

# **DARTFORD LOCAL PLAN TO 2037**

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February 2021

**DARTFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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

### **About the Local Plan**

- 1.2 Development in the UK is guided by national and local planning policy. At the Borough level, Dartford Council is expected to determine how its area will change, and how land and buildings will be used in the future. The Local Plan sets out how this will happen in order to accommodate the required development identified in government policy. The Local Plan forms the basis for Dartford's decisions on planning applications for development, and also guides decisions on public and private sector investment. Dartford's Local Plan takes on board the priorities of government, local authorities, infrastructure providers, residents, parish/town councils, businesses and other local organisations.
- 1.3 This new Dartford Local Plan replaces the existing Core Strategy 2011 and Development Policies Plan 2017. The Core Strategy set out ambitions for major transformation of the Borough by 2026, based on regeneration and development of large sites within the urban area in the north of the Borough. This approach is successfully being implemented and will continue further, notably at Dartford town centre. Many aspects of policies originally within the 2017 Plan also remain relevant. The relationship between new and old policies is set out in Appendix A.
- 1.4 This new Local Plan sets out the Borough development strategy to 2037, including the part of Ebbsfleet Garden City within Dartford. The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation was set up in 2015 to speed up delivery of the Garden City, which straddles the boundaries of Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs.
- 1.5 The Plan aims to be concise but far reaching, focussing on the provision of high quality development that meets needs and is in sustainable locations. It is intended to be flexible to change whilst also providing clarity for investment and infrastructure planning. The time horizon to 2037 enables infrastructure providers to plan future provision, so that development and new facilities can be co-ordinated. A base year of 2017 for this Plan reflects the commencement of preparation after adoption of the last plan, and the government's local housing need method.

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

### **About Dartford Borough**

- 1.8 The Local Plan considers Dartford's own unique characteristics, based on evidence, and forms proposals for the sustainable development of the Borough in line with national policy. In terms of strategic setting (see Figure 1 below), situated in Kent and within the Thames Estuary, Dartford stands at a pivotal point in South East England, and adjoining Greater London.

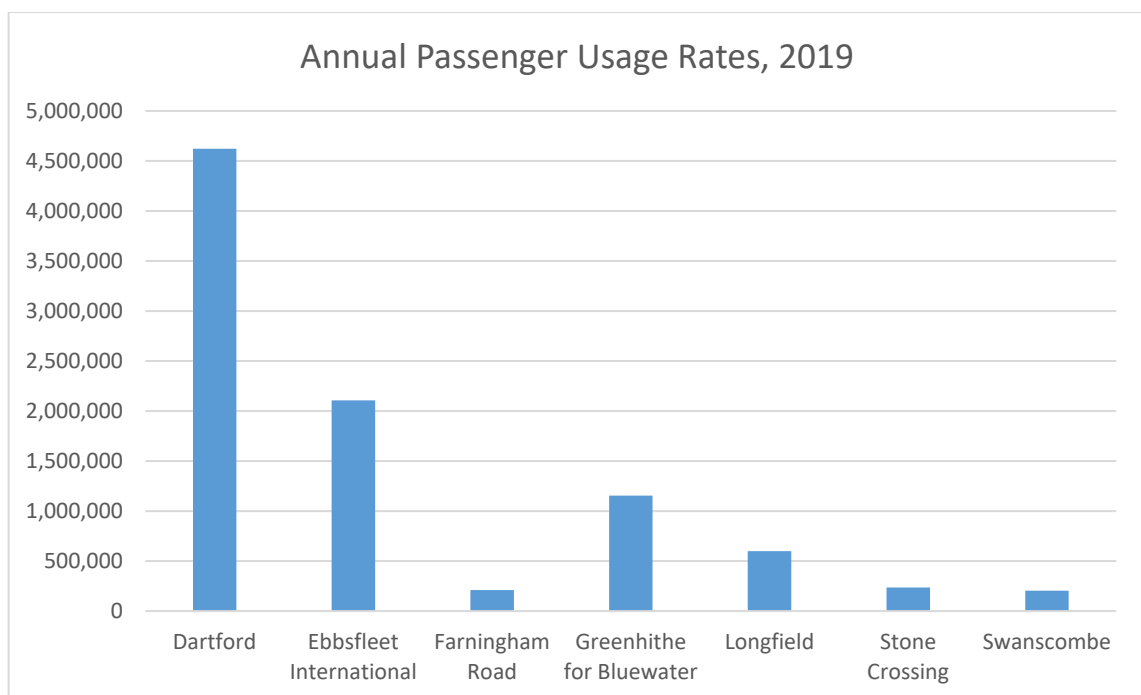
**Figure 1: Dartford's location within Kent and South East England**



- 1.9 Dartford Borough includes areas highly rich in history and historic character. Across the Borough currently, there are approximately 180 listed buildings and 12 scheduled monuments. The six Conservation Areas are found in Southfleet parish, Wilmington, Greenhithe and Dartford Town Centre.
- 1.10 The Borough lies on the dip slope of the North Downs adjacent to the River Thames. The River Darent in the west of the Borough and the Ebbsfleet river in the east flow northwards into the River Thames.
- 1.11 There is a varied and distinctive landscape, comprising two distinct areas, the urban north and the more rural south. North of the A2 is a largely built-up area, containing 70% of the population. This stretches from Dartford town in the west (adjoining the London Borough of Bexley) through to the growing communities at Ebbsfleet (adjoining Gravesham Borough) in the east. The largely built-up areas of Dartford, Greenhithe, Stone and Swanscombe, interspersed with former chalk quarries and industrial land, make up the urban area north of the A2 route- with the exception of Dartford Marshes in the north west of the Borough.

- 1.12 The northern part of the Borough has seen significant residential and commercial growth in recent years, most notably north of Dartford Town, along with the development at or near Ebbsfleet Garden City.
- 1.13 The southern part of the Borough comprises areas of open countryside, much of which is within the Green Belt, interspersed with villages and some small hamlets. With a range of shops and other community facilities, Longfield is the best served settlement in the southern area, whilst Wilmington parish has the largest population.
- 1.14 Dartford has major national and international connections via the strategic road network and rail services (including HS1 and Eurostar from Ebbsfleet International Station).
- 1.15 Dartford Railway Station has become the busiest station in Kent with an annual passenger usage of 4.62 million in 2018/19. Between 2018 and 2019, use of the station increased by 11%, a much higher rate than other stations across Kent. Within the Borough, all stations except Longfield saw a rise in passenger use between 2018 and 2019. More people use Dartford railway station than Ebbsfleet International and all the other stations in the Borough put together. This is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Annual Passenger Usage of Railway Stations in the Borough 2019**



Source: Office of Rail and Road

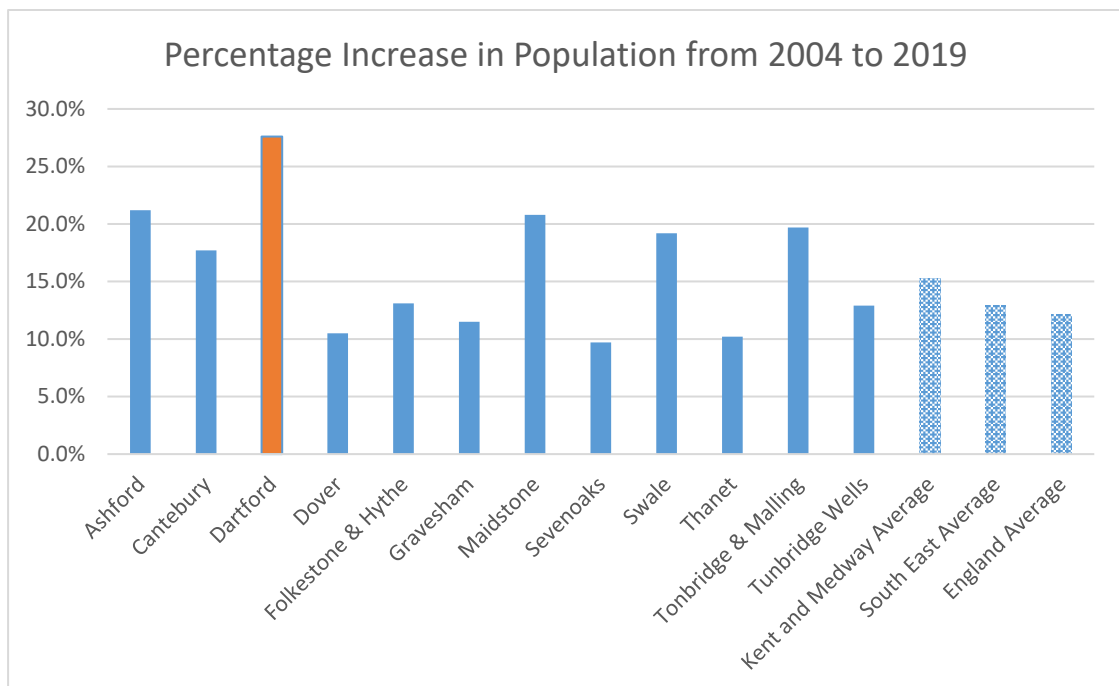


- 1.16 The Dartford Crossing/ M25 and the large arterial A2 London-Dover route generate high volumes of traffic flow through the Borough. This can be attributed to be the principal cause of the Dartford's higher carbon emissions per capita than the regional average (the majority of emissions are from transport sources).
- 1.17 Openness characterises the Borough as a whole, as a result of its rivers (most notably the Thames), large urban green areas and the countryside. The majority of Dartford's area is designated Metropolitan Green Belt land.

### People and Economy of Dartford

- 1.18 Between 2004 and 2019 the population of Dartford Borough increased by 28%, the largest increase across the Kent districts and a much higher increase than averages across Kent, the South East and England. This is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Percentage Population Increase (2004 to 2019) Comparison**



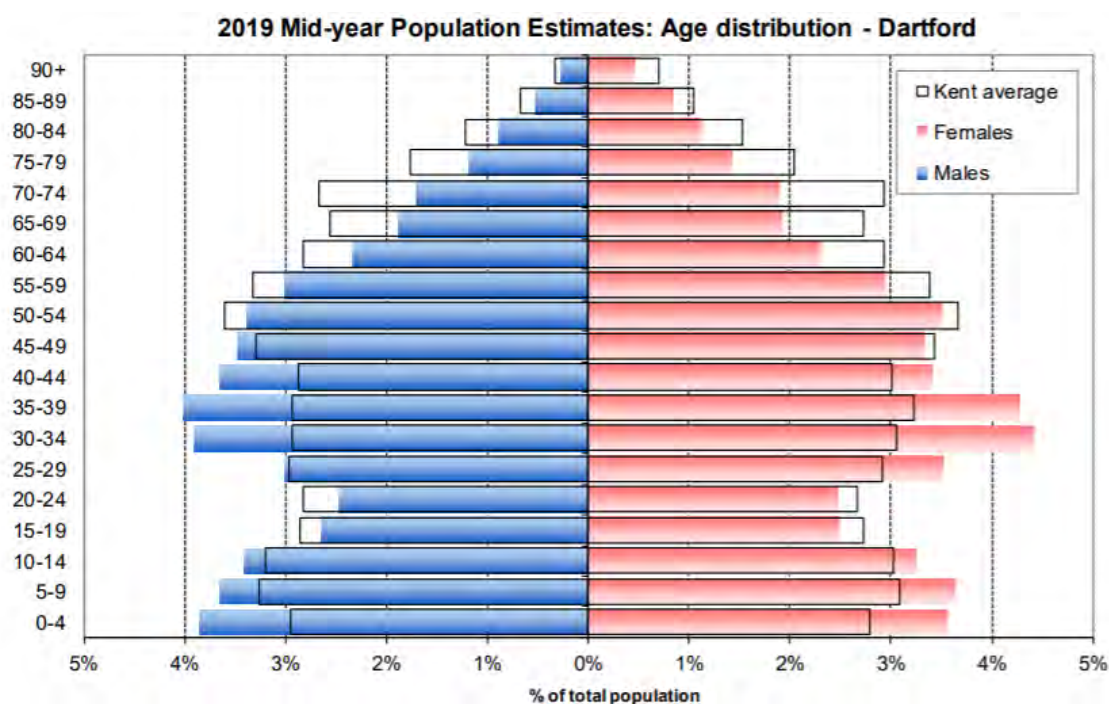
Source: KCC from ONS

- 1.19 The socio-economic make-up of the Borough is diverse. Nevertheless in terms of general groupings, 70% of Dartford's population can be loosely characterised as falling within the following defined national categories, based on market research by Mosaic:
- *Aspiring Homemakers – Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means;*

- *Domestic Success – Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers;*
- *Senior Security – Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement;*
- *Rental Hubs – Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods; and*
- *Family Basics – Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet.*

1.20 The average age of residents in Dartford Borough is 37.5 years, lower than the Kent and national averages of 41.2 years and 40.2 years respectively<sup>1</sup>. Compared to the Kent average, the Borough has a higher proportion of children under 15 and adults aged between 25 and 49. Figure 4 sets out the age and gender of those living in Dartford Borough compared to the average in Kent.

**Figure 4: Population Estimates by Age and Gender – Dartford and Kent Average**

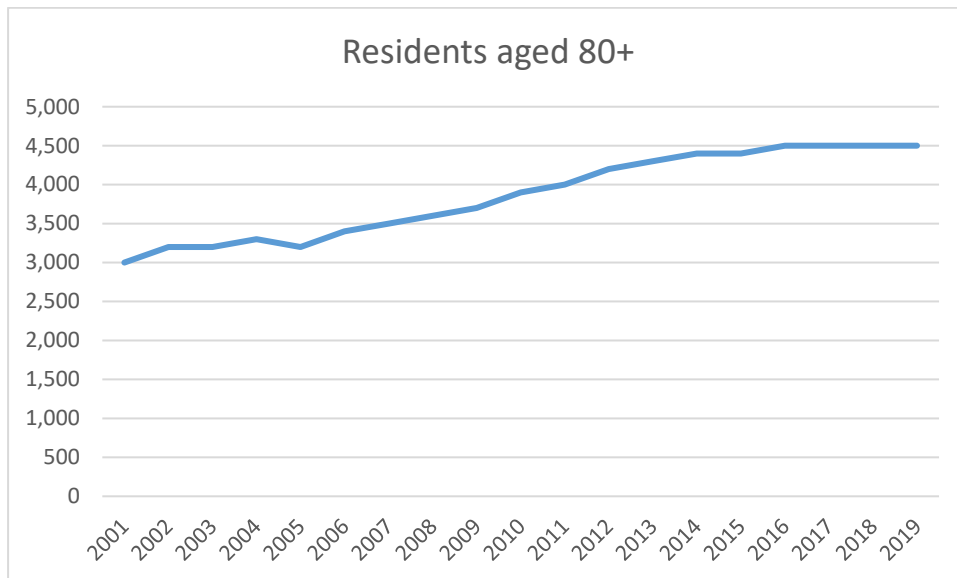


Source: Population Estimates Unit, Office for National Statistics (ONS). Presented by Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

<sup>1</sup> ONS (2019) mid-year estimates.

- 1.21 The number of those aged 80 and over in Dartford Borough has risen significantly since 2001 but is slightly below the Kent average. This is shown in Figure 5. The average life expectancy in Dartford is 81 years, which is in line with the Kent and England averages

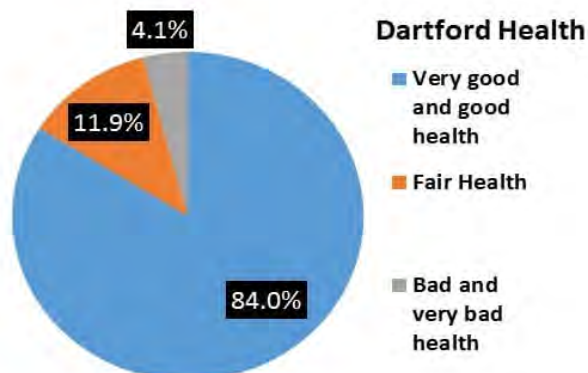
**Figure 5: Borough population aged 80 and over (2001 to 2019)**



Source: ONS

- 1.22 Compared with England as a whole, Dartford Borough has an above average number of people reporting very good / good health. Figure 6 sets out further information in relation to residents' health. One in seven (14%) people in Dartford Borough find their day-to-day activities are limited by illness, below the English average of 17%<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 6: Residents' Health Self- Classification**

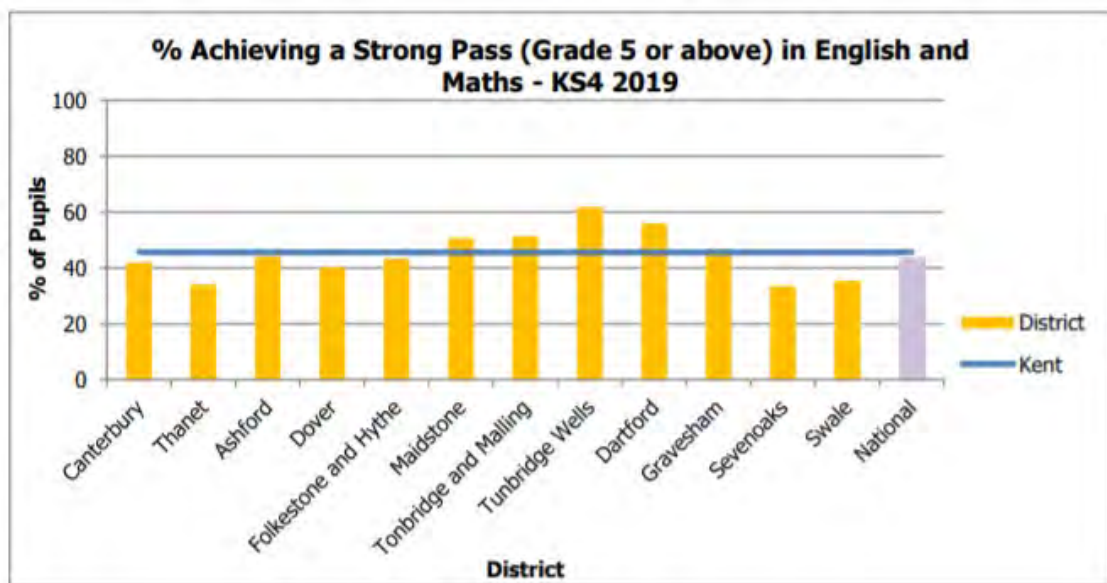


<sup>2</sup> Census, 2011

Source: ONS

- 1.23 Whilst there are high levels of residents with good health overall, there are still other challenges facing residents of Dartford Borough, including<sup>3</sup>:
- Childhood obesity rates are slightly higher than the Kent average, 25% of reception pupils and 37% of year 6 pupils are classified as overweight or obese in Dartford Borough, compared with 23% and 33% (respectively) for Kent;
  - The percentage of adults who consume the recommended ‘5 a day’ of fruits and vegetables is well below the Kent average and is the lowest of all districts;
  - The number of premature deaths (under 75 years) due to cardiovascular disease is the second highest across Kent; and
  - The number of premature (under 75 years) deaths from respiratory factors is above the Kent average.
- 1.24 Dartford Borough has some good levels of educational attainment, and includes popular high-performing schools. In 2019, 56% of Key Stage 4 children achieved a strong pass (Grades 5 or above) in English and Maths, higher than both the Kent and England averages (46% and 43% respectively) – see Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Key Stage 4 Attainment in Kent**

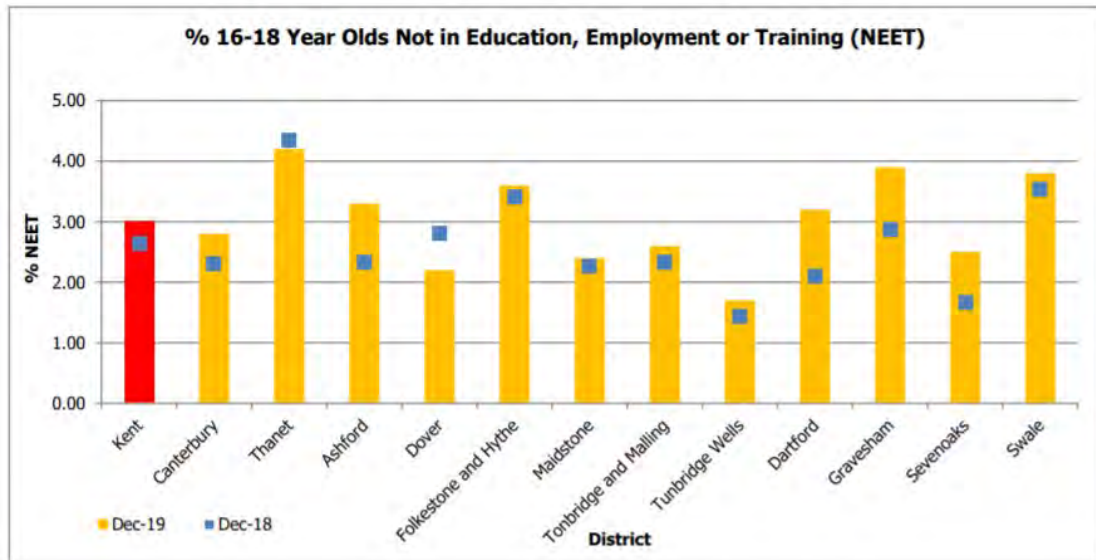


Source: KCC

<sup>3</sup>KCC Public Health Observatory, <https://www.kpho.org.uk/health-and-social-care-maps/pdf-social-care-maps>

- 1.25 Whilst good school grades are being achieved, 3.2% Key Stage 5 aged residents in the Borough were not in education, employment or training (NEET), which is slightly above the Kent average of 3%. Further information is set out in Figure 8. More than one in ten of those over 50 years old have no qualifications.

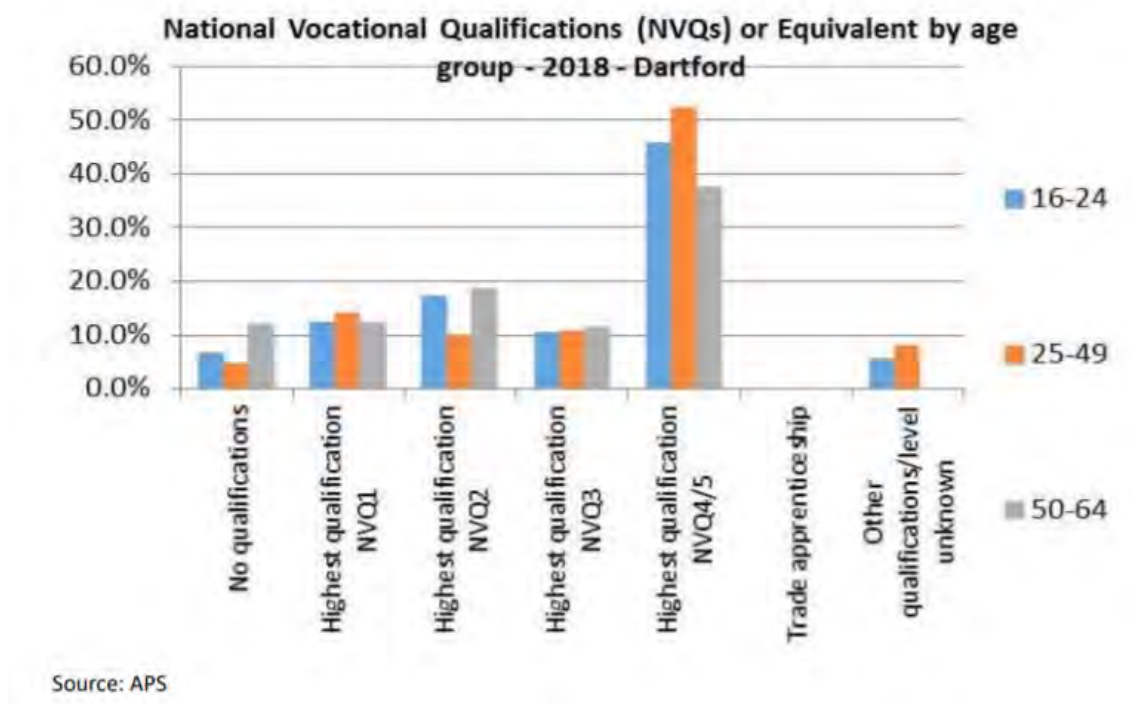
**Figure 8: Key Stage 5 Ages Not in Education, Employment or Training in Kent**



Source: KCC

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

**Figure 9: NVQs or Equivalent by Age Group in Dartford 2018**

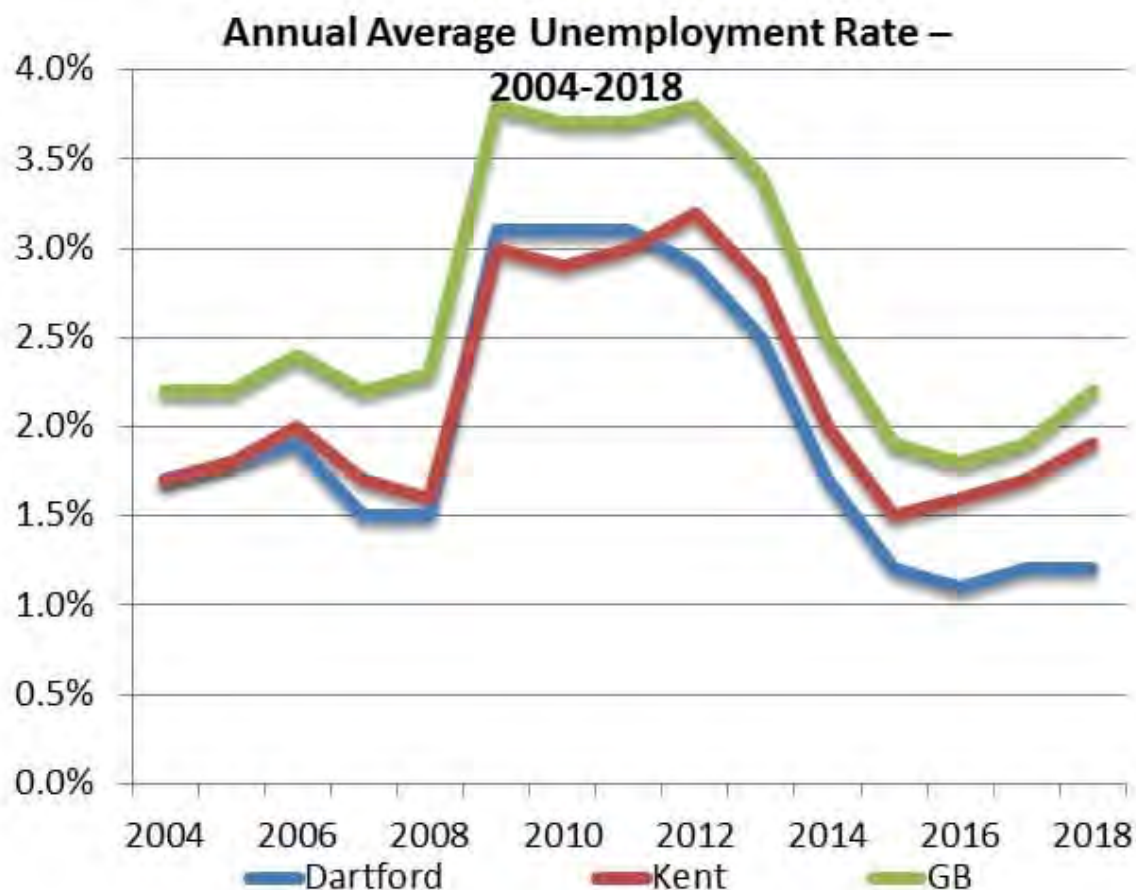


- 1.27 Based on data from the same time period, 46% of the Borough's residents are managers and/or professionals below average when compared with 53% for the South East and 49% for Great Britain. Consistent with that, 25% of Dartford Borough's residents are machine operatives or similar, compared with 13% for the South East and 16% for Great Britain<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.28 As with a number of economic indicators for Dartford, unemployment rates are better than average, and over the years have improved relative to Kent as a whole, as shown in Figure 10.

**Figure 10: Average Annual Unemployment Rates for Dartford, Kent & GB**

<sup>4</sup> ONS, Nomis Labour Market





Source: Claimant Count

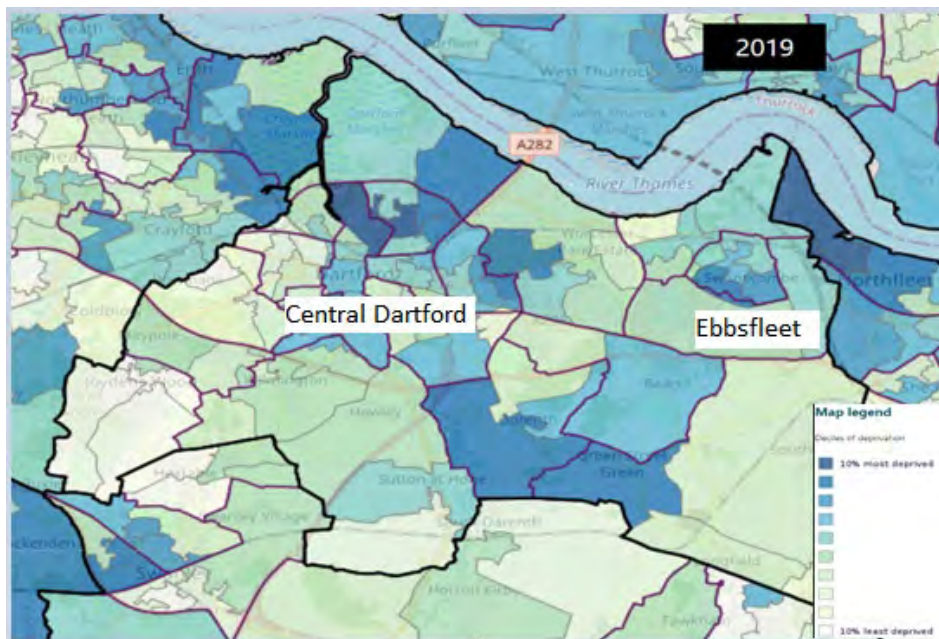
- 1.29 Data from July 2019 to June 2020 shows that only 2.9% of residents in Dartford Borough were unemployed, lower than averages across the South East and Great Britain (3.4% and 3.9%). Likewise, only 11% of residents are economically inactive (including students and retired people), lower than South East and Great Britain (18% and 21%).
- 1.30 The 2011 Census showed more people travelled into the Borough for work every day than residents who left to work outside the Borough i.e. net in-commuting. This reflects levels of job provision in Dartford Borough. The wholesale and retail sector is the largest single employer of people living in the Borough, with 22% of the population employed in the sector<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.31 Dartford Borough has benefitted from jobs and facilities, with a strong retail/ leisure offer particularly at Bluewater Shopping Centre. Vacancy rates in Dartford town centre's core have decreased. The Orchard Theatre in Dartford Town Centre is visited

<sup>5</sup> ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey

more frequently by residents in and around the Borough than venues in Central London or the O2 arena<sup>6</sup>.

- 1.32 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 shows that there a complex pattern in the levels of overall deprivation affecting the Borough, as shown in Figure 11. The net result is that the Borough is broadly in the middle of national deprivation rankings. When comparing average scores against the 317 Boroughs in the Country, Dartford as a whole is the 154<sup>th</sup> least deprived.

**Figure 11: Index of Multiple Deprivation in Dartford Borough 2019**



Source: MHCLG

- 1.33 When looking at how Dartford residents travel to work, 2011 Census data shows that 23% of trips are made by public transport and 8% by active travel (walking and cycling), compared with 12% by public transport and 14% by active travel in the wider South East region. Only 4% of Dartford residents worked from home at the time of the 2011 Census, compared with 7% in the South East region.
- 1.34 In summary, the Local Plan needs to respond to a range of key Borough social and economic factors, including:
- **A rapidly growing population** needing new local infrastructure, particularly for health and education.

<sup>6</sup> LSH (2021) Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail and Leisure Study



- **A population profile including a high percentage of children and young adults**, who will require sufficient educational, employment and leisure opportunities, and access to the housing market, to meet their needs.
- **A sizeable labour workforce with high employment rates**, but a limited choice of high order/ professional local job opportunities.
- **High levels of mobility**, and increasingly busy public transport, with traffic in the Borough contributing to pollution levels.
- Requirements to support walking and cycling, and access to the countryside and greenspace, for **healthy living**.
- **An ageing population** that should have the right kind of homes and local infrastructure to suit their needs.

### **Borough Vision**

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

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

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

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

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

*New settlements in Dartford Borough will be sensitively integrated with existing communities and the local environment, bringing accessible new services, public greenspaces and attractive waterside settings. They will be served by walkable, convenient and high quality jobs, public transport, healthcare, and education services.*

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

*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. It will be characterised by healthy, green and open environments; with high quality streets for walking and cycling. Ebbsfleet's new communities will be well linked, distinctive, diverse and thoughtfully designed, to reflect the needs, and cultural and landscape heritage, of the Borough.*

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

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

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

### **Strategic Objectives**

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

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

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

**Objectives for infrastructure and economic investment:**

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

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

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

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

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

2.3 These objectives will drive Dartford's planning decisions through Local Plan policies. Applicable objectives are referred to at the beginning of individual policies.

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

- *Strategic objectives: W1, W2, I1,I3, I4, G1*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 11, 15, 103, 118*

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

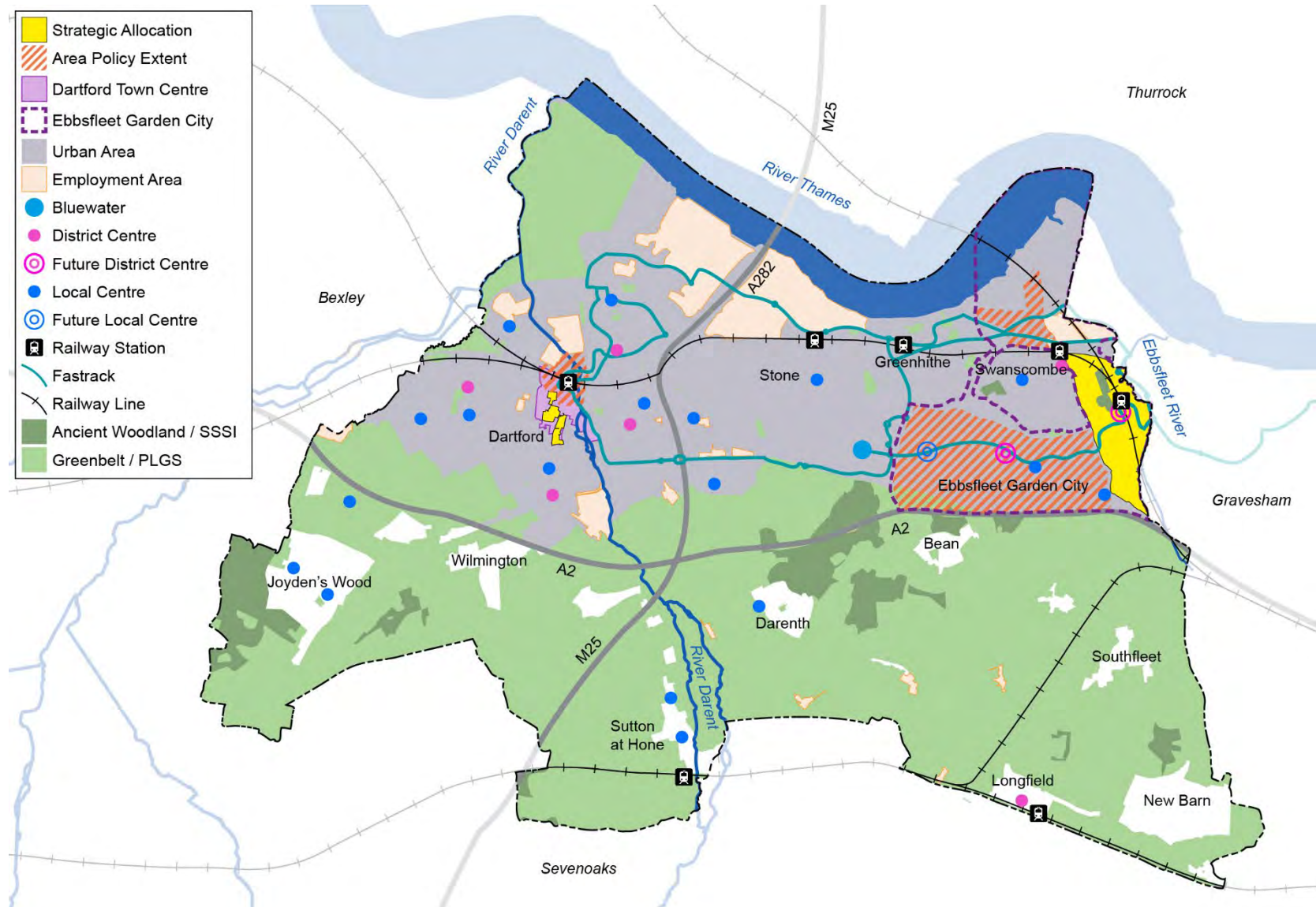
- 2.7 This Local Plan ensures that a positive framework is in place to enable continued development of planned regeneration until 2037. There remains clear potential for the efficient use of brownfield land, combined with the location of jobs and homes in places where people are not heavily dependent on cars, through the sustainable development of the northern urban area.
- 2.8 Dartford's transformation into a productive post-industrial economy, generating thousands of new jobs, should progress further, targeting local development and infrastructure needs. The growing strength of commercial development and employment generation in Dartford should be applied to provide a wider range of job and local business opportunities. Economic development must be focused on existing centres and employment clusters, maintaining their competitiveness, particularly through enhanced public transport accessibility and enhancing their local environment. The Borough's series of identified large and small employment areas provide local jobs and new development land, and will be retained and expanded for current and future commercial and industrial businesses.
- 2.9 A network of retail centres will be maintained to ensure accessible provision of shopping, leisure, essential services and jobs, at the heart of existing and new communities. This includes urban and village clusters that have maintained their vitality, but also Dartford Town Centre and the major economic asset of Bluewater.
- 2.10 The town of Dartford, in the north west of the Borough, has maintained a mix of businesses, services and shops, with only limited vacancies in its centre. However, with the prospect of further changes in the demand for shops ahead, an active strategy for the future is required. This is particularly the case where there is retail/ commercial space no longer fit for purpose, or other under-used land/ buildings where new uses can be introduced, so that new town centre activities keep the centre thriving. Growth in the resident population in the area can create sustainably located new neighbourhoods, and boost income for local retailing and businesses.
- 2.11 In the eastern part of the urban area, previously home to the cement industry, new neighbourhoods are emerging at Ebbsfleet. This location was planned to be a focus for regeneration and new infrastructure in the Thames Estuary, notably with the opening of Ebbsfleet International Station in 2007. Expectations that this area would deliver substantial high quality jobs and a choice of modern business premises have

not yet materialised, but the economic and sustainable development potential of land around the station still can be achieved and will complement the recent residential growth in the wider Ebbsfleet area. A genuine mix of uses at Ebbsfleet would support its Garden City aims and avoid generating high levels of commuting.

- 2.12 Ebbsfleet Garden City and central Dartford continue to offer the best opportunity for sustainable development and renewal of existing land and buildings. These locations will accommodate most of the assessed needs for residential development and high quality jobs in the future, supported by good public transport, key local services and shopping/ cultural facilities. In other parts of the Borough, housing and employment uses will be concentrated at locations well served by trains and high frequency buses, and supported by appropriate community/ green infrastructure. This spatial strategy is outlined in the Borough's Key Diagram (Diagram 1) below.
- 2.13 With this development focus on sustainable locations in the urban north of the Borough, the character of Dartford's villages and the open countryside can best be maintained. Much of the southern area of the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt where national policy seeks to maintain openness and permanence. Its purpose is also to limit urban sprawl between Greater London and towns in Kent, with the strategic wedge of open land at Dartford Marshes in particular providing a vital role in this regard. Green Belt land will be maintained to complement high levels of growth occurring in urban Dartford. This will ensure a defined sustainable pattern of development that is planned, clear and agreed for the Borough's future growth.
- 2.14 Significant new development has previously occurred/ been permitted at a number locations across the Borough's urban area. This included major development sites in the Greenhithe and Stone areas, settlements which have seen substantial growth from their small village origins. This part of the urban area, with distinctive places separated from Dartford and Ebbsfleet, and occasional large breaks in the built form and distinctive topography, will see much needed community and other infrastructure and the completion of existing planning permissions.



Diagram 1: Key Diagram



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

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

### **Urban Area Principles**

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

### **Economic Strategy**

7. Significant jobs, major commercial activity and new employment premises will be prioritised within central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City. Economic development will occur at locations elsewhere in the urban area where this is

consistent with sustainable growth patterns and provides suitable improvement/ intensification of commercial locations. Economic growth will be based on a strategy of:

- a) supporting the growth of existing local businesses within the Borough, and encouraging start-ups and small/ medium sized enterprises;
- b) promoting enhanced productivity, targeting growth sectors, and clusters of high technology, or creative, industries; and
- c) increasing professional and managerial employment.

8. Economic development and jobs growth will be delivered principally through providing sufficient development opportunities for:

- a) New development land at, and additional floorspace within, the identified employment areas.
- b) Redevelopment for modern retail/ leisure premises and community facilities within the retail centres. The network of retail centres comprises:
  - i) Dartford Town Centre, which will attract a wide range of new businesses;
  - ii) Bluewater, which will continue its regional economic contribution;
  - iii) District Centres at Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Swanscombe and Longfield; and
  - iv) Local Centres in the urban area and at villages.

#### Non-Urban Area Principles

9. The openness and permanence of the Metropolitan Green Belt in the south of the Borough and at Dartford Marshes will be maintained. Development will only occur where in full accordance with Green Belt policies.

10. Any residential or other development within the Borough's villages will be of proportionate scale and on non-Green Belt land.

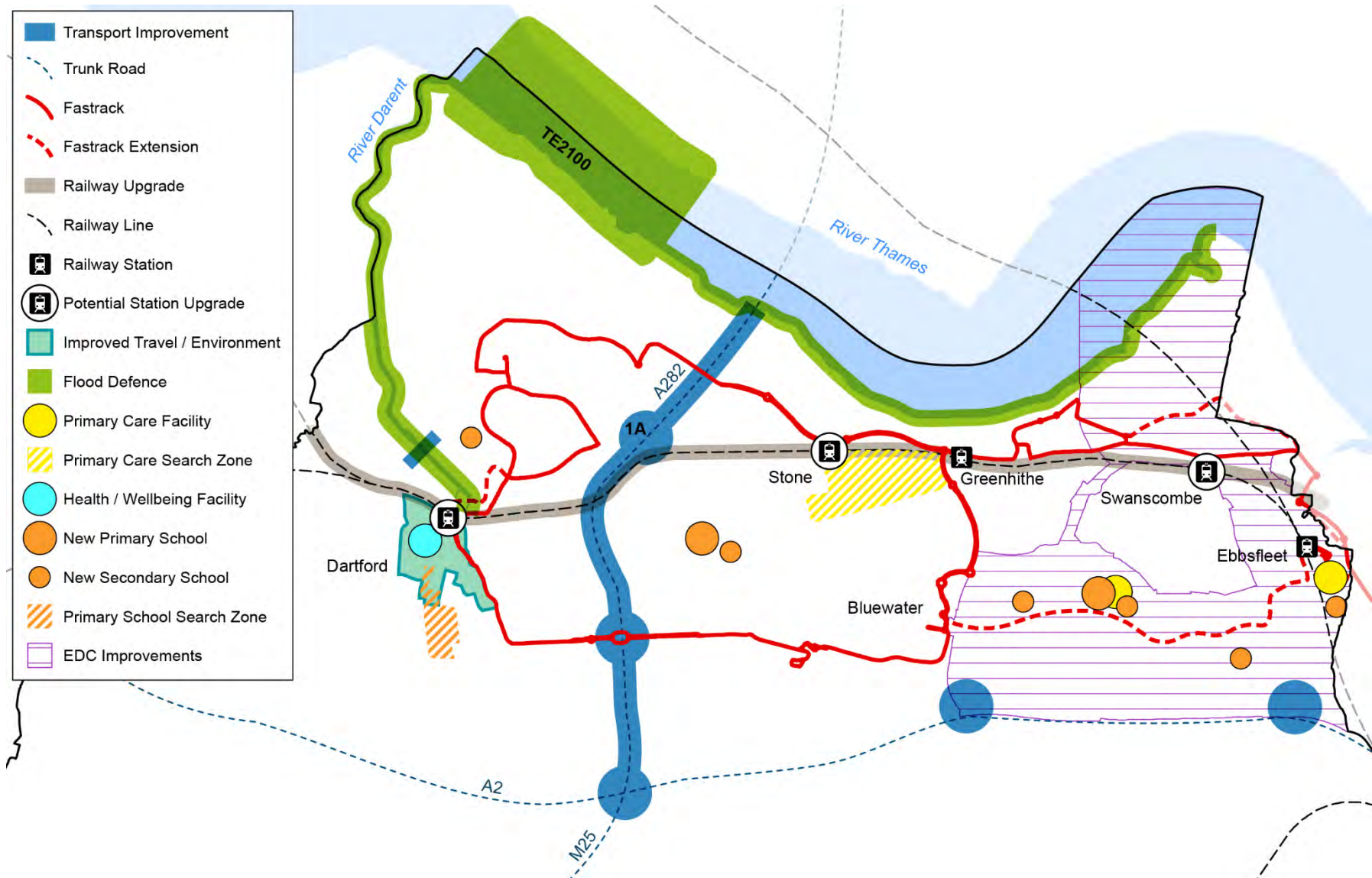
## Infrastructure Planning Strategy (S2)

- *Strategic Objectives: W2, W5, I1, I2, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 92, 96, 102, 103*

- 2.15 Infrastructure planning is an essential part of the sustainable growth of the Borough. The provision of community infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities, is essential to meet the wellbeing and personal requirements of residents. Development should also be complemented by green infrastructure, the open and green spaces necessary for residents to enjoy a healthy and good quality of life and for providing habitats for nature.
- 2.16 The Council works with partners, including Kent County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group/ the Primary Care Network (NHS) and Highways England, to use contributions from developers and to secure the delivery of the land to provide the facilities that are required as a result of development. The Council, and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation where applicable, will continue to lead the local infrastructure co-ordination process, and work in partnership with service providers to identify and secure delivery of high quality infrastructure alongside new development.
- 2.17 The Council has provided a clear and consistent development focus in Local Plans. New services and facilities must be provided in a timely manner, with investment commensurate with the scale and needs of the communities of the Borough as it grows. The Borough's urban environment in particular needs new facilities and public and private investment, to serve and protect residential areas, and to create high quality new places in growth areas that are appealing for pedestrians and with good communications. Some of these interventions (including 'search zones' where site-specific delivery, or the area requirement for community facilities, is not yet confirmed) are summarised in Diagram 2 below.



**Diagram 2: Infrastructure Diagram**



### Community needs and local infrastructure planning

- 2.18 With high levels of residential completions and sites under construction, pressing needs exist, e.g. for new health and education facilities. The rate of progress in achieving delivery by service providers has been variable. A number of education facilities have been completed, but the full range of facilities for community wellbeing and local services are required, particularly to support new development in the urban area. Looking ahead, infrastructure must be front loaded and provided early on in regenerating areas.
- 2.19 New community, transport and other infrastructure must be brought forward in the Borough to address longstanding growth plans. Cohesion of new and existing neighbourhoods needs to be consolidated and be given a chance to form with the assistance of facilities essential to forming successful communities e.g. schools or health/ wellbeing provision. Given the major changes already seen across some of the urban area, social integration supported by infrastructure needs time to take root and for development to sustainably continue at an appropriate and planned pace.
- 2.20 The Local Plan looks towards the late 2030s and therefore has to be flexible to future consumer preferences, wider implications of infrastructure/ technology, changing delivery models for community services, potential changes in the demand for skills or need to travel significant distances, and health impacts.
- 2.21 Local Plan policies set out the significance of securing land for infrastructure, and avoiding inappropriate alternative land uses that jeopardise facilities being delivered. This applies both to improvements needed to physical infrastructure in the Borough, including local and strategic (Thame Estuary) flood defences, and finding sites for new community infrastructure in growing urban areas. Similarly green infrastructure needs to be planned within developments, with strategic provision in large developments.

### Dartford's infrastructure planning regime

- 2.22 Dartford's 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, responsibility for their delivery and how they will be funded. The IDP is developed through discussions with the service providers and updated on a regular basis as projects progress.

- 2.23 Achievement of sustainable development and the associated infrastructure set out in the IDP is based around the successful delivery of the planned spatial strategy, focused on central Dartford and the Ebbsfleet Garden City. This means actively managing the location/ level of development. Unanticipated residential development proposals will be carefully considered against Policy M9.
- 2.24 Dartford has introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Dartford CIL governance model is based on annual consideration and agreement of local needs/ requirements of service providers and available funding. This planned 'in principle' funding approach is anticipated to be maintained to provide clarity for service providers and to support development. The implications of the introduction of any new national system of developer contributions on CIL will be considered. Planning obligations, secured through section 106 legal agreements, are also employed to secure site specific measures, land and affordable housing provision. It is expected that the major service providers, whether for highways, public transport, utilities, health and social care, education or other community infrastructure, will use this support to maintain a package of large and smaller scale service upgrades throughout the plan period and across the Borough.
- 2.25 Parish and town councils within the Borough receive a portion of the CIL contributions generated from development within their areas. Expenditure of this neighbourhood portion should be optimised and the Council will encourage the parish and town councils to contribute the monies received through CIL towards essential strategic community infrastructure such as new health facilities. This can complement the actions of Parish and Town Councils directly funding priority smaller interventions, e.g. improvements to the public realm, pedestrian crossings, bus stops and residents' parking schemes.

#### Managing travel demand and infrastructure

- 2.26 Dartford has attracted investment based on its strategic location and varied connections. For development to continue sustainably, the transport network needs to be improved. Recent economic accomplishments mean Dartford has a high degree of out-commuting, but an even higher volume of people who flow into the Borough every working day. Usage of Dartford railway station has grown rapidly but there are also high levels of movement through the Borough on London's arterial roads, and on railways. Additional to this, there are very high volumes of traffic orbiting on the M25,

which often end up being forced to divert off, using local roads, with the frequent incidents that happen on the strategic road network. The particular lack of resilience of the Dartford Crossing exacerbates much of the Borough's endemic congestion issues, with serious impacts on the local road network throughout all of Dartford town and beyond.

- 2.27 Due to this, a range of transport planning interventions are necessary. The local planning authority will push for proposed highway schemes, particularly the Lower Thames Crossing (outside Dartford) and the upgrade of the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions, to be completed and in a timely manner. It will work with partners to take forward and help deliver further junction upgrades on the strategic highway network, expected to include London Orbital Junction 1A and potentially other junctions in the Borough further south of the Dartford Crossing. This should be allied with a package of upgrades on the local road network to alleviate daily congestion pressure points.
- 2.28 Even after taking into account planned strategic highway works to address increased demand, development can only be accommodated if the proportion of journeys made through public transport and active (walking and cycling) modes are significantly increased, and other mitigation measures are undertaken by new development. Policies M16 and M17 set out further provisions.
- 2.29 A clear Local Plan strategy has an important role to play by leading the forward planning for a sustainable pattern of new activities. Uses that generate significant movements of people, such as schools, healthcare and large shopping or employment areas, need to be well located in close proximity to each other and residential areas, with a realistic choice of travel modes. The Borough's planning policies also consistently seek measures to secure major modal shifts in transport choice in favour of expanded active travel and public transport. These offer clear benefits for efficient travel and wellbeing, avoiding vehicular congestion, improving air quality and promoting healthy living.
- 2.30 Technological change is significant. It is expected to expand opportunities for more environmentally friendly vehicles such as replacing internal combustion engines with electric power, and alternative fuel options for buses. Measures to accommodate these changes will be required in developments. However, new information communications technology should also assist in providing economic growth prospects that are not dependent on ever-increasing travel demand.



- 2.31 There is the potential for better rail connectivity with the Crossrail (Elizabeth) line at Abbey Wood west of the Borough. Development proposals should not prejudice the long-term potential of new rail services between Ebbsfleet and the terminus for Crossrail services at Abbey Wood. The Council will continue to explore the potential of this project with partners, which will be based on the following principles for Dartford:
- Achieving significant modal shift away from reliance on private vehicles i.e. reducing congestion by delivering a new, integrated high quality transport service and connectivity required to meet current and future travel demands. A major intervention is required to provide additional capacity for the rail network to Dartford, and for reducing journey times to key central London destinations.
  - Supporting regeneration and the creation of new jobs and increased productivity, particularly at Dartford Town Centre, or for other large employers.
  - Demonstrating clear environmental and social benefits across the Borough.
- 2.32 In any event, the Council considers that there is a current need for major improvements in the railway stations provided for Dartford (which has become the busiest station in Kent), Stone and Swanscombe. This will be further explored with rail and other partners. The potential for enhanced operation and customer convenience is significant (e.g. at Dartford station), with the aim of achieving highly useable and integrated public transport hubs.
- 2.33 The Fastrack bus link directly between Ebbsfleet International Station and Bluewater will shortly be operating and further dedicated busway links are in delivery. Further major improvements are required to wider Fastrack route infrastructure. Expansion of Fastrack services, e.g. in the Swanscombe Peninsula area, and priority measures-at strategic junctions in Dartford are required to ensure reliability. These must be allied with improved bus services on other routes serving the wider urban and rural areas of the Borough.

#### Borough Green Grid Network

- 2.34 The Dartford Green Grid will help prioritise and deliver green infrastructure and cycling/ walking improvements. It supports planning for active transport, and enables people and wildlife to move and make connections within the urban area, to and along rivers, to the countryside and to Green and Blue Infrastructure networks beyond Dartford. The Green Grid should be applied to promote integrated and attractive walking/ cycling;

and can be enhanced and connected through urban spaces particularly where the soft landscaping within these areas allows for wildlife corridors. Its habitat/ landscape corridors and enhanced or new footpaths/ cyclepaths should be supported by applicable developments.

## **Policy S2: Infrastructure Planning Strategy**

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

to it, will be reserved as required, including for flood defences. New high quality and advanced communications infrastructure developments will occur in line with national policy to support the Borough's needs.

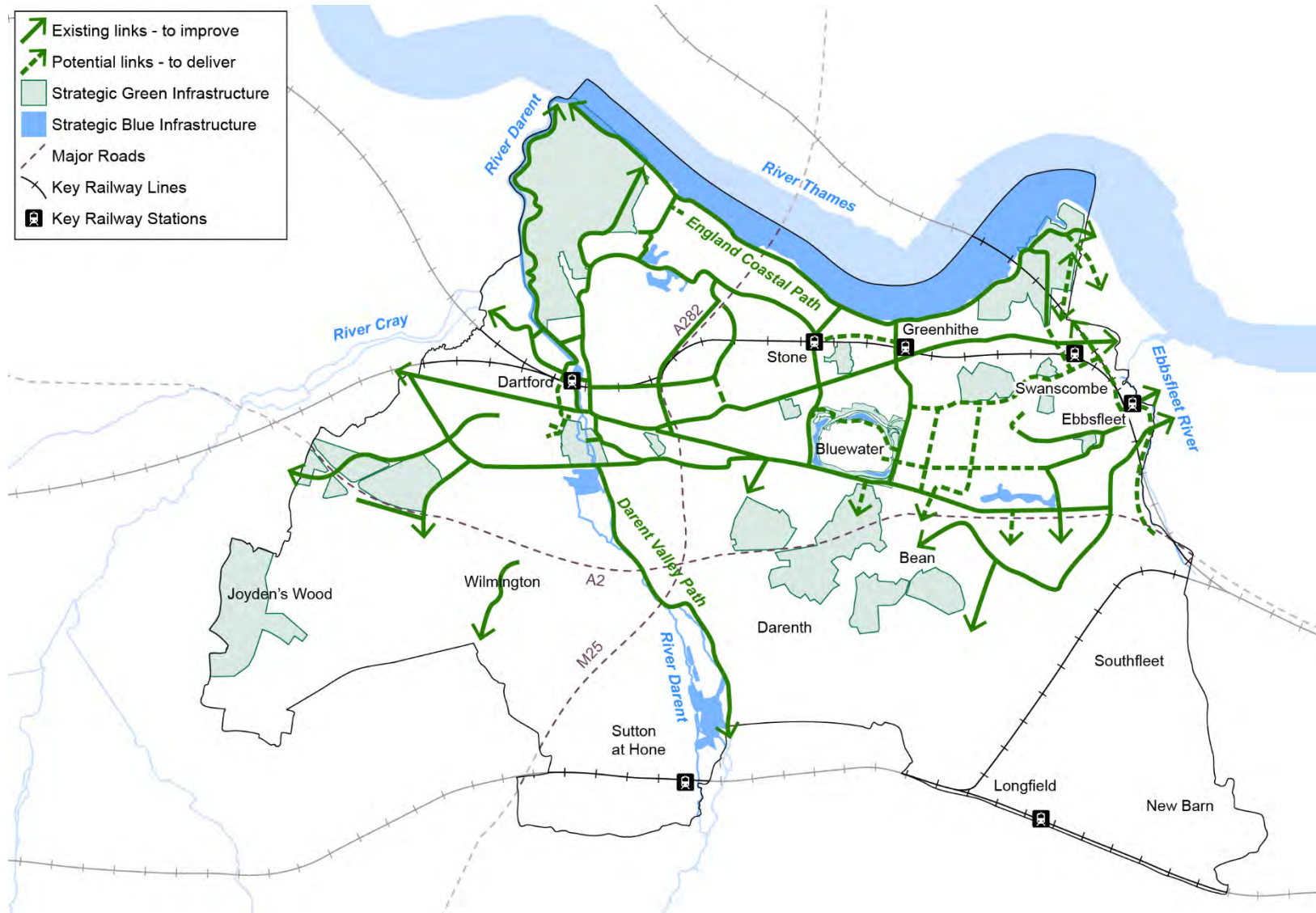
6. The Borough's Green Grid network will continue to be upgraded and expanded to a finer grain, including through improving existing green and blue infrastructure such as open spaces and water bodies, achieving appropriate new multi-functional greenspaces, and enhancing biodiversity. Development will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

### Climate Change Strategy (S3)

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, G3, G4, G5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 148-152, 155*

- 2.35 Climate change is likely to lead to hotter, drier summers, and warmer, wetter winters, with rises in sea levels and an increased frequency of storm events. The Council recognises the serious impact of climate change and the threats posed by rising global temperatures. The Council further recognises that it has a duty to act to ensure that the Borough and its people play a part in securing a sustainable future. It welcomes the Government's commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 but aspires to go further to tackle the effects of climate change.
- 2.36 The Local Plan has a key role to play in this, and therefore most of the policies of plan include relevant actions. By locating new development in areas well served by facilities and public transport and seeking to improve public transport services as well as walking and cycling routes via the Green Grid network, it will reduce the frequency and duration of private car use and thereby reduce Dartford's carbon emissions. Planning policies can also facilitate measures which encourages the take up of zero or low carbon technology. For instance, through requiring the installation of electric vehicle charging points within new development or promoting domestic renewable energy installations.
- 2.37 The local planning authority will continue to develop the Green Grid network of green spaces/ links across the Borough. Strategic elements of the Green Grid in Diagram 3 below include the Thames Path (which is soon to become part of the England Coast Path), National Cycle Route 1 which traverses the Borough from east to west, and the River Darent which provides a walking/ key wildlife corridor from north to south.

Diagram 3: Strategic Green Grid



- 2.38 The natural environment also has an important role to play in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Trees absorb carbon and green spaces provide areas where rain and floodwater can percolate, reducing the risk that properties will flood. In order to provide resilience to wildlife affected by rising temperatures, it is essential that the network of habitats is protected and improved. Policy S2 in relation to the Green Grid and a number of development management policies will also apply, including policies M14 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) and M15 (Biodiversity and Landscape). New legislation will be applied to optimise biodiversity net gain in Dartford.
- 2.39 Parts of the Borough are at risk of flooding but are largely protected by flood defence infrastructure which will be protected and enhanced through policies in the Local Plan. In line with national planning policy, most development is directed at sites which are not within flood risk areas. The exception is Central Dartford where developments will provide regeneration benefits and will need to be designed to mitigate flood risk particularly in the currently modelled climate change scenario.
- 2.40 Development can also be designed to reduce energy consumption and mitigate the effects of rising temperatures. This may be through paying careful attention to the aspect of dwellings, designing internal layouts to provide natural ventilation, including trees which provide natural shading to open spaces, and pedestrian/ cycle routes. As the Borough lies within a water stressed area, development will also need to incorporate water efficiency measures.

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

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

Green and Blue Infrastructure

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

Flood risk management

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

Sustainable design and technology

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3. W4, I1, I3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 15, 65*

- 2.41 Along with economic rejuvenation and job generation, Dartford Borough has hosted a substantial increase in housebuilding since the Millennium. In this period, in actual year by year completions, the Borough has commonly delivered approximately 600 new homes per annum. When fluctuations have occurred in the Borough's provision of development, these have broadly related to national economic factors.
- 2.42 The Dartford Core Strategy plan (2011) co-ordinated a positive regeneration agenda for the Borough. This included plans for Ebbsfleet, confirming it for strategic redevelopment (having previously been part of the Green Belt), and a swathe of sites across the urban area on brownfield, largely redundant, land. These opportunities gave development in the Borough further impetus, leading to a wave of recent large scale new homes and jobs provision at identified locations. As a result of this, over the last 10 years, delivery has on average accelerated to 699 new homes a year (including an exceptional period culminating in new home construction peaking at 1,162 per annum in 2016/17). Delivery rates in the last three years have reduced from this high as greater national economic uncertainty returned.
- 2.43 The net result has been very high Borough population growth (totalling over 10%) in the five years to 2019. In this period, Dartford has had the third highest growth rate in the country outside London, or seventh highest when including London Boroughs. This position is unlikely to be maintained and sustainably accommodated Borough-wide over a prolonged period (given the small land area of the Borough and infrastructure delivery); although further residential growth is expected through existing permissions, planned supply and new proposals in accordance with the continuing regeneration agenda at Ebbsfleet and central Dartford.
- 2.44 Dartford's regeneration agenda and identification of strategic economic development land has proved beneficial in job generation and securing significant new businesses in the Borough. There have been good levels of provision of new employment uses (offices / industrial development). Over the last decade or so, delivery rates of this new



floorspace have averaged approximately 13,000sqm per annum or more, with further very large provision currently under construction.

#### Future development mix and levels

- 2.45 To promote growing prosperity, a positive approach will be maintained towards economic growth and achieving wider job opportunities. Development within identified employment areas, allocated land and planning permissions will significantly expand employment land supply. Using this approach, the Borough has capacity to:
- Flexibly deliver substantial new premises, accelerating delivery levels
  - Provide a choice of accessible urban and more rural business locations
  - Achieve appropriate levels of projected jobs growth relative to population change.
- 2.46 The retail sector is supported through the housing-led population growth. However, structural changes to retailing are recognised. In future, new development may focus on the quality of premises and the visitor experience as much as the scale of new retail floorspace. When quantitative needs to 2030 are calculated and modelled in line with national policy, the data suggests that narrowly no net Borough-wide need exists if the full build out of permissions i.e. Ebbsfleet and Bluewater is assumed. Nevertheless, qualitative factors may support new/ re-provided premises within redevelopments, particularly close to new areas of economic regeneration and residential growth, e.g. Dartford town centre.
- 2.47 Importantly, new homes created in recent years have predominantly been on brownfield land in the urban area. The Plan maintains the previous ambition of 80% or more of homes to be on brownfield sites.
- 2.48 Dartford Borough's progress in creating sustainable new neighbourhoods, re-using land and supporting local job growth and new retail and services should be maintained at suitable levels to meet local housing and economic needs, address affordability issues and comply with government policy. This growth must be actively planned in a way that has sufficient flexibility but continues to enhance quality of life and a balance of uses and services. In order to continue to deliver the strategy of brownfield land recycling, and sustainably regenerating Dartford Borough, the rate and types of development and infrastructure delivery must be aligned. Direct full control over this by the local planning authority is not possible but the Council can help to ensure that it is provided in a co-ordinated and timely way through delivery on individual large sites,

for example. Aggregate development rates will be monitored against infrastructure provision.

### Residential growth

- 2.49 Residential development needs to be delivered to achieve objectives for high quality, affordable homes and to make good places to live in the Borough. The government's standard methodology for local housing needs currently requires the provision of 776 dwellings per annum. The Plan is particularly supportive of delivery of urban mixed use and residential development to maintain regeneration momentum, where infrastructure investment, jobs and services occurs in parallel to secure local quality of life.
- 2.50 A Borough housing requirement of an average of 790 dwellings per year is set out in this Local Plan. This level:
- Is directly based on the actual developable supply of housing land (for over 10 years ahead, with additional supply in later years), accounting for the confirmed Dartford capacity to achieve sustainable new homes in the Borough (see Table 1 below);
  - Meets the assessed local housing need rate and builds in flexibility, slightly exceeding the current national objectively assessed need for the Borough; and
  - It also supports plans for new homes to continue to materialise now in planned locations, by providing a sufficient deliverable supply for 5 or more years from now.
- 2.51 This housing requirement is at a level which is well related to the known capacity of Dartford's suitable sites. This capacity led strategy has already enabled a substantial uplift in housing delivery at planned locations. It is in harmony with the Borough's longstanding regeneration and sustainable development objectives, and in accordance with national policy.
- 2.52 The requirement of 790 homes a year would be a large uplift on long-term delivery in Dartford Borough (for instance +32% from a delivery rate of approximately 600 homes a year). An increase of this order brings the prospect of increased affordable housing delivery to meet identified needs, and supports economic development. It is also consistent with the realisation of the spatial strategy for the Borough, supporting a balance with new jobs and services, and with a focus on residential development on brownfield/ urban land, central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City, enabling the maintenance of the Green Belt.

- 2.53 It equates to a total of 15,800 dwellings over the plan period (to 2036/37 inclusive). This housing land supply is almost exclusively made up of existing developable permissions and sites found deliverable or developable in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The housing requirement will continue to be satisfied and will be kept up to date and flexibly managed through Brownfield Land Register entries, and reflected in regular five year deliverable housing supply statements and monitoring. The SHLAA looks ahead long-term, with sites identified and delivery projections made to 2037, and it provides further housing delivery responsiveness as sites may materialise earlier. The current projected housing trajectory is set out at Appendix C.
- 2.54 Positive actions in Dartford have resulted in progress on substantial regeneration sites that will continue to deliver new housing into the 2020s, and potentially longer. This means there is a very low reliance of delivery from more uncertain sources, e.g. land from unidentified non SHLAA (windfall) sites. This aligns with the delivery of sustainable development supported by infrastructure, through clear forward planning co-ordinated by the Local Plan and infrastructure planning. Unexpectedly high levels of development through additional homes on windfall sites (Policy M9) or other sources will be closely monitored and the implications for the Local Plan, infrastructure and brownfield land objectives reviewed.
- 2.55 The projected breakdown of supply to 2031/32 (the first 15 years of the plan) is set out in Table 1 below.

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

Source of housing supply:	Total contribution to 2017/18 to 2031/32 (inclusive) homes:
Delivered so far (last 3 years)	2,600
Allocated sites delivery	2,200
Further identified sites: SHLAA (deliverable/developable), including permissions, excluding allocated sites.	6,800
Future non-SHLAA delivery estimate	200
<b>TOTAL housing supply</b>	<b>11,900</b>
<b>TOTAL Housing requirement: 15 years at 790 homes per annum</b>	<b>11,900</b>
<i>To the nearest hundred.</i>	

- 2.56 Within the total supply, and making up much of the 11,850 total requirement, thousands of new homes in the Borough have extant planning permissions. This does

not include the Ebbsfleet Central site (Policy E4) where the extant permission is expected to lapse but a fresh planning application is expected in 2021. It is apparent that the bulk of Dartford Borough's housing supply is identified and well advanced, providing a choice of sites for the market to draw down and deliver.

- 2.57 The Plan's regeneration agenda means that there are area specific places with the potential to unlock additional sustainable development which can complement identified developable sites at planned locations. Longer-term opportunities at central Dartford and in Ebbsfleet Garden City (including as outlined in Policies D7 and E6 for instance) may be able to come forward, and complement housing supply. This is only expected to be due to accelerated/ additional delivery at Ebbsfleet or new land suitable for regeneration becoming available in central Dartford guided by the Local Plan policy and not at any other location.

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

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

### Housing requirement

3. New homes are required to be delivered at a rate of 790 per annum (on average) equating to 15,800 dwellings over the plan period, with planning permissions and delivery closely monitored and managed. Decisions will be based on this requirement, the housing land supply and housing needs in order to ensure a steady availability of deliverable land, and achievement of the planned supply at sustainable locations supported by infrastructure.
4. Planning decisions will have regard to the target for 80% of the Borough's new homes in the plan period to be located on brownfield land.
5. A rolling five year deliverable supply of housing land will be maintained, including the applicable supply buffer (brought forward from within the Plan period, to the level as required in the Housing Delivery Test).

### Town Centre, Community and Employment development

6. Supporting the delivery of sustainable development aims and Dartford's regeneration areas, planning decisions will have regard to the desirability of providing:
  - a) a balanced mix of land uses in the Borough and within neighbourhoods;
  - b) approximately 150,000sqm or more of new or improved commercial, business and services uses, and community and learning uses (including shops, offices, health facilities and schools), by 2026/27; and
  - c) approximately 200,000sqm or more new or improved industrial/ distribution premises by 2026/27.

2.58 These planned development levels and delivery approaches can be sustainably accommodated within the Borough through application of the spatial strategy, infrastructure and climate change strategic principles outlined in policies S1 to S4. As an indicative overview, Table 2 below broadly illustrates how/ where a mix of

infrastructure and new premises and accommodation is expected to occur to meet needs. It shows how the spatial strategy identifies sustainable locations that allow the continued maintenance of the Green Belt, and the achievement of development needs and regeneration objectives, as set out in this section.

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

What	Where	How	When <sup>7</sup>
Homes	Concentrated on specific sites identified in the housing land supply. This includes the following key areas; where, depending on regeneration progress, additional suitable residential sites may become available, or suitable land delivery may be accelerated by the market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ebbsfleet Garden City</li> <li>• Central Dartford</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing sites under construction or with planning permission.</li> <li>• Maintaining a supply of specific deliverable sites</li> <li>• Providing an ample amount and variety of new housing land at sustainable locations in the housing land supply.</li> <li>• Identifying available and suitable brownfield land.</li> </ul> Principal policies: S4, M9	<i>Over a rolling 5yr period:</i> >3,950 new homes (plus buffer and adjusted for performance to date).  <i>By 2032 (over 15 years):</i> 11,900 new homes.
Employment	Encouraged at locations across the Borough, particularly identified employment areas at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford (east of M25): 9 areas.</li> <li>• Other urban: 7 areas</li> <li>• South of the A2: 5 areas.</li> </ul> Strategic commercial development is also expected at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford town centre</li> <li>• Ebbsfleet Central</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing sites under construction or with planning permission. Includes strategic expansions to areas at: Littlebrook/ The Bridge; Riverside/ Northern Gateway; and Crossways.</li> <li>• Sustainable intensification/ upgrade of the identified employment areas. Criteria for other proposals.</li> </ul> Principal policies: S1, D2; E2, E4; M19-M21.	<i>By 2027 (over 10 years):</i> Approximately 4,000-7,000 extra office/ industry/ distribution sector jobs generated from new development.
Retail and local services	Maintaining the vitality and viability of a sustainable network of retail centres, and protecting/ enhancing community services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford Town Centre</li> <li>• Bluewater</li> <li>• District Centres (8)</li> <li>• Local Centres (20)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewal of Dartford Town Centre including existing shopping centres</li> <li>• Defining and retaining a focused core frontage in part of Dartford High Street.</li> <li>• Maintaining smaller, more localised centres as part of Borough network.</li> </ul>	<i>By 2027 (over 10 years):</i> Estimated gross need approximately 20,000sqm. (A greater amount could occur under current

<sup>7</sup> New infrastructure completions so far are not quantified here, but housing/ jobs/ floorspace totals also include completions since 2017.

What	Where	How	When <sup>7</sup>
		<p>Includes potential redevelopment of under-used sites at smaller centres in the urban area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New clusters to serve planned residential neighbourhoods. Planned new centres at Ebbsfleet Garden City include: 2 District Centres and 2 Local Centres to be built.</li> <li>• Appropriate evolution of Bluewater regional shopping centre.</li> <li>• Managing proposals for retail/ leisure outside the network of retail centres.</li> </ul> <p>Principal policies: S1, D2-D4, D6; E2-E5, M19, M22, M23.</p>	<p>planning permissions, depending on economy and changing retail patterns).</p>
Community infrastructure	<p>Where need from development exists, likely to include several locations in the urban area. The IDP and evidence includes additional provision for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dartford: 1 health/ wellbeing facility; 1(+) new primary school, 1(+) expanded primary school.</li> <li>• Stone/ Greenhithe: 1(+) primary healthcare facility, 1 primary school, 1 secondary school</li> <li>• Ebbsfleet Garden City: 1(+) primary healthcare facility, 1 community hub, 4 primary schools, 1 secondary school.</li> <li>• Borough: over 350 bedroom spaces in nursing and residential care homes (Class C2).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning infrastructure plans of service providers with planned growth locations.</li> <li>• Dartford's CIL income leveraging additional investment sources.</li> <li>• Securing further developer contributions to funding.</li> <li>• Securing on-site new provision where appropriate.</li> <li>• Working in partnership to retain land for timely service delivery.</li> </ul> <p>Principal policies: S2, D1, E1, M16-M18.</p>	<p><i>By 2023:</i> expanded primary school (Dartford).  <i>By 2024:</i> primary healthcare facility (Stone/ Greenhithe)  <i>By 2025:</i> health/ wellbeing hub (Dartford); secondary school (Stone/ Greenhithe).  <i>By 2037:</i> Full delivery of care/ nursing homes and other additional infrastructure.</p>

2.59 Delivery is taken forward through subsequent sections of this plan, particularly the two sections setting the provisions for growth at the Borough priority development locations at Central Dartford, and Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe.

### **3. CENTRAL DARTFORD**

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

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

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



gyms; and Dartford football club; plus walks into the countryside. Town centre cultural attractions include the theatre, museum and library.

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

new and improved walking and cycling connections, particularly to open up riverside settings, for the town centre to transform into a genuinely attractive in which to live, work and enjoy time.

- 3.11 Given its historic development close to the River Darent, much of central Dartford is at high risk of fluvial flooding. The area north of the railway line is also at high risk of tidal flooding from the River Thames. National policy allows development in flood risk areas where this provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk and where development will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere (see Policy M4). It is considered that the continued regeneration of central Dartford is a fundamental element of the Local Plan strategy which justifies development.
- 3.12 There are significant opportunities for greater residential accommodation in the town centre as Dartford adapts to fundamental economic changes, notably in the retail and leisure sector. Relatively few people live in the town centre at present, however just north of the station and rail line, new homes have been constructed and have proved popular (as have new commercial buildings).
- 3.13 Dartford town centre has maintained a mix of local facilities, public and cultural services, shopping centres and traditional retail units, with vacancy rates decreasing significantly until 2020. Evidence further shows:
- General daytime visitors mostly go to Dartford for shopping, and particularly for food purchases (Sainsbury's and Aldi are the main shops). The street market and national retailers in the shopping centres (e.g. Wilko, Poundland and Primark) are also popular.
  - Dartford town centre has a clear but relatively localised catchment for retail/ some services. Many travel to the town centre by car, but a high proportion also walk or come by bus.
  - The Orchard Theatre has a wide catchment extending well outside the Borough, however few of the many visitors to the theatre use restaurants and bars in Dartford. The majority of those who visit in the daytime never come to Dartford town centre in the evening and similarly many visitors to the theatre do not visit the town in the day.
- 3.14 Transformation of the town centre will embrace rapidly shifting lifestyles and technology, work and travel habitats, and consumer and resident preferences, whilst

respecting traditional town centre activities and the town's history. Under-used buildings provide opportunities for reuse/ refurbishment or redevelopment. The positive qualities and environmental character of successful parts of the town need to be sustained and further revealed.

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

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

3.16 The Council has supported significant developments to bring forward brownfield land and to secure central Dartford's future vitality and economy. The current scale of development expected from planning permissions, including (approximately 900 homes built since 2017) is shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Scale of Development Permitted in Central Dartford**

<i>Use</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Residential (nearest hundred dwellings)	2,000
Retail (nearest hundred sqm)	3,800
Office/ other business premises (nearest hundred sqm)	7,200
<i>To the nearest hundred</i>	

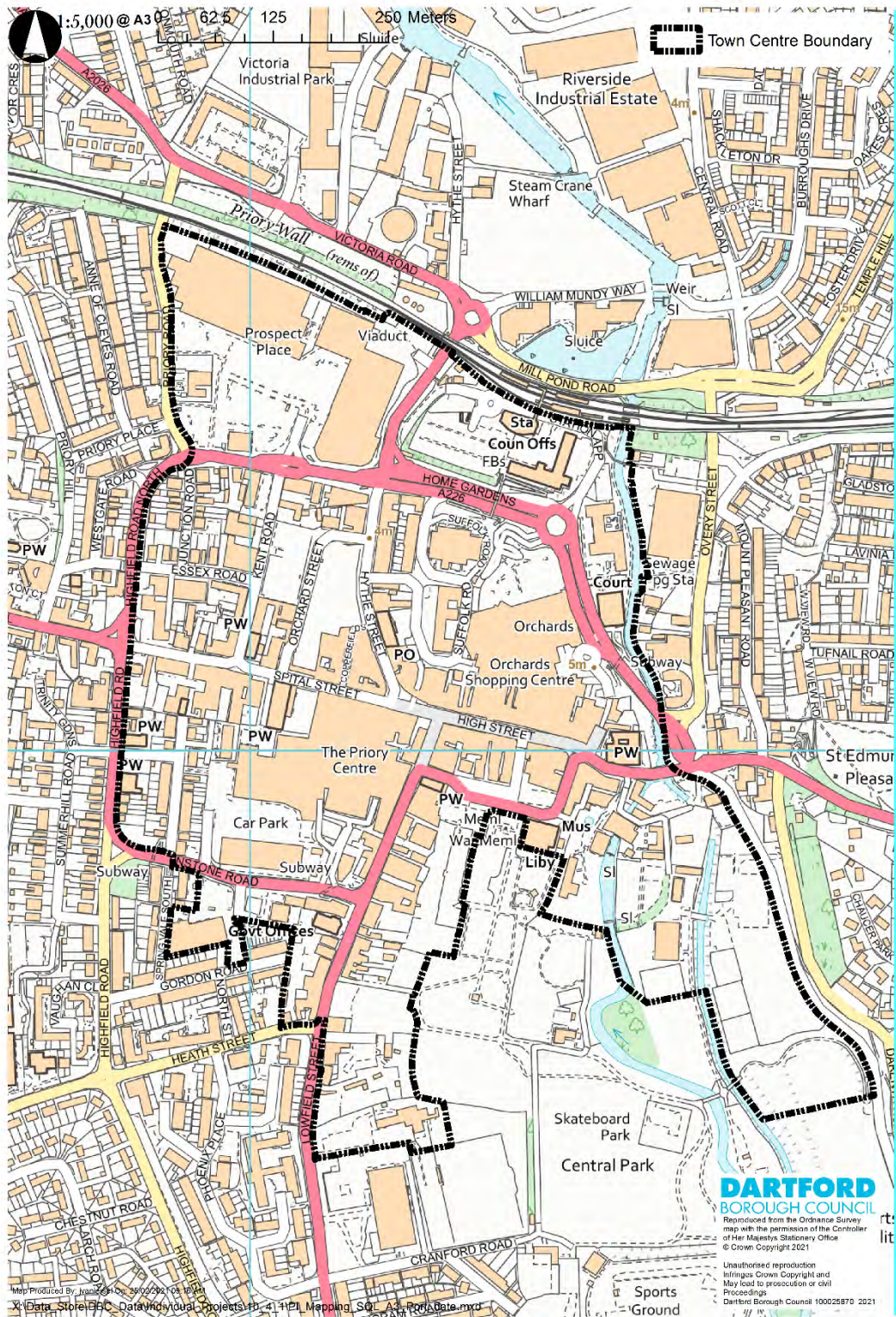
3.17 Additional new developments and uses should occur to take forward regeneration of the area. In order to support and enable the sustained evolution of central Dartford, the following development requirements are apparent, and guide strategy in this Plan section:

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

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



Diagram 4: Town Centre Boundary



## Central Dartford Strategic Policies

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W5, I1, I2, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 85*

3.19 The Local Plan has an ambitious vision for central Dartford:

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

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

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

### New uses and infrastructure

3.22 There are now clear opportunities and impetus to realise the vision for transformation of Dartford Town Centre and its surrounds. Significant diversification and growth of activities will create greater vibrancy and economic benefits. The delivery of this will be promoted by growing captive local expenditure for new local retail/ services, achieved particularly through creating new residential neighbourhoods and community/ cultural facilities in the town centre, allied with further local attractions in Dartford including a cinema. (The town centre's retail functions are summarised in the context of the Borough's network at Table 7 later in the plan). Development flexible to the

requirements of business occupiers, and new infrastructure and communications, will secure Dartford's future economic growth. A focus on the growing arts/ cultural sector and Dartford's productive history and industrial heritage to attract new creative industries, will also promote re-use of premises and a sense of vitality and refreshed identity.

- 3.23 Located between the High Street and railway station, the Orchard Theatre is a major attraction of vital importance to Dartford. It serves a much wider catchment area than the town centre and has benefitted from an increase in attendance rates. However, there has been little associated spend captured from these attendees. Development needs to build on the attraction and success of the theatre, as a clear point of differentiation from other competing locations, and to enhance the town centre as a place to spend longer, by providing complementary uses such as food and beverage. Specifically, a cinema and a mix of high quality bars and family restaurants would particularly help strengthen the town's daytime and mid-evening economy.
- 3.24 The benefits of these new economic activities, and additional long-term opportunities such as new transport systems, need to be optimised by planning for town centre growth and the immediately adjoining area as a whole. It is anticipated that the impact of new railway services (e.g. Crossrail/ enhanced links from Central London and Abbey Wood) or a new railway station would be particularly beneficial for central Dartford, given the scope for integrated public transport enhancements and enabling business investment in the town. It would also enhance the viability and therefore quality of development coming forward.
- 3.25 Integrated planning is at the heart of ensuring that new uses come forward along with appropriate new infrastructure in support. The Council will continue to explore all opportunities at sites and with service providers to achieve delivery of essential community uses, e.g. healthcare facilities and schools, to meet the needs of the growing population generated by development. Some of these facilities require relatively large amounts of land and would only be possible to deliver on the largest sites in central Dartford, and therefore require close consideration. It cannot be assumed land remains available just outside the central area. Central Dartford provides an optimal location for community services, co-locating with other uses and with the best public transport provision in the Borough.



### Development locations

- 3.26 Existing Town Centre key sites (originally Core Strategy identified) are largely moving forward, but many sites remain available to respond to future development needs.
- 3.27 Change is evident to the south of the High Street, where a focal new public space has been created adjoining Central Park, the first phase of upgrading the town's public realm. The new public space, Brewery Square at Market Square, creates a pedestrian friendly environment and new space for south-facing outdoor street culture including space for tables and chairs and informal entertainment, and provides an attractive open setting for the Central Park main entrance and the listed building hosting the town's library and museum.
- 3.28 Adjoining this, the first phases of redevelopment of the long vacant Lowfield Street are underway. The site is earmarked for continued redevelopment as the southern entry point for the town centre (see Policy D5). Nearby site clusters off the High Street/ Spital Street are attracting renewed development interest. At the former Co-op/ car park site known as Westgate (see Policy D4), a resolution to grant permission was agreed in 2020. These areas feature on Diagram 5.
- 3.29 This progress follows achievement of high profile investment in Dartford, including delivery of high quality riverside apartments immediately north of the town centre. To sustain the transformation, a framework is needed to guide renewal of the highly accessible area near this development (and the sites north of the High Street). This will balance the new buildings and spaces currently being delivered in the more southern parts of central Dartford by delivering regeneration near the railway station and river on the northern edges of the town centre (see Policy D7). Nevertheless, development momentum needs to continue with the most prominent of currently available sites brought forward for delivery and completion.

### Further opportunities

- 3.30 Future redevelopment/ refurbishment of unappealing spaces or buildings can complement existing identified development sites in the pipeline. Development investment can repurpose vacant or under-used buildings to provide a more diverse and flexible mix of viable uses, including the potential for new commercial and residential uses that meet the needs of customers and business, and better reflect current and predicted market trends.



- 3.31 Some of the most popular large retail developments often fail to enhance the town centre's streets, providing a setting that prioritises space for vehicles over encouraging shoppers and visitors; and lacking direct connections into the rest of town for linked trips for other services. The Council recognises that there is likely to be retail and wider economic regeneration needs. It will seek to use the opportunities for the renewal and redevelopment of shopping centres to provide higher quality mixed use environments that are well integrated, and larger facilities viable into the future.
- 3.32 The Dartford Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (2018) complements this strategy by setting out expectations and objectives for development coming forward (e.g. through movement, perception and design aspirations for the town centre, and local non land use planning actions). It will continue to apply at least until the new Local Plan has been adopted. An update will be considered depending on progress of change, economic circumstances and government design policy. It has also informed the council's ongoing major refurbishment of town centre streets and junctions to create better places (for pedestrians in particular) on the ring road and the main streets within it. Some of these proposals to improve the town's environment are shown, along with the development allocations at Diagram 5.

### **Policy D1: Central Dartford Strategy**

1. The high quality transformation of central Dartford is actively supported: as a destination to invest, be productive and creative, visit for shopping, leisure and services, and as a place to call home. Valued, good quality buildings and spaces will be repurposed, enhanced and better used. Development in and around the town centre will bring an expanded range of activities and services to the town (including cultural and creative facilities), increasing economic vitality and the choice of jobs, providing new infrastructure, and will grow the resident community. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) Current projects and strategic plans will continue to advance, leading to completion of: the sympathetic refurbishment of the town centre's key streets, public spaces and historic buildings; transport and movement improvements; the renewal of Lowfield Street/ Brewery Square (Market Street)/ High Street; and the successful redevelopment of the Westgate and Priory Centre sites.
  - b) There will be significant further progress in and on the edge of the town centre. It will change, with a focus on:
    - i. improving links across central Dartford, removing some of the barriers to movement that have been created by large sites, and making existing routes attractive and safe;
    - ii. facilitating, and connecting with, an enhanced Dartford railway station/ public transport interchange; and

- iii. opening up and creating safe links/ spaces to and along the River Darent.

2. The Council and partners will:

- a) Promote redevelopment of large/ unappealing buildings and under-used land/ buildings where they are no longer contributing positively to Dartford's environment or commercial or cultural offer. Appropriate short-term meanwhile use of vacant premises and/ or land is encouraged.
- b) Plan ahead with providers and landowners to reserve land for public/ community service provision in advance of occupation of new dwellings.
- c) Support the strong contribution made by the Orchard Theatre, street market and independent traders, to retain Dartford's identity and vitality.
- d) Secure major transport investment to: mitigate the current adverse impacts of traffic congestion; increase public transport capacity and services (reducing dependency on car travel); and enhance walking and cycling. The Council will seek full integration of rail, bus and Fastrack services, particularly at a new railway station and with new rail connections for Dartford.
- e) Seek parking that is flexible to use and promotes multi-purpose town centre visits. The Council will undertake a review of the parking strategy, looking at changing usage and the requirements of current and future residents, employees and visitors for short/ long stay vehicle parking.
- f) Further enhance the public realm and connectivity, and the setting of heritage assets, with refurbished streets and green routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This will feature public spaces, squares or pocket parks as focal points for the town centre, with a high class street scene, public art and new riverside environment, and hard/ soft landscaping and shelter – including new trees.
- g) Encourage access between the River Darent, the railway station and the town centre, particularly through wayfinding, upgrading of public spaces and currently unappealing environments, and overcoming severances to pedestrian and cycle movement created by the ring road (Home Gardens/ Westgate Street) and the railway embankment.

**Policy D2: Central Dartford Development Principles**

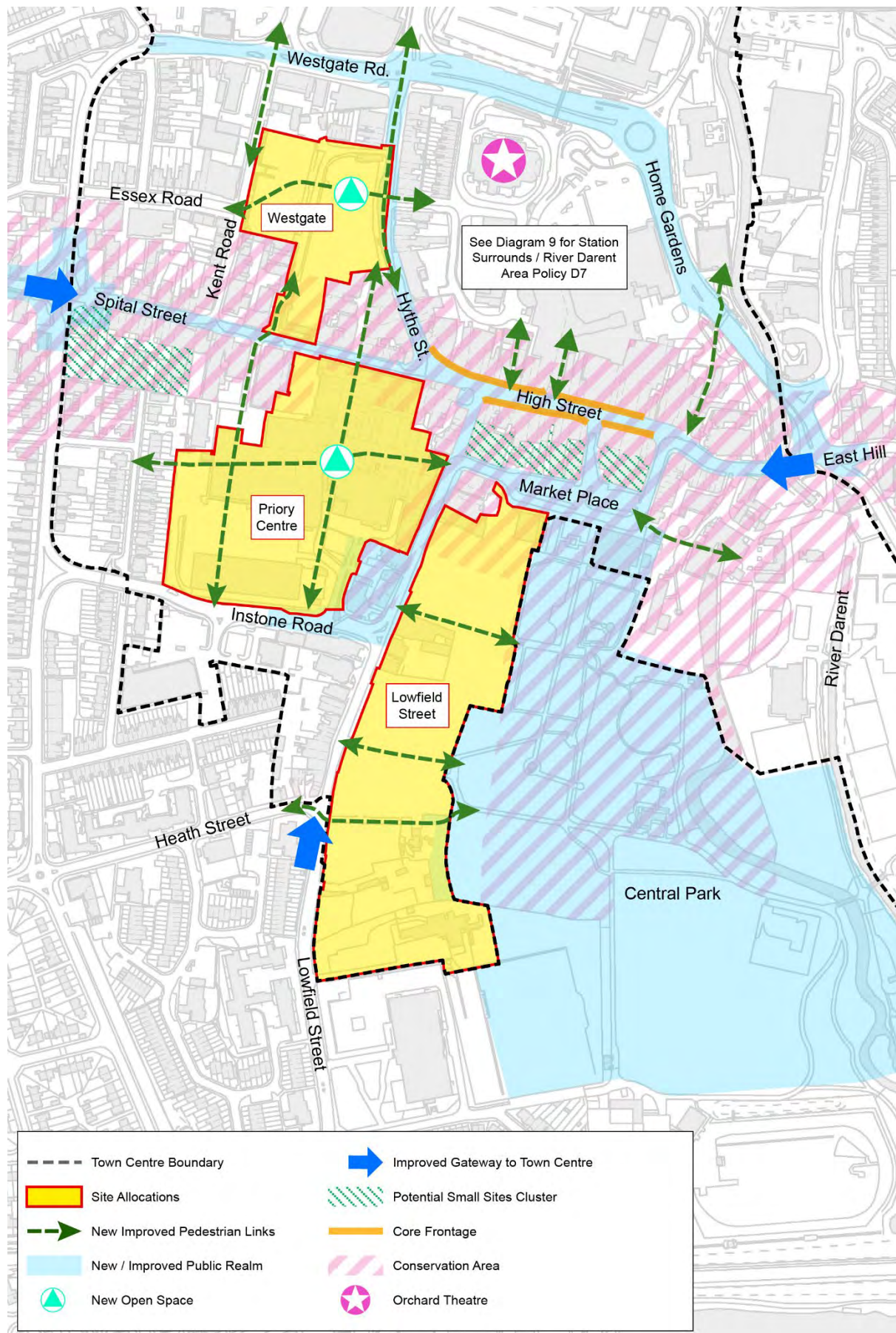
1. Development proposals in central Dartford should:

- a) Accord with Diagram 5 and the overall vision for Central Dartford, including by ensuring that development will not prejudice reasonable prospects for adjacent or nearby sites to come forward by virtue of overlooking or other outcomes, and contribute as required to local transport, public realm improvements, green infrastructure and social infrastructure requirements.

- b) Support the town centre's role in providing jobs, retail/ leisure, cultural facilities and other local services, securing a wide mix of uses in the town centre. Proposals must seek to retain or promote market town features for the future, such as affordable space for independent traders, arts/ cultural industries, and new food and beverage uses/ other local businesses. Major development in the town centre should wherever possible provide:
  - i. flexible commercial premises, with space designed for local growth sectors, or businesses that will grow local professional/ managerial or high technology level employment; or
  - ii. suitable new retail/ leisure facilities complementing current successful activities, or strategic visitor/ shopper attractions (for example a cinema/ other significant cultural or day and evening uses); or
  - iii. community/ public facilities and local services to accommodate the requirements of Central Dartford's growing population, unless a lack of need is demonstrated.
- c) Support the creation of a neighbourhood community with a mix of residential types and tenures.
- d) Ensure integration of the scheme into the wider setting and movement patterns, including creating safe public/ open spaces and/ or new pedestrian friendly streets. The sense of security of spaces and streets must be ensured, including for converted/ extended buildings where features such providing front doors onto safe spaces and streets are expected.
- e) Assess the heritage significance of the area and respond positively to local character and history, conserving and taking opportunities to enhance the significance of heritage assets.
- f) Deliver a development that improves air quality and grows the proportion of journeys made by active and public transport modes. This should include:
  - i. the integration, layout and design of development having safe and direct non-vehicular routes through the town centre as well as through provision of suitable infrastructure; and
  - ii. parking arrangements with flexibility for changing needs and technology, and good cycle parking provision.
- g) Fully mitigate flood risk and ensure that the development is safe for the lifetime of the development, where located within an area at risk of flooding.



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



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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 85*

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

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

**Policy D3: The mix of uses in Dartford Town Centre**

1. A diverse mix of ground floor uses is expected in Dartford Town Centre. The Core Frontage identifies the part of Dartford Town Centre where streets should be characterised by an active mix of uses at ground floor, high levels of daytime pedestrian activity, and a clear sense of history, all befitting a bustling market town. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) In the Core Frontage, changes of use, or redevelopment consistent with Conservation Area and other design/ heritage principles, for retail, leisure, services and other uses in Class E will be permitted where an active window display to the frontage is maintained if possible.
  - b) Elsewhere in the town centre, and at vacant units in the Core Frontage where sufficient effective marketing for Class E use has occurred, other main town centre uses, businesses and services will also be permitted, including food and drink uses, hotels, cultural, local community uses and other uses within Class F.
2. It is expected that residential development will occur principally through:
  - a) strategic allocations identified in Policies D4, D5 and D6;
  - b) high quality conversion/ extension of upper floors or under-used buildings; and
  - c) new residential developments in the housing land supply and other locations demonstrated to be suitable in the town centre in accordance with Policies D7 and M9.

### Central Dartford Strategic Locations

- 3.38 Three sites are identified as specific mixed use development allocations: Westgate (Policy D4); East of Lowfield Street (Policy D5); and Priory Centre (Policy D6).

#### Westgate Allocation (D4)

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 103, 118*

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



**Diagram 6: Westgate Site Allocation**



**Policy D4: Westgate Allocation**

1. Development at Westgate should provide a mix of uses to enhance Dartford's leisure, visitor and mid-evening economy and/ or health and wellbeing offer.
2. Proposals should demonstrate through masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that it:
  - a) retains the former Co-op façade on Spital Street;
  - b) includes active uses on existing street frontages and ensures safe public and private areas;
  - c) reconnects historic roads/ routes, ensuring an east-west pedestrian route across the site; and
  - d) features a new public square.
3. Development is expected to deliver:
  - a) a cinema/ strategic leisure/ health facility, or cultural, community service or shopping anchor use of equal significance, and/ or a hotel;
  - b) 5,000sqm or more of Class E, C1 (hotel) or other main town centre uses; and
  - c) 100 dwellings or more.

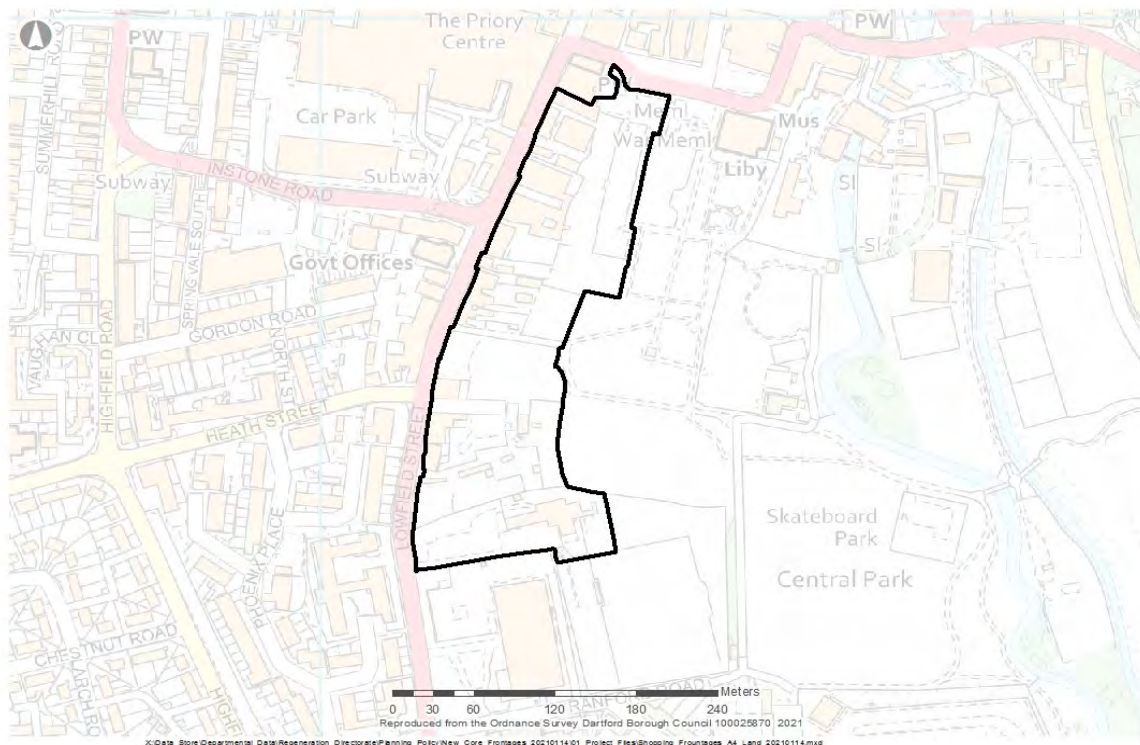


### **East of Lowfield Street Allocation (D5)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I3, G2, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 103, 118*

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

**Diagram 7: Lowfield Street Site Allocation**



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

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 103, 118*

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

**Diagram 8: Priory Centre Site Allocation**



**Policy D6: Priory Centre Allocation**

1. Development at the Priory Centre and adjoining land should provide a genuine mix of town centre and other uses, and create new open streets, public spaces and attractive pedestrian linkages from Spital Street to and along Instone Road and Lowfield Street.
2. Proposals should demonstrate through integrated masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that it:
  - a) achieves the co-ordinated and integrated redevelopment of the Priory Centre/ Instone Road and adjoining land, and one or more feature town centres square(s), complements adjoining and adjacent listed buildings, and enhances the High Street/ Spital Street part of the Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area;
  - b) provides significant active ground floor uses animating Spital Street and Lowfield Street as well as Instone Road and routes through the site, with viable new retail and leisure premises, including retention of large retailing anchors and space for independent traders;
  - c) includes visitor accommodation or a major attraction;
  - d) delivers a mix of good quality new houses and flatted development, and necessary land/ facilities/ contributions towards community service needs that arise from the development;

- e) provides high quality public realm/ spaces, well landscaped with a variety of open functions and ensures that all public and private spaces and routes are safe and overlooked;
  - f) makes use of existing levels and ensures that the development works with adjacent levels and land given over to the car park; and
  - g) respects neighbouring houses.
3. Development is expected to deliver:
- a) 400 dwellings or more;
  - b) 10,000sqm or more of retail/ leisure/ office floorspace (Class E), including large and small retail units; and
  - c) a Hotel (Class C1) and/ or 4,000sqm or more town centre attraction.

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, I3, G2, G4, G5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 103, 118*

3.52 Additional area based policy is required to complete the future transformation of Dartford, co-ordinating regeneration of further land which is accessible and prominently located. Key premises are expected to become available in future here, and can complement current strategic sites (allocations set out in Policies D4 to D6 above). This northern cluster of opportunities can provide balanced and sustained growth in central Dartford, and realise the potential for place-making centred on the River Darent, and potentially help facilitate major railway service or station upgrades. These are set out in Diagram 9.

3.53 Principal attributes for the area as a whole that should be accounted for in masterplanning and regeneration proposals include the need for connectivity and environmental enhancement centred on the River Darent that flows from south to north west, and the railway that traverses the area from west to east on an embankment. Further severance created by the ring road should be addressed, including through delivering at-grade pedestrian/ cycle crossings. The area policy incorporates parts of the previous Northern Gateway site and other land, but excludes land the Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area.

3.54 The Orchard Theatre will be retained, and potentially expanded. However, all development in the Station Surrounds/ River Darent area should recognise its role in driving creative growth, pedestrian flows, and evening uses; and the desirability of

development in its proximity promoting links through to the rest of the town centre, and including complementary cultural/ leisure uses.

- 3.55 Large sites are available and suitable for development now. These include the sites set out in Table 4 below (which cross refers to site label numbers in Diagram 9).

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

<i>Diagram 9 Ref.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Size (ha)</i>	<i>Planned approach</i>
1	Orchards Shopping Centre	1.67	To feature mix of town centre uses and unit sizes. Provision of significantly enhanced connections/ pedestrian environments linking directly north from the High Street to the Orchard Theatre and across the ring road (Home Gardens);
2	Station Mound/ Approach	1.9	Suitable and available for redevelopment, including Dartford Civic Centre offices and under-used land immediately adjoining the railway station.
3	Victoria Road/ Upper Hythe Street Sites	Approx. 1	Significant potential to improve linkages to the river and the street scene, and a prominent entry point to the town centre. Steam Crane Wharf should provide active ground floor uses to the riverfront. Adjoining redevelopment on Upper Hythe Street should be sympathetically brought forward without impinging on realising the regeneration potential of the gasometer.

- 3.56 The Station Mound includes the railway approach road and station forecourt pedestrian access. Any development should explore how better integration can be created with bus/ Fastrack services, for pedestrians to the town centre, and to/ with the river and development north of the rail embankment. Network Rail consider there may be potential for railway services to be increased and a replacement railway station/ public transport interchange to be constructed on the adjacent Prospect Place retail park immediately to the west. This option should be fully explored but, in any event, development should ensure that bus/ Fastrack and pedestrian/ cycle connections are optimised, particularly the ability for people to traverse the ring road and readily access the town centre.
- 3.57 Redevelopment of Station Mound provides opportunities to re-profile levels creating an improved relationship to the Westgate Road/ Hythe Street/ Home Gardens junction enabling enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre and potentially allowing for an active frontage to be provided to Home Gardens. The redevelopment should also include consideration of reconfiguration of the roundabout at The Orchards

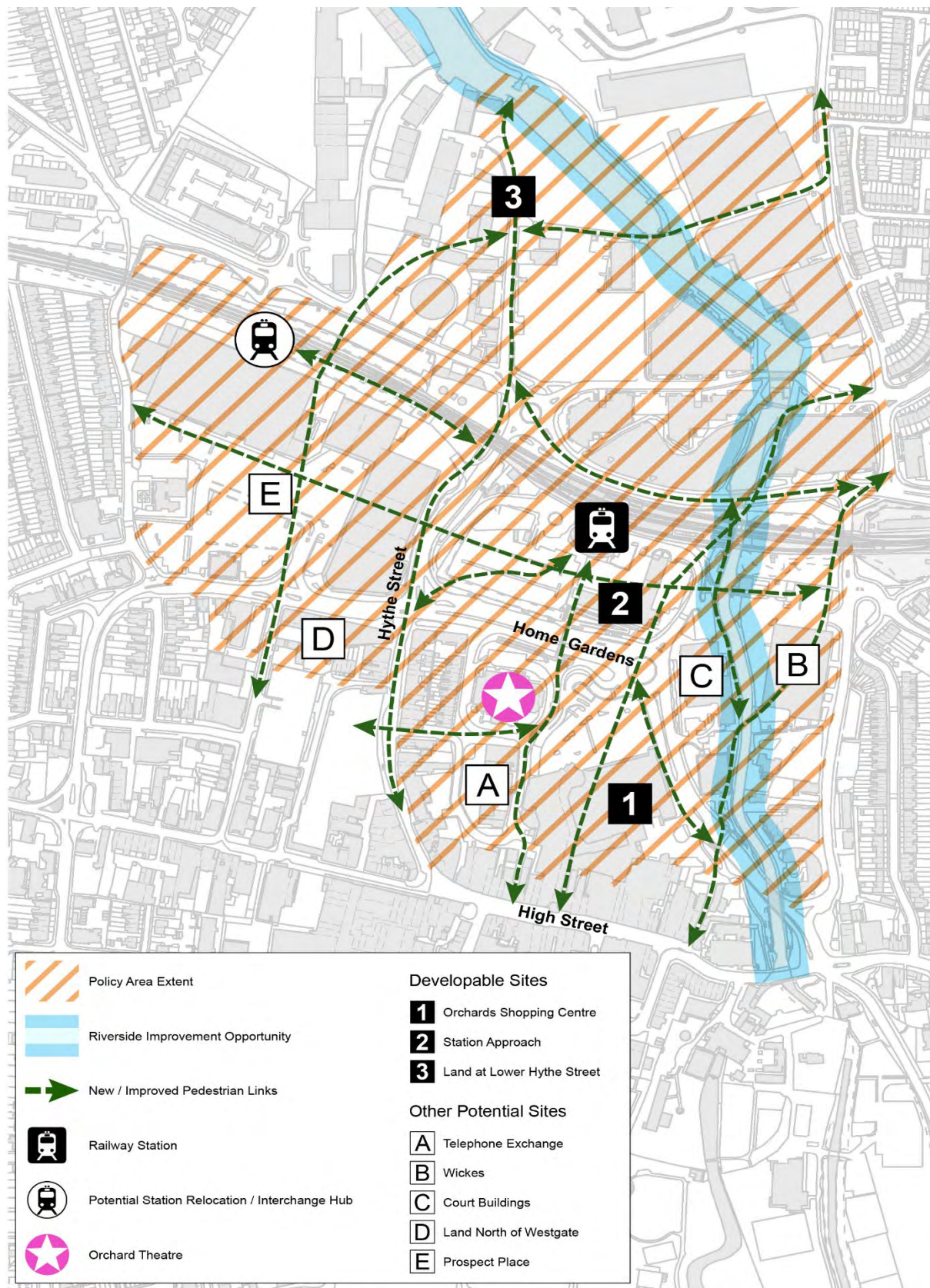


Shopping Centre entrance to provide a more pedestrian friendly environment and improved public realm.

3.58 Longer-term opportunities (not currently available) also include:

- The BT exchange building (Reference site A, Diagram 9): The site offers a significant opportunity for redevelopment to provide a safer and active route with architectural quality between the High Street and Orchard Theatre. Development should maximise synergy with The Orchard Theatre and The Orchards Shopping Centre, and provide a much improved street scene to promote pedestrian access to the High Street. An active frontage is needed to the north and the east elevations, and animating the route towards Hythe Street and to Bull's Head Yard.
- Wickes Overy Street and riverside offices on Home Gardens (Reference site B/C, Diagram 5): The redevelopment should provide attractive and safe pedestrian routes across the site and an improved safe, activated and accessible river frontage, including to improve the river as a green corridor for ecology and wildlife movement.
- Land north of Westgate site (Reference site D, Diagram 9): The site provides an opportunity to integrate with the Westgate strategic site (Policy D4) and provide an enhanced frontage to Westgate Road which is a key route into and through the town centre, and to provide a complementary built environment to improve town centre linkages to Prospect Place.
- Prospect Place (Reference site E, Diagram 9): Although potentially most appropriately brought forward as part of a new public transport hub, there is still scope to explore a better integrated, more intensive, town centre type development and to improve the frontages onto the surrounding streets and the east-west movement through the site. Specific opportunities could potentially include redevelopment of the Westgate Road frontage, and redevelopment/ enhancement at the corner of the Hythe Street/ Westgate Road junction, creating more prominent premises at this gateway location. Retail and food and beverage uses would be appropriate on the ground floor on the south and east boundaries. Residential uses may be appropriate along the western boundary, respecting the established housing. Subject to rail safeguarding, the service yard could also be redeveloped or could contribute to an improved pedestrian and cycle route along Hythe Street. A reconfiguration of the centre would also provide opportunities for improved access arrangements to the car park reducing queuing on the road network.

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





- 3.59 Elsewhere, land north of the railway station/ embankment has seen large residential-led redevelopment, and proposals should complement this with further uses to reinforce the neighbourhood community emerging in this area and broadening the range of residential accommodation, to increase cohesion and to support vibrant neighbourhoods. The loss of premises which support the neighbourhood will be resisted. Careful design and development of a suitable scale is particularly important where adjoining the existing built environment, both recent development north of the railway and established buildings and neighbourhoods.
- 3.60 Adjoining employment land to the north of this location has seen recent investment and will be retained, but further job opportunities and services are expected to be provided within the town centre. Commercial uses at Diasorin/ the bus garage may be retained whilst demand remains; expansion /intensification or redevelopment would need to take account of the new residential neighbourhood they now adjoin. Adjacent designated employment sites are not applicable to this area, and are subject to the requirements of Policy M21. However, to enable appropriate well-designed redevelopment of Upper Hythe Street between the river and the town centre, land on Upper Hythe Street not fronting Victoria Road is now subject to the area policy below.

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

1. West of Central Road and Overy Street, and including the northern part of the Town Centre (shown on Diagram 9), is an area containing highly accessible brownfield sites with significant future potential for creating new neighbourhoods, facilities, links and environmental enhancements. Development in this area will be supported where it integrates with, and maximises the potential for, sustainable regeneration of Central Dartford.
2. Development will be permitted where it includes the following key elements:
  - a) Transforming the Riverside environment into an attractive, safe, vibrant and resilient place, promoting outdoor leisure and onwads connections wherever possible. Applicable sites shall deliver high quality pedestrian routes along both sides of the River Darent, new landscaped public spaces, and seek to naturalise the River and its banks, where providing flood risk and ecological benefits, and, where appropriate, should include commercial uses which activate these spaces.
  - b) Improving Dartford railway station or access to it, and respecting safeguarded railway land. All opportunities for beneficial station relocation and/ or new railway tracks or infrastructure for additional services, and enhancing interchange with Fastrack/ bus services, should be fully explored. Development at or delivering a new railway

station will be supported and should include new active uses supported by the high footfall.

- c) Providing modern commercial facilities as part of mixed use redevelopment unless demonstrated to be unviable, particularly:
  - i. Any redevelopment of large footprint buildings (for example shopping centres where they are no longer viable in their current form) should feature appropriate new active uses and be of a layout and design that provides permeability, with pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces, and greener links; or
  - ii. Complementing cultural and leisure uses at the Orchard Theatre/ Westgate allocation; or
  - iii. Meeting needs for flexible commercial floorspace, including co-working space and serviced offices.
- d) Providing community facilities and alternative forms and tenures of new housing, additional to residential development under construction/ recently completed.
- e) Contributing to new or improved pedestrian/ cycle routes across the ring road (Homes Gardens and Westgate Road) and across the railway line/ access to Dartford Railway station, with attractive direct access routes to the High Street and Westgate allocation.
- f) Providing sufficient quality pocket parks and other greenspace, clear walkable routes to existing open spaces and significant contribution to the green grid.
- g) Ensuring that development is well and sensitively designed in proposing the efficient use of land, reflecting the town's character and heritage, and respecting other existing environmental assets and existing local residents.

## **4. EBBSFLEET AND SWANSCOMBE**

- 4.1 This section focuses on the other priority location in the Plan, the Ebbsfleet Garden City. The Garden City encircles Swanscombe Town, which is therefore also addressed within this chapter.

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

- 4.2 Ebbsfleet is a new Garden City taking shape in the east of the Borough near Swanscombe. Ebbsfleet Garden City has long identified large scale potential for a range of uses involving the re-use of land. Ebbsfleet Garden City will consist of homes, jobs and infrastructure, including major new greenspace. The area has an extensive industrial heritage from the industrial revolution onwards, culminating in the cement industry dominating the area for several decades during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries.
- 4.3 The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) was formed in 2015 to co-ordinate, facilitate and oversee the delivery of the first Garden City for over 100 years. It straddles the river Ebbsfleet which forms the Borough boundary between Dartford and Gravesham. The EDC has planning responsibilities, and has worked with Dartford Borough in the production of this Local Plan for Dartford.
- 4.4 At Ebbsfleet, rates of new development (predominantly housing) have grown substantially in recent years. New neighbourhoods have now been formed which contain local facilities, including shops, schools and parks. Within Dartford Borough, these comprise:
- Ebbsfleet Green located adjacent to the A2 (on the decommissioned Northfleet West Substation) which is largely complete
  - Castle Hill, at the eastern end of the area formerly known as Eastern Quarry (south of Swanscombe) which is nearing completion
- This southern part of the Garden City is the largest development area in the Borough and the development of neighbourhoods is expected to continue, with plans for Alkerden, which lies broadly in the centre of the site, and Ashmere, which is located at the western end.
- 4.5 In contrast, some parts of Ebbsfleet have seen little development so far. It is over ten years since domestic services at Ebbsfleet International Station commenced, but the

area around the station is largely undeveloped apart from large surface car parks which serve the station, a prime sustainable development opportunity which is a priority for delivery.

- 4.6 Swanscombe is a distinct historic neighbourhood, located in the north east of the Borough. Bone fragments from the earliest humans known to have lived in England were discovered here and the area has extensive history of human settlement. It grew rapidly into a small town as the industry around it expanded and the railway arrived. A well-established residential area and generous open spaces now provide a quiet heart to Swanscombe. The small railway station and local retail/ service facilities lie on the High Street in the east of Swanscombe. These lie some half a mile (less than a kilometre) from Ebbsfleet International Railway Station, but separate as a result of the dramatic topography created by the pits, cliffs and chalk spines which are characteristic of the area. Swanscombe has largely retained its own physical characteristics, with low levels of recent development. It has smaller sized homes than the Borough and County average, with a predominance of terraced houses and, to a lesser extent, flats. South west Swanscombe is within the most deprived 10% of areas nationally and within Kent.
- 4.7 Swanscombe Peninsula is a large land promontory projecting towards the River Thames, with multiple distinctive environmental characteristics, marked by a complex mix of past and present land uses. The Peninsula was used extensively in connection with the cement industry but also provided formal recreation for employees. This vast area still accommodates some existing employment uses on its south-eastern boundary but now largely comprises low lying marshland, woodland, regenerated vegetation, spoil heaps, and disused jetties but a well-used inlet. Notably, it features very tall electricity pylons over the River Thames, and the High Speed 1 Rail Link tunnel head. The area contains significant ecological and landscape assets, including saltwater and freshwater habitats and chalk cliffs. The area has been subject to speculation in relation to proposals for an entertainment resort for at least 5 years.
- 4.8 Prominent resources, and factors vital to future prospects in the area, include:
- *The opportunity for a genuine mix of urban and open spaces by Ebbsfleet International Station, which creates a chance to achieve highly sustainable and accessible urban development.*
  - *The different landscapes, natural environments and settlements provide the opportunity to integrate existing green and blue infrastructure with new and*

*improved parks and walking/ cycling links to create a grid within and between Swanscombe, Ebbsfleet, the River Thames and the countryside south of the A2.*

- *The unique existing topography, including dramatic chalk cliffs and large landlocked water bodies, provides opportunities to create a distinctive Garden City.*
- *The strong local cultural, archaeological and industrial heritage will enable the creation of new neighbourhoods at Ebbsfleet with a sense of place and history.*
- *Swanscombe can benefit from maintaining its existing positive and distinct character, with opportunities to improve access to better local facilities and public spaces.*

4.9 The Garden City will feature several new neighbourhoods respecting these characteristics. Table 5 below sets out the new dwellings projected to be provided by site (including 1,000 homes built since 2017 at Ebbsfleet Green and Castle Hill).

**Table 5: Projected Number of Dwellings – Ebbsfleet Garden City to 2036/37**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Dwellings</i>
Ebbsfleet Central (allocation)	2,200
Ebbsfleet Green (Ebbsfleet south and west)	800
Castle Hill (Ebbsfleet south and west)	1,300
Alkerden (Ebbsfleet south and west)	1,600
Ashmere (Ebbsfleet south and west)	3,100
Craylands Lane/ London Road, Swanscombe (EGC)	100
Croxton and Garry, Swanscombe (EGC)	200
<b>Total to 2036/37</b>	<b>9,300</b>
<i>To the nearest hundred</i>	

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

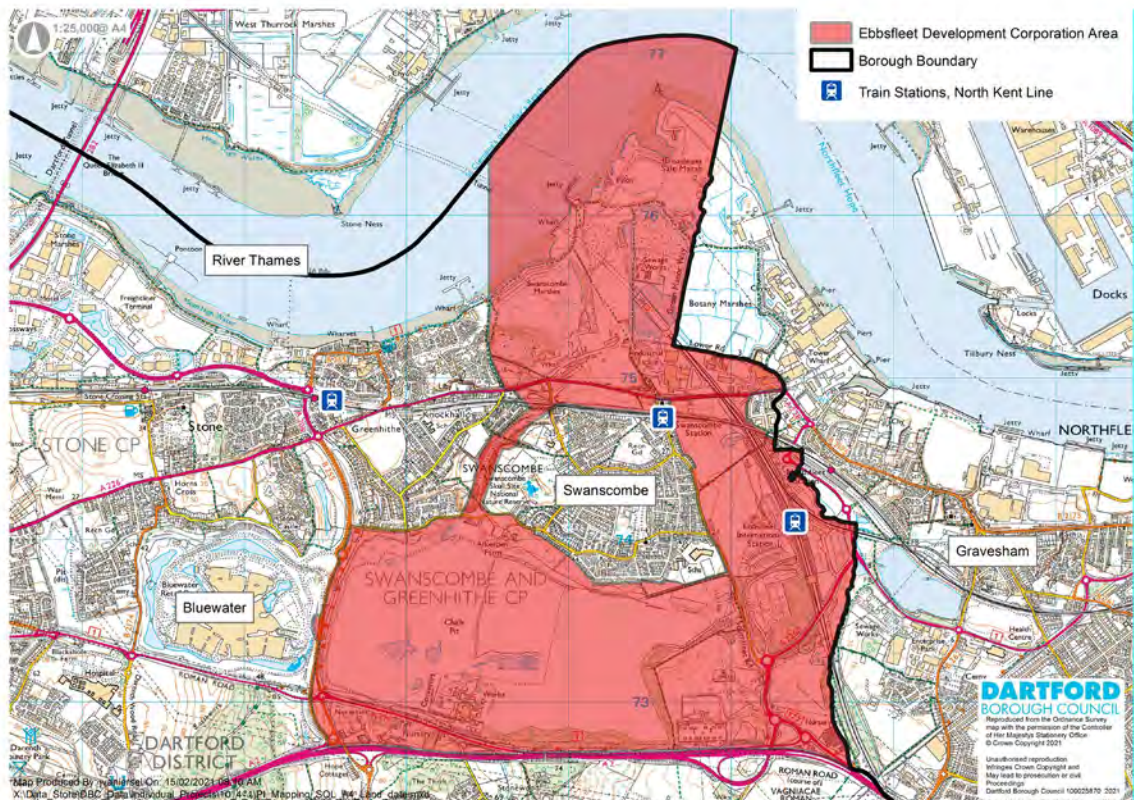
- To create a **21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden City** and a Healthy New Town at Ebbsfleet, within the environmental and urban fabric of north Kent.
- To drive the creation of new high **quality commercial** premises and to attract high technology/ professional and managerial employment to Kent, benefiting from a new commercial centre by Ebbsfleet International Station.
- To **enhance connectivity** by improving railway stations and services, expanding Fastrack and bus services, providing easier ways of moving between

neighbourhoods in Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe, and linking to Gravesend, Greenhithe and the wider area.

- To plan development in a **strategic form** that provides relief to the built up character of the north of the Borough (including for Swanscombe town), ensuring that views are maintained to landscaped ridges in the area.
- To deliver a network of **quality open spaces** and excellent, strategically located, parks.
- To provide an area with consistently good **environmental performance** in its building design and construction.
- To achieve good quality **mixed use developments** on brownfield land and gateway sites, within Ebbsfleet and, where appropriate, Swanscombe.
- To improve local **housing quality**, choice and availability to local families and other households, with a distinct local vernacular.
- To form new sustainable neighbourhoods that contain **local facilities/ shops and social infrastructure** in order to minimise the impact on major roads.

4.11 The extent of Ebbsfleet Garden City is defined as the administrative area of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (shown on Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Ebbsfleet Garden City in Dartford Borough**





### **Ebbsfleet Strategic Policies**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 72*

4.12 The Local Plan has a clear vision for Ebbsfleet Garden City in the Borough:

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

*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. It will be characterised by healthy, green and open environments; with high quality streets for walking and cycling. Ebbsfleet's new communities will be well linked, distinctive, diverse and thoughtfully designed, to reflect the needs, and cultural and landscape heritage, of the Borough.*

4.13 Ebbsfleet is now at a crucial point, part way through the stages of realising its long-term regeneration ambitions. Work is now well underway at many of the locations planned to emerge and form the garden city, for instance with new neighbourhoods being formed or due to start in southern Ebbsfleet. This progress needs to be maintained, and maximum certainty provided. The Ebbsfleet Central area by the International Station will be transformed to create a vibrant urban business and community hub, though full completion of development may continue beyond the plan period. Overall, the opportunity represented by the sizeable development land and its strategic connections must lead to sustainable urban level commercial, cultural, health and education facilities and commensurate parkland provision, guided by garden city principles applied for future needs. Ebbsfleet has to provide high quality walking, cycling and public transport connections and be integrated with surrounding areas. Design will be high quality, reflect the characteristics of the area and provide healthy, green environments.

4.14 There is currently uncertainty over the future of Swanscombe Peninsula due to proposals for development of an entertainment resort, but this Local Plan identifies potential for the important habitats to be protected and enhanced, and public access to be managed, through the designation of riverside land as Borough Open Space/ provision of an ecological park. Given the Garden City status of the land, and lack of clarity over its future, there is also the need for guidance for re-use of the remaining area which includes clusters of brownfield land (addressed in Policy E6). It is important that development at and near Swanscombe benefits the town: Policy E3.

- 4.15 Over the plan period, Ebbsfleet Garden City is expected to provide approximately 9,300 further new homes in the Borough, the majority of which has a planning permission, and substantial commercial floorspace. These will be supported by retail centres, schools, health facilities, sports facilities, and parks and green spaces. Whilst Ebbsfleet Central has an historic planning permission which has not been built out, a refined proposal for the site is being worked up by the EDC. This will secure a developable strategic scheme to provide commercial and community facilities. The Local Plan identifies Ebbsfleet Central as a pivotal allocation, and the principles for the development of the parts of it which lie within Dartford Borough are set out in Policy E4.
- 4.16 Given the long build out times for development within Ebbsfleet Garden City, there may be the opportunity for temporary (meanwhile) uses such as community support facilities, business start-ups, pop-up shops, food growing, open spaces for public events, and cultural projects. Support will be given to their provision subject to the likely timescales of future development and the suitability of the use in the proposed location.
- 4.17 Developments within Ebbsfleet Garden City will be expected to meet all the requirements set out in other policies in the Local Plan, including the provision of 35% of dwellings as affordable housing (Policy M7), accessible and wheelchair user dwellings (Policy M8) and the provision of biodiversity net gain (Policy S3).

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC)

- 4.18 The EDC is responsible for facilitating and maintaining development in the Garden City area. It recently acquired land in the Ebbsfleet Central allocation (policy E4). In addition to the Local Plan, further details of proposals in Ebbsfleet Garden City are illustrated by applicable parts of the EDC's Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, which brought together previous masterplanning work, and set out delivery and area based approaches. The delivery themes involve creating a civic community and healthy environments, connecting people and places, supporting an enterprising economy, enabling quality homes and neighbourhoods, and supporting resilient and sustainable systems. Policies E1, E2, E4 and E5 reflect some of the key elements from the Implementation Framework.



4.19 There are other documents produced by the EDC that informs its planning of the Garden City as follows:

- The Design for Ebbsfleet Character Guide provides design guidance on how Ebbsfleet's landscapes and cultural heritage will be used to inform the design of characterful and distinctive homes, streets and neighbourhoods.
- The Public Realm Strategy is a toolkit which should be used to enhance the design and quality of streets and public spaces.
- The Sustainable Travel Strategy includes principles and actions in relation to enhancing public transport, and enabling walking and cycling, as well as parking requirements.

Masterplans have previously been produced for a number of neighbourhoods but these may be updated over time; most notably the EDC is currently masterplanning Ebbsfleet Central.

### **Policy E1: Ebbsfleet Garden City Strategy**

1. The Council and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation will support the continued creation of a 21<sup>st</sup> century garden city at Ebbsfleet which provides high quality new greenspace, infrastructure, homes and business investment. This will be achieved by the co-ordinated delivery of well-designed and well-served mixed neighbourhoods. These will include work places, schools, health, facilities and centres which embrace neighbouring communities and towns, encourage walking and cycling, and are connected by modern public transport systems. It will become an important destination for recreation and leisure uses.
2. This will be achieved by commencing the creation a new urban heart at Ebbsfleet Central around a transport hub focussed on Ebbsfleet International Station, and delivering new neighbourhoods at Alkerden and Ashmere. The neighbourhoods at Ebbsfleet Green, Castle Hill, and north west of Swanscombe will be completed. Further mixed use development may come forward at suitable land north of Swanscombe.
3. Ebbsfleet Garden City will be sensitively integrated into its surroundings, including the River Thames and riparian open land and habitats to the north, and the Green Belt to the south. Its facilities, particularly at Ebbsfleet Central, will also serve and be well linked to surrounding established communities, including Swanscombe.
4. In order to achieve this, the EDC and Council will:
  - a) Use the opportunity of the scale/ quality of a new Garden City to aim for zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience;

- b) Achieve integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of travel;
- c) Secure provision of public and community services, and recreational and cultural facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods. Any retail centres, community facilities and open spaces provided as part of development in the Garden City will be protected to ensure that well-served communities endure;
- d) Encourage an enterprising and inclusive local economy, supporting local businesses with appropriate retention of existing commercial uses with a viable future, and providing additional opportunities for locally-based economic growth;
- e) Seek a strong civic community with a variety of homes and supporting infrastructure that allows people from all communities to live in the area and contribute to strong social networks embedded across all neighbourhoods;
- f) Promote the delivery and management of an estuarine ecological park on Swanscombe Peninsula (expected to be from Black Duck Marsh north-eastwards to the tip of the Peninsula and adjoining land);
- g) Achieve a healthy new town, including through significant formal and informal recreation spaces, with new parkland, strategic open space, and new sports pitches, provided in a whole environment which encourages active lifestyles;
- h) Support the use of empty buildings or cleared sites for temporary meanwhile uses where they enhance the character and vitality of the area;
- i) Explore opportunities for achieving appropriate Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople site provision to help meet the needs of the Borough; and
- j) Seek to ensure that appropriate stewardship arrangements are in place to allow the new community a meaningful way of engaging and shaping their local area.

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

1. Development proposals in Ebbsfleet Garden City should:
  - a) Comply with the principles set out in the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, the Design for Ebbsfleet Guide, the Ebbsfleet Public Realm Strategy and the Sustainable Travel Strategy. Proper regard will be had to subsequent masterplans and design guidance documents;
  - b) Offer a genuine variety of types and tenures of homes, and provide accessible and attractive new District and Local Centres, community facilities and a range of jobs for local residents;
  - c) Respect the need for the sense of space and openness between Ebbsfleet Central and Swanscombe to be maintained but recognising that suitable opportunities to enhance walking/ cycling connections should be explored;
  - d) Deliver open space and contribute to the Green Grid, including providing attractive opportunities for sports, exercise or to grow food, with a strong network of waterscapes and green corridors provided as a defining feature for Ebbsfleet's streets, parks and neighbourhoods. Development should make provision for long-term stewardship of all public spaces and facilities used by the public;
  - e) Demonstrate how the location and layout of development contributes to the scale, legibility and walkability of the Garden City. Development should contribute and connect to the street hierarchy, enhance the public realm and enable walkability and cycling; and
  - f) Be designed to a high quality, including beautifully and imaginatively designed homes which combine the best of town and country and exemplar developments.

### **Swanscombe (E3)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 127*

- 4.20 Swanscombe is a distinctive neighbourhood in the north east of the Borough. It is not part of the Ebbsfleet Garden City/ Development Corporation Area. Whilst little major development is planned for Swanscombe itself, it is appropriate to set out some guiding principles for the future of the town in light of the known and potential changes that are happening around it. These take into account the need to protect Swanscombe's existing character and opportunities arising from the new development which have the potential to benefit the town.
- 4.21 The town is located next to ongoing and planned developments at Castle Hill, Alkerden and Ashmere (within Ebbsfleet South and West Area – see Policy E5), Ebbsfleet

Central (see Policy E4), and at the smaller Craylands Lane and Croxton Garry sites to the north west of the town. It also has the potential to be significantly impacted by the proposals for the London Resort on Swanscombe Peninsula, should they proceed.

- 4.22 It is expected that the existing residential character of Swanscombe will be maintained and there are limited opportunities for infill residential development. However, there are some disused/ under-used former garage courts and small businesses on brownfield sites within the residential area which may be suitable for the small scale development of new homes subject to consideration of impacts on residential amenity and parking. A number of these already have planning permission and/ or are identified as suitable for development in the housing land supply, totalling less than 100 homes in the plan period. Family housing will be a priority within new residential development.
- 4.23 Swanscombe High Street contains a variety of shops and local services, as a result of which it is designated as a District Centre. There is also a small Local Centre providing a smaller cluster of shops around Craylands Lane/ Milton Road/ Milton Street. These are both identified on the Policies Map, and Policy M23 seeks to protect the function of these centres.
- 4.24 There are significant issues with through traffic and on-street parking in parts of Swanscombe, particularly along the High Street, and there may be opportunities to improve the environment to benefit pedestrians and cyclists. Bus connections within the town are relatively limited. There is a critical need to improve Swanscombe railway station and its poor quality pedestrian access arrangements.
- 4.25 Swanscombe also has a number of open spaces and community facilities. These are protected under Policies M14 and M18. Swanscombe Heritage Park and Craylands Gorge provide a significant historic and biodiversity resource, being the site of Lower Palaeolithic human remains (Swanscombe Skull Site of Special Scientific Interest) and hosting scarce plant species and invertebrates (Alkerden Lane Pit Local Wildlife Site). These are also protected under Policy M15 but there is an opportunity to enhance Craylands Gorge (which lies within Ebbsfleet Garden City) as part of proposals coming forward for Alkerden/ Ashmere.
- 4.26 The proximity of Swanscombe to major development taking place within Ebbsfleet Garden City means that there are opportunities for residents to benefit from better access to the high quality public transport network there, in particular Fastrack routes

and Ebbsfleet International Station. This will be achieved by ensuring that provision is made for improved or new pedestrian and cycle links between developments occurring in the surrounding area and Swanscombe.

**Policy E3: Swanscombe**

1. Swanscombe will retain and improve its identity and positive characteristics including the popular residential core, stock of dwellings for small and larger families, generous sized open spaces and approaches, and the local High Street. The following principles will apply:
  - a) The continued cohesion and sense of community in the town should be maintained by the principle of retention of existing dwellings as single family housing accommodation, where applicable; and
  - b) Facilities at the well-established High Street District Centre and other focal clusters and locations within Swanscombe should be retained/ improved.
2. Where shown to be consistent with the principles set out in criterion 1, there may be opportunities to provide additional local services, environmental improvements and proportionate developments of new family homes at small brownfield sites.
3. Development in Ebbsfleet Garden City should ensure wherever possible that Swanscombe benefits from:
  - a) access to better facilities and public transport, including upgrades to, or a wholly new, Swanscombe railway station; and
  - b) improvements to existing connections and the delivery of new green walking/ cycling connections, particularly towards the River Thames and Ebbsfleet International Station.

## **Ebbsfleet Garden City Strategic Locations**

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 72, 103, 118*

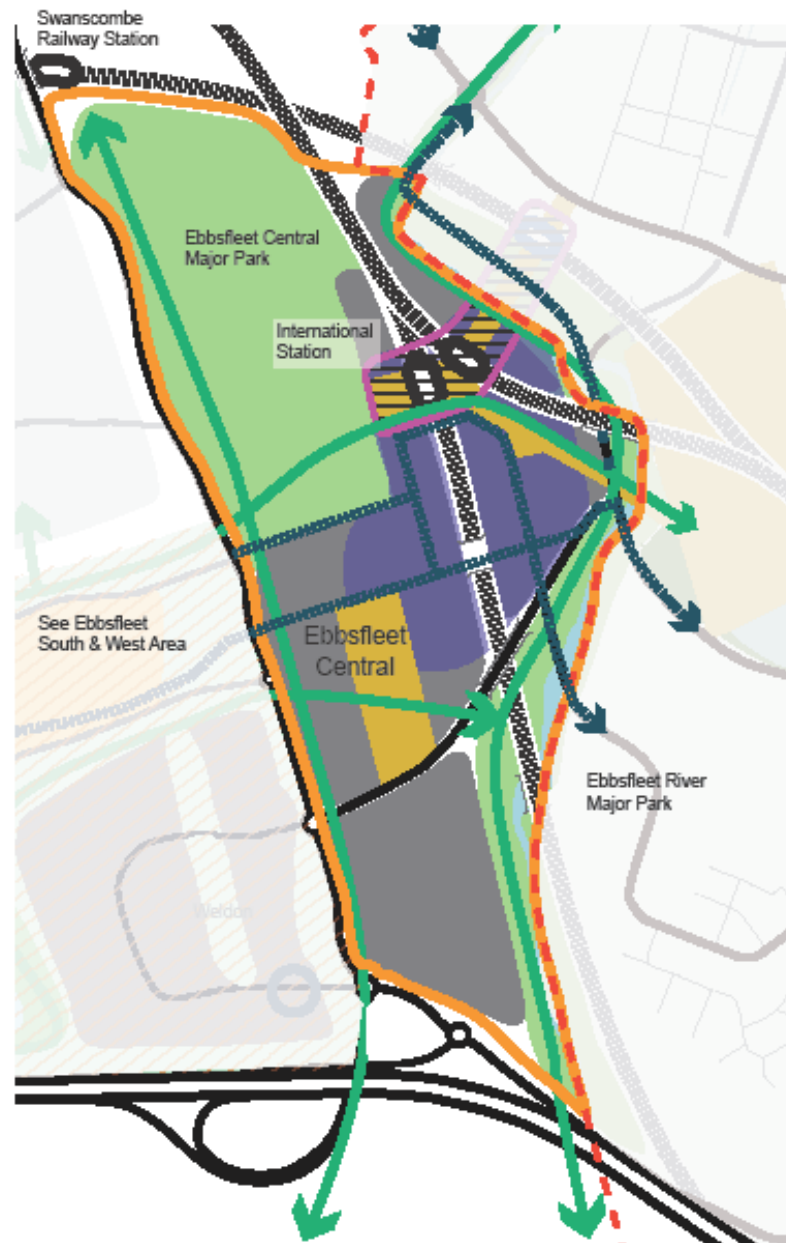
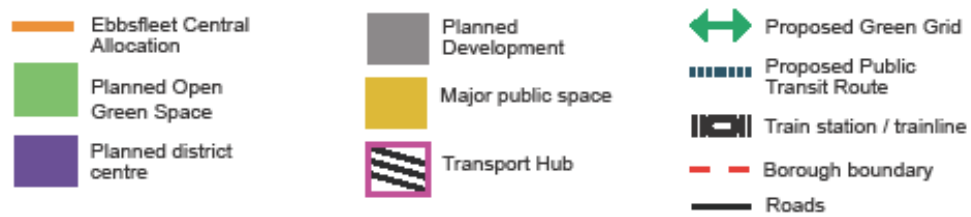
- 4.27 Ebbsfleet Central is allocated for the creation of a mixed use commercial hub of activity of very high strategic significance to the future economic and community development, and infrastructure provision, of the Garden City and the Borough. It may continue to be developed beyond the plan period, but there is expected to be substantial progress towards completing the whole development in Dartford. Part of it will be in Gravesham Borough.
- 4.28 Major new businesses, bringing major professional or high technology employment, are expected to be attracted. The focus for the significant active uses will be in mixed use areas at/ adjacent to Ebbsfleet International Station which will form a new vibrant urban centre of relatively high density to support city-style services, with opportunities for significant education/ health and other provision. In terms of education, there will be, as a minimum, a local primary school (2 form entry), plus other learning provision. It is anticipated that job-generating uses, and community and open space provision, will be built from the early stages of development.
- 4.29 Further from the International station, residential uses supported by local services will be predominant. Retail provision will support the above uses and facilitate clear clusters of activity. However, these will be modest in scale proportionate to the development, with a total of less than 20,000sqm.
- 4.30 Access to high quality, sustainable forms of transport is a key driver in planning for this location. Ebbsfleet International provides high speed train links to London, other parts of Kent and mainland Europe. There are also Fastrack services to Dartford, Bluewater and Gravesend, with opportunities to extend the network as development occurs. In order to fully realise the role of the station as a transport hub, there is a need to improve pedestrian and cycling connections over green space to Swanscombe, new neighbourhoods and stations on the North Kent railway line. It will be important to ensure that development at Ebbsfleet Central does not prevent the potential for an Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) extension from occurring in the longer-term, in accordance with Policy S2. The International Station is also served by a significant amount of car

parking which will need to be replaced in an efficient and integrated way as part of new development, including flexibility for changing requirements for station parking over the longer-term. Development is expected to facilitate links to Northfleet railway station.

- 4.31 The site includes a major urban park in the north/ west. This should be laid out and managed consistent with the requirements of the Bakers Hole Site of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Monuments which reflect the geological interest from the Palaeolithic period. This part of the site, occupying a prominent and strategically sensitive position adjacent to Swanscombe, also includes land that was previously used for landfill and may be subject to contamination. It will form part of the strategic open space provision, rather than built development. To the east, the River Ebbsfleet and surrounding marsh, scrub and grassy areas is a Local Wildlife Site. It is important that any future development reflects these important historic and natural features, and successful integration to the built, natural and heritage environment.
- 4.32 Diagram 10 shows the area subject to the policy and the key elements that will apply to development in this location.



**Diagram 10: Ebbsfleet Central**



## **Policy E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation**

1. Development of the part of Ebbsfleet Central within Dartford Borough will be supported where it provides a comprehensively planned strategic urban hub, with a full mix of activities including employment, health/ education, retail/ leisure, and residential development which is well integrated in the wider area; and supported by new open and public spaces, and major new transport and community infrastructure.
2. The main focus will be development with an urban character close to Ebbsfleet International Station, including large-scale commercial activity, and a new District Centre, with strategic health/ education facilities. Elsewhere in the site, development shall be predominantly new residential neighbourhoods including Local Centre(s), and public and open space including the improvement of access to the River Ebbsfleet.
3. Proposals should be designed to accord with Diagram 10 and:
  - a) provide at least 30% of the site as open space including a new park along the River Ebbsfleet, and integrate with strategic open space in the north of the site, which will become an extensive, varied and well equipped landmark urban park;
  - b) provide a new public transport hub with ease of interchange between rail services at Ebbsfleet International and other local rail stations, Fastrack and local buses, and deliver major new walking and cycling connections to both existing and new communities;
  - c) ensure that appropriate car parking is provided for Ebbsfleet Station and that such provision is integrated within the rest of the built form;
  - d) secure the direct Fastrack route through the site linking Ebbsfleet International station westwards to Bluewater (via Alkerden and other developments in the Garden City); and
  - e) not preclude achievement of new/ enhanced rail services in north Kent, including to Dartford (or direct to Abbey Wood).
4. Up to 2036-37, development within Dartford Borough is expected to deliver:
  - a) approximately 2,000 residential units;
  - b) approximately 100,000sqm Class E floorspace (predominantly offices/ business space, and only a limited proportion retail); and
  - c) substantial education, health and community facilities.

## **Ebbsfleet South and West Area (E5)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, I1, I2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 23, 72, 103, 118*

- 4.33 This area comprises the former Northfleet West Substation, former Eastern Quarry and its constituent parts, plus Bean Triangle (see Diagram 11). The neighbourhoods of Ebbsfleet Green (Northfleet West Substation), Castle Hill, Alkerden and Ashmere

are identified as contributing approximately 7,100 dwellings during the plan period which will be complemented by supporting community facilities and infrastructure. They already have planning permission, however several are still subject to details approvals. Policy E5 sets out guideline principles and the key elements from the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework which should apply to future development coming forward.

- 4.34 Kent County Council is taking forward plans to implement a tunnel in the west of this area, providing a direct Fastrack, pedestrian and cycle link to Bluewater and the transport hub at Ebbsfleet Central. There are also other opportunities to provide pedestrian and cycle links within the new neighbourhoods and linking the development sites to the surrounding areas. It is expected there will be a 2 form entry (FE) primary school at Ashmere, and the education campus at Alkerden will include an 8 FE secondary school and 2 FE primary school.
- 4.35 The Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework shows a network of open spaces and ecological corridors through the area and linking to Craylands Gorge to the west of Swanscombe. The provision of green spaces in this part of Ebbsfleet, including two major parks, will be important to the Garden City's environment, and contribute to meeting recreational needs and health of all residents- young and older. They will help define the new neighbourhoods across these large sites and provide a significant contribution to enhancing the Borough's Green Grid network.
- 4.36 The southernmost part of this area comprises the Bean Triangle, a small area of land located between major highways which contains a range of activities and is located within the Green Belt (Policy M13 applies). It contains a mix of commercial uses and houses interspersed with ancient woodland and other trees. The area provides a link between development at Alkerden and Ashmere and the countryside to the south of the A2. Opportunities to improve public access, landscaping and overall quality in this area will be maximised. There will be changes to road layouts and traffic flows in the area as a result of the A2 Bean junction improvements which are currently being carried out.

Diagram 11: Ebbsfleet South and West Area



**Policy E5: Ebbsfleet South and West Area**

1. South and West Ebbsfleet includes several planned new neighbourhoods, as well as some which are nearing completion. The fulfilment of strategic development by completing mixed use centres and residential neighbourhoods in the western part of this area will be supported.
2. Key elements of development in this area will include:
  - a) A direct Fastrack route through to Bluewater/ Ebbsfleet Central, serving the facilities of, and acting as a focal point for, all of the planned neighbourhoods.
  - b) The completion of the established neighbourhoods of Castle Hill and Ebbsfleet Green which will be complemented by further westwards development at Alkerden and then Ashmere. Alkerden will be a local hub for the community with a District Centre which will include an education campus and medical/ healthcare provision. At Ashmere, a Local Centre will be provided.
  - c) The provision of custom/ self-build dwellings which make a substantial contribution to the needs identified on the Dartford Self Build Register.
  - d) A fully connected pedestrian and cycle network, linked to the surrounding areas and Bluewater and the enhancement of connections to Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Stone and the countryside to the south of the A2.
  - e) North-south ecological corridors, the enhancement of Craylands Gorge as an ecological and heritage asset, a Major Urban Park between Alkerden and Ashmere, and Eastern Quarry Lakes Major Park.
3. Bean Triangle will remain in the Green Belt and development will be limited in accordance with national and local Green Belt policies. Improved walking/ cycling connections are required, and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation will explore opportunities for landscape enhancements of this key gateway into the Garden City.

### **Land North of Swanscombe Area (E6)**

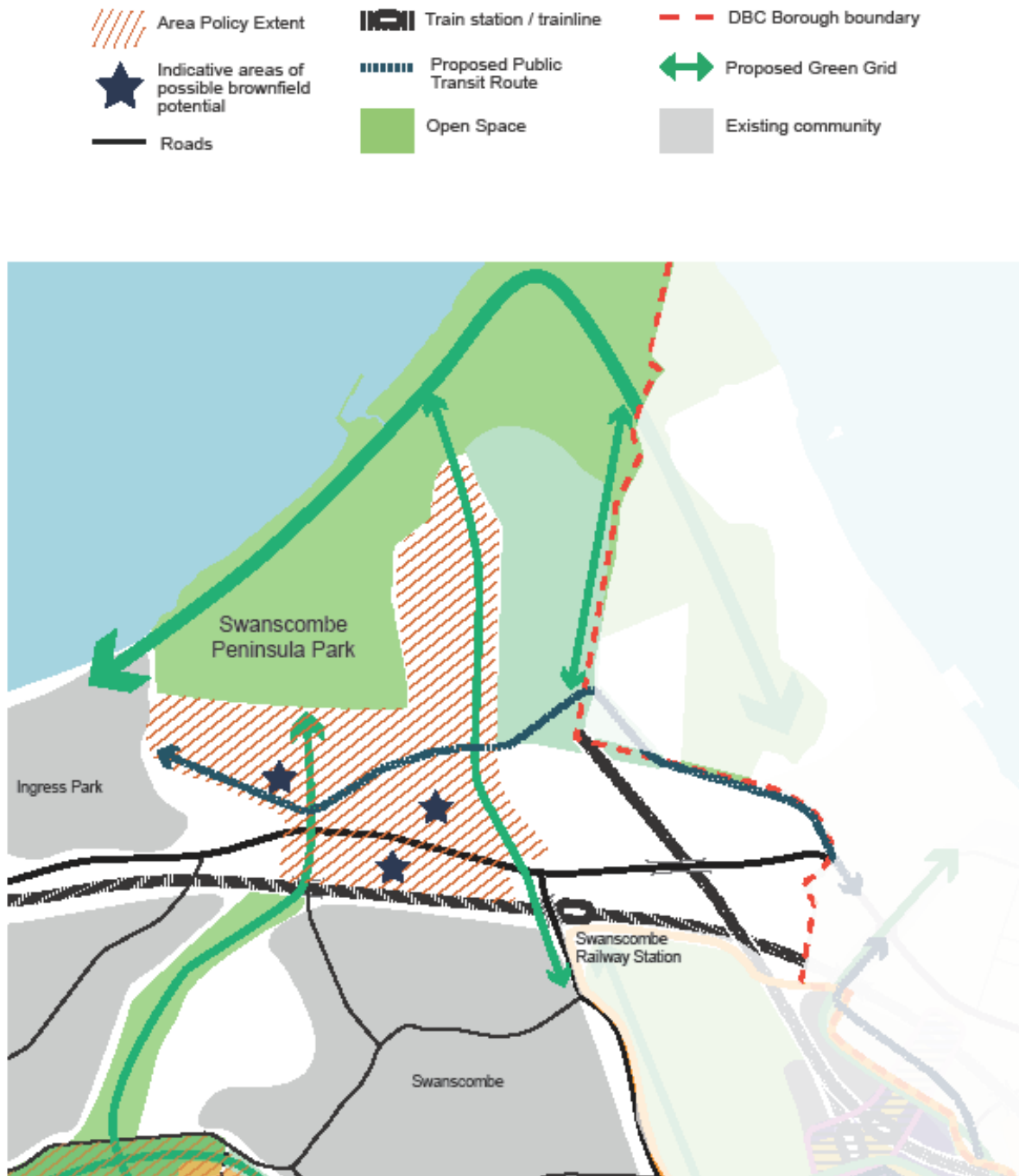
- *Strategic Objectives: I1, I2, I4, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 118, 174*

- 4.37 This policy outlines the Local Plan position of guiding new suitable development for an area to north of the North Kent railway line at Swanscombe (Diagram 12). It currently comprises a mix of industry, open land and former pits, incorporating part of Swanscombe Peninsula. It excludes current identified employment areas.
- 4.38 For clarity, it is acknowledged that this is part of a large, wider area across Swanscombe Peninsula (including the pits to the south of London Road/ Galley Hill Road) which has been put forward by developers as the potential site for an entertainment resort, now known as London Resort.
- 4.39 The London Resort proposals are being dealt with as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure project. The application for a Development Consent Order was submitted to the Secretary of State on 31 December 2020. The Council and the EDC have raised concerns over the proposals, including its impact on infrastructure, local communities, the environment and on the delivery of Ebbsfleet Central (policy E4). The government's decision on the project is not expected before the submission of the Dartford Local Plan.
- 4.40 Until recent submission of the Resort plans, there has been a lack of clarity over what was being proposed by the developers. However it is now apparent that if permitted and fully complete it would primarily comprise:
- Events spaces, themed rides and attractions, entertainment venues including theatres and cinemas, and ancillary retail, commercial, dining and entertainment facilities
  - Extensive car parking, A2 highways works, people mover and transport interchanges, a resort access road and river transport infrastructure
  - Four hotels providing up to 3,550 rooms, and up to 500 dwellings for resort workers
  - Combined conference and convention centre (up to 11,000sqm), and a building for e-sports and computer gaming (up to 16,500sqm)
  - Other works such as flood defence works and habitat creation/ enhancement

- 4.41 In light of the uncertainty over the future of the area, and its location within the defined Ebbsfleet Garden City area, it is appropriate for the Local Plan to provide a policy framework for appropriate development in the event that the proposed London Resort either does not get consent or it gets consent but is not implemented. In the event that it gets consent and development commences, a review of the Local Plan will consider the need to revise the policy in response to projected impacts.
- 4.42 Local Plan Policy E6 generally covers land to the south west of the High Speed 1 railway line and tunnel head. This is the primary area where brownfield land is concentrated, where there is less likely to be impact on river navigation, better integration with existing/ proposed settlements, and overall lower adverse environmental impact. Any development would be subject to land investigation and further studies. Parts of Swanscombe Peninsula designated as Borough Open Space will be managed in accordance with Policy M14. The local planning authority supports the development of an estuarine ecological park to the north west of the tunnel head (see Policy E1). Elsewhere, the Local Plan takes into account the need to retain and improve the existing employment areas in accordance with Policy M21.
- 4.43 The criteria based area policy below recognises the importance of habitats in forming any proposals. Parts of the area comprise open mosaic habitat, a nationally important priority habitat, the protection and enhancement of which will be a key element of any development.
- 4.44 The nature and scale of uses must be appropriate for the area under the policy. The criteria seek to ensure that environmental, design and sustainable transport issues are fully taken on board in any proposals that may emerge in future. In particular, it requires any development to provide benefits to (and be integrated with) existing and proposed new communities in the vicinity, and that it does not impinge on development plans at Ebbsfleet Central (E4). Diagram 12 shows the area subject to the policy and the key elements that will apply to development in this location.



Diagram 12: Land North of Swanscombe Area



**Policy E6: Land North of Swanscombe Area**

1. The area centred on Manor Way and London Road (north of the North Kent railway line and south west of the High Speed railway line and tunnel head) shown on Diagram 12 includes land with regeneration potential. Development on land within this area will be supported subject to further investigation in relation to its suitability for development and compliance with the requirements set out in criterion 2.
2. Any development in this area will need to:
  - a) focus any built major development on brownfield land and ensure that important ecological habitats are protected and enhanced;
  - b) demonstrate suitable new uses, such as local leisure/ recreational uses, commercial uses or residential development of a suitable density;
  - c) be sensitively designed and appropriately integrated with its surrounds and the Garden City, with no adverse impact on the delivery of the Ebbsfleet Central allocation;
  - d) take account of impacts in relation to: ecology; flood risk; river navigation; land contamination; noise; air quality; minerals safeguarding; landscape; groundwater quality; and surface water drainage;
  - e) provide a high quality network of links to the wider area including: the provision of a Fastrack route; improved pedestrian and cycle access to Swanscombe, the River Thames and Ingress Park; and the upgrade of Swanscombe Station; and
  - f) be designed to address: the unique location; views to the area from the north across the River Thames and across the Marshes; and views of the roofscape from London Road.
3. In the event that construction of the proposed international scale resort occurs, a Local Plan Review shall consider the need to revise policy in response to projected impacts.

## **5. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

- 5.1 This section provides more detailed, topic based, policies for planning applications, helping to deliver the strategic policies and objectives in the above sections. It starts with policies more focussed on design, housing and heritage matters (M1- M12), then sets out important Green Belt and environmental policies (M13- M15), and finally, largely infrastructure/ economic non-strategic policies (M16- M24).

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, I3, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 124-132*

- 5.2 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development in Dartford, ensuring the Borough's regeneration not only uses land attractively and efficiently, but that development creates better, healthier places in which to live, work and enjoy spending time. The National Design Guide sets out the features in achieving well-designed places and helps demonstrate what good design means in practice. The Kent Design Guide, which is being refined, provides a locally based approach to developing good design and a core set of principles to guide and shape high quality residential developments in Dartford. Additionally, developers should closely consider use of recognised benchmarks such as Building for Life to help demonstrate the outcome of these considerations.
- 5.3 High quality urban design is key to place-making and enhancing existing natural and built environments in Dartford Borough, ensuring a good quality of life for all residents and creating the right conditions for communities to flourish. Opportunities should be taken from the outset of planning developments to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, with active and creative design for desirable, integrated, sustainable places. Central principles include:
- Design that is attractive.
  - Design that contributes to and respects distinctive townscape character, landscape setting and biodiversity.
  - Design that is functional and fit for purpose.
  - Design that is adaptable and resilient.
  - Ease of movement.

- Successful public spaces.
- Support for a mix of uses / tenures.

- 5.4 Locally, the full variety of the Borough's townscape and landscapes is often not readily apparent on mapping or through cursory examination. For example, there needs to be appreciation of Dartford in three dimensions. The Borough's own determinants of its character include: variety in the sense of openness or enclosure, with level changes (not least due to extensive quarrying) and individual contexts, landmarks and visual signifiers; respect for topography should lead to enhanced designs that utilise changes in levels positively. Dartford's defining features incorporate man-made structures, e.g. bridges and tunnels, and natural aspects such as the borough's riparian environments, notably along the Rivers Thames and Darent. These should be well referenced in all applicable design proposals.
- 5.5 The Borough's historic environment should be recognised and appropriately respected through well-considered development design (policies M5 and M6).
- 5.6 Design, architecture and construction materials should be high quality and capable of enduring to complement and enhance the valued character of an area and reflect or reinforce locally distinctive features. Innovative design that respects and complements local character may be beneficial, particularly in Ebbsfleet Garden City, where a range of guidance is available.

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

- 5.7 Prominent developments such as Bluewater, Crossways Business Park (Stone) Ingress Park (Greenhithe) and The Bridge (Dartford) have had a positive regenerative effect in the Borough and raised the benchmark for quality in the area. Development should continue to raise the standard of design further in the contemporary context, and emulate the best quality developments in the Borough.
- 5.8 The scale of development potential in the Borough provides particular opportunities for placemaking in larger developments. There are also further opportunities to promote the provision of distinctive designs and landmark developments through high quality architecture in appropriate locations that enhance views and raise the profile of the area. The quality of public realm is a Borough priority, particularly in areas such as

public transport interchanges, central open spaces, town and district centres and at large mixed use developments.

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

#### Signage and intrusive structures

- 5.13 In addition to exploring these opportunities to enhance Dartford's sense of place, development should also seek to ameliorate intrusive physical characteristics in the

Green Belt and elsewhere. Much of the Borough's environment is open land designated as Green Belt, forming a key consideration in designing planning applications.

- 5.14 Inappropriate advertising and other forms of new signage can have major impacts on many places in the Borough. Particularly in the more rural areas, any advertisements and signage should be particularly closely considered. Most of this area is covered by the Area of Special Advertisement Control which was approved by the Secretary of State in 2016.
- 5.15 Given their particular visual prominence, opportunities to re-provide overhead wiring and structures underground at applicable development sites will be strongly encouraged.
- 5.16 To improve electronic communications networks, policy S2 includes support for the development of telecommunications masts, buildings and other structures in line with national policy and where acceptable against Local Plan policies. The need for new sites should be justified, and equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged.

### **Policy M1: Good Design for Dartford**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Development must demonstrate that it is designed in line with the National Design Guide, considers the principles of Kent Design, and satisfies all of the following locally specific criteria for good design in the Borough:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Responding to, reinforcing and enhancing positive aspects of the locality. Opportunities to create appropriately distinctive high quality places should be taken, particularly using prominent physical attributes (including the Borough's distinctive riverside environments, extensive open spaces, landscape and tree coverage);</li><li>b) Ensuring appropriate regard is had to heritage assets (see policies M5 and M6) and that the character of historic towns and villages and Areas of Special Character are respected;</li><li>c) Facilitating a sense of place, with social interaction, a physical environment encouraging health/ wellbeing, attractive active travel options, and inclusive and integrated neighbourhoods; through a mix of uses and careful design and layout that ensures that commercial and public facilities are well integrated within the site and the wider locality;</li><li>d) Providing permeability for the site to sufficiently connect to its surrounds and for the public to traverse the site, through clear</li></ol></li></ol> |
|--|

- pedestrian and cycle linkages, and, where appropriate, active frontages, open streets, and a fine grain mix of buildings and spaces;
  - e) Reinforcing and enhancing good design by integrating new development with the public realm/ open space; and providing biodiversity gain, and natural features including rivers and lakes/ ponds;
  - f) Including public art which reflects local character and heritage within large developments; and
  - g) Meeting the requirements set out in any supplementary local design guidelines which will be produced after public consultation consistent with these principles and national requirements, to be adopted as formal Supplementary Planning Documents or design codes.
- 2. Development must be shown to be suitable in terms of the height, mass, form, scale, orientation, siting, access, overshadowing, articulation, detailing, roof form, and landscaping relative to neighbouring buildings and the wider locality. Materials must support a sense of place, and be relative to the local character. Outstanding or innovative design which helps raise design standards in the wider area will be supported on appropriate sites which are not closely related to sensitive areas or assets.
- 3. The appropriate scale of development at a site, including the density of new residential proposals, should be the outcome of securing high quality development through a design-led process (and demonstrated by agreed masterplans on large sites) having proper regard to:
  - a) the current built environment context including heritage assets;
  - b) the location of the site in the Borough and its characteristics:
    - i) Assessment of development potential using locally specific design or conservation guidance documents, and fulfilling applicable Plan objectives for the area.
    - ii) Outside the urban area, design should, in particular, be sympathetic to local landscape and townscape character;
  - c) providing spacious and good quality developments including clearly meeting or exceeding nationally described size standards for new homes;
  - d) the principle of securing a mix of uses and residential types, achieving efficient re-use of land where appropriate, and delivering regeneration at urban locations well served by public transport services; and
  - e) requirements of this good design and other policies including for green infrastructure/ amenity space provision.
- 4. Public spaces in and outside buildings, and all accommodation, must be designed to be inclusive, safe and accessible for all Dartford's communities, including young, elderly, disabled and less mobile people. The design of buildings, open space and the private and public realm must reduce the fear of, and opportunities for, crime.
- 5. Signage and advertisements must be of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the building and locality, particularly in the designated Area of



Special Advertisement Control, and must not have a negative impact on visual amenity, public safety or the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 170, 178-181*

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

### **Pollution**

- 5.20 Dartford has a number of areas of poor air quality designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which are shown on the Policies Map. These are in areas where residential properties are located in close proximity to congested and/ or busy roads. The AQMAs are currently subject to review and the Action Plans are being updated. Air Quality Impact Assessments will be required for proposed developments which are within or immediately adjacent to AQMAs, or where they have the potential to adversely impact on air quality, for example through additional traffic movements. Development in all locations will be expected to minimise pollution and meet national

air quality standards. Addressing pollution and public health is a primary reason to adhere to the transport and spatial strategy in policies S1 and S2 to manage growth and development location, especially unplanned windfall development.

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

### Minerals

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

### Landfill Sites

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

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

- 5.25 In the event that proposals emerge, full and detailed planning applications will be required. Assessment of proposed development on gassing landfill sites will take into consideration the potential migration of the gas to adjacent areas and the resultant impact on public safety. There will also be a need to ensure that groundwater quality will not be adversely affected.
- 5.26 The first priority in assessing proposals is to ensure that development is appropriate; especially that any new residential development meets legislative requirements for safety. It is also very important that there is robust information so that all the issues of feasibility and potential uncertainty are recognised at the point of determining planning applications and that there is detail available to support reasonable confidence that the planned benefits will be realised if development commences.
- 5.27 There may be continuing uncertainty regarding the extent of gas emissions and/ or land stabilisation despite major upfront technical requirements. Experience suggests that the programme to bring forward satisfactory development in full can then become a longer-term endeavour than initially identified. This is due to uncertainty regarding delivery timescales, cost/ viability and potential impacts on meeting policy requirements, and the need to provide mitigations necessary to achieve sustainable growth in the Borough. For these reasons, sites which need to address potential gassing and land stabilisation issues will not be prioritised in Dartford's housing land supply over sites where there are no such land conditions and associated viability implications.

## **Policy M2: Environmental and Amenity Protection**

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: G2, G3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 151-154*

- 5.28 Under the Climate Change Act, the United Kingdom is now legally bound to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In Dartford, 40% of carbon emissions come from the built environment<sup>8</sup>. The built environment is responsible for carbon emissions at the construction stage but also throughout its lifetime, depending largely on its quality, choice of materials and the way in which it is occupied and used.
- 5.29 Policy M3 requires development to holistically and intentionally consider and act upon the opportunities for positive contribution to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. The design of residential development must consider how the occupants will interact with the building and how this interaction will impact on their use of natural resources and their need for heating and cooling. In order to assess the sustainability performance of residential developments, tools such as the Homes Quality Mark by the BRE are encouraged. Achievement of Passivhaus standards will be supported. However, where development impacts on the setting of a heritage asset, very careful selection of the most appropriate solution/ technology is required.

### **Preserving Natural Resources**

- 5.30 It is expected that residential dwellings will be designed with sufficient space and layout to increase the ease of both recycling and composting. This includes early design for waste storage within individual units and also within serviced areas of flatted developments. Waste storage for flatted developments must provide sufficient and easy access for collection vehicles.
- 5.31 During the construction phase, the re-use of materials on site, or use of locally sourced materials, is expected wherever possible in order to prevent waste and reduce vehicular trip generation.
- 5.32 Water efficiency is an issue of growing importance in South East England. The policy requires all new residential dwellings to achieve 110 litres per person per day in

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<sup>8</sup> Based on DEFRA emissions data from 2005 through to 2017

accordance with Part G2 of the Building Regulations 2015. All developments should seek to make a contribution to challenging water scarcity. It is possible to achieve this in a number of ways, including installing water efficiency fittings within converted buildings or through incorporating water-conserving planting into landscaping plans. Therefore this policy is not restricted to new build dwellings and will apply to all homes created. It is expected that information will be provided as part of planning applications to confirm how requirements will be satisfied. In addition, it is expected that good sustainable design and construction will fully explore the potential to build in features such as grey-water recycling systems, particularly in large new development where scale and viability should allow.

### Reducing Carbon and Improving Energy Performance

- 5.33 Pending national confirmation of the next upgrade in energy efficiency expectations, new residential developments will be expected to surpass Building Regulations Part L. Criterion 2a will be applied to major development until proposals to go beyond this level of performance come into force, e.g. the Future Homes Standard.
- 5.34 Dartford Borough has signed up to the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy 2020 which includes actions such as targets for any new development over 100 houses. Under criterion 3 below, it is expected that there will be significant uptake of low and/ or zero carbon technologies on residential schemes of 100 units or more. This could be through district heating or combined heat and power for instance, with the type of technology used being determined based on best practicable outcome. If this cannot be delivered, a sustainability statement should be submitted with the application which clearly demonstrates that the technologies can be readily be installed at a later date.
- 5.35 Across all development, consideration must be given to the materials used with regard to their thermal performance, as well as their embedded carbon and longevity. For applicable technologies, for instance involving active solar technology (photovoltaic and solar water heating), the design and aesthetics of the technology must be taken into consideration and negative local impact avoided.



### Non-Residential Development

- 5.36 In order to achieve carbon reductions, improved energy performance and water preservation, non-residential development over 1,000sqm will be required to achieve BREEAM excellent standard. Securing BREEAM excellent standard will demonstrate that the environmental impacts of the development have been considered holistically and that all aspects of Policy M3 have been taken into consideration. Demonstration that the development will be able to achieve the excellent standard should be submitted with the planning application, and at pre-application stage if appropriate. As and when the BRE update the requirements needed to achieve the excellent standard, it is expected that development will adhere to these and continue to achieve excellent ratings where feasible.

### Major Installations and Energy Storage

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

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

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The design, construction and lifecycle of development must contribute to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change. This includes, but is not limited to, improving energy performance, reducing carbon emissions and preserving water. At applicable sites, the appropriate technology and systems should be considered to minimise impact on character or heritage. The use of recognised assessment tools or aiming for quality/ exemplar standards is expected wherever possible.</li><li>2. To achieve these aims, all residential development should:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Achieve a minimum on-site reduction in regulated carbon emissions of at least 19 per cent beyond Part L of the Building Regulations, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not feasible. This</li></ol></li></ol> |
|--|

- will be required for major development until such time that amendments are made to national legislation/ policy which have the effect of surpassing this level of performance;
- b) Demonstrate delivery of the water efficiency requirement level of 110 litres per person per day for all dwellings created;
  - c) Use materials and design to increase energy efficiency and thermal performance, increase a building's length of life and adaptability for future uses, with materials recycled or re-used from within the site, or sourced locally, where possible; and
  - d) Achieve a layout and design that allows for the efficient management/ re-use of natural resources, including securing waste reduction, re-use, recycling and composting for the future occupiers of development. Adequate and convenient arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials must be made.
3. Large residential development of 100 dwellings or more should be demonstrated to feature additional significant zero and/or low carbon or sustainable technology features across the site. This could include for example, use of grey-water recycling and/ or a combined heat and power connection where scale and feasibility allows.
  4. In order to demonstrate high levels of energy performance and water efficiency, non-residential development over 1,000sqm must achieve the BREEAM excellent standard.
  5. In determining applications for energy storage or small and large scale low/ zero carbon technology and installations, the economic and environmental benefits of the proposal will be weighed against the individual and cumulative impact of the development. Development will only be permitted in line with national policy and where the following factors have been satisfactorily taken into consideration:
    - a) Minimising landscape impacts, and impacts on ecology and agriculture (where applicable);
    - b) Shadow flicker and glare (if relevant);
    - c) Electronic and telecommunication interference/ navigation and aviation issues (if relevant); and
    - d) Ensuring installations are removed when no longer in use and land is then restored.

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

- *Strategic Objectives: G5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 155-165*

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

### **Flood risk and Drainage**

- 5.40 The Dartford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) identifies that fluvial and tidal flooding are the main sources of flood risk in the Borough though surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding are also a potential risk. The fluvial flood risk mainly arises from the River Darent and the tidal flood risk mainly arises from the River Thames and extends into the lower reaches of the River Darent. The SFRA includes maps showing the areas which fall within flood risk zones 2 (medium probability) and 3 (high probability). These are grouped together and indicated as flood risk areas on the Policies Map. Site specific flood risk assessments will be required for developments in these areas and for certain types of development not within identified flood risk areas. The SFRA sets out what matters should be addressed in the site specific

assessments. It is important that development in flood risk areas does not increase flood risk or displace flood water and that development is designed to incorporate flood resilience measures such as raised finished floor levels and flood dispersal openings.

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

### Strategic Plans

- 5.43 The Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) Plan sets out a high level programme of flood defence infrastructure improvements which will be required over the next 100 years to manage rising sea levels and increased flood events. Initially, the plan within Dartford Borough is to improve the existing flood defence system. Development proposals within the tidal flood defence raising zone (shown in Diagram 2) must consider the need for space to inspect, maintain and raise the defences in future. In many circumstances, it will be appropriate for the developer to incorporate a raised flood defence into the development. Where this is not the case, developers will be expected to demonstrate that their proposed works will not constrain the options for future raising of the defence. This may include geotechnical investigations and calculations. Early consultation with the risk management authority responsible for the defence (in most

cases, the Environment Agency) should be undertaken to establish the preferred solution and how proposed development can complement this.

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

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

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

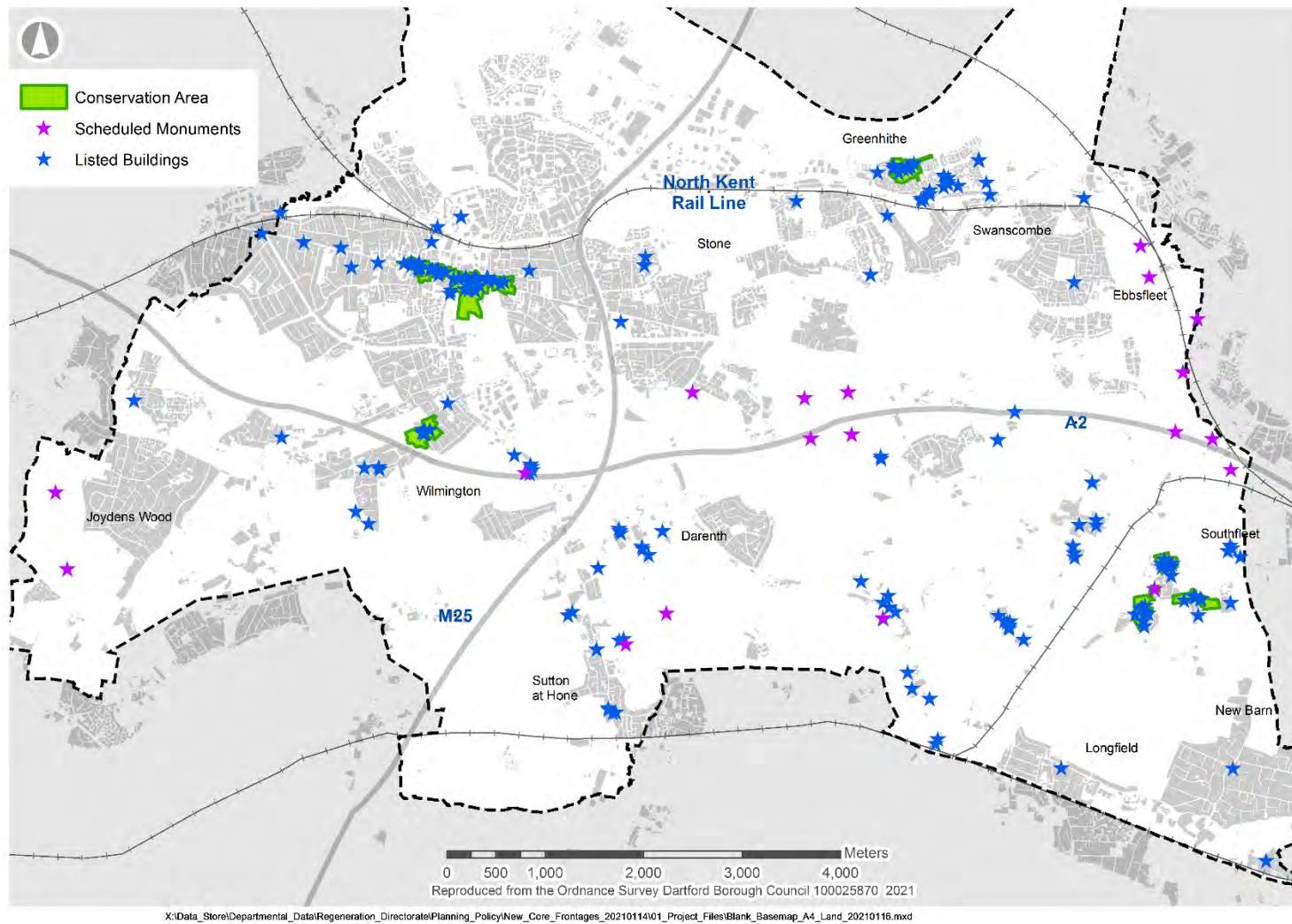
## **Historic Environment Strategy (M5 and M6)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 184-202*

- 5.46 Dartford Borough has a long history and varied heritage due to its location in the fertile Darent Valley, availability of natural resources and proximity to London. There is evidence of prehistoric activity in the Borough dating back to the Palaeolithic period. The modern town of Dartford originated as a small Romano-British settlement on what is now Watling Street, the main road through Kent from London to Dover. There was then a Saxon settlement and a medieval market town before more rapid growth in the post-medieval period and industrial expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 5.47 Some of the resultant heritage assets are still evident and the key ones are designated as listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. These are shown in Figure13 below. They are an irreplaceable resource and should not be unnecessarily lost through redevelopment. The local planning authority will seek to retain the Borough's designated heritage assets and enhance their significance wherever possible, ensuring that they are put to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Proposals leading to substantial harm or total loss of a designated heritage asset will be resisted, and will only be allowed on an exceptional basis.
- 5.48 Where an asset has been deliberately neglected or damaged, its deteriorated state will not be taken into account in decision-making.



Figure 13: Designated Heritage Assets



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

**Table 6 Significance of Potential Heritage Assets**

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

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

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

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

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

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

affecting designated heritage assets will be assessed under Policy M5. Applications affecting non-designated assets will be assessed against the criteria contained in Policy M6.

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

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

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

### **Listed Buildings**

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

### **Conservation Areas**

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

### **Scheduled Monuments**

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

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

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

### **Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

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

### **Affordable Housing (M7)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 61-64*

5.54 With many new neighbourhoods in creation in Dartford, a wide choice of housing must be available and accessible to meet the needs of local residents, providing diversity and a mix of house types and tenures. This will enable families and households to stay in the area when their circumstances change and a different type of home is needed, and assists in the achieving the planned, steady delivery of inclusive Borough regeneration.

5.55 Developments should contribute to the creation of mixed communities in Dartford Borough with a range of housing tenures to meet varying local need. Substantial residential development is occurring - largely on the basis of existing planning permissions - and will continue for several years. This means that new applications need to consider closely how future housing needs can be met, complementing the contribution to be made by sites which already have planning permission.

#### **Thresholds and headline target**

5.56 Following national policy, affordable housing in the Green Belt or south of the A2 will not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments i.e. affordable housing is required for developments of 10 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5ha or more. For sites in the urban area, the 15 dwelling previous threshold will continue to be used. In the event that changes to national policy occur, these would be given appropriate weight.

5.57 Reflecting future needs requirements, the planned residential sites, and development delivery prospects, the Local Plan sets a headline target of at least 35% new housing on applicable sites to be delivered to meet the current national definition of affordable housing. This is to meet the requirements for affordable housing over the plan period, accounting for affordable housing delivery from sites already in the pipeline. The headline affordable housing target should be factored in to land values but in any event is expected to prove viable on most types of site without planning permission which comprises the planned housing supply of the Borough. (However, in central Dartford

as defined in paragraph 3.17, factors such as competing suitable land uses mean a lower target applies for this key regeneration area).

#### Tenures and delivery

- 5.58 A large range of tenures/ housing products now fall within the definition of affordable housing, including both rented and ownership-based tenures. This incorporates housing products such as shared ownership, discounted market housing (including First Homes), and rent-to-buy. For some households, e.g. newly forming households needing help to enter the housing market, ownership-based affordable housing tenures are likely to be an appropriate solution. However, for those with lower household incomes (as set out in the Council's Tenancy Policy), there is an essential need for affordable rented housing, which will be tackled through a range of actions/ developments. Criterion 1c of the policy supports sites proposed for 100% affordable rented provision.
- 5.59 Projected need requirements suggest that within the affordable housing provision, there should ordinarily be provision of a higher proportion of social/ affordable rented provision than intermediate affordable housing products. Subject to negotiation and latest local need evidence, the indicative guideline is that development should include:
- 20% of total housing as social/ affordable rented tenures; and
  - 15% of total housing as affordable home ownership products.
- Evidence shows that there is significant need for social/ affordable rented housing and that other needs could principally be met through ownership-based intermediate affordable housing products, especially shared ownership provided at 25% equity.
- 5.60 The indicative tenure guidelines above accord with national policy requiring the provision of at least 10% of all new homes on major development sites to be available for affordable home ownership, with some exceptions (for example developments providing 100% build to rent dwellings). It also accords with the proposal for a minimum of one quarter of all affordable housing provision to be First Homes.
- 5.61 There are often several considerations in achieving successful affordable housing delivery including:
- the local housing needs in the Borough and at the site, and, critically, the ability of those in housing need to sustainably afford the accommodation;



- the capacity of the development to provide various types of affordable housing; and
- the delivery and management/ maintenance of affordable housing, including the need for affordable housing to be feasible in scale, form and location for housing associations or other approved providers.

5.62 Affordable housing should be provided on-site and designed so that it is integrated with the other parts of the development. This ensures that there is a good distribution of affordable housing across the Borough and promotes social inclusion. However, it is recognised that on-site provision will not always provide the best solution due to factors such as the size and type of development, the nature of the site and impacts on the viability of development. Such cases will be exceptional and will need to be fully justified. The local planning authority will require off-site housing provision to be made or the payment of a commuted sum instead. The commuted sum should be equivalent to the financial contribution were the affordable housing to be provided on-site.

### **Policy M7: Affordable Housing**

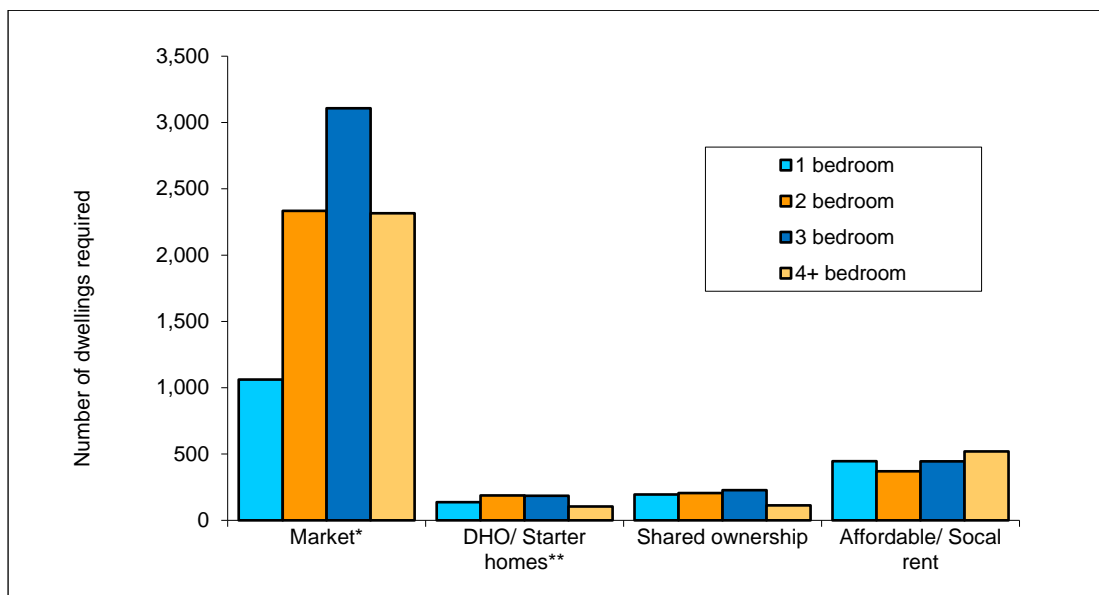
1. Residential development should aim for a genuine mix of housing to support inclusive neighbourhoods, with a range of rental and ownership options to meet local needs. Affordable housing should be provided in the following circumstances:
  - a) In the urban area, at developments proposing a gain of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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4*  
*NPPF paragraphs: 61*

- 5.63 A range of residential development should occur, particularly on larger sites. Genuine variety in the type of new accommodation is a requirement of the Borough's development strategy (see Policy S4). Dartford's policy framework includes several measures for the provision of high quality dwellings of sufficient size and useability, appropriate to local needs. This includes minimum nationally described room sizes (Policy M1) but also principles set out in this policy in relation to overall size, adaptability and the specialist needs of the population.
- 5.64 The Residential Needs Assessment considered the sizes of dwellings required to meet the needs of the Borough's population over the plan period. Figure 14 shows the expected overall mix of homes required. In terms of market housing, it is clear that the greatest need is for 3 bedroom homes, but with significant need for 2 and 4 bedroom homes. For affordable dwellings, the needs for different sizes of homes are more evenly spread.

**Figure 14: Indication of Mix of Dwelling Size (with Tenure)**



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

\*\* Discount Home Ownership/ Starter Homes [First Homes] figures in particular represent potential demand rather than a requirement

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

#### Accessible, Adaptable and Wheelchair User Dwellings

- 5.66 The provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings (M4(2): Category 2 of the Building Regulations) within new development create homes which are step free and therefore accessible to most people. Provision of more accessible and adaptable dwellings will particularly benefit those with reduced mobility and enable more residents to stay in their homes for longer as their needs change.
- 5.67 It is a key aim for all new dwellings to be designed to meet M4(2) standards, continuing the previous approach. Currently, through sites with planning permission, market housing developments are delivering significant levels of accessible and adaptable dwellings (including 100% provision), demonstrating potential for further additional delivery on new sites.
- 5.68 Occasionally, there may be site-specific circumstances where it is impossible for all dwellings to meet the M4(2) standards in full. This could be due to site topography or the need for raised finished floor levels to mitigate flood risk, for instance. Alternatively, it may be shown that it is not viable to include lifts, in particular on certain small flatted infill developments. In these cases, developers should provide an early but comprehensive justification on why the proposals do not meet the policy requirements. Whilst some sites will be built out under old permissions before Category M4(2) was introduced, non-provision on new proposals will only be in exceptional circumstances where site specific circumstances negate such provision.
- 5.69 Some people will need homes which are suitable for wheelchair users (M4(3): Category 3 of the Building Regulations). It is clear that a growing ageing population, and those who will be unable to manage mobility activities, will increase the need for

wheelchair user homes. On this basis, large developments will be expected to provide some dwellings which meet M4(3) wheelchair user standards. It is not anticipated provision would be outside a range of 0 to 5% of dwellings, to be negotiated on the basis of latest information on need. This may be as part of the affordable housing element of the scheme.

### Specialist Housing

- 5.70 The local planning authority would support the provision of older persons and nursing/residential care home spaces as part of the mix of housing within larger developments. Standalone specialist housing developments may be acceptable where there is need for the type and mix of accommodation proposed, and they are sustainably located (Policy M9).

### Self-Build and Custom-Build Dwellings

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

**Policy M8: Housing Mix**

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, I1, I3, G1*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 117*

- 5.73 New dwellings on sites of all sizes should be sustainably located. To identify sustainable locations, the Dartford Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2021 (SHLAA) defines criteria to identify sites which are suitable, deliverable and developable for residential development during the plan period. It includes an estimated capacity for each site with potential for five or more new dwellings. The deliverable/ developable sites have been assessed in terms of their access to local facilities and public transport and been found to be in sustainable locations. The planned housing land supply is set out in the SHLAA with updates via the brownfield land register, plus statements showing the latest five year deliverable housing land information.
- 5.74 Most new housing in the Borough will be on land identified through these mechanisms. Plan-led, identified, residential development locations are a fundamental part of Dartford's central sustainable development strategy (see policies S1, S2 and S4).
- 5.75 Sites not identified in the housing land supply are unplanned and considered to be windfall sites. Developments comprising one to four dwellings will form windfalls as they are too small to be pre-identified. These small sites provide little opportunity for on-site provision of facilities and infrastructure, and their acceptability should be demonstrated in terms of net benefits. However, the aggregate impact of larger sites not previously identified has the potential to have an adverse impact on the Local Plan regeneration and sustainable transport objectives, and these have not been accounted for in infrastructure planning by service providers, for example securing land nearby for new school provision.
- 5.76 There is a strong imperative for sites to maintain the Borough's priority for development to be focussed on brownfield land (policy S4) in the future. Exceedance of the plan's 80% brownfield land target in early years does not itself justify greenfield development. Appropriate re-use of land is facilitated through planned development, including the brownfield land register.

- 5.77 The relative scale of the Borough's recent development, and future growth at planned locations, presents challenges to maintaining infrastructure capacity. The Council continues to work closely with infrastructure providers to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is provided to support identified development.

Accessible local infrastructure

- 5.78 It will also be important for any new development to be located close to or deliver on site provision for schools, shops, health facilities, and recreation facilities. Access to or provision of good public transport services providing access to employment sites or destinations with a range of services, e.g. Dartford town centre, will also need to be demonstrated. Good access to facilities, frequent public transport, as well as the provision of good quality pedestrian and cycling opportunities linking to facilities, underpin the central Local Plan principle of encouraging a modal shift from car use to more sustainable forms of transport (see policies S2 and S3). For example, all developments need to show that the location is well integrated into safe walking and cycle routes.
- 5.79 For these sustainable development aims to materialise, proper assessment is required of whether facilities and links are close by/ convenient to use. Continuing previous policy, applicable walking distances are those suitable in the Dartford context to achieve substantial modal shifts from car dependency, and using safe and attractive routes.
- 5.80 A high but achievable level is to be maintained in the Borough for accessibility to public transport services- to ensure that this offers a genuine alternative choice for residents in preference to the car. Dartford's SHLAA uses a threshold of 400m to a station or a bus stop with at least two buses an hour each way (or six per hour for greenfield sites over 1 hectare) and this same criterion will be applied to windfall sites. The usefulness of the service will also be taken into account, including the number of services available and the destinations served by these services, e.g. Dartford Town Centre, hospital, secondary schools, Bluewater, major employment areas.
- 5.81 Developments should be within ready walking distance of community facilities along a useable and good quality route. A maximum walking distance of up to 800m to a range of public services and shops is the normal threshold level that will be applied in the

Borough. This will take account of both existing provision in the area, and relevant facilities that have been secured and are forthcoming.

- 5.82 Major developments must give close consideration to providing for needs arising for social, community and green infrastructure. This will normally relate to the scale of development proposed and should address the latest available information on infrastructure delivery in the Borough. This will include projections on capacity and will take into account both planned development and planned provision of infrastructure over the plan period. Proposals must be supported by evidence on how the infrastructure proposed as part of the development is sufficient or provide an explanation of how impacts can be acceptably mitigated.

### **Policy M9: Sustainable Housing Locations**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | Sites that have been planned and shown to be deliverable or developable in the housing land supply will be supported for residential development, where the proposed number of dwellings is broadly in line with the supply's projected capacity.   |
| 2. | <p>New homes should be focussed on the planned development locations in the supply. Unplanned windfall residential development will only be acceptable if it is in a sustainable location and the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disbenefits. Windfall development involving a net gain of five or more dwellings must also demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) It is located on brownfield land (unless it has been shown that the site is necessary to rectify a lack of five year supply of deliverable housing land);</li><li>b) It is within easy walking distance of a range of community facilities including schools, shops, leisure and recreation services, and is well located with respect to walking/ cycling or good public transport to a choice of employment opportunities; and</li><li>c) In the case of major development, it is also shown to be sufficiently served by infrastructure, after allowing for the infrastructure requirements of the sites identified in the housing land supply.</li></ul> |



**Residential Amenity Space Provision (M10)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4, G2, G3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 127*

- 5.83 All residential dwellings are required to provide high quality amenity space for the primary purpose of enhancing the health and wellbeing of Dartford's residents. The design, scale, functionality and performance of private amenity space is of great importance and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the factors set out in criterion 2 of Policy M10 have been considered and incorporated.
- 5.84 For houses, the private amenity space is expected to be delivered through a single rear garden with direct access from the street and also through the house. However, where unavoidable site constraints dictate that a rear garden alone would not provide sufficient quality and/ or quantity of amenity space, additional private amenity space will be permitted in the form of a balcony or terrace. In these circumstances, the majority of the private amenity space should be in the form of a garden, with the balcony or terrace providing top-up space. The design considerations set out in criterion 2 are essential, in addition to the form and scale of provision.
- 5.85 When considering provision, the layout and quantity should reflect the character of the site and the area in which it sits as well as the size of the house and the number of expected occupants. In most parts of the Borough, it is expected that rear gardens should be generous in their provision and specifically designed to enable good provision of space for healthy and active life, and the practical and leisure needs of children and older people.
- 5.86 On average across a whole development scheme, an indicative guideline of at least 60sqm per house can be achieved. This must be allied with demonstration of good quality against the design criteria. Gardens of this size and greater have recently been delivered at sites such as Castle Hill and St Clements Way. . In the south of the Borough, much larger gardens should be delivered. Where sites are shown to be unusually physically constrained, impacting on what can be provided as a rear garden, e.g. a tight site within a retail centre, sufficient additional means of provision should be secured. This may be achieved through private or public communal open space within or near to the development, and/ or through alternative types of private amenity space such as balconies or terraces

- 5.87 For flatted development, private amenity space is expected to be delivered primarily through a balcony, wintergarden, terrace, garden, or a combination of any of these options, in addition to communal amenity space provision. These forms of provision should be flexible and attractive, fulfilling most of the design factors listed in the policy for resident wellbeing. It is intended that all residents have some access to private outdoor space. The aim is to achieve approximately 10sqm or more of private amenity space for each flat, unless there is an overriding strong design necessity for some smaller balconies. In flatted development, it is particularly important that space is well designed with regard to materials, dimensions and access so that it is highly useable. Provision should have a minimum depth (from the exterior wall of the flatted development to the furthest point outwards) preferably of 2.5m to ensure that the space is useable and can fit relevant furniture/ items. Factors in criterion 2 should still be considered and incorporated into design at an early stage. Ground floor flats are encouraged to include gardens where possible.
- 5.88 The figures set out are indicative guidelines of quantity and not quality. They should not form a maximum assumed baseline level, rather a good design approach should be taken from the outset. Example figures are based on typical recent delivery and provide a potential expectation for what is likely to be feasible or able to be surpassed on most sites.
- 5.89 Sizes and form/ layout of all private amenity space should aim for broad consistency across sites, unless clear justification is provided, and should not be reduced based on tenure.

#### Communal Amenity Space

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

- 5.91 High quality provision is expected in terms of both design and the location. Verged areas, narrow landscape strips or buffers or areas with no management/ provision for leisure or play cannot be considered communal amenity space. In addition, when providing communal amenity space, the noise, privacy and security impacts should be thoroughly considered and mitigated.
- 5.92 A contribution to the Green and Blue Infrastructure network is expected in line with Policy M14. Depending on the nature of communal amenity space provision, and if well laid out and appropriately managed, it can potentially count in part or whole towards the requirements in Policy M14. It should not all count as M14 provision unless significant land is dedicated to, and managed for, biodiversity purposes within the communal amenity space.

### **Policy M10: Residential Amenity Space**

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W3, W4, G2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 61, 70, 127, 130*

- 5.93 The local planning authority is committed to providing a good mix of housing in the Borough and to maintaining the character of popular residential communities to meet current and future needs. New housing land will play a key role in meeting housing needs, but guidance is also needed in relation to proposals for new dwellings on infill sites, backland sites and existing residential gardens and for the conversion and extension of existing dwellings.
- 5.94 Residential development should provide good quality living accommodation and outdoor space, healthy communities and attractive environments. In particular, a range of houses with gardens need to be maintained and residential amenity protected.
- 5.95 The conversion of houses and residential infill development can be appropriate but should not result in the loss of character and amenity. In order to prevent this, the plot size and spacing between buildings should reflect the historically dominant form in the area even where this has been eroded by subsequent development. Decisions will take account of the potential impact of the proposal on townscape character. Such proposals also often intensify the use of the site and the street. This can have adverse consequences on residential character, for instance additional noise, increased activity, and more refuse and recycling bins kept on-street to serve the individual households. It will be important to ensure that proposals do not have adverse impacts on highways and on-street parking and regard will also be given to Policy M17.
- 5.96 In order to ensure that sufficient size of existing housing stock is retained, conversions will only be allowed where the original property is more than 120sqm. Converted terraced dwellings are not normally capable of providing an adequate standard of accommodation and can have significant impacts on residential amenity. For these reasons, the conversion of terraced houses will be resisted.

### Maintaining Garden Land

- 5.97 A lack of choice of family sized homes in the local area will impact on the ability of the Borough to retain facilities and maintain mixed communities, and to attract the workforce needed to support the planned growth and diversification of the economy. The local planning authority is committed to maintaining existing larger family homes as part of providing a broad choice of residential accommodation.
- 5.98 Proposals for dwellings, and inappropriate extensions on residential garden land, can also have adverse impacts on character, and family health and wellbeing. In order to maintain garden land, all new dwellings should be set in commensurately sized gardens, allowing provision of soft landscaping, trees, habitats and breaks between houses. This is particularly important in those locations identified as an Area of Special Character on the Policies Map that are distinguishable as established residential neighbourhoods. In accordance with national planning policy, the local planning authority will resist proposals which result in the unacceptable loss of garden land.

### Guidance for Householder Developments

- 5.99 Householder developments can create a number of potential local impacts. The criteria in the policy will be applied in the consideration of extensions, loft conversions, outbuildings and ancillary structures where planning permission is required. The below sets out guidance for different types of extensions/ additional floorspace though each case will be considered on its merits.
- 5.100 These guidelines aim to ensure that householder development does not have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of adjacent and surrounding local residents in terms of loss of sunlight and daylight, overlooking and an overbearing impact as well as the visual amenities of the local area. Policy M1 (Good Design for Dartford) will be given due consideration in the assessment of any householder development, with a particular focus on the local context.
- Rear extensions: Single storey extensions to the rear of semi-detached and terraced properties should generally not be greater than 3.5m in depth on a common boundary, unless it can be demonstrated that the larger extension proposed will have no adverse impact. Two-storey extensions to the rear of semi-detached properties should be set in 2m from the common boundary at first floor

level. Two-storey extensions to the rear of terraced properties cause particular problems and will not normally be allowed unless it can be established that there will be no undue impact on adjoining properties.

- Side extensions: Roofs must match and tie into the existing roof, stepped down from the main ridgeline, unless this is not possible structurally, or would have a better visual appearance. Two-storey side extensions within 1m of a common boundary should generally have their front walls set back at least 0.45m at the point where it joins the existing building in order to retain the identity of the existing dwelling, and to ensure the extension remains subservient.
- Front extensions: in front of the existing building line, and on corner and conspicuous sites, are particularly sensitive and discouraged, being highly likely to result in a significant impact on the street scene, other than porches.
- Loft conversions: to be designed such that dormers do not dominate the appearance of the existing dwelling and create a top-heavy effect. Flat roof dormer extensions are unlikely to be appropriate on front roof slopes or roof slopes that are visible from public vantage points. If proposed at the property's rear they should be set in to the roof plane, down from the ridgeline and in from the side cheeks.
- Outbuildings: To be used only for purposes incidental or ancillary the main dwelling and located sufficiently away from neighbour properties without material adverse impact on the most-used parts of neighbour private amenity space (usually the area immediately to the rear of neighbour dwelling). Height should be minimised, with limited or no accommodation in the roof space.

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

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

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

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

- 5.101 The National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires local planning authorities to assess the level of future need for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople pitches/ plots and to identify a supply of sites in Local Plans. The PPTS sets out the definition of what gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople means for the purpose of the planning policy. In summary, the policy clearly sets out that the requirements of the PPTS apply to persons of a nomadic habit of life other than those who have ceased to travel temporarily for specified reasons.
- 5.102 The Dartford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identifies a need for 70 pitches for gypsies and travellers who meet the definition in the PPTS over the period to 2035, 48 pitches of which are needed within the first five years. It did not identify a need for transit sites for gypsies and travellers. In terms of meeting the needs of travelling showpeople, it identifies a need for one additional plot up to 2024 with none needed in the longer term.
- 5.103 Since the GTAA was published, the Council has granted permanent planning permission for 11 additional gypsy and traveller pitches. This means that the number of pitches needed to meet needs in the first five years has reduced to 37 pitches. The policy identifies actions that are key to addressing needs, particularly maintaining a five year supply of pitches and plots to meet the requirements set out above.
- 5.104 The GTAA recognises that a number of sites are occupied by extended family groups and are not sub-divided into individual pitches. As such, in the short to medium term, the study recognises the likelihood that the accommodation needs of concealed or doubled-up adults and teenagers could be met through additional touring caravans or shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites. These would generally be equivalent to providing pitches, even if they are not formally set out as such.
- 5.105 The pitches and plots that will be accommodated in the shorter term on existing authorised and tolerated sites through intensification, or by small scale extensions to them where there are known needs arising from these sites, is being verified. Evidence currently indicates that some of the required gypsy/ traveller pitches and the single



travelling showpeople's plot could be accommodated on existing sites without the need for planning permission. Others would require planning permission and need to be allocated in the Plan to ensure delivery of additional capacity. In terms of the latter, additional pitches could be provided to meet needs within (i.e. intensifying) the Tennis Court site at Sutton at Hone, and by extending/ intensifying the site at Salinas in Darenth Wood Road. These are identified in the policy and on the Policies Map and removed from the Green Belt.

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

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

1. Dartford will meet needs and maintain a Five Year Supply, with deliverable land to meet identified requirements for 37 gypsy and traveller pitches and 1 travelling showpeople plot. This will occur through a range of actions including:
  - a) Realising the potential for additional accommodation within existing authorised and tolerated sites, where needs arise;
  - b) Allocating land for additional pitches at: Tennis Courts Sutton at Hone and Salinas Darenth Wood Road;
  - c) Actively seeking to identify deliverable non Green Belt sites within Ebbsfleet Garden City; and
  - d) Determining planning applications expeditiously in line with national policy and the development management criteria set out in criterion 2 below.
2. Planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots will be assessed against relevant local and national policy requirements. Proposals located in the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with the balancing exercise set out in national policy, taking into account impacts on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, and having regard to relevant material considerations. All proposals must demonstrate that the site:
  - a) Is of a scale to accommodate, and has the potential to provide the facilities required, for future occupants in terms of amenity and in meeting site licensing requirements;
  - b) Is of a scale appropriate to the ability of the surrounding community to accommodate the development without significant detriment to neighbouring residential amenity, taking account of existing population size and density;
  - c) Is not in an area liable to flooding; and suitable drainage can be installed that does not lead to unacceptable risks to groundwater and/or localised flooding
  - d) Is located close to a range of services and facilities;
  - e) Has the ability to provide appropriate safe vehicular access to the site and provides suitable parking and amenity areas; and
  - f) Is screened and visually integrated into the local and wider landscape, with careful siting within the site (including of any day rooms).

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

- *Strategic Objectives: G1, I1*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 133, 134, 143-147, 170*

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

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

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

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

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

5.112 The NPPF recognises that the construction of new buildings is generally inappropriate in the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. National policy (NPPF paragraphs 145 to 146) sets out development that may not be inappropriate. Some exceptions which may not be inappropriate include: extensions

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

5.113 The extension of buildings, provided they are not disproportionate, may not be inappropriate in the Green Belt. In some cases, they may be necessary to maintain the viability of existing uses. In certain circumstances, there may be buildings within the curtilage of those proposed for extension. Their existing presence and proposed removal will only justify a larger extension where it is clearly demonstrated that they are lawful and cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt and where their removal would reduce the harm to the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the proposed development. Replacement buildings need not be inappropriate provided that the replacement is not materially larger than the building it replaces, remains in the same use, and the open character of the Green Belt is maintained. Such development must be sensitively located and designed

5.114 The re-use of buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction is included as an exception to inappropriate development in paragraph 146 of the NPPF where the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. However, such re-use of buildings often also results in a change of use of the land around it which can have an impact on the Green Belt such as introducing various paraphernalia associated with the proposed use, structures, fencing, hardstandings and lighting required to facilitate the new use, as well as pressure for further development that requires planning permission. Any extensions proposed which are required to facilitate the use will also be considered with regard to the overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The re-use of buildings will be considered together with the impacts of the change of use of the associated curtilage.

#### Equine and Recreation Uses in the Green Belt

5.115 The Green Belt acts as an important recreational resource for a range of activities, including walking, cycling and riding. The network of routes identified as part of the

Green Grid linking together open spaces and routes across the Borough, in particular from the urban areas in the north to the countryside in the south.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Replacement Buildings**

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

#### Extensions to Buildings

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

#### Infilling or Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites

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

#### Changes of Use

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

#### Agricultural Development

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

#### Equine Development

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

Development for Outdoor Sport and Recreation

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

\* Original building means a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 where it was built before that date, and as it was built when initially built after that date, and in the same lawful use.



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

- *Strategic Objectives: W2, G2, G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 91, 96-101, 150*

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

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

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

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

- 5.122 There is also a need to retain the quantity and quality of existing local green spaces. A number of the most significant spaces have been identified as Protected Local Green Spaces and Borough Open Spaces and are designated on the Policies Map. It is recognised that there are also other recreational spaces which have not been identified and these are also addressed below.
- 5.123 Protected Local Green Spaces are those open spaces which have special characteristics that make them the most important green places for local communities. The designated spaces meet the national policy requirements of being close to the community served, local in character and not extensive, and special in the local context due to their tranquillity, beauty or highly distinct recreational value. Protected local green spaces benefit from robust planning policy protection, forming an important part of Green Infrastructure. They are afforded the same policy protection as land within the Green Belt. Development proposals on Protected Local Green Spaces will generally be considered inappropriate unless very special circumstances are shown to exist, as set out in national and local policy.
- 5.124 Borough Open Spaces are made up a wide range of green spaces that have local environmental (e.g. recreational, amenity, landscape and/ or biodiversity) value. Some are publicly accessible but others have no public access. They include parks, playspaces, allotments, churchyards/cemeteries, identifiable tree clusters or key greenspaces that may hold biodiversity value, current and former sports pitches, and linear green features such as railway embankments. There may be other playing fields and sports pitches which have not been specifically identified as Borough Open Space but are important for ensuring that local residents stay active and maintain good health and as areas for flora and fauna. In line with national planning policy, the presumption is against building on Borough Open Space, playing fields and sports pitches, and any loss must be justified by robust evidence. However, some flexibility will be applied where development is intended to enhance the existing function of the open space, for example ancillary buildings which benefit the users of the space, where appropriate alternative space will be provided or where there is a demonstrable surplus of provision in the area.
- 5.125 There may be a need to retain more localised public amenity spaces which are not identified on the Policies Map. These include communal or small recreation/ play spaces within residential areas. The need to retain such public amenity spaces will be

more acute where there is limited usable alternative provision in the neighbourhood accessible on foot, or alternative provision is of demonstrably inferior quality or size. Where there are proposals which affect these spaces, the local planning authority will have regard to the need for the proposed development.

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

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

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

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: G3, G4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 127, 170, 171, 174-177*

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

#### **Habitats Regulations**

5.127 The Thames Estuary and Marshes, Medway Estuary and Marshes and The Swale Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites (wetland sites of international biodiversity importance) are located outside the Borough but have the potential to be affected by some proposals in the eastern part of the Borough. Studies have shown declines in the numbers of birds using these sites which could be caused by human disturbance from recreational use of the marshes. The evidence shows that residential development within 6km and larger residential development between 6km and 10km of the SPAs and Ramsar sites could lead to an increase in recreational use. The 6km-10km zone affects proposed residential developments in the east of Dartford Borough and is shown in Figure 15.

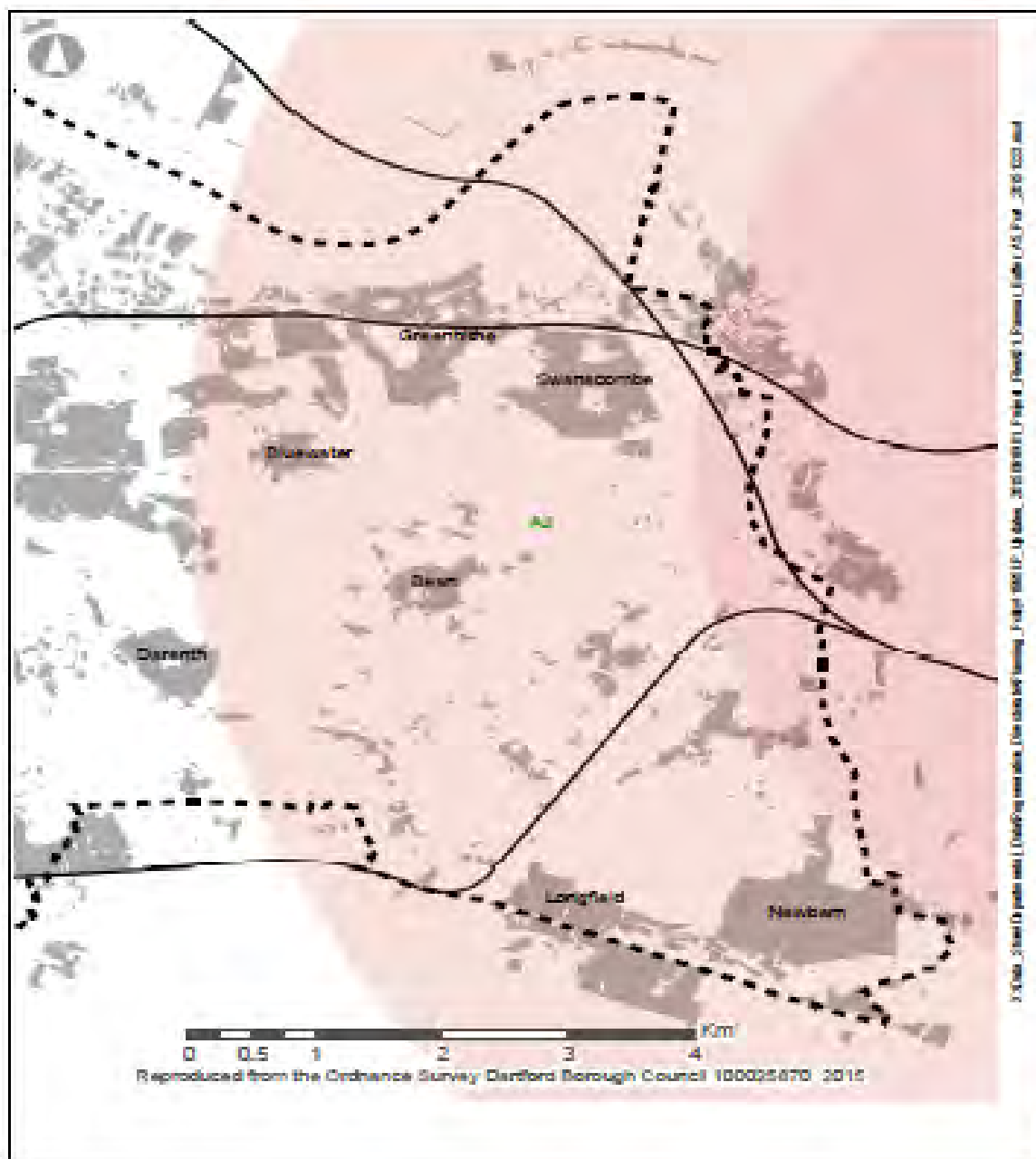
5.128 Under the Habitats Regulations, there is a need for the local planning authority to screen for and, if necessary, carry out appropriate assessment for all proposed developments which have the potential to affect the biodiversity interest of SPAs and Ramsar sites. The assessments need to show if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

5.129 The Council's approach is set out in full in the document "Habitats Regulations and Large Sites in Dartford Borough – Guidance for Developers (2021)". This requires

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

- Option 1: Payment of a tariff per dwelling, calculated as a proportion of that applied to developments within 6km of the SPAs and Ramsar sites. Given the administrative costs of collection and distribution, this will only be appropriate for development of 100 dwellings or more. The tariff will be used to fund measures that are likely to have an impact on areas which attract less frequent visitors.
- Option 2: Provision of alternative greenspace/ bluespace within or close to the proposed development which provides a demonstrably suitable alternative to visiting the SPAs/ Ramsar sites.
- Option 3: Availability of demonstrably suitable alternative greenspace/ bluespace which may divert potential residents from visiting the SPAs/ Ramsar sites which could reduce or negate the need for tariff contributions.

**Figure 15: Areas within 10km of the North Kent SPAs and Ramsar Sites**



### Biodiversity and Habitats in Dartford

5.130 Priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types and were identified nationally on the basis of being the most threatened and requiring conservation. The Borough hosts a number of priority habitats, not all of which are protected by designations. These include the grazing marsh and coastal saltmarsh at Dartford Marshes and the deciduous woodland at Beacon Wood Country Park. The Policies Map shows the larger areas of ancient woodland. Priority species are those which are the most threatened and require conservation nationally. In Dartford Borough, these

include bats, dormice and great crested newts. The Kent Biodiversity Strategy focuses on certain priority habitats and species, with objectives and targets for improving them. In considering development proposals, the Council will ensure that priority habitats and species are conserved and, where possible, enhanced.

- 5.131 There are a number of important wetlands and water bodies in the Borough, including the River Darent and Dartford marshes. Protecting and improving the ecological quality of these will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Darent and Cray Catchment Plan. Development located close to water bodies should ensure that any potential adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated and that opportunities are taken to enhance them. Measures could include recreating the ecology of waterbodies where this has been lost and/ or establishing a significant natural habitat resource.
- 5.132 Some areas of the Borough have been identified as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) on the basis that they have good potential for biodiversity improvement and for connecting nature conservation sites, habitats and species. The BOAs include a variety of statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites, woodland, lakes, marshes, heathland and brownfield sites which are known to provide important habitats for invertebrates. These sites are set in an area which is fragmented by urban development and transport corridors.
- 5.133 The designated sites, priority habitats, key water bodies and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas form part of the Green Grid network.
- 5.134 It is expected that development will avoid any adverse impacts on existing biodiversity features, including designated sites, priority habitats and species, and waterbodies. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised, mitigated and, as a last resort, loss or damage should be compensated in accordance with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy (policy S3).
- 5.135 As well as ensuring that existing biodiversity features are not adversely affected, developments should provide net gains for biodiversity. Measures to improve biodiversity value should be included within the site boundaries, but in the event that this is not possible, provision should be made within the Borough's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. It is anticipated that there will be a national requirement for developments to provide a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.



Landscape and tree coverage

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

### **Policy M15: Biodiversity and Landscape**

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

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

- Strategic Objectives: W2, I1, I2
- NPPF paragraphs: 102-104, 108-111, 204

- 5.138 The need for an integrated transport approach to the location of development, together with effective transport policies to manage the effects of vehicular travel on the local and strategic road network and to encourage higher uptake of sustainable travel, continues to be an essential part of the Borough's planning strategy (policy S2).
- 5.139 Improvements to the transport network are necessary to deal with the impacts of traffic arising from new development and overall traffic growth. Extensive collaboration is occurring between Highways England, the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC), the Council and Kent County Council (KCC) on further strategic highway improvements.
- 5.140 Dartford Council is also working with a number of partners, including KCC, EDC and Transport for London (TfL), to explore opportunities to improve public transport, cycling and footpath links, including on the Green Gird and for further enhancement of the Fastrack network.
- 5.141 The scale of development can only be accommodated without adverse impacts on the highway network if a significantly increased proportion of journeys are made through sustainable forms of transport. Proposals for major development with long build out times must ensure that public transport services are provided in the early phases, and devise a long term programme of ensuring Fastrack or other applicable sustainable transport services (including on demand mobility services) in the long term. Major development located near to railway stations will be expected to support/ contribute to station upgrades including measures to improve interchange arrangements and passenger facilities.
- 5.142 National policy states that planning decisions should take into account whether significant impacts from development on the transport network in terms of capacity and congestion, or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

- 5.143 In Dartford Borough, after taking account of an assumed increased use of sustainable travel modes together with planned highway network mitigations, localised residual impacts on the highway network may still occur as a result of cumulative development. Therefore development proposals should address any severe residual impacts on the local highway network that may arise. There are specific issues for Dartford Borough that require safeguards, for example the impact of incidents at the Dartford Crossing or other strategic roads and the severe conditions caused. The extent of development for logistics, for example, is such that there is a need for large commercial occupiers to demonstrate that they have considered provisions to hold vehicles on site when a major incident occurs on the Borough's strategic highway network.
- 5.144 National guidance should be referred to in considering the threshold at which transport assessments or statements are required. Applicants should agree their preparation in advance with the local planning authority, KCC and/or Highways England as appropriate.

#### Sustainable travel

- 5.145 The way in which development is designed, and the mix of uses included, can have a major effect on reducing travel and on the pattern and means of travel that the development generates. As a priority, developments should promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport to minimise car use, especially for shorter trips. Opportunities in this respect must not be missed in the masterplanning and layout of proposals, particularly for destinations that are regularly used by residents and local workers and shoppers and at larger residential sites e.g. through dedicated and carefully routed land for buses, and attractive walking and cycling routes. Upgrades are particularly necessary if windfall housing sites bring forward major unplanned development (see Policy M9).
- 5.146 The development of a more comprehensive cycle and pedestrian route network is sought to provide a genuinely viable alternative for shorter distance journeys, particularly enhancing connections within and towards Dartford Town Centre, and Ebbsfleet Garden City. In particular, development at the Green Grid should support active travel links (policy S3), and further cycle network interventions are suggested in the Network Development Study.

- 5.147 Streets make up the greater part of the public realm. The appearance of the street scene, massing of buildings and layout of estate roads can all be used to reduce vehicle speeds so that roads are made safe for all types of user. Better designed streets contribute to the quality of the built environment and play an important role in the creation of high quality attractive developments. *Manual for Streets*<sup>9</sup> provides guidance on the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets, and development proposals should take account of the guidance set out in the Manual. Large sites should justify and formulate a comprehensive strategy. The *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*<sup>10</sup> provides guidelines regarding national highways.
- 5.148 The River Thames provides opportunities for the transportation of passengers and cargo. Whilst there are no passenger river services currently operating in the Borough, it may be possible to introduce these. Johnson's Wharf is safeguarded through the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Other wharves should only be considered for redevelopment if they are not viable for their continued use, or for cargo, sustainable transport, or marinas/ moorings/ boat yards. The developer will need to commission a viability study to be undertaken in consultation with the local planning authority and Port of London Authority. This includes sites that have land to access the wharf but are not proposing development on the wharf, or would otherwise sterilise active usage as a wharf.

### Travel Plans

- 5.149 In accordance with national policy, major new residential or trip generating development will need to be supported by a travel plan. This should contain a package of measures ensuring sustainable travel, linked to monitoring and management of targets. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that major new residential and employment developments are directly served by Fastrack or, where this is not possible, that improved provision is made to conventional bus services.
- 5.150 Travel Plans should include: clear long term objectives; devoted measures to increase active and sustainable travel to and from the site; and benchmarks and specific targets to enable regular monitoring and review of outcomes. There should be a timetable for

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<sup>9</sup> Department for Transport/Communities and Local Government *Manual for Streets* (periodically updated)

<sup>10</sup> Department for Transport *The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (periodically updated)

delivery of measures and review to ensure the timescale set for fulfilment of objectives is achieved, including the identification of additional measures to be applied if regular review indicates outcomes are not being achieved in line with anticipated timescales.

#### Access and Safety

- 5.151 There needs to be suitable and safe access arrangements for vehicle, sustainable transport, cyclists and walkers, and, where applicable, loading/ unloading and other transport requirements within developments. These need to be incorporated into the proposed layout.
- 5.152 New accesses onto the highway network should be located and designed so that they operate safely, without unduly affecting the free flow of traffic. They should make a positive and sensitive contribution to the local street scene and be sympathetic to local amenity and the environment. New accesses must be designed to accommodate the volume of traffic and types of vehicle likely to use them and provide for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities as well as efficient public transport operation. For large development, this should be considered with the detail of the street hierarchy and character areas.
- 5.153 In creating new accesses, it is important that existing pedestrian facilities are not degraded. Dropped kerbs at pedestrian crossings, entry treatments and tactile paving can all be used to provide convenient and safe crossing points for more vulnerable road users.
- 5.154 Lengths of continuous dropped kerb can encourage footway parking, which creates problems for pedestrians, and also reduce the positive definition of the footway for people with impaired sight. Highway design and the public realm must account for the needs of those less mobile, including wheelchair and mobility aid users.

#### Parking and Electric Vehicles

- 5.155 Development proposals should not impede the free flow of traffic on the existing road network or create hazards to traffic or other road users. Careful management is required of parking demands generated by the development, avoiding uncontrolled spill-over into nearby residential areas, with provision in accordance with Dartford's latest Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). In locations

where on-street parking is already under pressure, development that does not incorporate adequate off-street parking has the potential to result in inconsiderate and unsafe on-street parking. This can lead to narrowing of the useable road space resulting in obstructions, in particular for emergency vehicles, and impacting on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. The approach to on-street parking (and potentially also off-street parking) is expected to be updated, firstly in the urban area, including at Dartford town centre.

- 5.156 The need for off-street and on-street parking spaces must be considered alongside the impact of provision, including possible detriment to the local and wider areas where front gardens are lost. Planning applications for potentially inappropriate loss of front gardens for parking will be closely examined, given the highway and environmental impact of such proposals individually and cumulatively. To avoid potential increases in the risk of surface water flooding, parking spaces in front gardens should make use of permeable paving materials. Parking surface treatments should always be consistent with the maintenance of groundwater quality in the Borough.
- 5.157 In order to reduce carbon emissions, the national strategy is for conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans to be gradually replaced by electric vehicles, with all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2035. There needs to be infrastructure in place to encourage the take up of electric vehicles and applications for development should take into account the need to ensure an adequate provision of parking spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. The Parking Standards SPD already requires the provision of electric vehicle charging points for residential development with on-plot parking and consideration is to be given to providing charging points within residential communal parking areas and in employment, retail and leisure developments. The local planning authority wishes to ensure that developments are future proofed and make sufficient provision for electric vehicle charging points to avoid the need for expensive retrofitting at a later date.

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

1. Development must be appropriately located and make suitable provision to minimise and manage transport impacts which arise. Proposals must also include appropriate vehicular access arrangements to the new development, and measures for active and sustainable travel. A Transport Assessment will be required on applicable proposals.

2. Localised residual impacts on the highway network that are forecast to occur after on-site mitigations should be addressed by well-designed off-site deliverable transport measures. Development will not be permitted where the localised residual impacts from the development on its own, or in combination with other planned developments in the area, result in severe impacts on one or more of the following:
  - a) road traffic congestion and air quality;
  - b) safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road-users;
  - c) excessive pressure for on-street parking.

#### Public transport

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

#### Rivers

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



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

1. Development must be of a design and layout to promote walking, cycling and public transport use through provision of attractive and safe routes which address the needs of users. Guidance set out in Manual for Streets, or any future equivalent, must also be applied. Bespoke access and transport approaches may be agreed at large regeneration sites, where forming a suitable alternative.
2. Transport assessments and travel plans must take account of applicable guidance by Kent County Council. A travel plan will be required where there are anticipated significant / negative impacts of transport movement arising from a development. In this respect, the following will apply:
  - a) Travel plans should set deliverable actions for the promotion and delivery of safe and attractive active and public travel measures to increase their uptake, and reduce demand for less sustainable/efficient transport.
  - b) An effective and robust travel plan should feature clear measures and actions to enable objectives to be met, including on-going monitoring and review, taking into account the operational characteristics of a development, and be capable of applying over a prolonged period as necessary.
3. Development must ensure that the following requirements are met:
  - a) Provision is made for safe and convenient access to footpaths and cycle routes, with public rights of way protected including, where opportunities exist, delivering new or upgraded routes between key facilities, the Green Grid network, and to existing neighbourhoods. Urban area and village footpaths and cycleways must be safe, overlooked and well lit.
  - b) Supporting facilities for cyclists, including secure cycle parking/storage and lockers, are provided; and in major developments which attract significant numbers of people (such as schools and large scale employment, retail and leisure developments), changing areas and showers should be included
  - c) Design features are provided for people with mobility and sensory difficulties, especially at road crossing points, public transport stops and changes in level on walking routes.
4. Adverse effects from the travel and movement issues associated with any development, including on amenity or the environment, must be minimised. Development will be supported where the layout and siting of all forms of access is acceptable in terms of residential amenity, highway capacity and safety, free flow of traffic, cycle and pedestrian provision, and visual impact. Provision should be made at applicable developments for loading, unloading and the turning of service vehicles to ensure highway and pedestrian safety.
5. Development must provide an appropriate level and form of vehicle parking provision, taking into account any existing provision as relevant to the

development, and in full accordance with applicable Parking Standards SPD policy. In this respect, the following will apply:

- a) Electric vehicle charging points must be provided for all new residential properties with dedicated/allocated parking spaces, and for a proportion of parking spaces provided as part of new employment, leisure and retail development. Charging points or cabling to allow their future installation must be provided for all shared car parking spaces provided on new residential developments.
- b) The conversion of front gardens for car parking is only allowed where it includes provision of a vehicle crossover and only where the garden is capable of accommodating a parking space in accordance with the parking bay minimum standards set out in the SPD, plus space for soft landscaping; and with unobstructed pedestrian access to the dwelling. New car parking must make use of appropriate permeable paving materials, in line with the SPD, and water quality protection objectives (where applicable).

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W5, I3*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 83, 91,92*

- 5.158 The pace of change in the Borough means community infrastructure provision is a central part of securing sustainable growth (see policies S2 and S4). Well located social and community facilities and services help people, including vulnerable groups, to meet their day-to day needs locally and encourage increased levels of sustainable and active travel. In addition, such facilities contribute to a sense of community, quality of life and well-being in the neighbourhood. At strategic scale sites, community facilities should be provided in a timely way to support new communities and, as far as possible, nearby existing communities, to encourage community cohesion. Facilities should be flexible but focussed on the Borough's needs.
- 5.159 Community facilities comprise social, community, built sport/recreation and cultural uses. They encompass a variety of buildings and spaces including (but not confined to) health, education, spiritual, indoor community sports, cultural facilities, public meeting spaces, post offices, and cemeteries/crematoria. Buildings used for local retail or leisure services such as convenience shops and public houses may qualify, especially in the rural area.
- 5.160 The retention and improvement of local community facilities is important for rural villages and urban areas alike. Community spaces in urban areas may additionally contribute to meeting the needs of new development in a local area. The Local Plan seeks to retain and safeguard existing spaces/ facilities where there is a continuing need/ demand for these, and to ensure that, as the local population expands and demand is forecast, such facilities are retained and do not require future re-provision. Compelling evidence to support loss of facilities will be required by any applicable re-purposing or development proposals.

### **Policy M18: Community Uses**

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

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

- *Strategic Objectives: W2, I1, I4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 80, 81, 83, 86, 87, 89, 90*

- 5.161 National policy encourages Local Plans to proactively enable economic development, including the identification of areas for economic regeneration and sites/ criteria to accommodate growth. The Dartford Local Plan takes this positive approach and will maintain the Borough's successful record of attracting jobs and business investment. The economic strategy within policy S1 retains the network of identified employment areas that have been the focus of recent investment, extending them where appropriate, whilst aiming to increase the quality, sustainability and levels of floorspace/ jobs provision, and expand the range of new jobs.
- 5.162 Dartford Borough's priority locations (central Dartford and Ebbsfleet) and the large and accessible purpose built employment sites are well placed to attract managerial and professional and high technology employers currently under-represented in the Borough, and bringing sectors targeted in national policy to increase productivity.
- 5.163 Dartford has balanced significant population growth with major economic development. The current framework has provided a very large pipeline of new jobs and commercial space in the urban area. (Outside the urban area, economic development will be led through a series of identified employment areas and retail centres). This will continue, but policy below – notably M19, the overall policy guiding investment to sustainable economic locations - includes provisions to aim for growth that delivers the right employment in the right place and balanced with environmental impacts, including from travel generation by employment uses. Digital infrastructure, including excellent fibre network coverage, is promoted. A positive approach to regeneration of retail centres is also taken, where this maintains/ improves local services and enhances neighbourhoods.
- 5.164 Current identified employment areas in the Borough are performing well, attracting investment and with low vacancy levels. Policy M21 maintains these, reflecting their role which supports suitable clusters of industry and offices; with a strategy of retaining their overall purpose within the context of using land for business more effectively (intensification) and strategic extensions. This allows them to evolve in response to

sectoral changes, local employment and economic development needs. Redevelopment should also reduce adverse impacts of the sites on:

- climate change and congestion, mitigating/ reducing dependency on private cars/ goods vehicles; and
- the local environment (buildings and sites).

5.165 Dartford Town Centre is a highly sustainable and suitable location for office uses and is a priority for regeneration, with very good public transport and labour market accessibility, a choice of development sites and existing provision, and a range of supporting services. Creative industries often emerge in unplanned urban locations due to social factors or where accommodation has not yet been renewed, e.g. secondary parts of the town centre, and growing clusters will be supported.

5.166 Ebbsfleet Central (see Policy E4) will attract major inward investment and provide commercial space newly designed to meet future business needs. It will feature a new public transport interchange and be accompanied by a range of supporting uses in the Garden City.

5.167 There have been big changes in the nature of shopping provision nationally. Online expenditure has grown and the traditional bricks and mortar presence has receded. Many retailers have collapsed or scaled down due to financial pressures, and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of change. However, some smaller centres and convenience retailers have performed relatively well, and may benefit from shifts towards home working for example. In terms of retail and leisure uses, retention of local provision in centres in the Borough is essential to the strategy of providing facilities and day-to-day uses in a convenient network of places that are easy for residents and workers to walk to.

5.168 The network of retail centres provides local jobs and secures a walkable mix of services, and this will be retained. The centres meet large scale residential growth and create/ maintain a heart for new and existing communities. Dartford Town Centre and Bluewater (policy M22) are complemented by:

- District Centres at Dartford, Swanscombe, Ebbsfleet and Longfield; and
- a series of small Local Centres.

This network of centres has maintained low vacancy rates and is expanding with growth at Ebbsfleet, and will be supported in future. Sequential testing, and impact

assessment for proposals over 280sqm, will apply. Development will accord with the role of the centre as set out in Table 7 below.

Strategic investment and large proposals

- 5.169 Policy M19 (criterion 3) addresses national policy with criteria for genuinely exceptional economic development investment that cannot be located in the Identified Employment Areas or line with Plan sections 2 and 3. To maintain the economic strategy, development is directed to one of these locations, where ample land provision is provided. However, the policy also includes, as an exemption to this, criteria for additional flexibility in response to potential future major economic opportunities. Although inapplicable to most economic developments, provision is made for extraordinary future proposals, for unforeseen strategic opportunities that may arise in new sectors, technology, and future innovation.
- 5.170 Policy M20 seeks to ensure that local economic benefits accrue directly from very large developments that may emerge within the Borough. Very large commercial developments should proportionately provide some smaller business units or appropriate premises to support small or medium sized enterprises in the Borough wherever possible, and explore applicable local training opportunities. Development needs to provide a genuine mix to meet labour force and business needs.

Table 7: Role of Retail Centres

<b>Centre</b> <i>(* indicates not yet built)</i>	<b>Retail Function</b>	<b>Typical Services Provided</b>	<b>Main Customer Draw</b>	<b>Implications for Change</b>
<b>Dartford town centre</b>	Town centre	Weekly convenience and comparison (particularly within the Core Frontage) shopping; leisure, culture/ recreation, hotels, community, education, health and education, social care and service facilities.	District level population; town centre employees; regional catchment for Orchard Theatre and associated facilities. Railway station and Fastrack users	Diversify uses, grow independent retailers, expanding the cultural and leisure offer; meeting demand for new food and beverage for family dining and the evening economy, supporting cultural /leisure uses in the town centre.
<b>Bluewater</b>	Regional shopping centre	Specialist comparison shopping; top-up convenience shopping; outdoor and regional indoor leisure; hotel.	Regional level catchment; UK and international tourists linked by Fastrack to Ebbsfleet International and Greenhithe stations	Bluewater will evolve to maintain its competitive position, whilst ensuring it remains complementary to local town centres. Extant permission remains for approximately 24,000sqm retail floorspace, which if built out is to be predominantly for comparison goods retailing.
<b>Dartford (multiple), Longfield Swanscombe, Alkerden* and Ebbsfleet Central*</b>	District centre	Top-up convenience shopping, usually anchored by a local supermarket, allied with community (health, education etc) and service facilities including cafés/ restaurants.	The local settlement, visitors to community facilities, public transport users and nearby neighbourhoods.	New centres are to promote walkable settlements with convenience retail and health/ education facilities proportionate to their size, accessibility and function. Elsewhere, changes are to maintain viability of centres. This includes where appropriate, development to enhance the public realm or mixed use redevelopment to provide ground floor modern commercial/ service units.
<b>Multiple across Borough including Ebbsfleet Central*, Ashmere*, Ebbsfleet Green, Castle Hill</b>	Local centres	Top-up convenience shopping and other small shops, other local businesses and services;	The immediate neighbourhood	New centres are to promote highly walkable settlements, with small convenience retail and local services proportionate to their size and function; potentially with neighbourhood services in the vicinity, e.g. primary school Elsewhere, maintain viability of centres through diversification of uses for commercial, business and services.



### **Policy M19: Sustainable Economic Locations**

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

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

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

**Identified Employment Areas (M21)**

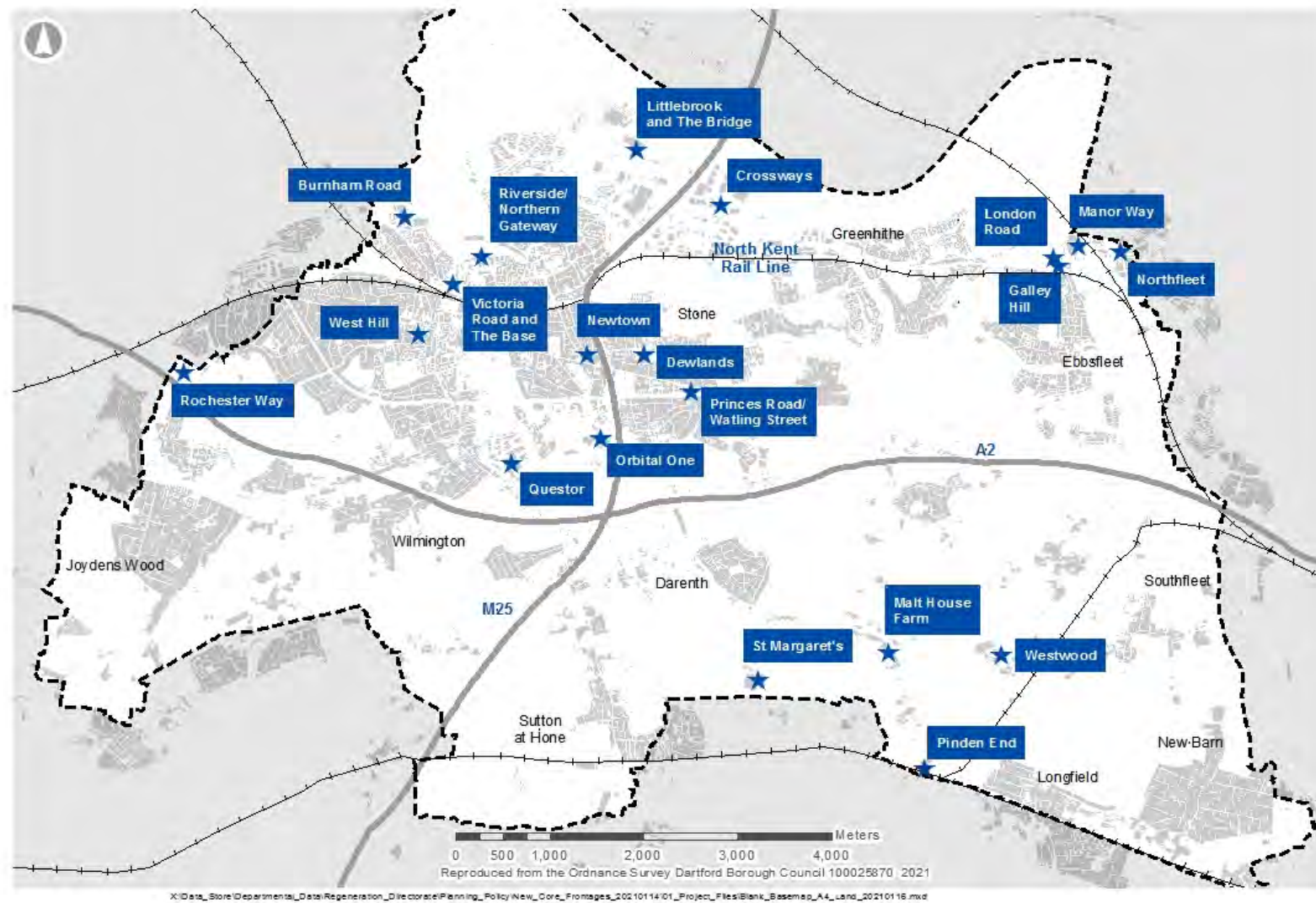
- *Strategic Objectives: I1, I4, W2*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 80, 81, 83*

- 5.171 Policy M21 covers the Identified Employment areas shown in Figure 16 below and detailed on the Policies Map. These are an important part of Dartford's spatial and economic strategy (policy S1). They include high quality business parks such as Crossways and The Bridge which attract major investment and employment. At these locations in recent years, there has been investment in new light industrial units, and the Borough's distribution/ warehousing (Class B8) sector has attracted significant development to modernise and expand its stock. A choice of established urban industrial/ commercial clusters and business premises in the rural area is also provided.
- 5.172 The policy sets out a supportive approach for employment proposals at the identified employment areas. It builds in further development opportunities to allow necessary strategic change to occur and for suitable diversification. However, in Dartford Borough it is clear that the overall mix of uses should remain commercially-focussed because introducing non employment generating uses is harmful to the overall strategy and maintaining Dartford's success in delivering clusters of new floorspace.
- 5.173 All development should maintain or enhance the visual amenity of employment areas. Well located and good quality landscaping within and at the exterior of sites should be provided as appropriate.
- 5.174 The designated employment land across the Borough includes a varied range of new and older industrial and commercial clusters. To achieve common economic and environmental objectives throughout these identified employment areas, the policy is largely structured around whether development proposed is a more industrial or service-based activity.

Industry and Distribution

- 5.175 Criterion 2 will apply for uses within Classes B2, B8, E(g)(iii) and applicable sui generis development, promoting industrial development where the site is functionally and environmentally improved to create a better quality site. Industrial developments should be sited and designed to minimise impacts on the health and amenity of adjoining uses and to ensure the compatible operation of different activities within areas. Large industrial and uses within class B8 often necessitate good distributor road access and/ or strategic road access. However, appropriate mitigations or river access should be fully explored.
- 5.176 Further requirements are set for harmful or nuisance creating activities, mostly likely to arise from uses within class B2 and sui generis development, and goods vehicles issues mostly from developments within use classes B8 and E(g)(iii). Development to successfully enclose, and enable expansion of, industrial processes is promoted to prevent conflict between uses or unacceptable impacts.
- 5.177 The sale of goods from employment premises may generally be acceptable where the facility is ancillary to the main use, is limited in floorspace and does not harm the vitality and viability of nearby centres or the town centre.

Figure 16: Identified Employment Areas



## Services

- 5.178 Criterion 3 applies for offices, research/ development processes and other service-based and administrative or other non-industrial activities, i.e. not within use classes B or E(g)(iii). These uses are central to the economic strategy and the potential to diversify the range of jobs in the Borough, including for new managerial/ professional employment or supporting existing growth businesses clusters. Service business uses may locate in retail centres. However, a number of identified employment areas include headquarters, purpose built offices or other commercial facilities containing large scale provision of professionally-related, clerical or desk-based employment.
- 5.179 Employment levels can be grown and existing employment areas improved through appropriate redevelopment proposals that diversify and better use existing sites. Economic development objectives are often served by proposals that locate close to, or include facilities designed to, attract knowledge/ data-driven and high technology/ creative industries. However, it is important that proposals with high job density uses are very well located to public transport or alternatively provide measures to achieve reduced car dependency.
- 5.180 At present, the largest clusters of employment in the Borough, e.g. Crossways Business Park, are located in close proximity to the strategic highway network and the Fastrack network. However, local railway stations and services are less well connected to some large employers. These locations should develop in a form that genuinely promotes increased public transport uptake and enhanced active travel links.
- 5.181 For services with higher density of employment types at identified employment areas, it is very likely a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be required for both employee and operational traffic in accordance with Policy M17. In appropriate circumstances, a Framework Travel Plan with a clear pathway for production and submission of detailed travel plans at a later stage, where clarity on development details and occupation is available, will be acceptable. It is very important that detailed travel plans for particular buildings/ occupiers are subsequently produced and managed, with clarity about who will do what and who is responsible to ensure compliance.

## Supporting facilities and other business uses

- 5.182 Large business parks and urban industrial estates may benefit from selected new small walk-in services for local employees. Limited and targeted facilities and services that support the functioning of identified employment areas, such as workplace childcare facilities, sandwich shops, cafés and small-scale convenience goods provision, may be accepted as long as they do not adversely affect the status or operation of the employment area. Proposals must achieve the objective of reducing overall levels of vehicle generation. In assessing the suitability of these supporting uses, the lack of existing provision, and scale of existing employment in the locality and worker needs, will be considered as part of determining if provision is necessary. This will prevent a proliferation of these supporting uses, especially where this may harm the vitality and viability of nearby centres or the town centre. Development should be for walk-in trade and of modest scale. Proposals over 280sqm would necessitate a retail/ leisure impact assessment. A need in the immediate area should be clear and is unlikely to be justified at employment areas with low levels of employees, e.g. low density industrial sites, or outside the urban area. Outward facing site locations on the edge of the employment area are unlikely to be appropriate, although food/ drink provision on riverside locations may bring benefits to leisure walkers.
- 5.183 Hotels can also directly support large employment areas. However, these should be well located to Fastrack/ railway stations or provide a suitable Travel Plan. Their location should be justified on the basis of the sequential test, given the need to deliver new hotels in the priority central Dartford area.

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

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

### Industrial development proposals

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

### Services business development

3. Development for other service based business premises should support the enhancement and sustainable intensification of employment areas and sites in line with the economic strategy. Proposals will be expected to meet the following requirements:
  - a) Major development for office or research and development should be located within easy walking distance of a railway station or Fastrack, or, failing this, the Travel Plan should achieve measures that demonstrate significant reductions per job in private vehicle movements during peak hours.
  - b) Supporting businesses for visitors should be located and designed for use by employees of other businesses in the Identified Employment Area, and not individually or cumulatively undermine the operation and status of the employment area or nearby centres in the retail network.

### Other proposals at Identified Employment Areas

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

**Bluewater (M22)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W5*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 85-87, 89, 90*

5.184 Bluewater was planned and delivered as a high quality development to lead regeneration and economic development in the Thames Estuary. Opening in 1999, it soon became established as a premier regional shopping centre in a unique setting. At approximately 150,000sqm (gross) floorspace in total, it remains predominantly in its original built form.

5.185 Bluewater is a large employer in north Kent, and an important component of the economy. Bluewater's evolution as a regional centre is supported to maintain its quality in the face of competition and distinctiveness against other centres (subject to assessment of applicable proposals).

5.186 The 2011 Core Strategy provided a framework for development proposals, including criteria over sustainable travel, maintaining Bluewater's design integrity and parkland setting, supporting the success of nearby Ebbsfleet, and its role to provide an offer distinct from nearby town centres (with retail assessment required taking into account neighbouring town centres and regional considerations). These requirements remain relevant.

5.187 In accordance with these criteria, permission 16/01207/OUT allowed the first large (up to 30,000sqm) expansion to retail at Bluewater. This followed the opening of new regional scale facilities in south east England/ London, most notably Westfield Stratford by Stratford International Station (one train stop from Ebbsfleet International). The Core Strategy noted the need for Bluewater evolve to maintain its competitive position, which continues as a central principle.

5.188 Subsequently, there has been an acceleration of consumer trends, with a national decline in demand for a bricks and mortar retail presence. At the time of writing, only 4,267sqm of retail (comparison goods) floorspace in the above permission has been constructed.

5.189 The Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail and Leisure Study concludes that Bluewater should retain its regional shopping centre status, and notes the importance that the centre



maintains its distinct role. This clear role is set out in the Plan's retail network (Table 7). The Study supports, in principle, development such as the recent 'Hangloose' planning permission for outdoor recreation (which utilises Bluewater's special features such as cliff face and water features), hotel use and commercial leisure uses that cannot be accommodated in centres such as Dartford.

- 5.190 A range of uses may therefore benefit Bluewater. However, larger regional style retail/ leisure activities should be the focus. In line with the outputs from the study, the sequential approach will be applied to indoor leisure proposals, mostly within Class E or sui generis use, e.g. cinemas. The applicable part of the national main town centre uses definition covers leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls).
- 5.191 National policy includes a default 2,500sqm threshold floorspace level for impact testing to apply. This is regarded as appropriate for developments within Bluewater as shown on the Policies Map. It allows assessment and evaluation of regional considerations to be focussed on applicable retail/ leisure proposals. Where necessary, regard may be had to relevant recent planning applications and the cumulative total of proposed floorspace at Bluewater, to avoid the threshold being circumvented (whether deliberate or unintentional).
- 5.192 All assessment/ testing should recognise its regional role, and be undertaken in consultation with neighbouring local and strategic authorities.
- 5.193 Bluewater is a generator of substantial travel movements. Impact on the highway network needs to be minimised through a range of measures, particularly providing better sustainable transport options for employees. The centre is a hub for buses and has existing Fastrack services. It will shortly benefit from the new Fastrack link towards Ebbsfleet Central, although the need for additional bus/ Fastrack services and/ or an enhanced interchange facility should be reviewed under development proposals that may emerge at Bluewater. Development must ensure safe and attractive pedestrian environments in and out of the centre, and especially at the bus hub. Dedicated cycling routes through the site and secure cycle parking should be improved.

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

**Policy M22: Bluewater**

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

**District, Local Centres & Food/ Drink Establishments (M23 & M24)**

- *Strategic Objectives: W1, W2, I4*
- *NPPF paragraphs: 83, 85, 92, 104, 180*

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

5.197 The overall character of these centres is typically as follows:

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

5.198 Further information is provided in Table 7. It is important that District and Local Centres can evolve and diversify as appropriate but continue their essential function. This is often through change of use, but some centres, especially larger ones, may warrant mixed use partial redevelopment. This should improve the role, environment and vitality of the centre. As prominent places within individual neighbourhoods, any opportunity to enhance their local environment should be explored in order to support their vitality, and to enhance their appearance and operation for pedestrians and visitors. In the event that sites within come forward for redevelopment, it is expected that retail or active uses will be provided on the ground floor, even if they are not currently occupied by such a use.

- 5.199 The policy will apply to addresses listed in Appendix D / shown on the Policies Map, and new centres planned at Ebbsfleet (shown on the Key Diagram). The planned new centres should be built out and managed to fulfil their expected role. At all centres, if provision of key uses is moderately below the amount set in policy this does not automatically justify alternative uses; performance will be monitored accordingly. Residential use above and potentially behind ground floor shops is likely to be appropriate, with considerations including provision of suitable access and refuse collection arrangements.

Food/ drink establishments

- 5.200 Food and drink uses are generally promoted in the network of retail centres. However some uses, especially evening-focused activities such as hot food takeaways, drinking establishments or nightclubs, or where located in less urban locations (particularly outside the retail centres), can have an adverse impact on residential amenity. Policy M24 sets out criteria in this regard.
- 5.201 In recognition of their history and community value, public houses now benefit from increased planning protection. The Local Plan protects pubs proposed to be lost to non- essential community use unless they have been demonstrated to be unviable as a public house or essential community (F2) use.

**Policy M23: District and Local Centres**

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

District Centres

2. Change of use for Class E, F or service sui generis use will be permitted at District Centres where:
  - a) more than 50% of the ground floor units are currently in Class E and F use; or

- b) the existing unit is vacant and has been demonstrated to be not viable for Class E, F or service sui generis use through sufficient effective marketing.

Local Centres

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

**Policy M24: Food and Drink Establishments**

- 1. Hot food takeaways, nightclubs, bars and public houses will only be permitted where the following criteria are met, taking account of potential cumulative impacts:
  - a) there will be no material detrimental effects on the residential amenity of neighbours;
  - b) there will be no material detrimental effects on the local environmental quality as a result of noise, vibration and smells; and
  - c) access, servicing and parking arrangements for the proposal do not result in an adverse material impact on the safety and traffic flows or cause unacceptable increases to traffic and parking.
- 2. The local planning authority will seek to prevent the inappropriate location or clustering of takeaway premises. Hot food takeaways will normally be permitted only within the designated network of retail centres, and will normally be refused adjacent to an existing or approved hot food takeaway unit (other than at Bluewater).
- 3. The proposed loss of public houses in the Borough will only be permitted with sufficient effective marketing of the premises demonstrating it is not viable as a public house or for local community (Class F2) use.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING**

- 6.1 This final section sets out how policy delivery can be secured and verified.

### **Local Plan Implementation**

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

- 6.7 Selected implementation documents produced by the Council/ supporting plan delivery are set out in Table 8.

**Table 8: Key Implementation Documents**

Which Document?	What Function?	When Produced?
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)	Demonstrates progress in implementing Plan by reviewing development delivery in accordance with the objectives of the Plan. Additionally, the AMR reviews progress on Local Development Scheme and the Duty to Cooperate.	Annually
5 year deliverable supply statement	Demonstrates the projected housing delivery for the forthcoming 5 years applying closely the national definition of deliverable housing land, in order to analyse and determine housing supply.	Annually or more frequently
Brownfield land Register	Can add to the existing housing land supply; Part 1— lists brownfield sites that are appropriate for residential development. Part 2 – goes further to include some sites from Part 1 after public consultation that are thereby given a consent (permission in principle) for housing.	Annually (December)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule	Sets the rate of CIL charges in the Borough to collect funding in support of infrastructure delivery.	Indexation annual updates. Work to consider a full new Schedule will commence after Plan adoption
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)/ Design Codes	In line with Local Plan policies, providing additional context to help achieve plan objectives.  Design codes add information on the design of developments in local areas, following public consultation.	The need for review of existing SPD will be considered after Plan adoption. Design codes depend on progress of national policy.
Housing Action Plan	Housing Action Plans are required if the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) is failed. The Action Plan sets out how future delivery will be increased in order to ensure the Local Need is met.	As required under HDT results



### Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 6.8 Neighbourhood plans are not produced by the Borough Council but should support the delivery of strategic policies set out in the local plan, i.e. policies set out in sections 2-4. Once formally in place, a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the statutory development plan.
- 6.9 There is currently one confirmed neighbourhood plan area in the Borough, at Stone. National policy asks that the Local Plan provides an indication of the housing requirement for the neighbourhood plan area. Consistent with the capacity based approach outlined for Policy S4, this totals approximately 900 dwellings for Stone over the plan period to 2036/37, approximately 200 dwellings of which have already been delivered. St James Lane Pit, a large site with outline planning permission, accounts for the bulk of the expected Local Plan future delivery in the area.

### **Monitoring Framework**

- 6.10 The outcomes of monitoring against the identified targets will be reported annually in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). If necessary, the AMR will propose actions to deal with identified issues.
- 6.11 Additionally, the overall performance of the plan's policies will be considered through review of appeal decisions and of applications granted as a departure from the local plan.
- 6.12 A comprehensive monitoring framework is set out on the following pages. This identifies targets for key policies in the plan, specific triggers which would indicate that targets may not be met and, in such circumstances, the actions to be taken in response. A number of contextual indicators are also included which, whilst not linked directly to the application of the local plan's policies, will provide helpful understanding of broader trends at play in the borough. There are also a variety of further monitoring indicators addressing the full scope of the local plan.
- 6.13 It is structured around the plan's 14 strategic objectives, which are grouped around three themes:
- *Objectives for the wellbeing of communities (W1-W5).*

- Objectives for infrastructure and economic investment (I1-I4)
- Objectives for a green and attractive environment (G1-G5)

6.14 In addition to the indicators in the framework set out in Table 9 below, qualitative data may be used to provide a fuller understanding of progress being made in implementing the Plan's strategic objectives.

**Table 9: Monitoring Framework Data**

SO	Monitoring Theme	Key Indicator/Source
W1	<b>Achievement of cohesive, safe, walkable and attractive neighbourhoods</b>	Gain or loss of: education, healthcare, and major community use facilities. Rate of progress towards the aim of approximately 125,00sqm Class E and Class F floorspace by 2026/27.
	<b>Delivery of suitable types of dwellings</b>	% homes constructed within the year that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• houses of 2 bedrooms or more</li> <li>• not compliant with Nationally Described Space Standards (NDDS)</li> </ul> Number of consented applications for self-build.
W2	<b>Improved air quality</b>	Data from the air quality monitors within the AQMAs
	<b>Reduced need to travel</b>	% Vacancy rates within District and Local centres; Progress in completing new District and Local Centres.
W3	<b>Provision of sufficient housing</b>	5 year Deliverable Land Supply Statement; Housing Delivery Test; Residential permissions and completions for the year; Percentage of homes delivered on sites under 1 hectare
	<b>Delivery of affordable housing</b>	% of dwellings constructed to be affordable, out of applicable sites; % of dwellings in the year completed/transferred for affordable housing occupation
	<b>Provision of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Pitches</b>	New pitches provided in the year; 5 year traveller pitch/plot supply and context
W4	<b>Provision of whole of lifetime residential homes</b>	% of dwellings constructed not meeting Building Regulations Category M4(2) requirements
W5	<b>Provision of opportunities for culture, art, leisure and sports</b>	New F class permissions/ completions; and other applicable major developments
I1	<b>Brownfield development</b>	Proportion of new dwellings built on brownfield land over the plan period.

SO	Monitoring Theme	Key Indicator/Source
I2	<b>Implementation of new, or enhancements to, the cycle/ pedestrian network</b>	CIL 5 year delivery programme; Applications providing/improving cycle/ pedestrian pathways, in or outside of development boundaries
	<b>Improvements to traffic management</b>	Fastrack usage data/ network improvements; Highways project delivery/ STIPS annual report.
I3	<b>Achievement of a vibrant Dartford Town Centre</b>	Number of completed residential units within Central Dartford; Net gain in E-class floorspace within the Town Centre; Net gain in F-class floorspace within the Town Centre; Vacancy rates of Core Frontage; Progress towards new cinema and hotels delivery; Property market information on rents; Completed development and/or projects within the monitoring year that provided new or enhanced public realm/ green infrastructure in Central Dartford
I4	<b>Retaining a prosperous economy with a good choice of jobs</b>	Rate of progress towards the aim of approximately 200,000sqm Class B2/B8 floorspace by 2026/27; Property market information on rents; Nomis data on number of businesses
G1	<b>Appropriate Green Belt development/ Green Belt retention</b>	Type of development permitted in the year in the Green Belt, including on appeal.
G2	<b>Provision of sustainable and high quality building design</b>	Exemplar or best developments completed in year in terms of new architecture, innovative or sustainable design, or outstanding greenspace provision.
	<b>Enabling the enjoyment of the historic environment</b>	Change in the Buildings at Risk register
G3	<b>Adapting to Climate change and reducing Dartford's Carbon footprint</b>	% of developments not completed to the national higher water standard;
		% development completed where 19% emissions performance beyond Part L of the building regulations were not achieved.
		Number of non-residential completions that achieved BREEAM Excellent
		% of residential development achieving A-C rating in Energy Performance Certification (EPC)
G4	<b>Promotion of sustainable environments and habitats and provision of biodiversity net gain</b>	Development/ improvement of protected local green spaces within the year; Percentage of applicable large developments that have not delivered 20% open space provision; Biodiversity net gain; Mitigations/ contributions for North Kent international status habitats

SO	Monitoring Theme	Key Indicator/Source
G5	<b>Creation of attractive and accessible riversides</b>	Delivery of public realm or open space along the river corridors, or improvements to river water quality or flow.
	<b>Action preventing flood risk</b>	Developments refused due to flooding issues; Progress on flood defence delivery or strategic flood risk evidence actions

6.15 Infrastructure delivery is essential to achieving development sustainably. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared alongside the Local Plan which sets out key supporting infrastructure requirements. It also indicates anticipated costs and potential funding sources for each project. Expected delivery is based upon partnership working throughout the Local Plan process. The IDP is a live document that the Council will review on a regular basis to reflect the current circumstances and to inform the development management process. The Infrastructure Schedule contained in the IDP sets out an overview of the key infrastructure requirements necessary to support regeneration in the Borough and ensure successful implementation of the Plan.

6.16 The Council will also report on the progress against 5 year infrastructure delivery aims to ensure that the specific mitigation needed to support the plan's growth is coming forward. This will draw from the applicable current IDP, key aspects of which are outlined in Table 10 below.

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

Infrastructure Provision	Potential Main Projects
1. Highway, public realm, public transport and walking/cycling improvements to enhance access to and movement within Dartford town centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City.	Dartford Town Centre Regeneration Fastrack expansion
2. Major improvements to the strategic road and rail network within and through the Borough.	Lower Thames Crossing M25(A282) Junction 1a Railway station improvements
3. Improvements to the Borough's flood defences and its resilience to the effects of climate change.	TE2100 Project, Dartford Town Centre
4. Improvements to the provision for education and learning to meet the needs of a growing population through all ages and abilities (nursery, primary, secondary, special needs, higher education and adult learning).	Alkerden Secondary School Ashmere Primary School Ebbsfleet Central Primary School
5. Improvements to the provision of health and wellbeing facilities.	Ebbsfleet Central Health Facility, Stone/ Greenhithe facility

6. Additional community facilities and improved capacity of services for social care, sports and recreation and leisure.	Eastern Quarry Community Hub
7. Environmental improvements through the upgrade of existing and creation of new green infrastructure.	Green Grid developments New landscaped public realm providing useable open space in developments

## Local Plan Review Process

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

- Annual monitoring results; and
- Specific triggers set out below

The triggers for review and reporting dates are set out in Table 11 below.

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

Issue	Trigger for review	Date to report
<b>Whole Plan updating</b>	Age of plan	Set: 2027, 2032, 2037.
<b>Housing delivery</b>	Three successive years of HDT results below 75%	Earliest possible: 2025
<b>Inappropriate use of greenfield land</b>	More than 50% of cumulative housing delivery (in plan period) is on greenfield sites.	Set: 2025, 2027, 2030, 2032, 2035.
<b>Adverse impacts on infrastructure and sustainable development</b>	More than 25% of cumulative housing delivery (in plan period) is on unplanned windfall sites.	Set: 2025, 2027, 2030, 2032, 2035.
<b>London Resort development proposal</b>	If DCO permitted, on construction of first significant phase.	If applicable, estimated approximately 2022-2024.
<b>Substantial new railway infrastructure for the north Kent Line.</b>	On government approval of a specific heavy rail project serving Dartford from Abbey Wood Elizabeth Line station.	If applicable, estimated approximately 2024 at earliest

6.18 Local planning authorities must review their Local Plans and Statements of Community Involvement, and decide if they need updating at least once every 5 years from their adoption date. This is to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Most plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every 5 years. Reviews should be proportionate to the issues in hand, and are likely to focus on.

- conformity with national planning policy;
- changes to local circumstances, such as a material change in Local Housing Need;

- Housing Delivery Test performance; and whether the authority can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable sites for housing;
- whether issues have arisen that may impact on the deliverability of key site allocations;
- appeals performance;
- plans adopted by neighbouring authorities;
- significant economic changes that may impact on viability; and
- whether any new social, environmental or economic priorities may have arisen.

6.19 If, after this review, it is established that policies do not need updating, clear reasons will be published. Alternatively, it may not be necessary to revise the entire plan in whole, in which case a list of which policies need updating will also be published.

6.20 The Dartford Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for planning is due to be reviewed by December 2022, 2027 and 2032.

## **APPENDICES**

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

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

CS24	Flood Risk	-	<b>S3, M4</b>
CS25	Water Management	DP11	<b>M4</b>
CS26	Delivery and Implementation	DP1	<b>S2</b>
<b>Selected Development Policies 2017 policies (less closely related to CS policies)</b>			<b>This new plan:</b> Principal policy references
Policy number	Name		
DP2	Good Design in Dartford		<b>M1</b>
DP5	Environmental and Amenity Protection		<b>M2</b>
DP7	Borough Housing Stock and Residential Amenity		<b>M11</b>
DP11	Sustainable Technology and Construction		<b>M3</b>
DP12	Historic Environment Strategy		<b>M6</b>
DP13	Designated Heritage Assets		<b>M5</b>
DP18	Neighbourhood Centres		<b>M23</b>
DP19	Food and Drink Establishments		<b>M24</b>
DP23	Protected Local Green Space		<b>M13</b>



## **Appendix B – Glossary of terms**

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

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

	development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017.
<b>Building Regulations</b>	A separate statutory process to land use planning which ensures that structures are constructed to certain standards, including energy efficiency standards. Building Regulations approval is required for most building work in the UK.
<b>C1 Use Class</b>	Hotels
<b>C2 Use Class</b>	Residential Institutions
<b>Communal Open Space</b>	Open space which is provided and managed for the communal benefit of residents within a housing development. It will usually comprise local spaces that provide neighbourhood facilities for play and/or rest or areas that provide visual amenity. It includes both hard and soft landscaped areas such as a hardstanding area with seating and green spaces containing vegetation.
<b>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)</b>	A charge on development to help Dartford Council to raise and pool contributions from developers to fund a range of infrastructure to support new development, e.g. schools, health facilities and transport improvements. The CIL rates which apply locally are set out in a Charging Schedule.
<b>Conservation Area</b>	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Conservation Areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
<b>Deliverable Sites</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full definition. Sites that are available now, offer a suitable location for development now and are achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years.
<b>Design and Access Statement</b>	A short report accompanying and supporting a planning application explaining how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrating that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users.
<b>Developable Sites</b>	Sites that are in a suitable location for development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.
<b>Development Management</b>	The process whereby a local planning authority determines whether to approve or refuse a planning application.
<b>E(g)(iii) Use Class</b>	Light industrial uses.
<b>E Use Class</b>	Commercial, Business and Services – includes most shops, cafes and restaurants, financial and professional services, most indoor sport and recreation, health services, day nurseries and creches, offices, and light industrial uses.
<b>F Use Class</b>	Comprises uses within use classes <i>F1</i> and <i>F2</i>
<b>F1 Use Class</b>	Learning and non-residential institutions – includes art galleries, museums, libraries, exhibition halls, places for religious worship, law courts
<b>F2 Use Class</b>	Local community uses – includes shops of less than 280sqm selling essential goods and at least 1km from similar shops, community halls, most outdoor sports and recreation, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, skating rinks
<b>Fastrack</b>	A fast and high quality bus network, serving the major development sites and linking residential areas with public transport interchanges, employment areas and the main shopping centres. It operates partly on a dedicated track consisting of bus-only roads, on-street bus lanes and priority at junctions.

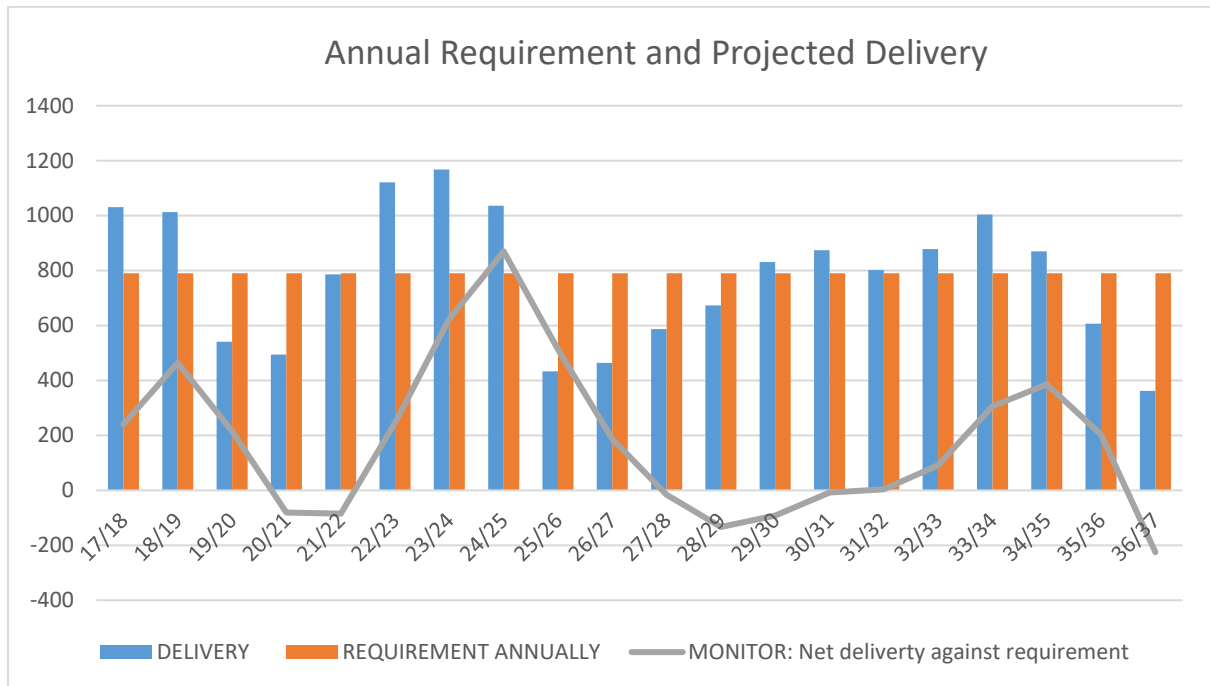
<b>First Homes</b>	Dwellings sold at a discount of at least 30% to local people who are unable to purchase a home at market prices.
<b>Green and Blue Infrastructure</b>	Green and blue (water) spaces, many of which form part of the <i>Green Grid</i> and serve many purposes. These include: designated nature conservation sites (including <i>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</i> and Local Wildlife Sites); priority habitats (as defined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan); Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; roadside nature reserves; rivers/ lakes; <i>Protected Local Green Spaces</i> ; <i>Borough Open Spaces</i> ; open spaces within new development; and other open, landscaped and amenity spaces (including filled and grassed former landfill sites).
<b>Green Belt</b>	An area of open country in which development is strictly controlled under national policy for its openness and permanence. The Green Belt affecting Dartford Borough is part of the Metropolitan Green Belt which encircles Greater London.
<b>Green Grid</b>	An interconnected multi-functional network of <i>Green and Blue Infrastructure</i> , habitat/landscape corridors, footpaths, cyclepaths and non-motorised public rights of way. The Grid enables people and wildlife to be well connected: within the urban area in the north of the Borough; to and along the Rivers Thames and Darent and other watercourses; to and from the countryside to the south; and to <i>Green and Blue Infrastructure</i> networks beyond the Borough's boundary.
<b>Greenfield Sites/ Land</b>	Sites/ land that has not previously been used for development. This includes sites which were previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time, and can also include residential gardens. However this classification does not necessarily apply to land which was previously used for quarrying activities (see <i>Brownfield Land</i> definition).
<b>Groundwater Source Protection Zones</b>	Areas which provide groundwater sources of drinking water. Zones are classified to indicate the level of risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution to groundwater in the area based on the behaviour of groundwater and underground factors. See the Environment Agency's website for further details.
<b>Heritage Asset</b>	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
<b>Housing Delivery Test</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> for full details. Measures net additional dwellings previously provided in the Borough against the homes required, using national statistics and Borough data. Sanctions vary depend on the degree of % shortfall.
<b>Housing Land Supply</b>	<i>Deliverable sites</i> capable of accommodating five or more new dwellings within a five year period. These are identified in the <i>SHLAA</i> and updated via the <i>brownfield land register</i> . Annual statements show the latest five year deliverable housing land supply.
<b>Identified Employment Areas</b>	Areas identified on the <i>Policies Map</i> , with a general commercial land use character.
<b>Infill/ Infilling</b>	Development of dwellings or other buildings on vacant or under-used sites within a developed area.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	A collective term for physical, community and <i>green infrastructure</i> provision, including built structures and services such as roads, public transport, electricity, sewerage, water, schools, health facilities, telecommunications and recycling and refuse facilities.

<b>Landmark</b>	Visible object, feature or development that is distinctive in the nearby environment. It may act as a point of reference to assist orientation or create a visual focus in the urban or rural landscape.
<b>Listed Building</b>	Building or other structure of special architectural or historic interest identified and included on a list by Historic England under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All Listed Buildings are assigned a grade (I, II* or II).
<b>Local List</b>	A list of <i>heritage assets</i> that make a positive contribution to local character and sense of place. They are identified by the local planning authority using local selection criteria.
<b>Local Nature Reserves</b>	Places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
<b>Local Wildlife Sites</b>	Identified by Kent Wildlife Trust, these are sites which are important for the conservation of wildlife in Kent and Medway. Each site has a defined boundary and may support threatened or important habitats or wildlife.
<b>Main Town Centre Uses</b>	Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
<b>Major Development</b>	Housing development of 10 or more homes or on sites of 0.5 hectares or more. Non-residential development with a floorspace of 1,000sqm or more or on sites of 1 hectare or more.
<b>Marine Conservation Zone</b>	Zones designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They protect a range of nationally important, rare or threatened habitats and species.
<b>Masterplan/ masterplanning</b>	A plan which provides comprehensive guidance on the overall development of a (usually large) site. It sets out the mix and arrangement of future land uses, and may also include design principles, landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation, and integration with the surrounding built and natural environment. Masterplanning is usually undertaken as an intermediate stage between policy allocation and the submission of a detailed planning application.
<b>Mitigation</b>	Appropriate measures which, as a minimum, offset any adverse impacts of a proposed development.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>	The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 sets out government planning policies to guide the preparation of plans and decision making on planning applications.
<b>Policies Map</b>	Shows the location of sites and designations to which Local Plan policies relate on an Ordnance Survey base map.
<b>Protected Local Green Space</b>	Designated areas that have special protection against development. They are green areas of particular importance to local communities because of characteristics such as recreational value or tranquillity, and are not large areas of land.
<b>Public Amenity Space</b>	Open space with public access or in public sector ownership. It may include more localised spaces such as small greenspaces on residential estates of clear communal benefit, greenspace of local but distinct landscape merit, or public open spaces providing neighbourhood facilities for play and/ or rest enjoyed by residents.

<b>Public realm</b>	Those parts of a city, town or village, whether publicly or privately owned, which are available for everyone to use. This includes squares and parks.
<b>Ramsar Site</b>	A wetland of international importance especially for waterfowl under the Ramsar Convention.
<b>Retail Impact Assessment</b>	See <i>NPPF</i> . Assessment of the potential impacts of proposed retail development on existing retail centres.
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	A historic building or site identified for protection in a schedule compiled by Historic England under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
<b>Section 106 legal agreements</b>	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a Local Planning Authority to enter into a legal agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are used to support the provision of infrastructure, such as highways, and affordable housing. S106 has been scaled back since the introduction of the <i>Community Infrastructure Levy</i> .
<b>Self-build and Custom-build Dwellings</b>	Self-build dwellings involve individuals or groups of individuals finding a plot and coordinating the design and construction of the dwellings for them to occupy. Custom-build dwellings involve commissioning a developer to construct new homes using a bespoke design for individuals to occupy.
<b>Service Sui Generis Use</b>	<i>Main town centre uses</i> which are not within the <i>E</i> or <i>C1</i> use classes. Includes pubs, hot food takeaways, cinemas, bingo halls, launderettes, taxi or vehicle hire businesses, betting offices, pay day loan shops, and other applicable service sector facilities for visiting members of the public.
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</b>	Areas designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to conserve their wildlife and geology where it is of special interest. The sites are protected by law from damage through development or unsuitable management or other activities.
<b>Special Protection Area (SPA)</b>	Internationally important area protected for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory bird species.
<b>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)</b>	Identifies sites with potential for residential development and assesses whether they are suitable, available and achievable, i.e. <i>deliverable/developable</i> , for housing development over the plan period.
<b>Sufficient Effective Marketing</b>	Continuous proactive marketing for a period of 12 months or more, using a professional agent and an appropriate range of online, on site and other advertising media. Throughout the 12 month period, the asking price should be shown to be reasonable for the property and location, and to reflect the market value of the uses currently required under policy.
<b>Sui generis Use</b>	Uses which do not fall within the nationally specified use B, C, E or F classes. Includes theatres, large houses in multiple occupation (more than 6 people sharing), hostels, petrol filling stations, shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles, scrap yards, retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, amusement centres, casinos, funfairs, waste disposal installations, drinking establishments with expanded food provision, venues for live music performance, concert halls, dance halls.

<b>Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</b>	Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Development Plan.
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, taking into account economic, social and environmental objectives.
<b>Windfall Sites</b>	Sites put forward for development without having been positively identified for housing through the plan preparation process. They include all 1-4 unit sites for infill development within the urban area as these will have been too small to be considered in the <i>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment</i> ; although larger windfall sites are occasionally put forward.

## **Appendix C – Housing Trajectory**



## **Appendix D – Retail centre addresses**

Frontages are shown on the Policies Map but for the avoidance of doubt, addresses are provided here. Frontage policy includes the full site boundaries fronting the highway, even if the shop is set well back or the site not in current shop/ services use.

The Policies Map also includes Bluewater and town centre boundaries.

### **Town Centre Core Frontage**

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

### **District Centres**

<i>Dartford West</i>	
33 - 43 Dartford Road	84-98 Dartford Road
105 – 143 Dartford Road	West Hill County Primary School
<i>Dartford East</i>	
18 – 20 The Brent	1 – 21 The Brent
68A – 106 East Hill	75 East Hill
<i>Temple Hill Square</i>	
1 -49 Temple Hill Square	2-50 Temple Hill Square
Temple Hill Library & Home Start	Temple Hill Youth Centre & Dartford Gym
<i>High Street Swanscombe</i>	
1 -6 The Parade High Street	40 – 58 High Street
Methodist Chapel, Milton Road	23 – 57 High Street
The Old Fire Station & Church Road Hall, Church Road	2 – 4 Stanhope Road
<i>Longfield</i>	
5 – 65 Station Road	2 – 36 Station Road
83 – 97 Station Road	48 Main Road
<i>Hawley Road/ Lowfield Street</i>	
1 – 17 Hawley Road	291 – 301 Lowfield Street
Primary School & Children’s Centre, Oakfield Lane	Scout Hall, Oakfield Lane
6 Hawley Road (Orange Tree PH)	

### **Local Centres**

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



79 St Vincent's Road	146 – 154 Colney Road
116 – 122 St Vincent's Road	145 – 149 Colney Road
144 – 150 St Vincent's Road	
<i>Mead Road, Dartford</i>	
1 – 11 Mead Road	Veterinary Centre, Mead Road
<i>Sutton-at-Hone North</i>	
71 – 77 Main Road	
<i>Darenth Hill/Green Street Green Road, Lane End</i>	
70 - 72 Watchgate	76 Watchgate
<i>Craylands Lane/ Milton Street, Swanscombe</i>	
40 Craylands Lane	10 – 14 Craylands Lane
123 – 139 Milton Street	
<i>Horns Cross, Stone</i>	
285 – 293 London Road	116 – 122 London Road
<i>London Road West, Stone</i>	
44 – 64 London Road	
<i>Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet</i>	
67 Cherry Orchard	69 Cherry Orchard
71 Cherry Orchard	73-77 Cherry Orchard
79 Cherry Orchard	Castle Hill Community Centre
<i>Ebbsfleet Green, Ebbsfleet</i>	
Mortimer Square, 1-4 Talbot Lane	6-12 Talbot Lane
The Spring River, Talbot Lane	
<i>Fleetdale Parade, Dartford</i>	
2 – 46 Fleetdale Parade	
<i>Birchwood Parade, Joydens Wood</i>	
1 – 10 Birchwood Parade	
<i>Summerhouse Drive, Joydens Wood</i>	
62 – 70 Summerhouse Drive	
<i>Chastilian Road, Dartford</i>	
29 – 39 Chastilian Road	30 – 38 Chastilian Road
<i>Shepherds Lane, Dartford</i>	
36 – 44 Shepherds Lane	
<i>Pinewood Place/Oakfield Lane, Bexley Park</i>	
1-5 Maplehurst Close units (R1, R2 and B1-3)	