or, if necessary elsewhere, on the least sensitive locations;*
- *direct development away from, and helping to facilitate, the proposed estuarine ecological park (expected to be from Black Duck Marsh north-eastwards to the tip of the peninsula and adjoining land).*

E11 The policy would require development proposals that may emerge to be located outside the ecological estuarine park (for example be located on brownfield or unique opportunities at former quarry land south of London Road) and to demonstrate compliance with detailed environmental risk and ecological assessments. Proposals should achieve major Fastrack and/ or Swanscombe rail station upgrades, and regeneration of and high quality linkages with Swanscombe town. Potential suitable development could be for environmental upgrades to the employment area (and/or to provide less environmentally harmful new industrial premises), outdoor/ leisure uses and possible low key visitor accommodation; plus local scale neighbourhood uses facilitated by limited residential development.

E12 The general extent of potential opportunities may be shown indicatively on Local Plan Review diagrams/ supporting documents. Appropriate future open space designations will be shown. Currently, the following concept for greenspace and potential development land can guide further investigation of land use and connections, and aid public consultation:



Swanscombe Peninsula Concept Schematic (EDC, 2019)

F. Business Premises and Employment

F0 This section outlines the preferred approach to development of industrial, warehousing and private offices: premises providing significant jobs. It proposes a strategic site at the former Littlebrook Power Station.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Strategic Objectives | SO2, SO5 |
| Top national policy references | NPPF paragraphs: 80-82 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Areas Final report (DBC, 2016). • Ebbsfleet Inclusive Growth Strategy Baseline Analysis (EDC, 2019) • Local Plan Economic Development paper (DBC, forthcoming) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant: |

Local Strategy and Aims (F):

F1 The Local Plan Review will positively and proactively encourage job growth in sustainable locations and economic development in planned Priority Regeneration Centres. Employment strategy in Dartford will be driven by the needs of national policy, and local economic regeneration and sectoral requirements e.g. the creative industries, the availability of the labour force from current and planned housing, and the capacity of sustainable locations for development, rather than arbitrary targets for B-class job levels.

F2 The Local Plan's policies will reflect the high level of job growth and successful economic regeneration that has occurred in Dartford, with a continuation of delivery of new economic development in the north of the Borough, where the local labour force and transport connections are concentrated; and consistent with protecting the Green Belt.

F3 Major new employment proposals must be well served by public transport and/or make a substantial contribution to addressing the highways/travel impacts of development.

F4 Policies will enable economic development by recognising existing sector strengths, and supporting development that addresses the relative deficiency in local managerial/ professional employment levels. A prosperous rural economy will be supported, for example by continuing to support business investment in the identified employment sites south of the A2 where consistent with Green Belt requirements.

F5 Major new employment proposals should include a mix of premises, including provision of units of a type and size to contribute to the accommodation requirements of small and medium sized enterprises, 'move on' premises for growing or starter businesses, and new local cultural and creative businesses .

F6 Provisions to minimise adverse impacts on neighbours and the environment, through appropriate controls or proposals for enclosing activities, and for diversification of large sites to provide ancillary facilities for workers, will be continued (DP20:1 & 4-5).

Locations/ Delivery methods (F):

F7 New jobs and a range of new office and industrial premises will be developed principally through the following approaches:

- The build out of permissions at existing large identified employment areas.
- Strategic allocations at Ebbsfleet Central and the former Littlebrook Power Station.
- Retaining a Borough-wide network of identified employment sites, where loss of commercial uses are restricted.
- Intensification and new job provision at selected sustainable locations, where consistent with improving environmental quality.

F8 Intensification through redevelopment for economic purposes will be managed at identified locations through a criteria based policy to address varied future needs; allowing redevelopment at brownfield land, subject to local impacts. Alternatively, there may scope at a limited number of locations for proportionate extensions (for example potentially to Crossways at Thames Europort).

F9 In policy for these areas, priority may be given to certain proposals such as knowledge based, creative or high technology industries, and the provision of managerial or professional jobs. Innovative Travel Plans could be required to minimise the need to travel, especially during peak hours. The policy for intensification will only apply at identified employment areas with potential in close proximity to public transport and the highway network, and significant concentrations of population (either existing or planned) for instance:

- Crossways, Stone
- Princes Road/ Watling Street, Dartford
- Applicable locations at Dartford town, and at Swanscombe/ Northfleet

F10 To protect essential local industry and accessible employment, including across the south of the Borough, it is proposed to retain the employment areas at the locations identified in DP20 in 2017. This may be subject to detailed review of boundaries, particularly at Dartford.

F11 To maximise benefits of economic development to Dartford, applicable developments will be expected to contribute to local training and apprenticeship objectives. Requirements are currently set out in policy CS9:1d.

FORMER LITTLEBROOK POWER STATION:

F12 The Core Strategy identified an area at Littlebrook for jobs/ logistics. The Power Station has subsequently closed, been disposed of and is undergoing demolition. Given this, and the location and current characteristics of the land, it is considered appropriate to update policy for the area. The site is currently considered to merit a strategic allocation to ensure the wider environmental improvement are specifically identified and secured; and due to the potential type and scale of economic benefits.

F13 To meet expected strategic economic needs and provide a long-term supply of new premises for local business, brownfield land is allocated (see Appendix) at the former Littlebrook Power Station:

- ***For high quality employment development, greenspace and infrastructure appropriate for its location and riverside setting. A maximum of 88, 000sqm shall be provided with a wide range of different B-class uses and unit sizes and styles, including provision designed and demonstrated to be accessible and affordable for local businesses. The Local Plan Review will set an amount of development to be required to be provided in the form of smaller units (under a certain floorspace threshold).***

- *This is dependent on evidencing that transport implications will be acceptable at Junction 1a in particular and through Dartford Town Centre which may require demonstration of delivery of satisfactory mitigation with regard to the additional traffic generated by the development. In recognition of the severe traffic congestion on Bob Dunn Way, Junction 1A and the wider area from the level of traffic and incidents on the Dartford Tunnel approach; and given the lack of capacity in the network to accommodate any further traffic without further exacerbating the already severe conditions, any mitigation will need to demonstrate that the traffic generated by the development will result in no worse traffic conditions than current. A package of mitigations is expected to include:*
 - *Junction 1A upgrade, which must be sufficient in recognition of overcoming problems from the frequency and severity of incidents at the tunnel and the level and duration of disruption caused by incidents and to provide improved local access across Junction 1A.*
 - *Management measures to mitigate impacts on Dartford Town centre.*
 - *Parking and sustainable transport measures, including cycling and pedestrian upgrades and travel plan. These shall be devised and enforced to achieve a significant proportion of workforce traveling to work by public transport, walking or cycling, compared to local travel to work modes.*
- *Development land shall be for at least 30% greenspace, with new useable open space ecological habitat creation, with 10% net biodiversity gain delivered. A well designed and managed landscaped environment will be expected which creates a good quality visual amenity/appearance across the identified employment area.*
- *The development shall provide flood defences in agreement with the EA and shall also leave open a riparian area in the north west of the site sufficient for long-term requirement for a Thames Barrier/ intervention under the TE2100 project.*
- *Enhancements to the environment and links shall provide an attractive setting for the riverside, the England Coastal path, and the current Public Right of Way west of the site shall be significantly enhanced to be well defined, landscaped and legible, and provide ease of access for a range of users. Good pedestrian and cycle connectivity shall be designed and delivered across the identified employment area linking well to Fastrack stops, the Bridge development and local facilities.*
- *Proposals shall either utilise the wharf or demonstrate that it does not prevent future longer term use of the wharf.*
- *Appropriate small-scale services e.g. a café will be acceptable where located and operated to benefit both local workers and recreational visitors.*
- *Masterplanning and a clear phasing for development shall be secured in order that all the above requirements are secured for delivery in a reasonable timescale prior to end of the Local Plan Review period.*

Question 16. Do you support the preferred approach to business premises and employment sites in the Borough, including the proposed strategic employment allocation and criteria for development at the former Littlebrook Power Station? If not, what are the reasonable alternative options at Littlebrook and elsewhere, and what evidence do you have to support this?

G. Natural Environment and Open Space

G0 This section outlines the preferred approach to 'green' uses and provision, including both existing and within new proposals. It takes forward main plan option 3 on greenspace strategy.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Strategic Objectives | SO1, SO6-SO9 |
| Top national policy references | NPPF paragraphs 96-101, 120, 171, 174, 178-181. |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford Open Space Report 2015/16 (DBC, 2016) • Dartford Playing Pitch Study 2016 (DBC, 2016) • Statutory Habitats Regulations Assessment (to be commissioned) • Landscape study (to be commissioned) |
| Summary change from existing | <u>Minimal</u> / Limited / <u>Partial</u> / Significant: |

Local Strategy and Aims (G):

G1 Dartford will maintain an overarching strategy for the Borough, with a spatial approach relevant to Dartford bringing together environmental and social benefits from land, water, the environment as a whole; the urban and southern area, countryside, established residential and other areas, and new development sites.

G2 This means to:

- Continue to create a multi-functional network of green spaces and links, including through new projects, and recognise its importance to mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Protect and enhance biodiversity including trees and habitats, and ecological networks.
- Recognise open and green space supports healthy communities; supporting retention of existing open spaces, including playing pitches where needed.
- Ensure that new development makes sufficient provision for good quality private amenity space, communal resident space, and public open space.

G3 Open space and associated assets, such as trees, will be retained for nature or historic conservation purposes, or where serving settlements by virtue of amenity/ recreation value or beauty (including through maintaining Local Greenspace with Green Belt level protection). It is a priority to enhance the environment along all the Borough's rivers including the Thames and Darent.

G4 The Local Plan Review will protect the local environment (and communities) from pollution/ contamination in all its forms and adverse impacts on air, land, water, flora and fauna.

Locations/ Delivery methods (G):

G5 The Local Plan Review will keep in refined and enhanced form a Borough network (e.g. Development Policies Plan Figure 7) but update this to emphasise its role in mitigating the impacts of climate change, opportunities for trees, and to reflect applicable multi-functional opportunities and known changes. The latter would include the England coast path, open space within strategic development sites and the projects being implemented as part of the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership.

G6 By continuing to retain and protect open spaces:

- Protected Local Green Spaces which are small, special local spaces where development will not be permitted unless very special circumstances apply (policy DP23).
- Borough Open Spaces and non-designated public amenity spaces where development will not be permitted unless certain criteria are met (policy DP24). The principles of protecting sports pitches and land that has civic amenity, linear, other spatial or biodiversity value (e.g. tree belts) shall remain. The extent of identified Borough Open Space may be reviewed but is only expected to reflect minor on the ground changes.

G7 Dartford will continue to require all development to provide public open space in accordance with the requirements set out in policy CS14 (b) and (c) but strengthen the policy to ensure that this is good quality and useable space.

G8 All new dwellings must have good quality private amenity spaces (including residential gardens and balconies). Through a policy taking forward the current Local Plan's provision in policies DP7 and DP8, residential gardens should be sufficient and varied in size to contribute positively to the local environment and character, demonstrably versatile for the likely occupants, and bring forward environmentally beneficial aspects such as tree planting. Inappropriate proposals on garden land will be resisted.

G9 Bringing together existing policy, all larger developments shall be required to achieve a set target of the land to be functional and managed new open space (maintaining requirements in policy C14:1b/c would retain a proportion up to 30% of sites as open space), plus providing inviting and accessible communal open space.

G10 In relation to nature conservation, Dartford will continue to protect and enhance the hierarchy of designated sites (including SSSIs, National Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites), biodiversity features, habitats (including ancient woodland), Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, species and trees (policies CS14 and DP25). This will be updated to require new developments to provide biodiversity net gain and make reference to the newly designated Swanscombe Marine Conservation Zone.

G11 The Local Plan is expected to retain policy for large residential development in the east of the Borough (including Ebbsfleet Garden City) in relation to the potential impact on North Kent European Protected Sites, with updates to the supporting text/ implementation details. Updating will reflect the changes to the way that mitigation measures are considered as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process as a result of the People over Wind case.

G12 Specific requirements for landscaping will be set out to require residential, commercial and other developments across the Borough to respond to their setting, and as part of contributing to enhancing the natural environment.

Question 17: Do you support the preferred approach to protecting, enhancing and providing new public open spaces, the provision of private space, biodiversity and landscape? If not, what changes should be made and why?

H. Renewable Energy and Water Management

H0 This section outlines the preferred approach to managing natural resources and utilities for premises in a changing climate. It focuses on those aspects where planning and the Local Plan is relevant, as opposed to other legislation.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Objectives | SO6-SO7 |
| Top national policy references | NPPF paragraphs: 148-150, 155-161 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Thameside Water Cycle Study 2009 • Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2005 • Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2008 • New Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (to be commissioned) • Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) plan (Environment Agency) • Building Regulations Proposed Changes – Charging Points and Future Homes (Government) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant: |

Local Strategy and Aims (H):

H1 The Council recognises the serious impact of climate change and that we are facing a climate emergency. It welcomes the Government's commitment to meet the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 but aspires to see the effects of climate change tackled earlier than either the 2050 national target or the 2030 date proposed by some. It is committed to increasing efforts to work with highways partners to reduce car use and provide solutions to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and calmer, safer traffic.

H2 The policies in the Local Plan review will seek to minimise carbon emissions and address climate change by:

- Locating new development in areas well served by facilities and public transport, including Fastrack, to reduce the use of private cars;
- Seeking improved train and bus services, as well as improved walking and cycling routes;
- Requiring the design of development to minimise the need for the regulation of internal temperatures and energy consumption;
- Supporting the provision of decentralised energy and heating facilities and renewable and low carbon energy schemes and technologies;
- Encouraging the use of electric vehicles;
- Protecting and increasing greenspace in both the urban and rural area;
- Protecting and enhancing tree planting;
- Protecting the borough from risks of flooding including enabling the implementation of the TE2100 plan; and
- Aiming for resilience from the future impacts of climate change

Locations/ Delivery methods (H):

ENERGY & WATER:

H3 Development should be designed, located and constructed to minimise the need to regulate internal temperatures and reduce energy consumption.

H4 Provision of decentralised energy and heating facilities and renewable and low carbon energy schemes/ technologies will be supported. The Local Plan Review will retain in simplified form the criteria for low/ zero carbon technology and installations set out in current policy DP11:2. It will not directly replace the references in current policy CS23 to low/ zero carbon combined heat and power provision on strategic sites or the Code for Sustainable Homes.

H5 Dartford policy will maintain the requirement that development must increase water efficiency and that all dwellings will need to meet the water efficiency requirement level of 110 litres per person per day (policy DP11) but remove the reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes standards (policy CS25). To reduce demand on water infrastructure further, 'Grey' water recycling systems will be encouraged, including on non-residential development

H6 The Local Plan Review will consider going further than the proposed changes to Building Regulations by requiring the installation of electric vehicle charging points/ cabling in all new residential development where there are shared/ communal parking spaces. A rapid uptake in provision is sought, but developments should also be flexible and 'future proofed' to changing technology.

H7 These measures will complement/support national changes to Building Regulations on nearly zero energy buildings and Future Homes Standards that are expected to set out:

- New homes will benefit from a 25% improvement in energy performance compared to 2011 and it is expected renewable energy and features such as ground source heat pumps will need to be installed.
- New non domestic buildings will (and public buildings as of now) benefit from a 60% improvement in energy performance compared to 2008 and must be supplied energy from on-site renewable sources e.g. solar panels.
- Significant extensions and renovations/conversions will also be required to demonstrate energy improvements under future Building Regulations.

FLOOD RISK & RIVERS:

H8 Consideration has been given to national policy on flood risk in proposing development sites, and seeking sequentially preferable locations. The Local Plan Review will be informed by a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and sequential testing in line with national policy.

H9 The Local Plan will require all development to be designed, located and constructed to minimise flood risk and align with national policy on the exception test. It will continue protecting the Dartford marshes from development and seek safeguarding of applicable land at Littlebrook from development that may prejudice essential flood risk management requirements (unless shown this area will not be needed for a new barrier at Long Reach). Policy will reference the need to suitably protect areas around the existing flood defences for future improvements.

H10 Dartford's policy will require will require well designed and well managed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that accord with KCC's drainage guidance, suitably considered as part of early site planning of layout and open space provision.

Question 18: Do you support the preferred approach to renewable energy, water conservation and flood risk? If not, what alternative approach should be adopted and what evidence do you have to support this?

I. Affordable housing

I0 This section outlines the preferred approach in the Local Plan Review to delivering housing that is made of tenures within the government's new definition of 'affordable housing'.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Objectives | SO1 |
| Top national policy references | NPPE paragraphs: 61-64 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford and Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment (DERNA) (HdH, 2019) • Viability Assessment (to be commissioned) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant |

Local Strategy and Aims (I):

I1 The Local Plan Review will aim for a genuine mix of housing tenures, with a range of traditional and new ownership and rental options available to residents. Affordable housing provision will increase with the aim of meeting the full range of needs found within the Borough.

I2 All neighbourhoods should include a range of households and housing tenures, with mixed communities contributing to the vitality of the Borough. New developments must not be dominated by one type of housing tenure, with on-site affordable housing provision alongside open market housing at larger developments to provide a genuine mix (subject to robustly tested economic viability requirements).

I3 As a general principle, it is beneficial Borough-wide for affordable housing to have diversity and meet the requirements of different types of households. Nevertheless on applicable sites the Local Plan will aim to ensure products within the national definition of affordable housing that perform better in developments viability terms do not inappropriately outweigh the delivery of affordable/social rented housing that meets local housing need.

Locations/ Delivery methods (I):

I4 The Local Plan will retain a requirement for residential proposals in the urban area of 15 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more to contribute to the provision of affordable housing provision (current policy CS19). South of the A2, the threshold for seeking affordable housing provision will be a minimum of 10 dwellings, to reflect changes to national policy (and management and delivery constraints of the current threshold of two dwellings in these locations).

I5 To promote mixed communities, the Local Plan Review will promote delivery of affordable housing by retaining the DP9:2 policy requirement for provision of affordable housing to be on-site; unless exceptional circumstances apply. Policy will also require design, layouts and facilities that are not obviously or unduly segregated, with designs that do not distinguish between different tenures.

I6 In reflection of the Borough's future need and development opportunities, it is proposed the Local Plan Review looks to increase the overall affordable housing target aspired to planning policy. Further work on viability and need, and responses to this consultation, will inform the final proposals for the proportion of affordable housing in applicable private developments. However at present the preferred option is to require a 35% affordable housing target subject to viability, with guidelines that this should normally be made up of:

- 20% social/ affordable rent, and
- 15% affordable home ownership products (the majority shared ownership).

I7 This mirrors the findings of the extensive DERNA research. The Local Plan therefore is expected to seek that developments provide a mix of rented affordable provision accessible to local people, plus other subsidised accommodation to own (in full or part). The latter group includes Starter Homes at below market levels targeted to younger first time buyers, and other forms of discounted market housing sold at least a fifth cheaper than open market purchase. Policy will require provisions to ensure a discount for future eligible households, also in line with national policy. The proposed guidance for these housing products to be provided alongside a greater proportion of shared ownership (part buy, part rent) accommodation reflects the projected needs of Dartford.

I8 The Local Plan Review will maintain an explicit approach of highlighting the need to give proper weight in support of proposals for affordable/social rented sites. Existing policy DP9:1 supports these proposals if satisfactorily located, and it is the preferred options to also acknowledge national policy.

I9 To complement affordable housing funded through section 106 legal agreements (developer contributions) as above, the Council will directly deliver new affordable housing with tenures appropriate to meeting local needs.

Question 19: Do you support the preferred approach for thresholds, percentages and tenures of affordable housing provision? If not, please set out an alternative option and explain your reasons.

J. Housing type and size

J0 This section outlines the preferred approach to the standards and variety of new housing expected in the development, the mix of accommodation and 'benchmarks' of sufficient quality, design or size.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Objectives | SO4 |
| Top national policy references | NPPE paragraph: 61 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford and Ebbsfleet Residential Needs Assessment (DERNA) (HdH, 2019) • Viability Assessment (to be commissioned) • Dartford Housing Density paper (DBC, 2018) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant: |

Local Strategy and Aims (J):

J1 The Local Plan Review is based on a strategy for new accommodation bringing benefits through focused provision of a range of dwelling sizes and types designed and located in accordance with the future needs of Dartford's population.

J2 Policies in Dartford will consider whole lifetime requirements of the population; ensuring the requirements for different groups in the community, including disabled, older or younger people, and families with children are addressed locally. This will be achieved by using optional residential standards of national policy, and expecting sites to be well located to relevant community service provision.

J3 New development, whether houses or apartments, will provide a choice of size and type of accommodation; of sufficient size and with a choice of dwelling bedroom numbers. A genuine diversity of new homes is required to meet future local needs and for inclusive neighbourhoods. Residential developments extending over a large area should not normally be dominated by flatted accommodation or by an undue concentration of very large private homes for instance; unless the location requires.

J4 Homes will be required to include design and layout features to make provision for accessible/ adaptable accommodation to be flexible as personal needs and overall demographics change; and new wheelchair user dwellings will be sought to assist disabled people in the Borough.

Locations/ Delivery methods (J):

J5 The Local Plan Review will continue to apply Nationally Described Space Standards, providing minimum sizes for new residential developments.

J6 The Local Plan will expect all new dwellings to be built to accessible and adaptable M4(2) standards unless site constraints make this impossible (on smaller sites for instance). Single storey (bungalow) homes may be appropriate in some developments. Policy will encourage, where possible, provision of wheelchair user dwellings on applicable developments (Category M4[3]). It may be appropriate for a proportion of rented affordable homes to be designed to wheelchair user standards.

J7 Proposals for Space and Category M4[2] standards set out in paragraphs I4 and I5 above will be subject to viability testing as part of a new Viability Assessment, and potential amendment if necessary.

Question 20: Do you support the preferred approach to accessible/adaptable and wheelchair user homes and minimum space standards in Dartford? If not, what reasonable alternative option should be adopted and what evidence do you have to support this?

J8 All developments will still be expected to provide a majority of dwellings as two bedrooms or more in size under the Local Plan Review.

J9 Retaining the existing Core Strategy threshold, developments of 100 homes or more will be required to create vibrant, inclusive communities and support the efficient delivery of homes. In this respect, they will need to, for example:

- make significant provision for both 3 bedroom and 4 bedroom family homes;
- include homes suitable for older people or those with care needs, potentially including residential care homes (within use class C2); and
- make provision for self or custom build serviced plots, if significant unmet needs are demonstrated via Dartford's Self Build Register

J10 The restriction for existing terraced properties, and minimum size threshold for other dwellings, for conversion proposals in policy DP7: 4 will be retained; as shall the approach outlined in DP7:3 for conversions, infills and extensions.

Question 21: Do you support Dartford's preferred approach to the mix of development on sites? If not, what alternative option should be adopted and what evidence do you have to support this?

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

J11 Residential density is the amount of housing for any given land area. For instance, in terms of measurement it is often calculated in dwellings (or habitable rooms) per hectare. The same density level as quantified can mask significant variations in the form and appearance of housing.

J12 The preferred option is for a design-led approach to housing development. Policy would expect the characteristics and potential of the site's surrounds and context to be individually and carefully considered from the outset. Criteria will be introduced to this end:

- addressing key aspects of the local context, securing attractive and healthy places, e.g. securing attractive and healthy places.
- meeting open space requirements, and
- aiming for efficient use of brownfield land in line with national policy, where consistent with infrastructure and services availability (particularly quality of public transport).
- For larger sites in the Borough, full masterplanning and a genuine diversity of residential accommodation is appropriate.

J13 Further specific criteria may apply for all developments located outside the urban area, although minimum density standards are not considered suitable here.

Question 22: What do you think Dartford's preferred approach should be to the density of development on sites and what evidence do you have to support this?

K. Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

K0 This section outlines the preferred approach in the Local Plan to households defined as Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Strategic Objectives | SO1 |
| Top national policy references | Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 |
| Current/ future evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (ORS, 2019) • Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Implementation Strategy Update (DBC, 2016) |
| Summary change from existing | Minimal / Limited / Partial / Significant: |

Local Strategy and Aims (K):

K1 The Local Plan Review will address accommodation needs in line with national policy. Dartford will identify a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to meet the identified 5 year needs (as set out in the GTAA) for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople who meet the definition set out in the PPTS. This amounts to 48 additional permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers (which does not equate to 48 new sites) and 1 additional permanent plot for travelling showpeople. No specific needs for transit provision have been identified.

K2 The potential to provide suitable accommodation 'at source' within existing sites may be significant, and will be explored fully. Appropriate local criteria for planning decisions will be provided.

Locations/Delivery methods (K):

K3 The following principles will be the focus for considering the potential of land to provide a supply of deliverable sites:

- Additional accommodation within existing authorised site boundaries (subject to licensing requirements), some of which would not require planning permission or allocation within the Local Plan. Potential sites are: Castle Farm[^], Knoxfield Plot 3[^], Salinas[^], Forest Amusements[^], Hillside*, Sauleskalns, Tennis Courts.
- Sites occupied under temporary planning permissions being granted permanent planning permission. The only existing temporary planning permission is at Brakefield Road.
- Small scale low impact extensions to existing authorised gypsy and traveller sites. There are current planning applications for extensions at Cob Tree Farm and Brakefield Road which may or may not fall into this category.
- Potential sites within Ebbsfleet Garden City.

[^] Sites that do not require planning permission or allocation within the Local Plan

* Site has an extant planning permission

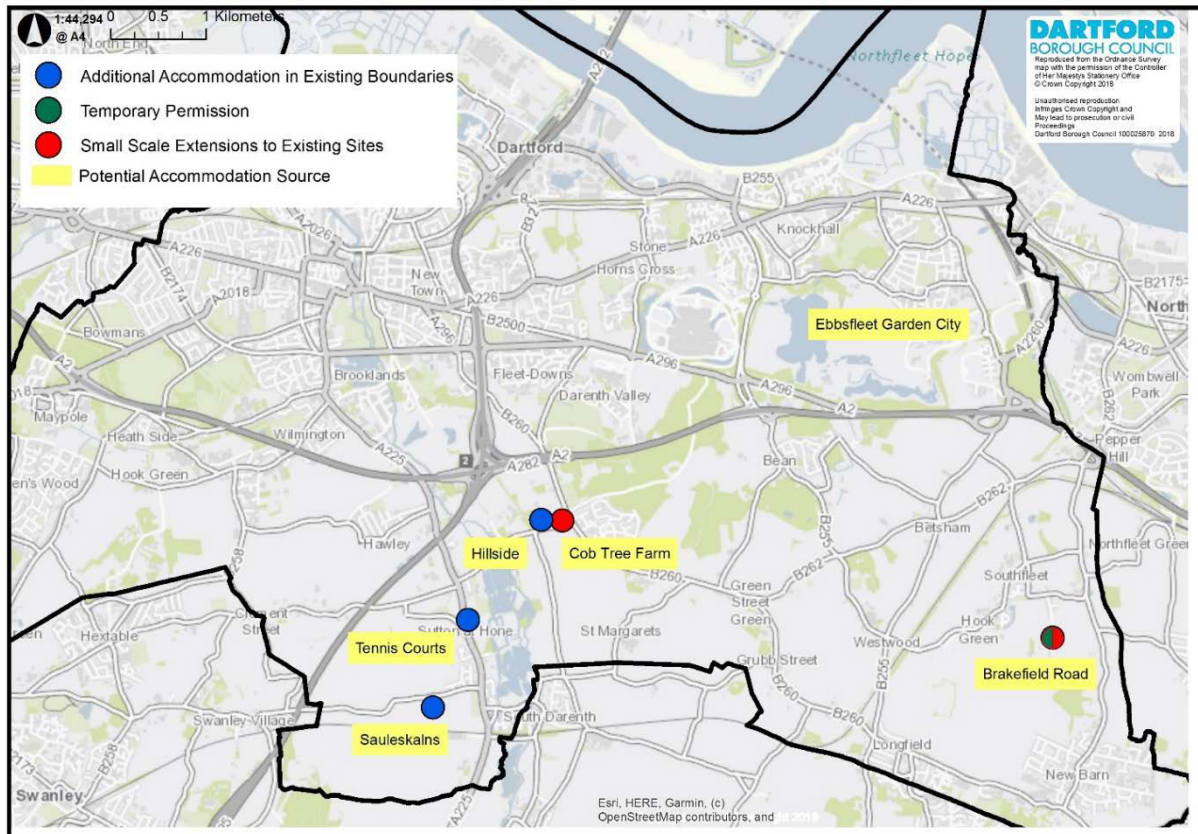
K4 In the event that the above sources do not provide sufficient accommodation to meet the 5 year needs, the Council will carry out a Borough-wide search for new sites. This will include other areas that are not within the Green Belt and sites that may be put forward in response to this consultation or as a result of a consultation with landowners prior to the publication of the Local Plan.

K5 The preference will be to avoid an overconcentration of sites in a single part of the Borough.

K6 In order to consider the potential for allocating sites which are deliverable, the Council will:

- consult landowners of both existing and potential sites
- liaise with Ebbsfleet Development Corporation.

K7 The following diagram illustrates the preferred option of exploring potential at existing sites, and elsewhere (including within the Ebbsfleet Area).



K8 The Council will ask neighbouring authorities, through duty to cooperate procedures, whether they are able to accommodate any of the need arising in Dartford

K9 Dartford will retain a criteria based policy to assess proposals coming forward on other sites, including those to meet longer term needs. Existing policy DP10 will be amended to include reference to landscape, visual and Green Belt impacts.

Question 23: In terms of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople:

- **Do you support the preferred approach towards identifying deliverable sites to meet needs over the next 5 years? If not, please set out an alternative way that this could be carried out.**
- **What are your views on the potential sources of sites? Are there any alternative sources or specific sites that we should consider as an option?**
- **Do you have any views on the proposed changes to the existing criteria based policy?**

6. Policies to Retain

6.1 No 2011 Dartford Core Strategy policies are expected to remain wholly unchanged in the Local Plan Review, although as discussed various aspects of some are expected to be generally carried forward. Although none then warranted deleting in whole, some parts of these policies were updated via the 2017 plan providing development management policies for the Borough.

6.2 A number of policy provisions adopted in 2017 are considered to still be effective, consistent with amendments to the approach set out above, and to remain in line with national policy. These are expected to be maintained and included in the Local Plan Review, either only with limited factual updating, or the same criteria incorporated within new policies.

6.3 One prime example where there has been little national policy or local change and which could be largely retained is Dartford's Development Policies Local Plan (2017) policies on Heritage and the Historic Environment.

6.4 The following lists by theme the existing policies from the [Dartford Development Policies Plan 2017](#) considered applicable for inclusion in the Local Plan Review:

HERITAGE AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- DP12: Dartford's Historic Environment Strategy
- DP13: Designated Heritage Assets

GREEN BELT LEVEL PROTECTION

- DP22: Green Belt in the Borough
- DP23: Protected Local Green Space

COMMUNITY SERVICE USES

- DP21: Securing Community Facilities

DESIGN AND AMENITY

- DP2: Good Design in Dartford
- DP5: Environmental and Amenity Protection
- DP7: Borough Housing Stock and Residential Amenity

TRANSPORT

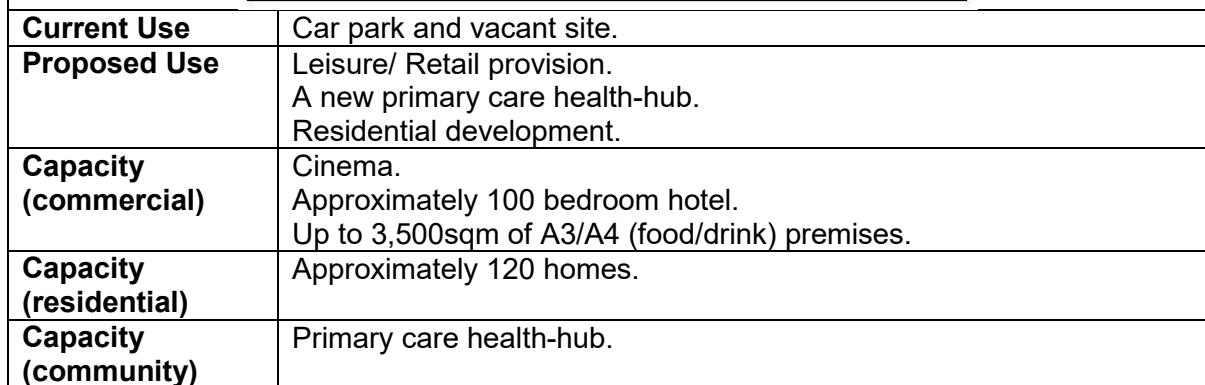
- DP3: Transport Management
- DP4: Transport Access and Design

LOCAL SHOPS

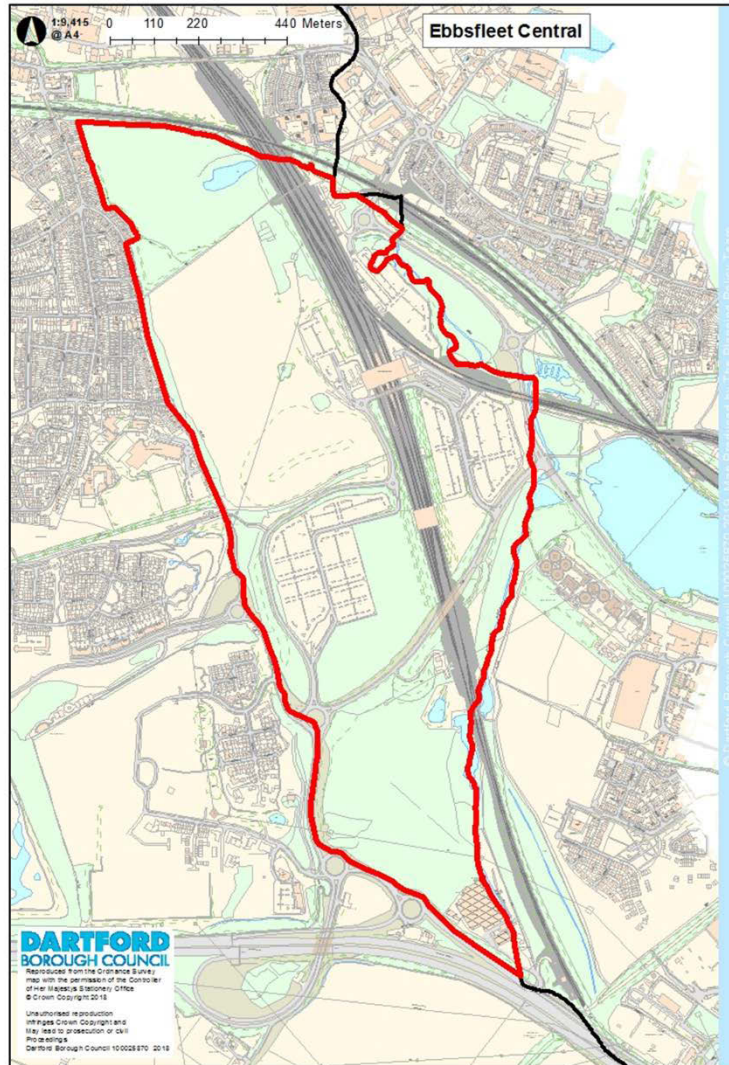
- DP17: District Centres
- DP18: Neighbourhood Centres
- DP19: Food and Drink Establishments

Question 24. Do any of these current policies need significant updating? If so, how and why should they be updated?

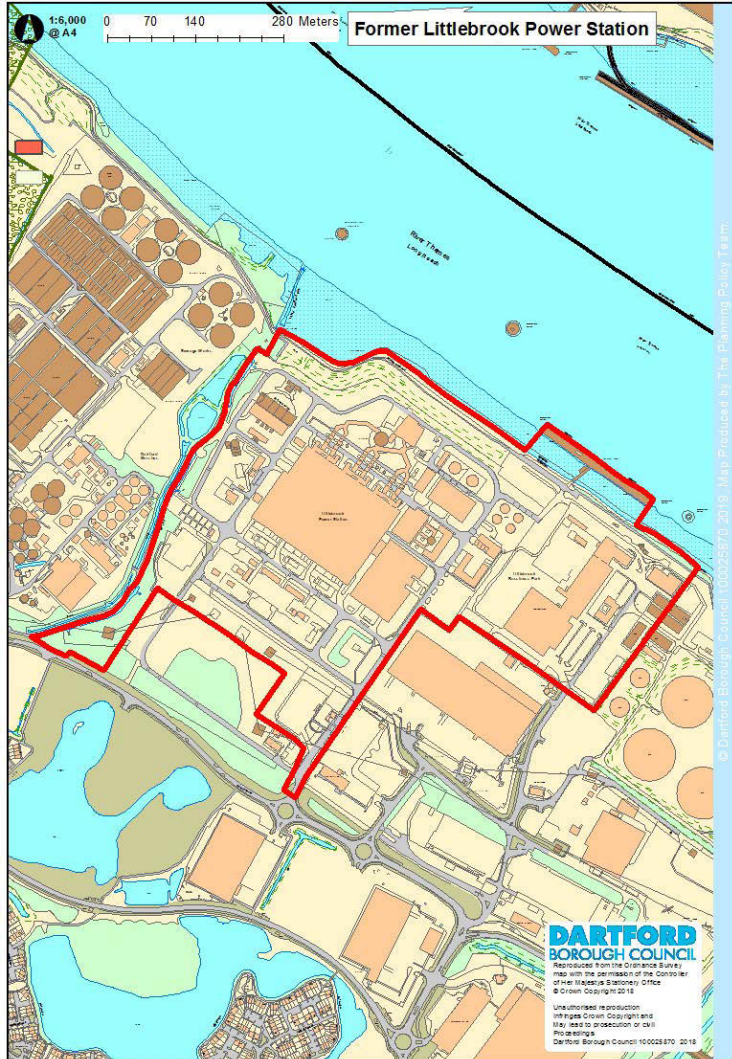
| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| SHLAA Site Ref: | 20 | Site Name: | <i>Hythe Street & Kent Road</i> | |
| Current Plan Status: | | Core Strategy Key Site | Site Area: | 1.08ha |
| Address: | Former Co-Op 20-54 Hythe Street and Westgate Car Park, Kent Road. | | Ward:: | Town |



| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------|
| SHLAA Site Ref: | 1 | Site Name: | <i>Ebbsfleet Central</i> |
| Current Plan Status: | Core Strategy Strategic Allocation | Site Area: | 117.84ha |
| Address: | Ebbsfleet Central including car parks and land east of International Way | Ward: | Ebbsfleet |



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|-------------------------------|---|
| Current Use | Former quarry and other land (parking areas and vacant areas) around Ebbsfleet International Station and the High Speed 1 line. |
| Proposed Use | A city centre mix of uses including employment, health, leisure, education, residential, restaurants/bars, and retail. |
| Capacity (commercial) | Approximately 100,00sqm of business, principally office, development (Class B1). 12,500sqm retail (class A1). |
| Capacity (residential) | 3,000+ homes. |
| Capacity (community) | 30,000sqm of community uses (class D1). |

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|---|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| SHLAA Site Ref: | 180 | Site Name: | Former Littlebrook Power Station | |
| Current Plan Status: | | Part Core Strategy Key Site | Site Area: | 33.73ha |
| Address: | Albion Rd, Dartford | | Ward: | Bridge |
|  | | | | |
| Current Use | The power station has closed and is undergoing demolition. | | | |
| Proposed Use | High quality employment development, greenspace and infrastructure appropriate for its location and riverside setting. | | | |
| Capacity (commercial) | 88,000sqm B-class floorspace. | | | |
| Capacity (residential) | Zero. | | | |
| Capacity (community) | Small scale supporting private services e.g. local café or crèche. | | | |