

**SETTLEMENTS AND
SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS**

**SUPPLEMENTARY
PLANNING DOCUMENT**

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION
APRIL 2026
PLANNING SERVICES

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This is a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation produced by Dartford Borough Council. It focuses on two important considerations: settlements shown on the existing Policies Map, and how sustainable transport for locations is considered in the adopted Dartford Local Plan.
- 1.2. An SPD provides additional guidance on a topic or area, building on the policies contained in a Local Plan. By law, the Local Plan is very important as the starting point for making decisions on planning applications. In this Borough, it is the Dartford Plan (adopted April 2024).
- 1.3. The SPD will cover the whole of Dartford Borough, including the area of Ebbsfleet Garden City, where planning applications are considered by the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC).
- 1.4. Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). Public consultation is a crucial stage in defining the final content of the SPD:



- 1.5. Subject to public consultation outcomes, the SPD is expected to be amended and adopted by Dartford Borough Council in June 2026. Once in place it will be used alongside the Dartford Plan and national policy to decide relevant planning applications.

SPD BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

- 1.6. This SPD provides guidance for residents, developers, landowners, decision-makers and others. It sets out practical advice on applying requirements in the Dartford Plan and the accompanying Policies Map. It helps deliver the existing overall strategy for where development should be located by confirming precisely how towns and villages are mapped, and by detailing policies and benchmarks from the Dartford Plan that evaluate a location's accessibility in terms of nearby services, public transport, and walking and cycling.
- 1.7. Settlements are cities, town and villages. Dartford Borough contains towns and villages, plus small groups of buildings and homes that are not settlements. Locations that are not settlements could include hamlets, linear developments, or places that may have historically been considered as small villages but now lack sufficient local services to function as a settlement.
- 1.8. Settlements are where new development is usually focused by the UK planning system, especially medium-sized and larger settlements providing a range of uses and local infrastructure. In planning for economic, social, and environmental improvements, "infrastructure" not only includes physical systems and basic services for places to work effectively (e.g. transport and utility networks), but also community facilities and institutions, services in neighbourhoods essential to the well-being of people. This incorporates educational and NHS facilities plus public 'green' spaces like parks but also many other vital services.
- 1.9. The Dartford Plan recognises adverse consequences of congestion and pollution on health and environment, and potential impacts on investment and economic productivity are real and fundamental issues in the Borough. This is especially due to:
- the very high volume of traffic in Dartford reliant on the strategic highway network of the M25 London Orbital and A2(T) and junctions in the Borough.
 - acute and Borough-wide congestion problems due to the lack of resilience of the Dartford Tunnel part of the London Orbital when incidents occur, which is regularly.
 - the sustained increase in vehicle (commuter and freight) trips associated with the large-scale growth of employment in Dartford in recent decades.
- 1.10. As a result, and for balanced sustainable development and to maintain the quality of life of residents, the development strategy in the Dartford Plan is based on reducing dependency on private vehicles, and providing a choice of alternative modes of transport. Most importantly, it aims to cut the ultimate sources of transport demand that create people's need to travel, particularly through a focus on the right location for new development.
- 1.11. Planning development with a concentration on Dartford's settlements (towns and identified villages) both utilises existing services in terms of infrastructure and also supports their vitality and prosperity. Having a mix of uses within the area, i.e. jobs and services alongside houses, reduces the need to travel.
- 1.12. Development focused on settlements ensures the existing social infrastructure, including public services, is retained and efficiently used to the benefit of all. It enables the viable planning and provision of land and infrastructure funding to be realised, including investment in public transport, schools and healthcare. Local businesses benefit from a growing customer base in the vicinity, and sufficient labour force in the area. More widely, the overall character of the Borough is maintained, as is the open countryside (including Green Belt) and key natural features such as Dartford's riverside, marshland, heaths and woodland.

- 1.13. This framework has been set by the Dartford Plan, and the SPD offers supporting guidance on how its policies should apply across the Borough. The SPD is necessary also to clarify the continuing operation of the adopted Local Plan in the context of new national planning policy (proposed).

2. APPLICABLE LOCAL PLAN & NATIONAL POLICY

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY IN DARTFORD

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 states in paragraph 7:

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

- 2.2 To help deliver this, local plans should include an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for development (NPPF 2024, paragraph 20).

- 2.3 This planned strategy for the pattern and scale of development will be strongly shaped by the transport and travel implications of growth. The NPPF 2024 states in paragraph 109:

Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve:

- a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;*
- b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places;*
- c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;*
- d) realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and*
- f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains*

- 2.4 National policies support development at existing or new settlements, particularly to reuse brownfield land. The proposed changes to the NPPF indicate development decisions are expected to increasingly hinge on whether or not the site is within a settlement as defined in local policy. Settlements in the form of towns are significant to other parts of national policy (for example, the presence of a town can be influential as part of 'grey belt' land assessment in the Green Belt, the concept introduced in the 2024 NPPF).

- 2.5 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF 2024 highlights the importance of actively managing growth patterns with a focus on sustainable locations, reducing congestion and the need to travel:

The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

- 2.6 To 'actively managed patterns of growth', national policy seeks to ensure sustainable transport modes are prioritised and that safe and suitable access to sites are achieved for all users (NPPF 2024, paragraph 115a–b). These are vital issues in Dartford, being a Borough identified as having suffered with issues of congestion and air quality. The rapid growth of Dartford's towns has been supported by a genuine choice of transport modes, notably sites planned around the North Kent Fastrack system and at locations with good and improved railway access, including Ebbsfleet International and Dartford stations. This needs to be complemented by better walking and cycling infrastructure.
- 2.7 Opportunities to maximise sustainable transport exist in nearly every site in Dartford and should always be taken locally. The final sentence of the NPPF 2024 at paragraph 110 is not considered to be relative in this Borough given evidence on its overall character. As with any non-metropolitan authority area there will be some places of open or relatively rural character, however, in Dartford's transport context there are very few – if any – locations with a genuinely rural-only level of accessibility (intended by the NPPF) that cannot be improved.
- 2.8 The proposed (draft) NPPF puts forward the use of a national Connectivity Tool, using data on transport and locations, to give a perspective on the extent to which a location is well connected or requires travel to access key services. This may provide one source of general information; but this new national metric fails to have regard to certain critical issues that determine how travel is undertaken in practice and provides limited insight for specific sites and comparison in the Dartford context. Appendix 1 explains this and identifies how a more locally targeted indicative framework can be used.

THE DARTFORD PLAN (ADOPTED 2024)

2.9 The Dartford Plan (paragraphs 1.14–1.20) introduces the Borough as follows:

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.

The southern part of the Borough comprises areas of open countryside, much of which is within the Green Belt, interspersed with villages and some hamlets. With a range of shops (including a supermarket) and other community facilities, Longfield is the best served settlement in the southern area. However, Wilmington parish, which adjoins Dartford, has a larger population.

The Borough has major national and international connections via the strategic road network and rail services (including High Speed 1 from Ebbsfleet International Station).

Dartford Railway Station is the busiest station in Kent². Ebbsfleet International and Greenhithe are the next best used stations in the Borough.

The A282/M25 Dartford Crossing and the arterial A2 London-Dover routes generate high volumes of traffic flow through the Borough. This can be attributed to be the principal cause of the Borough's higher carbon emissions per capita than the regional average, given that the majority of emissions are from transport sources.

As a result of economic growth in the Borough, more people travelled into the Borough for work than residents who left to work elsewhere, i.e. Dartford generated net in-commuting. In terms of how residents travel to work, the 2021 Census shows relatively high levels of private vehicle use (46% in total), with 12% of trips being made by public transport and only 6% of trips being made by active travel modes (walking and cycling). This compares with 10% in the South East made by active travel modes. The 2021 Census captured a significant proportion, 31%, of Dartford residents working mainly at or from home.

Between 2011 and 2021 Censuses, the population of Dartford Borough increased by 20%, the second largest increase in the country...

2.10 The Dartford Plan (paragraph 1.38) concludes that a key characteristic of the Borough is the high levels of mobility that puts pressure on public transport and creates traffic congestion that contributes to pollution levels.

2.11 The Dartford Plan has a very clear and distinct spatial strategy to ensure development is directed towards a sustainable location. It states at paragraph 2.14:

The overall spatial strategy is outlined in the Borough's Key Diagram (Diagram 1). With this development focus on sustainable locations in the urban north of the Borough, the character of Dartford's villages and the open countryside can best be maintained. Much of the southern area of the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt where national policy seeks to maintain openness and permanence. The purpose of the Metropolitan Green Belt 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.

2.12 This approach is confirmed in the first policy in the Dartford Plan, Policy S1:

Policy S1: Borough Spatial Strategy

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

2.13 Figure 1 below confirms the extent of Central Dartford in the Dartford Plan:

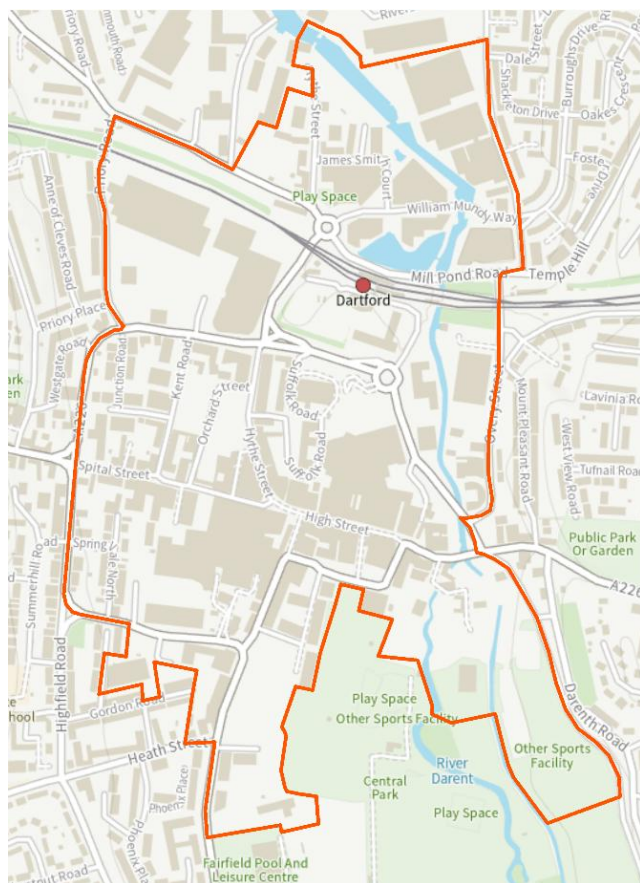


Figure 1: Central Dartford boundary

- 2.14 The Borough Spatial Strategy covers all uses, including major trip-generating activities such as business and industry. Co-locating a mix of activities in town centres and smaller centres is a particularly relevant way to minimise travel need, and to support public transport:

Policy S1: Borough Spatial Strategy

9. *Economic development and jobs growth will be delivered principally through supporting development opportunities, to deliver:*
- a. *Planned strategic expansions at, or additional floorspace within, the identified employment areas.*
 - b. *Redevelopment for modern retail/leisure premises and community facilities within the retail centres. The network of retail centres comprises:*
 - i. *Dartford Town Centre, which will attract a wide range of new businesses;*
 - ii. *Bluewater, which will continue its regional economic contribution;*
 - iii. *District Centres at Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Swanscombe and Longfield;*
 - iv. *Local Centres in the urban area and at villages.*
 - c. *Under policy S5 the policy is for residential development to show benefits outweigh the disbenefits, including taking account of the location's sustainability (unless sited in/around Dartford town centre i.e. the defined Central Dartford area, or at Ebbsfleet) applies. As HMOs can often be an intense form of land-use, with multiple residents in one house, their location should take particular account of the sustainability and environmental impacts.*

- 2.15 Policy S1's strategy also addresses villages. This part of the policy in particular is supported through SSL1 later in this SPD:

Policy S1: Borough Spatial Strategy

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

- 2.16 National planning policy requires all local plans to include a summary 'Key Diagram'. Dartford's Key Diagram (replicated as figure 2 below) generally represents the Borough Spatial Strategy set out in Policy S1. It shows both essential policy area definitions and infrastructure that may support sustainable growth locations including:

- The Urban Area north of the A2, marked in grey.
- The strategic development sites (allocations in the overriding priority both areas) marked in bright red, and potential further growth areas (broad locations) as hatched.
- Dartford Town Centre and Ebbsfleet Garden City boundaries.
- The identified employment areas, marked by the light shaded areas.
- District and local centres in the retail network, marked by the coloured circles.
- Fastrack (the frequent North Kent modern bus service dedicated routeway), marked by light blue routes in the Urban Area.

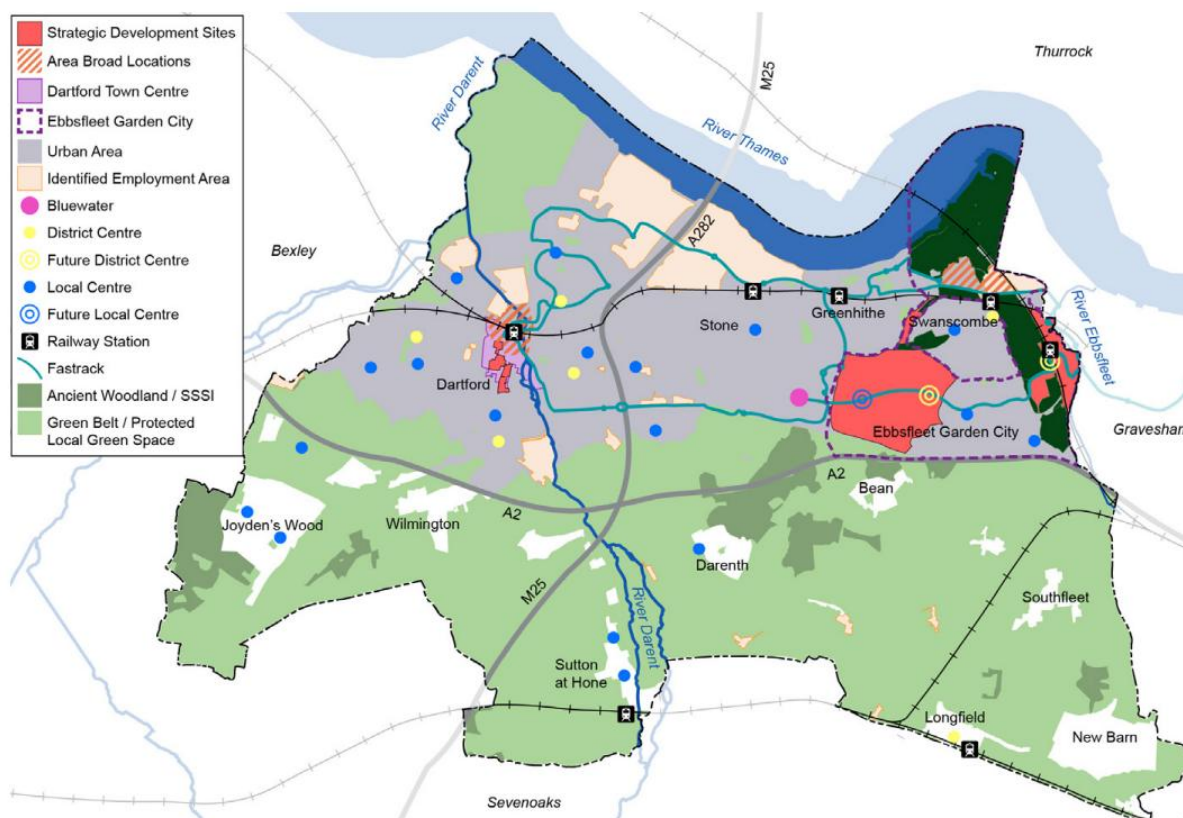


Figure 2: Key Diagram in the Dartford Plan

2.17 The Dartford Plan has an infrastructure-led approach to development, central aspects of which are set out in Policy S2:

Policy S2: Infrastructure Planning Strategy

1. *Borough development will be plan-led, and major proposals masterplanned and phased, in order to ensure the co-ordinated delivery of new infrastructure, and that demand is managed to remain within capacity as far as possible until necessary new infrastructure is provided. New services and facilities will be provided to meet Dartford Borough's needs with key infrastructure provision identified in Diagram 2 and Table 1. Land will be retained within applicable large development for essential community, travel, flood defence and green infrastructure uses.*
2. *Community uses, including education, health, sports facilities, cultural services and local shops, will be retained, and new facilities delivered. Development will ensure communities have good quality and sustainable access to the day-to-day facilities they need including local services and jobs. Overall community infrastructure needs and growth will be regularly reviewed to ensure that a flow of sufficient new facilities are secured in appropriate locations.*
3. *New development will be located where well-served by public transport, and within easy walking distance of local facilities and jobs (for new homes, or the labour force/primary catchment as applicable for other developments). All major development will feature significant measures to provide improved safe and secure active travel routes integrated with the surrounding area. Large and trip generating developments should support public transport use and new infrastructure. Focusing on sustainable locations/transport provisions should support minimising pollution in Air Quality Management Areas and elsewhere*

- 2.18 The Dartford Plan at paragraphs 2.34–2.37 confirms the necessity for proposals to support the use of, and investment in, a range of transport modes, and in the Dartford context development can only be accommodated where the use of sustainable transport is increased:

In addition to Policy S2, Criterion 3 and 4, the main policies focused on transport include S1, D1, E1, M15, M16 and M20. A range of transport planning interventions are necessary, including reducing reliance on private vehicles in new developments and improving public transport and active travel provision...

Even after taking into account planned works, as described above, on both the strategic and local highway networks to address increased demand, development can only be accommodated if the proportion of journeys made by public transport and active travel modes are significantly increased together with other sustainable travel measures undertaken by new development to mitigate their impact. Policies M15 and M16 set out the further provisions required of development.

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.

Development will need to secure major modal shifts in transport choice in favour of expanded active travel and public transport provisions. These offer clear benefits for efficient travel and wellbeing, avoiding vehicular congestion, improving air quality and promoting healthy living. The Dartford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)¹⁶ will be applied to deliver new cycling and walking infrastructure.

- 2.19 With the level of transport demand and congestion in the Borough, sustainable transport, including walking and cycling, is critical to addressing climate change as set out in Policy S3:

Policy S3: Climate Change Strategy

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

- 2.20 The final Borough-wide strategic policy is on the location of residential development, Policy S5. It is comprised of two parts. The first part addresses the location of residential and mixed-use development as specifically identified in the Dartford Plan, which under the plan-led system are expected to provide the predominance of new homes:

Policy S5: Sustainable Housing Locations

1. *Sites located in accordance with the Borough Spatial Strategy, Central Dartford, Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe, Bluewater policies, or remaining sites in the identified housing land supply as set out in Appendix A and where after taking into account applicable site constraints the proposed number of dwellings is broadly in line with the projected site capacity, will be permitted for residential development.*

At three residential-led allocations on the Policies Map and identified by diagrams in Appendix A, residential development will be permitted where:

- a. *Shown to be designed to:*
 - i. *Respond sensitively to local topography,*
 - ii. *Respect long distance views to the sites;*
 - iii. *Respect and enhance existing landscaping and landscape settings;*
 - iv. *Facilitate an integrated sense of place and community;*
 - v. *Create functional open space well related to the development and connecting to the wider green infrastructure network;*
 - vi. *Provide a fine grain of built form ensuring permeability and integration and safe connections to neighbour facilities, services and infrastructure; and*
 - vii. *Ensure an appropriate scale of development across each site, to create street scenes which contribute to and enhance the character of the surrounding areas*
- b. *Demonstrated to be designed to fully utilise and support the public transport corridor and active travel potential of London Road (and also in the case of St James Lane Pit, Watling Street) providing safe, direct and attractive walking links from all dwellings to bus/Fastrack services, and achieving development well equipped to integrate with the wider cycle network (for commuter, recreational and other cycling).*
- c. *Meeting other Local Plan policy and infrastructure requirements,* d. *A design-led process leads to an agreed layout, showing:*
 - i. *At St James Lane Pit Stone, up to 870 dwellings*
 - ii. *At Stone Lodge Stone, up to 140 dwellings*
 - iii. *At Knockhall Road Greenhithe, up to 61 dwellings*

2. *At other locations, residential development will be supported where the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disbenefits, including the sustainability of the site's location. Unplanned windfall development within Use Class C3 involving a net gain of five or more dwellings should also show that:*

- a. *It is located on brownfield land, unless it has been demonstrated that the site is necessary to rectify a lack of five-year supply of deliverable housing land;*
- b. *It is within easy walking distance of a range of community facilities including schools, shops, leisure and recreation services, and is well located with respect to walking/cycling and good public transport to a choice of employment opportunities; and*
- c. *In the case of major development, it is also shown to be sufficiently served by infrastructure, after allowing for the infrastructure requirements of the sites identified in the housing land supply.*

2.21 The second part above of Policy S5 establishes the broad criteria for housing proposals that may be put forward at other locations. These requirements vary depending on the scale of proposed development:

- The first sentence, stating all benefits outweigh disbenefits including the sustainability of the site location, can apply to all proposals. This SPD may be of particular assistance to

consideration of smaller proposals and the sustainability of their location, especially Appendix 1's framework for indicating a local sustainable transport rating.

- The content that follows (Policy S5 parts 2a-2b) applies to sites on the net gain of five or more dwellings. SSL1 and text as follows in this SPD helps explain how the specific criteria and guidelines of Policy S5 of the Dartford Plan should be addressed in detail for these proposals.

2.22 Table 1 below, extracted from the Dartford Plan, outlines some of the main locations where business and housing growth is expected to be accommodated, and other key policies on sustainable locations such as Policy M18 on sustainable economic locations:

Table 1: Summary of types and locations of development (Dartford Plan, Table 3)

What	Where	How
Homes	<p>Concentrated on specific sites identified in the housing land supply. This includes the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ebbsfleet Garden City • Central Dartford <p>Depending on regeneration progress, additional suitable residential sites may become available, or suitable land delivery may be accelerated by the market in line with policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing sites under construction or with planning permission. • Maintaining a supply of specific deliverable sites. • Providing an ample amount and variety of new housing land at sustainable locations in the housing land supply. • Identifying available and suitable brownfield land. <p>Relevant policies: S1, S4, D4, D5, D6, E4, E5, M9</p>
Businesses	<p>Encouraged at appropriate locations in the Borough, particularly in identified employment areas at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford east of M25 (9 areas) • Other urban (7 areas) • South of the A2 (5 areas) <p>Strategic commercial development and services are expected at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dartford Town Centre • Ebbsfleet Central 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic expansions to areas in Littlebrook/The Bridge; Riverside/Northern Gateway; Burnham Road; Crossways. • Completing sites already under construction or with planning permission. • Sustainable intensification or upgrade of the identified employment areas. • Criteria for other proposals. <p>Relevant policies: S1, S4, D2, E2, E4, M18, M19, M20.</p>

2.23 This SPD provides confirmation of how these policies will be applied, and the data relevant to consider what is a sustainable location accessible in transport terms in the Borough. It also should assist in the identification of the best possible development locations, clarifying the appropriate settlements as established in the Dartford Plan.

3. PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS AND TRANSPORT

SSL 1: PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCATIONS AND TRANSPORT

1. **Across the Borough all development should be planned and designed from the outset to support sustainable travel.**
2. **It is expected that development locations will be selected so they are integrated locally and strategically with sustainable transport infrastructure; achieving both: (a) easy and green mobility within settlements through walking and cycling, and also (b) convenient access to efficient public transport options for longer distance travel:**
 - (a) **Development sites will – through early consideration of location, layout and optimal entry/egress points – ensure safe, straightforward and pleasant access by walking and cycling to and from, and within, the site:**
 - i. **Housing development should be located (or make provision on site) so that a range of local community facilities and services are within easy walking distance.**
 - ii. **Housing and all other developments must benefit from high quality routes to local services and infrastructure, that are direct or align with desire lines for pedestrians and cyclists. Developments may be required to deliver new or upgraded walking and cycling routes, which will be surfaced suitably, well-lit and benefit from passive surveillance, and should be in a landscaped setting.**
 - (b) **Housing and trip generating developments – including major residential, employment, retail/leisure, community, cultural and sporting facilities – should be well served by accessible, frequent and useful public transport.**
3. **For all applicable uses and developments, site selection and assessment of proposals should carefully consider the level of accessibility and any improvements that may be necessary, in line with the Dartford Plan, this SPD, informed by sustainable transport performance measured against local requirements as outlined in Appendix 1, and by applying the Dartford LCWIP. A sustainable location in the Borough in Dartford Plan terms should not be shown principally through reference to the national Connectivity Tool.**

SSL1 Introduction

- 3.1 The vital importance in this Borough of sustainable and efficient transport is a cornerstone of the Dartford Plan (see Section 2 above). It is the fundamental enabler of growth, continued prosperity and local well-being in Dartford. Paragraph 2.81 of the Dartford Plan confirms: *“Good access to facilities, frequent public transport, and the provision of good quality pedestrian and cycling opportunities linking to facilities underpin the central Local Plan principle of encouraging a modal shift from car use to more sustainable forms of transport (Policies S2 and S3).”*
- 3.2 Requirements in SSL 1 Clause 1 emphasise the fundamental significance of a good location from the earliest opportunity of the development considerations. The design of development and new infrastructure provision may address some of the issues arising from the trips generated. Nevertheless, it is the location of land and the arising distances and quality of available connections to facilities that are the principal determinants of the need to travel, and the transport mode selected.

- 3.3 Effective planning policies and development decisions can prevent the need for people to undertake regular or lengthy journeys through locating homes, jobs and services together. This an aim of the Dartford Plan. SSL1 Clause 2 recognises successful sites and places provide for the essential needs of their own population locally, i.e. through infrastructure and complementary uses provided within walking distance or a short cycle ride, whilst also ensuring a real choice of travel modes for trips further afield. A location within one of the Borough's towns (see the following Policy SSL 2) is most likely to meet requirements – compared to other parts of the Borough – and accord with national and local policy, subject to site-specific factors and full assessment against the Dartford Plan.
- 3.4 The significance of sites that avoid generating additional transport demand and improving the quality of alternatives to private vehicles has increased further as a result of Dartford being one of the fastest growing parts of the country. It is unnecessary and likely harmful for Dartford's future development needs to be met at locations that do not meet local sustainability requirements as set out in the Dartford Plan. The assessed and agreed Borough strategy is that developments will be accommodated at planned locations with good access by public transport and walking and cycling. It therefore identifies Central Dartford (see Figure 1 above) and Ebbsfleet Garden City plus mixed-use and housing sites as allocated on the Policies Map. These are accessible sites that will meet development needs.

Sustainable transport including active travel: SSL 1 Clause 2(a)

- 3.5 Wherever located in the Borough, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport/travel should always be taken. Policies M15 and M16 of the Dartford Plan should be consulted. Sustainable travel and sustainable transport infrastructure may include: public transport and active travel i.e. walking and cycling, all of which are efficient in relieving pressure on the highway network, thereby reducing journey times. Importantly, with a focus on climate change, these are zero or low carbon modes of travel. Walking and cycling are also good for physical, mental and public health, forming good exercise for individuals without generating air or noise pollution for others, and can be very low-cost. Pedestrian interaction in towns and villages also supports the social strength of communities.
- 3.6 Clause 2a(i) of SSL 1 above highlights the important principle for all new homes to have community facilities “in easy walking distance” (as per the Dartford Plan, Policy S2(3)). For housing and Policy S5, Paragraph 2.81 of the Dartford Plan identifies:
- services close by should include “schools, shops, health facilities, and recreation facilities”; and
 - developments have to show they are “well integrated into safe walking and cycle routes”.
- 3.7 The distance threshold for residential sites will be a maximum walking distance of up to 800m to facilities (Paragraph 2.85 of the Dartford Plan). This distance equates to a typical 10-minute walk and is not measured as the crow flies.
- 3.8 The method for defining applicable walking routes and other factors is detailed in Appendix 1. The route most people may choose may not be along the highway, as there are extensive traffic free routes to consider. Footpaths and other public rights-of-way are woven into the fabric of Dartford's settlements and across Britain. In all instances, routes need to be safe and convenient.
- 3.9 In addition to proximity to useful destinations, walking and cycling routes for new development must be of sufficient quality as set out in Clause 2a(ii) above. Any proposal focusing on accessibility by

cycling will have to demonstrably illustrate how the specific routes expected to be used are safe and convenient routes for cyclists of varied confidence and ability, for example to local shops, schools and employment. This is especially so if relying on “high” or “moderate” cycling potential as rated under Table 12 in Appendix 1.

- 3.10 Walking and cycling routes may need to be provided or upgraded through sufficient and appropriate developer contributions as necessary guided by the Dartford LCWIP and in line with legislation. The benefits of any new cycle/shared routes in providing green settings or contributing to biodiversity should also be considered.

Public transport: SSL 1 Clause 2(b)

- 3.11 Clause 2b of SSL 1 above reflects the additional criteria for sites for five or more new homes, or major non-residential proposals for many trip generating uses, in the Dartford Plan (including through Policies S2 and S5).
- 3.12 These developments will generate a significant volume of journeys, some of which will be longer-distance regular trips, for example commuting to work (but also to popular leisure pursuits or essential services such as healthcare). The Dartford Plan requires high – but realistic and necessary within this Borough – accessibility to public transport services. This ensures there is a genuine alternative to the car.
- 3.13 Many locations in Dartford’s towns have good public transport accessibility. The Borough has seven railway stations served by three separate railway lines, and therefore direct services to a wide choice of termini in different parts of central London. There are a range of bus services that connect towns well, plus suburban routes, buses to villages and rural Kent, and buses by Transport for London. The modern and frequent Fastrack service is readily accessible for a large proportion of the Borough’s population and major employers. This context is outlined further in Appendix 1.
- 3.14 Paragraph 2.84 of the Dartford Plan requires:
- A safe and convenient walking distance of 400m from any railway station, or a bus stop with at least six buses an hour each way (these are not destinations in their own right so few people are willing/able to walk far).
 - Or, if not a greenfield site over 1 hectare in size, a walking distance of 400m from any railway station or a bus stop with two buses an hour each way. The usefulness or otherwise of the service will be taken into account, including the destinations served by these services. For example, consideration should be given to whether regular access is available to Dartford Town Centre, the hospital, secondary schools, Bluewater, or urban employment areas.
- 3.15 These minimum service levels are necessary for public transport to have the prospect of being perceived as genuinely convenient and appealing. The peak time frequency of six services an hour for each direction, a service every 10 minutes, is available in Dartford and relevant as it may be sufficient to use it on a regular ‘turn up and go’ basis. The peak service level is the scheduled maximum service level for two separate 60-minute periods in a weekday. See Appendix 1 for further methodological details.

Additional Guidelines for Non-residential Proposals: SSL1 Clause 2

- 3.16 SSL 1 addresses all uses, not just residential. For other uses creating travel demand, sustainable transport access is essential. A location with good public transport is expected (Clause 2b), this includes any use attracting significant employees, users, customers and visitors. And in addition to commercial development, it includes larger public services and large or intensively used other uses (e.g. secondary schools/colleges and health facilities, large places of worship and recreation facilities used by large volumes of people).
- 3.17 The Dartford Plan and national planning policy acknowledge town centres are generally sustainable locations for trip generating uses and developments in many forms and sizes. The national 'main town centre use' definition will be applied, or for other non-residential proposals with employees or visitors, the nationally defined 'major' scale developments, for the purposes of triggering SSL 1 Clause 2b.
- 3.18 Policies S1(9) and M18(1-2) of the Dartford Plan therefore steer Class E development (in particular but not exclusively) to identified centres in the Borough; notably at Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet. Policy M20 is focused on how identified employment areas can sustain and accommodate office and industrial developments, subject to appropriate transport provisions. SSL1 guidance can be used to demonstrate compliance with Dartford Plan M20 requirements such as clause 3a for service businesses.
- 3.19 Even non-business uses may function intensively and lead to significant transport demand. This may sometimes be during off-peak periods, however, SSL1 should still be considered (including for environmental and well-being reasons, and as public transport frequencies may be low). Selection of an unsustainable location for these uses may mean they are inappropriate in principle, and mitigation such as those outlined in SSL1 may not always be sufficient. For applicable community uses (excluding essential public services or necessary neighbourhood scale uses), Policy M17(1d) requires demonstration of need where the majority of users travel from outside the Borough.

Summary indicators of local transport accessibility: SSL 1 Clause 3

- 3.20 In Clause 3 of SSL1, proposals are advised that the suitability of a development's location in the Borough should principally be viewed against the adopted policies in the Dartford Plan and associated documentation. In evaluating the sustainability of locations in the Borough in terms of accessibility and connectivity, these provide a consistent and appropriate basis for considering accessibility and performance relevant to the Borough, its development requirements, infrastructure, and services.
- 3.21 These principles have resulted in a framework for rating different sustainable transport modes in Appendix 1 (Table 12) that gives an indication of site potential and distances to access rail, bus and cycling travel. This approach does not factor in every issue but is a starting point which then allows account to also be taken of qualitative factors such as route service levels, and usefulness of destinations. Individual assessment is always needed of factors such as capacity and cost – or for walking and cycling, a safe and sufficient quality environment should be established upfront.
- 3.22 The local approach and ratings identified in Appendix 1 can provide simplicity and clarity that may be useful for small sites in particular, for example single dwelling proposals.
- 3.23 In December 2025 the Government introduced the National Connectivity Tool in a written statement to Parliament. The Connectivity Tool provides information against national average levels of

connectivity and is outlined in Appendix 1. However, there is concern that this fails to benefit from any significant local assessment or data in relation to the many key factors and qualitative aspects that determine the attractiveness and uptake of sustainable transport modes.

- 3.24 Furthermore, it is highlighted that the Connectivity Tool produces uniform results across grid areas and therefore is not bespoke to individual sites in nearly all circumstances and fails to have regard to specific access/entry arrangements for any site. Additionally, issues have been identified with key methodological assumptions and thresholds used in the public transport and active travel modes; these all render the Tool of only limited applicability and insight in Dartford Borough. SSL1 should be applied, with consideration where appropriate of the local method for rating sustainable transport performance set out in Appendix 1.

4. SETTLEMENTS IN THE BOROUGH

SSL 2: DEFINED SETTLEMENTS IN THE BOROUGH

1. **Settlements in the Dartford Borough area are those listed below within the Urban Area (which is defined by Policy S1 part 7 of the Dartford Plan) and those forming town and villages within applicable areas inset from the Green Belt in southern Dartford Borough. These are settlements:**
 - **In the urban north of the Borough**

Towns in the Urban Area:

 - **Dartford**
 - **Ebbsfleet**
 - **Greenhithe**
 - **Stone**
 - **Swanscombe**
 - **In the Borough south of the A2**

Non-Urban Area Town:

 - **Longfield**

Villages (Non-Urban Area):

 - **Bean**
 - **Darenth (Lane End)**
 - **Joyden's Wood**
 - **Southfleet**
 - **Sutton-at-Hone**
 - **Wilmington**
2. **The defined extent of Non-Urban Area settlements in 2 and 3 is confirmed through the Policies Map extracts in Appendix 2.**
3. **The Borough Spatial Strategy set out in Policy S1 of the Dartford Plan features overall guiding principles for development in and outside of settlements:**
 - **Overarching requirements are for development to be at planned locations and provide a balance of uses and services within settlements, minimising the necessity to travel by private vehicle (Policy S1, part 1).**
 - **It sets a focus on brownfield land not within the Green Belt and sites with good access by public transport, walking and cycling (Policy S1, part 2a-b).**
4. **Policy S1 establishes the strategy for settlements:**
 - **S1 part 3: states the overriding priority is at Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet,**
 - **S1 part 7: defines principles for the rest of the Urban Area,**
 - **S1 part 11: outlines any residential or other development within villages will be of proportionate scale and on non-green belt land. This will require careful consideration of how the proposal is selected, located and designed. This SPD should be used to ensure development is proportionate to the village in terms of travel impacts, sustainable transport provisions and sufficient public transport accessibility.**

SSL 2 Introduction

- 4.1 The Borough's fundamental geographical characteristics have provided a clear and effective focus in successive Local Plans for the location of sustainable development and maintaining Dartford's character. The Borough features a distinct north-south divide delineated by the A2 strategic highway (eight lanes wide). North of this is the bulk of the Borough's population, employment and infrastructure, and the largest settlements (many of which originated on the River Thames or River Darent). The sustainability of this area as the most suitable location for development, was reinforced in recent decades by the availability of large previously developed (brownfield) sites.
- 4.2 The southern half of the Borough extends in the direction of Kent Downs National Landscape, and in contrast is over 80% designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The Borough is also defined by a smaller Green Belt area at Dartford Marshes, located northwest of the Urban Area. This plays a vital role in maintaining the openness of Dartford from Greater London, at the confluence of the Rivers Thames and Darent.
- 4.3 SSL2 above should be used in considering current and emerging national policy on settlements when applying the Dartford Plan.
- 4.4 The Dartford Plan includes the Urban Area on the Key Diagram (see Figure 2 above) and defines it as "north of the A2 and outside the Green Belt". The principal focus of development in the Dartford Plan is on this part of the Borough and especially Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet (detailed in bespoke Dartford Plan chapters).
- 4.5 The adopted urban focus reflects that towns (and cities) commonly benefit from offering their residents significant commercial activities and other supporting facilities and infrastructure within the settlement. A choice of transport options means services and jobs are readily accessible from the homes of residents. The mix of uses, open spaces and other infrastructure may cater for the predominance of local economic, social and environmental needs without travelling outside the settlement or dependence on private vehicles. There is every opportunity and need to make full provisions for sustainable transport, and to fully apply SSL 1 above.

South of the Borough Settlements

- 4.6 South of the A2 in the Borough, including Longfield and the villages, falls outside the urban growth policies of the Dartford Plan (SSL 2 Clause 4 confirms).
- 4.7 This is a varied area. Many of the residential areas south of the A2 can be characterised as mostly interspersed residential areas and estates largely developed in the 20th century, some of which included no facilities, as well as some generally medium-sized or small villages (a selected number of which have retained limited facilities). SSL 2 Clause 1 above and Appendix 2 to this SPD notes those neighbourhoods that have been confirmed as still retaining multiple key local services as settlements. These host facilities that are regularly used by broad parts of the population, and reasonably typical of well-functioning smaller settlements, such as essential local scale public services, and smaller scale retail and services.

4.8 Figure 3 below, was published by the Council in support of the Dartford Plan:

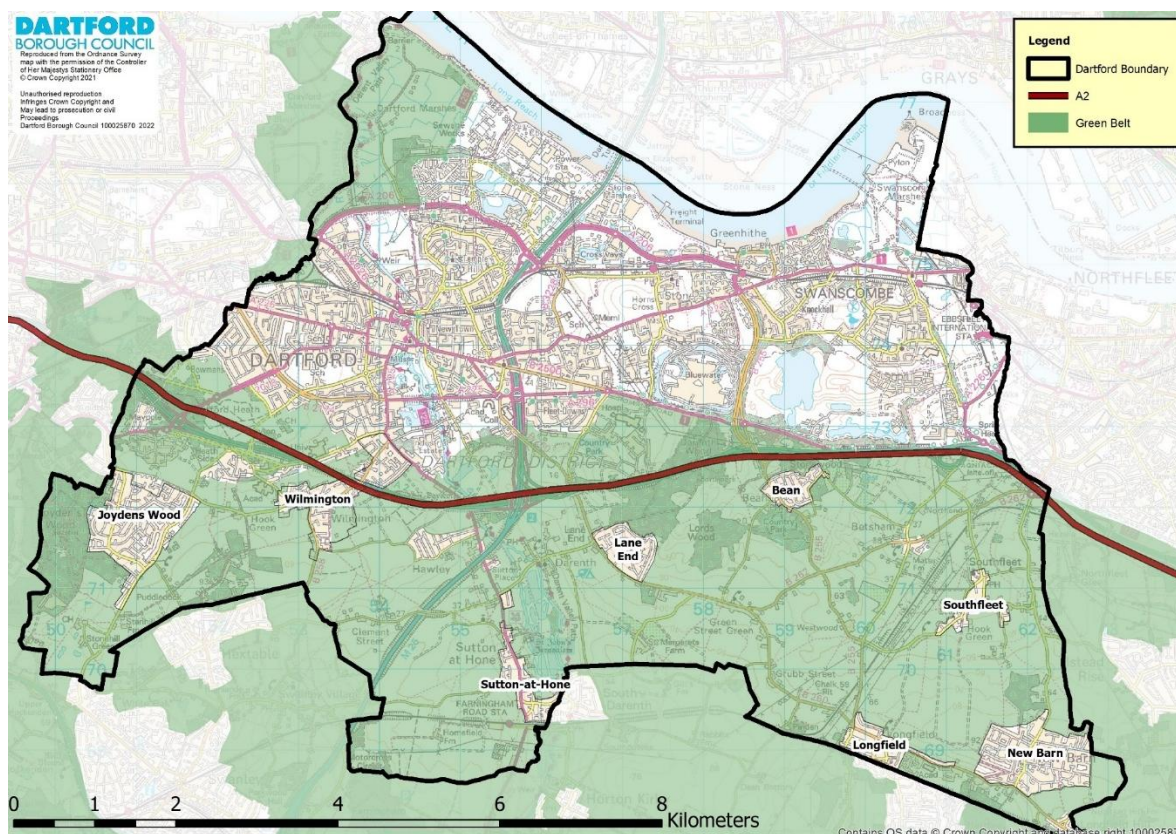


Figure 3: Smaller settlements and Green Belt in the Borough

- 4.9 In Figure 3, the A2 strategic highway is highlighted in red, and north of that, the well-developed Urban Area is transparent. The Metropolitan Green Belt is shown, and in the south of the Borough there are several “insets” from the Green Belt of various sizes not covered by green in Figure 3.
- 4.10 This enables confirmation of not only which places are settlements, but also how far they extend. Under the Dartford Plan, the Council has consistently viewed all Green Belt land as not part of a defined settlement. SSL 2 and Appendix 2 confirm which of the insets fall in an identified settlement. There is no change to the definition or status of Green Belt boundaries shown on the adopted Policies Map.
- 4.11 Even if qualifying as part of a settlement, not all neighbourhoods are well placed as sustainable locations for significant development. Areas lacking significant jobs and key services in the vicinity generate transport demand, which is reliant on private vehicle use (SSL 1 of this SPD).
- 4.12 In the southern parts of the Borough, the distances involved – and the dispersed services and population – can make any walking and cycling impractical, and investment in public transport infrastructure unfeasible. This in turn contributes to congestion and pollution, unattractive road environments for pedestrians and cyclists, and challenges efforts to tackle climate change. It should be noted high traffic volumes across Dartford Borough may impact on the safety and likelihood of walking and cycling, especially with unlit or unsurfaced footpaths. Some village roads also lack footways.
- 4.13 Given the need to travel out this area’s settlements to access employment and higher order services regularly, to reduce the extra traffic generation (and congestion, pollution, noise and safety concerns)

materially, effective public transport provision is likely to be necessary (SSL1). The frequency, cost, reliability and choice and significance of destinations will be very influential as to the effectiveness of available public transport in the south of the Borough. Achieving and maintaining sufficient public transport services can be very challenging accessibility in lower density non-urban areas.

- 4.14 In any event, development in villages should be of a proportionate scale and avoid Green Belt land (Policy S1, part 11 of the Dartford Plan). This will vary depending on the individual settlement.
- 4.15 Longfield and the village settlements are outlined in Appendix 2, confirming applicable boundaries shown on the adopted Policies Map.

5. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – ACCESSIBILITY RATINGS IN DARTFORD

5.1 This Appendix outlines sustainable travel provisions across Dartford, and considers how the performance of locations can be measured locally in this respect.

Local accessibility metrics

5.2 Based on established and approved principles underlying the Dartford Plan (and associated documents) locations can be rated in a simple way for accessibility, to provide a summary indication of their accessibility – see Table 2 below. The following benchmarks and thresholds drawing from this and national research should be used to consider the performance of locations against different sustainable transport modes, and to inform the application of the Dartford Plan and SSL 1 of this SPD.

Table 2: Dartford sustainable travel rating indicators

Transport mode	Dartford Summary level of accessibility		
	High	Moderate	Low
Railway	Within 800m walk ¹ (10 minutes) from a station in the Borough	800m to 1.6km walk from a station in the Borough	More than 1.6km walk ² from a station in the Borough
Bus including Fastrack	Within 400m walk ³ (5 minutes) from a bus stop with at least 6 buses per hour (day time) in both directions	Within 400m walk (5 minutes) from a bus stop with an average of approximately 2 buses per hour (day time) in both directions	More than 400m walk from a bus stop with less than 2 buses per hour (day time) in both directions
Cycling <i>If at the specific location safe and convenient routes for cyclists of varying ability are available to useful destinations.</i>	Within 10 minutes cycle from Dartford Town Centre ⁴	More than 10 minutes cycle from Dartford town centre but within 10 mins of a District Centre ⁵	More than 10 minutes cycle from Dartford Town Centre or District Centre

¹ An acceptable walking distance is taken to be 10 minutes (approx. 800m) from the DfT Manual for Streets and IHT (2000) Guidelines for Providing Journeys on Foot.

² Research by Wakenshaw and Bunn (2015) using National Travel Survey data based on the 85th percentile outside London gives 1.6km as the upper limit for walking to a railway station.

³ The 400m walking distance is based on guidance by IHT (2000) Guidelines for Providing Journeys on Foot, which advises an average walking speed equates to approximately 400m in 5 minutes. The guidance also suggests that a desirable walking distance for journeys generally is 400m. The 400m walking distance is also supported by the DfT (2005) Inclusive Mobility guidelines.

⁴ See the inner area of Figure 4 below.

⁵ District Centre addresses are provided in Appendix E of the Dartford Plan.

Application and interpretation

- 5.3 It is essential that a range of qualitative issues are also considered, in addition to distances.
- 5.4 Rail may form a relatively quick means of transport, especially for travel outside the Borough (including to London's wide range of employment and attractions) and associated walking distances to stations in Table 2 reflect this. Overall, however, services in the Borough suffer from capacity issues, especially at peak times as all routes to London serve many other towns in Kent.
- 5.5 The Borough has the following railway lines:
- **North Kent line:** generally high frequency and with some choice of destination, especially from Dartford Station. Journey times can be relatively slow, for example over an hour to central London termini. Certain stations currently suffer from safety or structural issues in their operation, variable capacity, dependency on flights of steps or a negative environment (e.g. outside daylight hours). These issues limit their use by some customers. *Stations: Dartford, Stone Crossing, Greenhithe, Swanscombe.*
 - **Victoria line:** lower frequency than North Kent line, with limited services stopping at Farningham Road in particular compared to other stations in the Borough. Its stations have very limited connecting onward public transport options to the rest of the Borough. *Stations: Farningham Road, Longfield.*
 - **High Speed 1 line:** rapid transport to eastern/northeastern London (Stratford International and St Pancras International). It is very costly as the route extracts an additional significant premium for High Speed service. Currently there are relatively limited onward public transport options for the south and west of the Borough. *Station: Ebbsfleet International.*
- 5.6 Bus services are not a destination in their own right. A 400m convenient walking threshold is relevant and the categories in Table 2 reflect the requirements of the Dartford Plan. Services are highly variable within the Borough, and subject to change.
- Fastrack services in the north of the Borough benefit from a modernising fleet and operate partly on dedicated busways (however subject to constraints due to traffic congestion and the ongoing Galley Hill closure).
 - The west and south of the Borough are not served by buses offering a convenient 'turn up and go' frequency and commonly lack any service in the evenings and at other off-peak times.
 - Main 'hubs' are at Dartford Town Centre (no specific bus station) and Bluewater (no rail interchange).
- 5.7 The quality of cycling routes and safety is absolutely critical. At present, cyclists in the Borough generally take routes on road. There are no significant stretches of high quality, safe and attractive segregated provision. Cyclists face particular physical deterrents and safety issues accessing and crossing the core area of Dartford, and many other parts of the Borough. Some locations could offer relatively short or flat journeys to local facilities such that cycling may prove practical even to less experienced cyclists, however, the infrastructure to support safe cycling at present is limited:
- With Dartford's extremely high vehicular traffic levels, including on local roads, the suitability of every location Borough-wide to offer safe and convenient cycle routes (including for short distances) will need to be verified. Each individual site will need consideration of its specific access arrangements.

- National Cycle Route 1 traverses the Borough east-west and although it enables routes towards Dartford Town Centre, much of it is not segregated or off-road. Reference may be made to the approved Dartford LCWIP which is in delivery, and emerging proposals for London Road, Stone.

Appropriate methodology

- 5.8 In applying Table 2, walking and cycling routes can be determined with reference to signed routes, cycling and walking guides, the Dartford LCWIP, and measured with Google Maps with manual verification where appropriate. The quality of routes should be closely considered, ensuring they are well-defined, safe and secure, direct and accessible. In those locations where a 'safe and attractive' walking route is questionable (for example, unlit or unmade routes, alleyways or footpaths across open spaces, private routes or places with access limitations including any significant flight of steps or steep slopes) the measurement must be made along the nearest public highway or rights of way with surfaced pavements and street lighting.
- 5.9 Walking distance to bus stops should be measured to the specific location of a bus stop, not the general bus route or corridor. Timetable information can be sourced from bustimes.org, which is based on the government's Bus Open Data Service. Bus service levels will need updating when development proposals are put forward.
- 5.10 Minimum service levels for buses in Table 2 and the Dartford Plan are necessary to ensure public transport is genuinely convenient and appealing. A frequent service every 10 minutes may encourage usage on a regular 'turn up and go' basis. This service level is available during peak times connecting a number of towns in the Borough. The peak service level is the scheduled maximum service level for two separate 60-minute periods in a weekday.
- 5.11 To calculate cycle routes, the National Cycle Network or LCWIP should be consulted, the latter being available from the Dartford Borough Council website. The 10-minute cycle time area from Dartford Town Centre is determined by using the LCWIP isochrones produced by PJA (2022) set out in Figure 4 below.
- 5.12 Ratings in Table 2 only give a high-level indication of distance, not the quality of route or safety. Any proposal focusing on accessibility by cycling will have to demonstrate how the specific location and its access benefits from safe and convenient routes for cyclists of varied confidence and ability, for example to local shops, schools and employment.
- 5.13 Table 2 ratings for cycling are contingent on this. Where a designated centre is in proximity to a site, but a route of sufficient quality is not available, the rating outcome should be downgraded to scoring 'Low'.

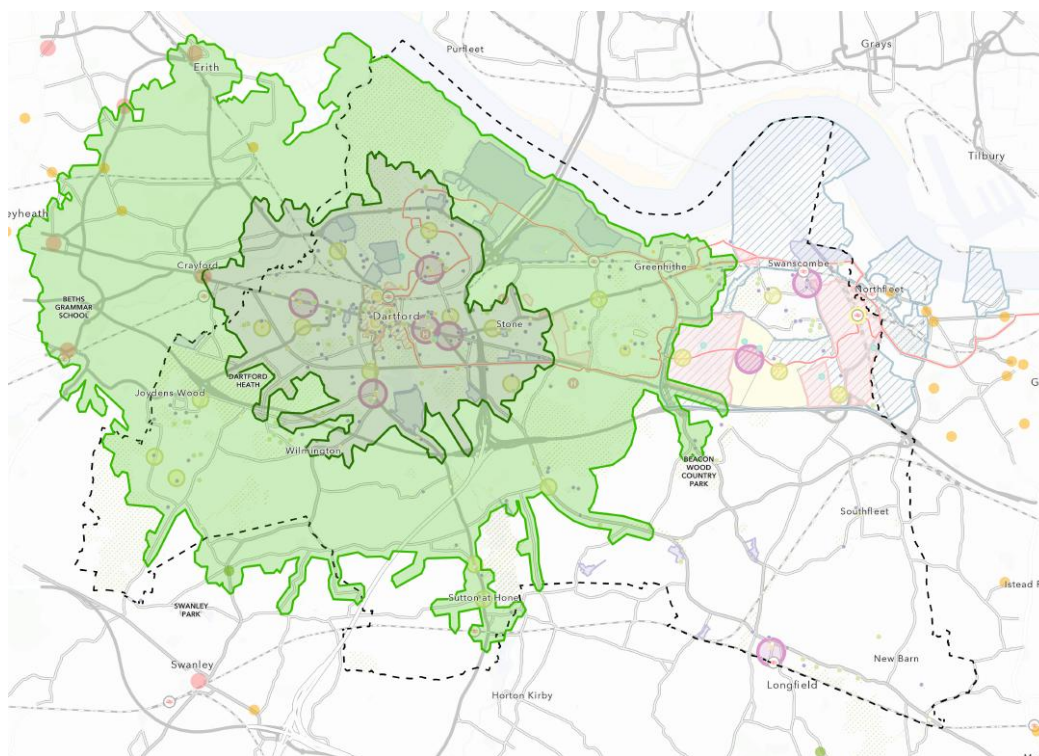


Figure 4: 10 and 20-minute cycling time isochrone from Dartford Town Centre. The darker (inner) zone is referred to in Table 2, extending east of the M25 and to a small extent south of the A2.

Issues with the national Connectivity Tool

- 5.14 The Connectivity Tool aims to measure on a relative national basis how well a place enables people to get to where they want to go by walking, cycling or public transport. It covers England and Wales only, and it accounts for six types of destinations:
- employment
 - visiting people (residential)
 - education
 - shopping
 - entertainment (leisure and community)
 - healthcare
- 5.15 It considers what is reachable within an hour and the destination 'value' (for example, more jobs can add more weight). This does not account for where there is a necessity or desire to travel more than an hour, and tool is weighted by people's willingness to travel on the specified transport mode.
- 5.16 The tool does not consider the quality of walking and cycling routes (for example, footway or cycle lane presence, width, surfacing, lighting). This a fundamental issue as walking and cycling is essential to access public transport – an unsafe or inconvenient walk to a bus stop may discourage potential users.
- 5.17 The tool calculates travel time from any given location within 100m x 100m grid squares across England and Wales, and therefore does not address specific small and medium-sized sites directly, or their immediate access arrangements. It finds the shortest route between origin and destination using public transport timetables at the time of publication, and it applies an average cycling speed of 16kph and an average walking speed of 4.8kph.

- 5.18 It combines the score of each destination to create an overall measure of a place's connectivity and is weighted by frequency of travel to each kind of destination (determined by the National Travel Survey).
- 5.19 Every location across England and Wales falls within a 100m x 100m grid square that is scored on a relative index (0 to 100).

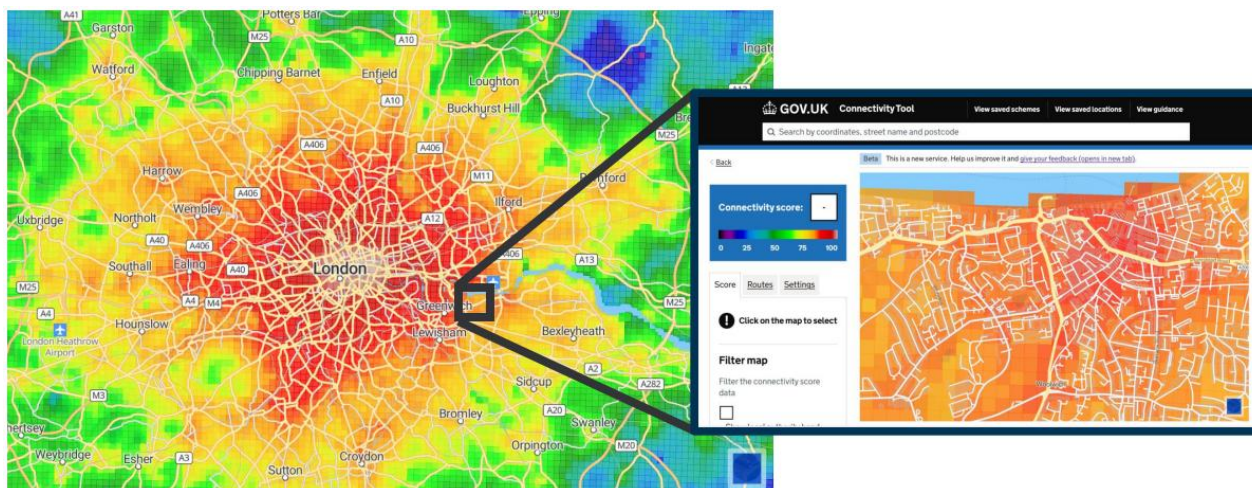


Figure 5: The Connectivity Tool (Source: Department for Transport).

- 5.20 It is expressed as a heatmap with each grid square overlaid by a coloured tile that corresponds to the 0 to 100 index (being lowest to highest connectivity). The colour-coded tile is also accompanied by a qualitative category (for example, a score falling within 50-60% is 'slightly above average connectivity'), as shown in Figure 6 below.

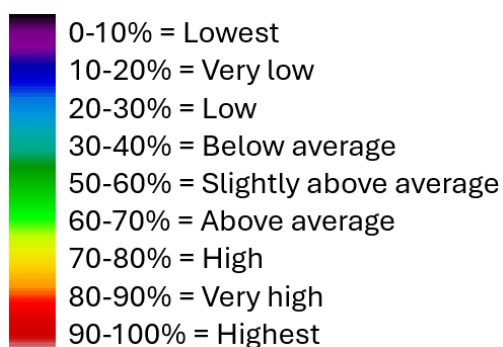


Figure 6: The 0-100 index and associated qualitative categories of the Connectivity Tool.

- 5.21 The national nature of the Connectivity Tool has direct implications for its utility in the local context. A development location in a county in central England, for example, will not necessarily have the same sustainable transport requirements as Dartford.
- 5.22 The following example of the cycling scoring in Figure 7 is instructive:

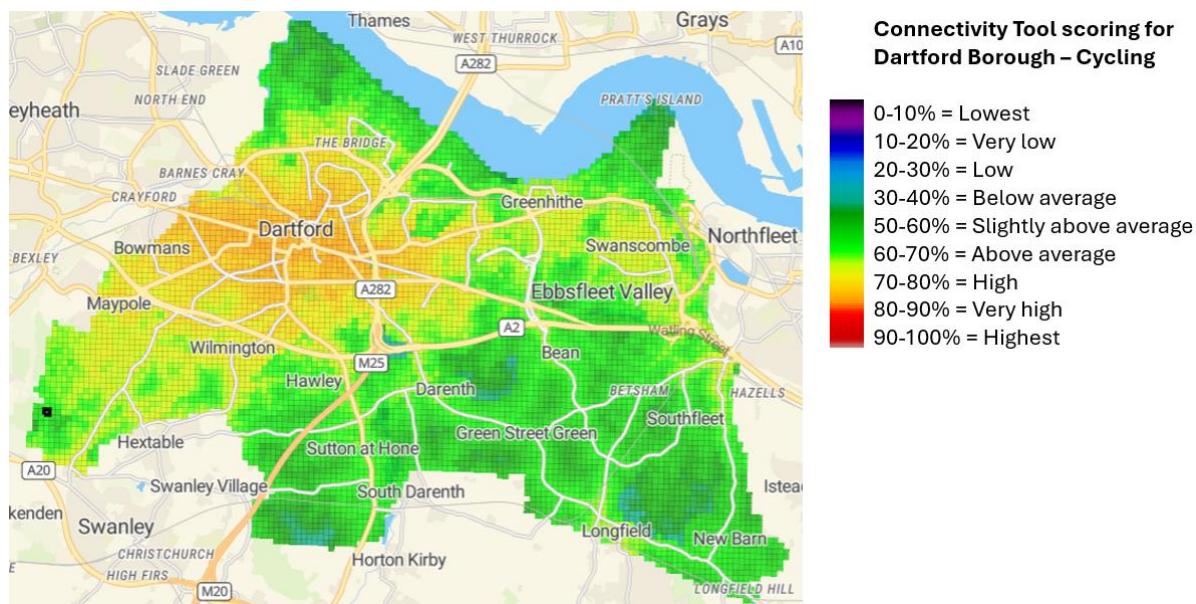




Figure 7: The overall Connectivity Tool score for cycling across Dartford Borough.

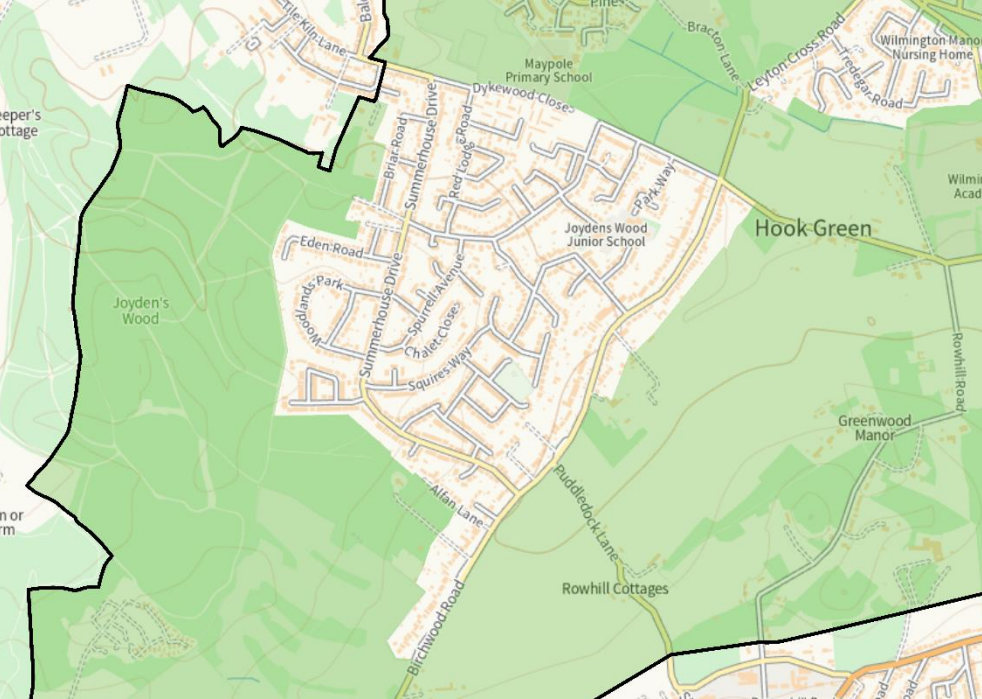
- 5.23 The Connectivity Tool finds almost all neighbourhoods in the Borough to be ‘above average’ (slightly too high) for cycling. A very large proportion of the Borough’s residential areas score ‘high’ for cycling (most of the west of the Borough). This is contradictory to all local observed characteristics and data.
- 5.24 The relative approach of the tool is a fundamental weakness, along with other specific concerns, in its application for local development purposes.
- 5.25 Furthermore, the Connectivity Tool produces uniform results across grid areas and therefore is not bespoke to individual sites and fails to have regard to specific access and entry arrangements for any site. The adopted Dartford Plan’s requirements, and appropriate consideration of the local indicative ratings in Table 2, are preferred.


APPENDIX 2 – SMALLER SETTLEMENTS

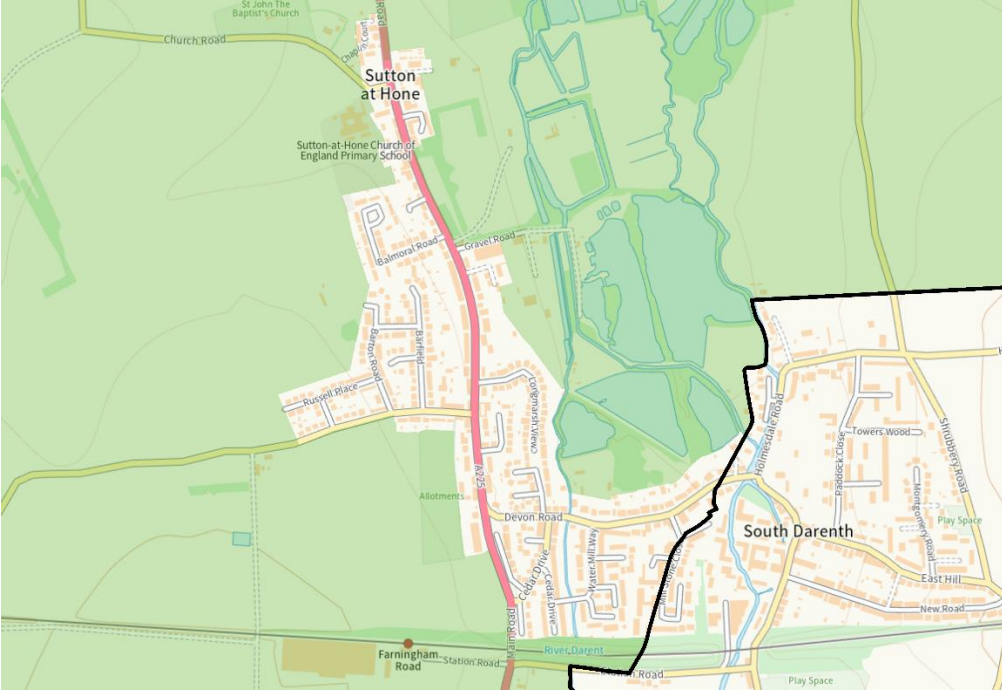
- 5.26 This Appendix complements SSL 2 by confirming the extent of settlements identified by reference to the adopted Policies Map. Each settlement boundary is shown in the left-hand column of the tables below.
- 5.27 For further reference, a summary is provided for the settlements identified in the middle column. To inform SSL 1 and other considerations, Appendix 1 sustainable transport ratings are provided for the centre point of each settlement in the right-hand column.
- 5.28 Other results will apply elsewhere in the settlement. All developments should conduct their own site-specific assessment using the methodology set out in Table 2 of Appendix 1. This is particularly relevant for cycling, which should consider the quality of the route by assessing if the specific location is safe and convenient for cyclists of varying abilities and whether they can reach useful destinations. Therefore, the cycling scores provided in the right-hand column of the tables below are indicative.

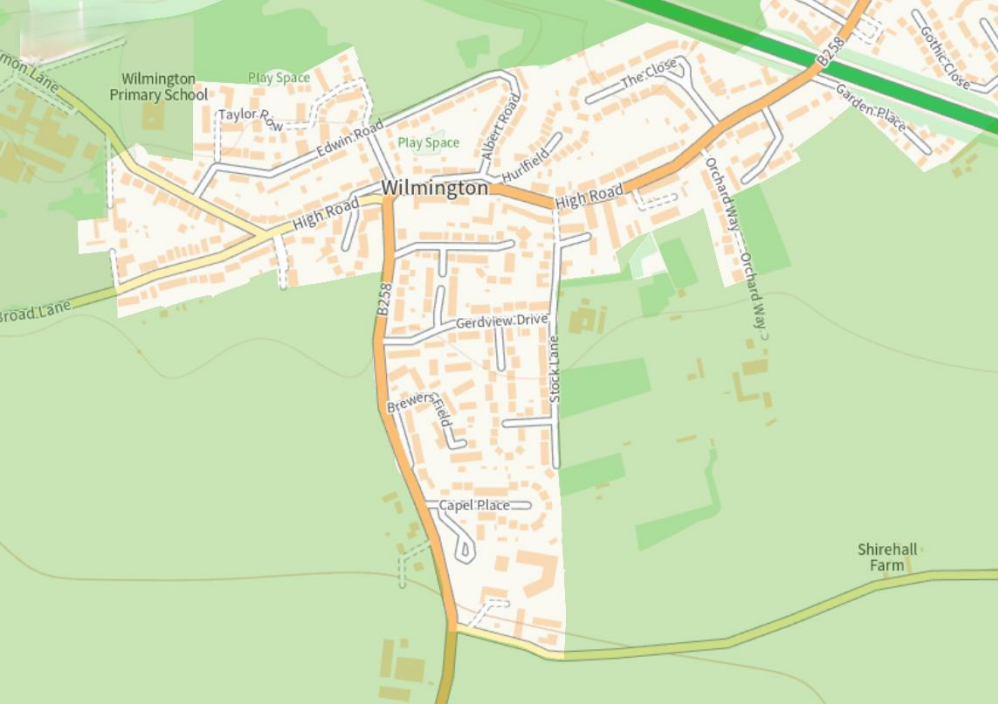
<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Bean Village</p>  <p>The map shows the settlement of Bean, bounded by a black line. It is surrounded by green areas representing the Green Belt. Key features include roads like Bramble Avenue, School Lane, and Southfleet Road. Landmarks such as Bean Primary School, a playing field, and allotments are also visible.</p>	<p>Bean is central within the Borough, just south of the A2 with a clear village Dartford Plan boundary (single inset).</p> <p>The parish is small (even counting the very limited area north of the A2) but the settlement has a sufficient range of relatively useful or traditional local services, such as a convenience store, post office, village surgery and pub, to be regarded as a village.</p> <p>Nevertheless, it does not have a railway station in the vicinity. There is a moderate bus service with a peak of two buses per hour.</p>	<p>Rail: L Bus: M Cycling: L</p>

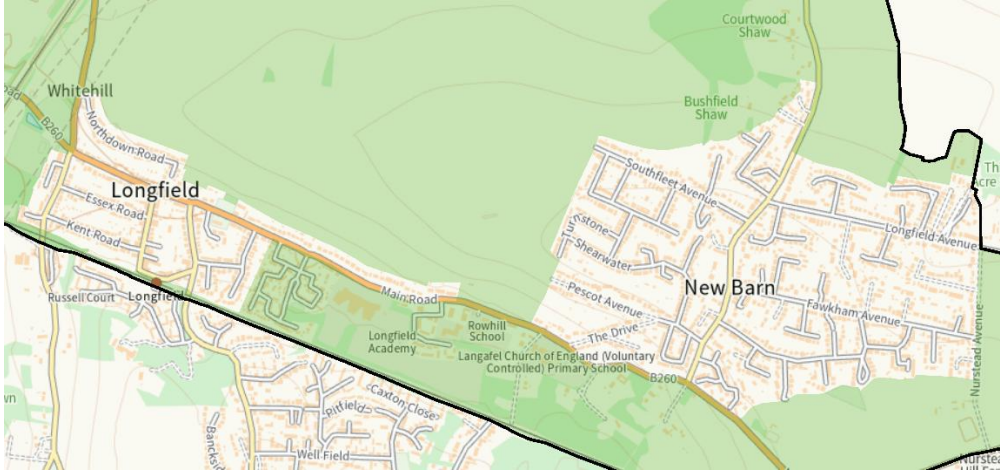
<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Darenth (Lane End) Village</p> 	<p>Darenth has a much larger parish population, who predominantly live in the neighbourhood often known as Lane End located on the B260 Dartford to Longfield road. On this main road is Lane End's small Local Centre designated in the Dartford Plan, and a GP surgery nearby. There is a limited bus service with a peak of one bus per hour.</p> <p>Lane End is included as a village for the Dartford Plan defined by a clear single inset on the Policies Map.</p>	<p>Rail: L Bus: L Cycling: L</p>

<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Joyden's Wood Village</p>  <p>The map shows Joyden's Wood Village with a black outline indicating the settlement boundary. The area is surrounded by green, representing the Green Belt. Key features include Maypole Primary School, Joydens Wood Junior School, and various roads such as Summerhouse Drive, Birchwood Road, and Hook Green. Other nearby locations like Greenwood Manor and Rowhill Cottages are also visible.</p>	<p>Joyden's Wood in the southwest of the Borough also has two designated Local Centres: shops at Birchwood Parade and at Summerhouse Drive, and facilities such as the library and school (adjoining infants and juniors site). It clearly forms a functional village.</p> <p>To the north of the defined area lies some other facilities/ neighbourhoods, but these are either relatively isolated or in the Green Belt and do not form Dartford Plan settlements.</p> <p>Joyden's Wood village boundary for the Dartford Plan is defined by a single inset.</p>	<p>Rail: L Bus: L Cycling: L</p>

<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Southfleet Village</p>		
 <p>The map shows the settlement boundary of Southfleet Village, which is a central area surrounded by green. Key features include St Nicholas's Church, Sedley's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Warren Road, Red Street, and Hook Green. Other landmarks like Court Hill Cottages, Withens, Rector's Meadow, Allotments, and a Playing Field are also visible. The map uses a color-coded system to distinguish between the settlement boundary, the Green Belt, and the extent of the settlement.</p>	<p>In the east of the Borough, Southfleet is an attractive historic village that at its core has retained a pub and school. Its central neighbourhood is therefore included as a village for the purposes of the Dartford Plan. It is defined by a single inset that extends south.</p> <p>The parish has several other areas, many designated for heritage purposes or recognising the value of the built environment but are not regarded as settlements for the Dartford Plan. There are some clusters of buildings that do not qualify as villages, but these are generally small and the whole parish population is under 2,000 people. There is a limited bus service with a peak of one bus per hour.</p>	<p>Rail: L Bus: L Cycling: L</p>

<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Sutton-at-Hone Village</p>		
 <p>The map displays the settlement boundary of Sutton-at-Hone, outlined in black. The area is primarily linear, following the River Darent and the A225 road. Key features include the River Darent flowing through the center, the A225 road running north-south, and various residential streets such as Church Road, Balmoral Road, and Devon Road. Landmarks like St John the Baptist's Church and Sutton-at-Hone Church of England Primary School are marked. The map also shows the surrounding Green Belt (green) and the borough boundary (black line).</p>	<p>Sutton-at-Hone is a village principally west of the River Darent, on the southern boundary of the Borough. It has a generally linear form but with streets extending off the road to Dartford; the majority of properties are centred in and around a Local Centre designated by the Dartford Plan, with open land leading west/south to Farningham Road railway station. Further up the main road (A225) to Dartford is a smaller Local Centre near the library. This area, by the local school, is considered in Dartford Plan terms the northernmost part of Sutton-at-Hone.</p> <p>Beyond this, the remainder of the parish is mostly Green Belt land, and although there are some developed areas inset from it there are minimal public or essential local facilities supporting them. They do not form settlements.</p> <p>Sutton-at-Hone's village boundary for the Dartford Plan is defined by a single inset (adjoining the boundary with Sevenoaks District).</p>	<p>Rail: H Bus: L Cycling: L</p>

<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Wilmington Village</p>  <p>The map shows the settlement boundary of Wilmington Village, outlined in black. The area is surrounded by green, indicating it is within the adopted Green Belt. Key roads include High Road, Orchard Way, and B258. Landmarks such as Wilmington Primary School, Shirehall Farm, and several play spaces are marked. The settlement is primarily located south of the A2 road.</p>	<p>Wilmington Parish area is large, includes a number of schools and mostly lies south of the A2. Within this is a clear centre of the settlement, including a pub and convenience store. Around this core, the Dartford Plan definition of the village is focused to a single inset south-west of A2. A clear and focused extent has been defined of the village for the purposes of the Dartford Plan.</p> <p>A moderate bus service runs through the centre of Wilmington with a peak of 3 buses per hour, however connections to railway stations are generally poor.</p>	<p>Rail: L Bus: M Cycling: H</p>

<p>Settlement Boundary (see interactive Policies Map)</p> <p>Legend for extracts below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black line: Borough boundary • Green: adopted Green Belt in the Borough • Transparent (surrounded by green): extent of settlement 	<p>Summary Rationale (Policy SSL 2 reference)</p>	<p>Centre point of settlement: sustainable transport rating (High / Moderate / Low) (Appendix 1, Table 2 outcome)</p>
<p>SSL 2: Longfield (Non-Urban Area Town)</p>  <p>The map shows the settlement boundaries for Longfield and New Barn. Longfield is on the left, and New Barn is on the right. A black line indicates the Borough boundary. Green areas represent the adopted Green Belt. The settlement extent is shown in a transparent area surrounded by green. Key roads include Kent Road, Main Road, Southfleet Avenue, and Longfield Avenue. Landmarks include Longfield Academy, Rowhill School, and Langafel Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School.</p>	<p>Longfield benefits from a bank/building society, healthcare, schools and other public facilities. It is considered to include the community of New Barn, falling under the compact sized Longfield and New Barn Parish Council. The boundary is formed by the two insets on the Policies Map.</p> <p>It has the only District Centre designated by the Dartford Plan in the south of the Borough, with a Waitrose supermarket located near the railway station. Between this and New Barn is the only secondary school in the south of the Borough (except for schools at Wilmington, further north and west).</p> <p>Longfield’s comparatively good level of service provision and other characteristics are atypical of villages in the Borough such as Southfleet and Sutton-at-Hone. It is clearly one of the more sizeable places in the Borough, and its population is sufficient to fall within the ONS⁶ ‘larger village / small town’ category.</p> <p>Located in the far south-east of the Borough away from A-roads and motorways, and in an open rolling landscape, Longfield is not urban. For the purposes of national and local planning policy, it is regarded as a (non-urban area) town in the context of Dartford Borough and a settlement in SSL1 Clause 2.</p>	<p>Rail: H Bus: M Cycling: M</p>

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiescharacteristicsofbuiltupareasenglandandwales/census2021>