

A large, stylized letter 'A' graphic in a light blue-grey color, centered on a dark blue background. The 'A' is composed of two main triangular shapes meeting at a point at the top, with a horizontal bar across the middle. The word 'Appendix' is written in a light yellow, sans-serif font, positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, partially overlapping the right side of the 'A' graphic.

Appendix

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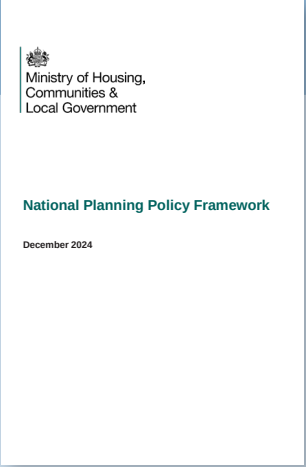
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A.1 National planning and policy context

National Planning Policy Framework, MHCLG (2025)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and provides the overarching principles that local plans and development decisions must follow. It emphasises sustainable development, up-to-date plan-making, effective land use, and high-quality design. A core policy theme focuses on the vitality of town centres, establishing the national policy expectations that town centre masterplans must align with, including promoting economic resilience, supporting mixed-use development, encouraging well-designed, accessible, and vibrant centres, and guiding how local authorities plan for housing, transport, heritage, and community needs.



Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Provides the statutory policy framework - Establishes the national policy context that the Dartford Town Centre Masterplan must align with in both strategy and delivery.
- Promotes town centre vitality and mixed use - Encourages diverse, adaptable town centres with a mix of retail, leisure, employment and residential uses.
- Supports sustainable, compact growth - Prioritises efficient use of land, higher densities in accessible locations, and regeneration of brownfield sites.
- Strengthens design quality - Requires well-designed, beautiful and locally distinctive places, supported by design codes and masterplanning.
- Encourages active and sustainable travel - Embeds a vision-led transport approach prioritising walking, cycling and public transport connectivity.
- Integrates climate and environmental objectives - Requires developments to contribute to net zero, biodiversity net gain, and climate resilience.
- Supports healthy, inclusive communities - Promotes access to services, public spaces and social infrastructure, reinforcing a people-focused town centre.
- Ensures deliverability and long-term planning - Emphasises planned growth, infrastructure coordination, and a long-term (15–30 year) vision - key for a robust masterplan.

Planning Practice Guidance, MHCLG

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides detailed, national-level guidance to support the implementation of planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is intended to help local authorities, practitioners, and applicants apply policy consistently, covering topics such as plan-making, decision-taking, viability, and design. The draft MHCLG Design and Placemaking PPG builds on this by placing strong emphasis on design quality as a fundamental component of sustainable development. It promotes a vision-led, place-based approach where development responds to local character, supports community needs, and integrates environmental sustainability. The guidance highlights the importance of tools such as masterplans and design codes, as well as early engagement, collaboration, and effective governance, to ensure that well-designed, coherent places are delivered and maintained over time.



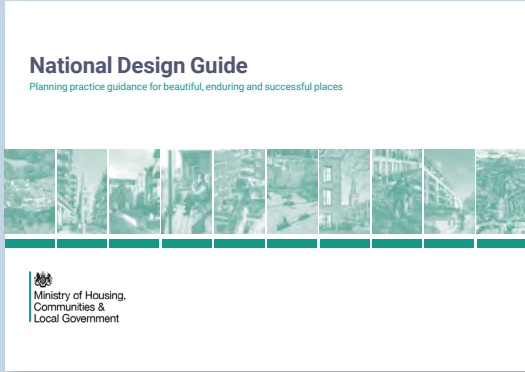
Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Policy alignment and clarity - Provides a clear national framework to ensure the Dartford Town Centre Masterplan aligns with NPPF expectations on design quality and placemaking.
- Vision-led strategy - Supports establishing a strong, locally distinctive vision to guide regeneration and growth in the town centre.
- Masterplanning and coding - Reinforces the role of the masterplan and potential design codes in coordinating development, ensuring consistency and quality across sites.
- Placemaking and vitality - Emphasises creating attractive, inclusive, and active environments – key to strengthening Dartford’s town centre offer and economic resilience.
- Contextual design - Encourages responses that reflect Dartford’s heritage, urban grain, and strategic location within the Thames Gateway.
- Sustainability and resilience - Embeds principles for climate-responsive design, green infrastructure, and sustainable movement networks.
- Delivery focus - Highlights governance, stakeholder engagement, and long-term stewardship – critical for translating the masterplan into successful on-the-ground outcomes.

National Design Guide, MHCLG (2021)

The National Design Guide (2021) sets out the Government’s vision for what constitutes well-designed, beautiful, enduring and successful places. It identifies ten key characteristics:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public spaces
- Uses
- Homes and buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan



Together, these articulate the essential components of good urban design. The guide explains how development should respond to local character, create coherent and accessible built forms, support active travel, integrate high-quality public spaces, enhance nature, and promote sustainable, resilient places. It serves as practical planning guidance illustrating how good design should be delivered through planning decisions and local design codes.

Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Provides a comprehensive design framework - The ten characteristics offer a clear structure for developing masterplan principles, design objectives, and coding for Dartford town centre
- Supports place-led regeneration - Encourages an integrated approach where movement, uses, built form and public realm are planned together to create a coherent town centre.
- Strengthens local identity and character - Emphasises responding to context, heritage and local distinctiveness—critical for Dartford’s evolving town centre.
- Promotes walkable and connected environments - Prioritises active travel and well-connected movement networks, aligning with sustainable transport objectives.
- Enhances public realm and social life - Focus on high-quality, inclusive public spaces supports a vibrant and people-focused town centre.
- Integrates climate, nature and resilience - Embeds green infrastructure, resource efficiency, and climate adaptation into the masterplan approach.
- Supports mixed-use vitality - Encourages integrated land uses and adaptable development, reinforcing the role of the town centre as a destination.
- Ensures long-term stewardship - Emphasises durability, adaptability, and management, supporting a sustainable and deliverable long-term vision.

National Model Design Code, MHCLG (2021)

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) provides detailed guidance for creating local design codes, policies and visual tools that define what high-quality design should look like in different places. Its purpose is to set clear, illustrated design parameters that help local authorities, communities and developers shape coherent, attractive and context-responsive development. The NMDC expands on the ten characteristics of good design established in the National Design Guide and aligns with national planning policy by emphasising local character, visual clarity, community engagement, and consistent design standards. It outlines a structured coding process and encourages tailoring design requirements to the scale and circumstances of each location, ensuring that codes are both place-specific and deliverable.

Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Translates vision into delivery - Provides a clear structure for converting the masterplan vision into specific, measurable design parameters and codes that guide development.
- Responds to local character - Supports defining different area types within Dartford town centre, ensuring design responds appropriately to context, heritage and urban grain.
- Ensures consistency and quality - Establishes consistent standards for built form, public realm, and land use across multiple sites and phases of development.
- Promotes sustainable, walkable places - Embeds principles for movement, mixed uses, and green infrastructure aligned with town centre regeneration and reduced car dependency.
- Strengthens community engagement - Encourages early and ongoing involvement of local communities, helping shape a masterplan that reflects local priorities and builds support.
- Provides certainty for delivery - Offers clarity for developers and decision-makers, enabling faster planning decisions and more predictable outcomes.



Building for a Healthy Life, Homes England (2026)

A nationally recognised design tool kit that supports the creation of high-quality, healthy, and sustainable places by focusing on how neighbourhoods function for people and nature, rather than just how buildings look. It provides a structured yet flexible framework of 12 design considerations - covering integrated neighbourhoods, distinctive places, and streets for all - to guide decision-making from strategic planning to detailed design. The 2026 update strengthens its emphasis on active travel, green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, and higher-density urban regeneration, promoting well-connected, inclusive, and liveable environments that improve public health, environmental performance, and long-term stewardship.



Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Supports healthy, walkable urbanism - BHL's focus on active travel, connectivity, and compact mixed-use development aligns directly with town centre intensification and reducing car dependency
- Provides a clear design framework - The 12 considerations offer a practical structure for shaping coherent masterplan principles, design codes, and development briefs.
- Promotes regeneration and density done well - The emphasis on higher-density, urban examples is directly applicable to town centre regeneration contexts like Dartford.
- Enhances place quality and identity - Guidance on character, streets, and public realm supports creating a distinctive, legible town centre environment.
- Integrates climate and nature objectives - Strong focus on green/blue infrastructure, SuDS, and biodiversity net gain aligns with climate resilience and environmental policy drivers.
- Improves health and social outcomes - Embedding access to services, social infrastructure, and inclusive design helps address inequalities and supports thriving communities.
- Bridges policy and delivery - BHL is designed to align with the NPPF and design codes, helping translate strategic ambitions into deliverable, high-quality schemes.

Healthy Homes, Homes England (2026)

This guidance sets out a concise framework for designing new homes that actively support physical, mental, and social well-being, recognising the critical role housing plays in preventing illness and improving quality of life. It defines a "healthy home" as one that provides high standards of indoor environmental quality - such as good air quality, thermal comfort, daylight, and energy efficiency - alongside adaptability, accessibility, and affordability. Structured around five core themes (inclusivity, amenity, efficiency, comfort, and control), the guidance promotes homes that are future-proofed, energy-efficient, and responsive to diverse user needs, while also emphasising the importance of wider factors such as access to green space, services, and community infrastructure in creating healthy, resilient places.

Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Supports resident health and well-being - Embeds principles that improve indoor living conditions, helping deliver high-quality town centre housing.
- Promotes inclusive and adaptable homes - Ensures new development meets the needs of diverse, ageing and multi-generational communities.
- Aligns with sustainable, low-carbon urban living - Energy efficiency and reduced emissions support climate goals within town centre regeneration.
- Strengthens links between homes and place - Emphasises access to green spaces, amenities and services - key for a vibrant, liveable town centre.
- Enhances long-term resilience - Future-proofing and flexibility support changing lifestyles and evolving housing demand in Dartford.
- Provides a clear quality benchmark - Offers a practical framework to guide design standards, development briefs, and design coding within the masterplan.

Sustainable placemaking guidance for successful local centres, Homes England (2026)

This guidance sets out how to plan, design, and deliver successful local centres as essential infrastructure within new and existing communities, emphasising their role in supporting sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods and reducing reliance on the car. It identifies key principles across strategy, design, configuration and mix - including strategic location, active travel connectivity, integrated mixed uses, high-quality public realm, and flexible building design - to create vibrant, inclusive places that foster social life and economic activity. It stresses that successful centres require early and coordinated delivery, partnership with operators, and a long-term stewardship approach, with no single template but a need for context-responsive, adaptable solutions.



Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Reinforces the town centre as critical infrastructure - Positions centres as foundational to sustainable communities, supporting a strategic role for Dartford town centre.
- Supports mixed-use regeneration - Emphasises clustering of uses, active frontages and residential above, aligning with town centre intensification.
- Prioritises accessibility and active travel - Guidance on route convergence, walkability and mobility hubs is directly applicable to improving Dartford’s connectivity.
- Promotes vitality and social life - Focus on inclusive public spaces, community uses and programming supports a vibrant, people-focused town centre.
- Encourages flexible, future-proofed design - Adaptability of buildings and uses helps respond to changing retail and economic conditions in town centres.
- Links delivery and placemaking - Highlights the importance of phasing, early activation and long-term stewardship - key to successful, deliverable masterplanning.
- Aligns with wider policy and BHL principles - Provides a complementary framework for embedding placemaking quality within Dartford’s broader urban design strategy.

Sustainable placemaking guidance for mobility hubs, Homes England (2026)

This guidance defines mobility hubs as user-centred places that integrate active travel, public transport, and shared mobility with high-quality public realm and local amenities to support sustainable, low-carbon lifestyles. Going beyond traditional transport interchanges, mobility hubs combine multiple travel modes with placemaking, social, and commercial functions to encourage modal shift away from private car use, reduce congestion and emissions, and support healthier, more connected communities. The document sets out principles for planning, design, and delivery, emphasising early integration within masterplans, strong connectivity, flexible components tailored to context, and a networked approach to hubs that shape travel behaviour and enable higher-density, accessible development.



Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Supports transport-led regeneration - Embeds a ‘vision-led’ approach where sustainable movement underpins placemaking and growth.
- Improves accessibility and connectivity - Encourages integration of rail, bus, active travel and shared mobility - highly relevant to Dartford’s role as a transport hub.
- Reduces car dependency - Promotes modal shift, freeing up land from parking and supporting more efficient, urban intensification.
- Enhances public realm and place quality - Positions hubs as civic spaces with amenities, contributing to a vibrant, people-focused town centre.
- Enables higher-density development - Lower car ownership supports compact, mixed-use growth consistent with town centre objectives.
- Integrates with local centres and services - Co-location with commercial and community uses reinforces town centre vitality and reduces the need to travel.
- Provides a delivery and infrastructure framework - Helps structure phasing, stakeholder coordination and investment in transport infrastructure within the masterplan.

Parking - What works where, Homes England (2026)

This guidance sets out how car parking can be designed to support high-quality, sustainable placemaking rather than dominate it, emphasising a “vision-led” approach aligned with compact, walkable neighbourhoods and reduced car dependency. It introduces a set of “Golden Rules” which prioritise getting streets and public spaces right first, encouraging active travel, using a mix of parking types, and designing efficient, flexible arrangements such as unallocated or hybrid parking. The document highlights that poorly planned parking can consume up to 25–50% of development land and undermine density, character and environmental outcomes, while well-integrated solutions—supported by landscape, good design, and future-proofing—can enhance place quality, enable higher densities, and adapt to changing mobility patterns including EVs and shared transport.



Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Supports town centre densification - Efficient, well-integrated parking reduces land take and enables higher-density mixed-use development.
- Prioritises people-focused streets - Reinforces designing streets and public realm first, ensuring parking does not dominate key town centre spaces.
- Reduces car dependency - Encourages walking, cycling and public transport, aligning with sustainable town centre regeneration goals.
- Promotes flexible and shared parking models - Unallocated and hybrid approaches can better respond to varied demand in a busy town centre environment.
- Improves townscape and identity - Integration with landscape, active frontages, and a mix of parking treatments helps create attractive, distinctive urban environments.
- Supports climate and environmental objectives - Reduced hard surfacing and integration with green infrastructure aligns with SuDS, biodiversity and net zero goals.
- Future-proofs development - Emphasises adaptable parking that can be repurposed as car use declines - highly relevant to long-term town centre transformation.

Streets for a Healthy Life, Homes England (2026)

A practical design guide that illustrates how well-designed streets can function as places for people first, rather than solely as movement corridors for vehicles. As a companion to Building for a Healthy Life and Manual for Streets, it emphasises the multiple roles streets play - including movement, place, access, parking, and infrastructure - and promotes a balanced, “place-led” approach where social interaction, health, biodiversity, and environmental performance are embedded in street design. The guidance sets out typologies (from principal streets to mews and edge lanes) alongside best practice principles, highlighting the importance of walkability, cycling, connectivity, landscape integration, and traffic calming to create inclusive, attractive, and low-carbon neighbourhoods.



Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Supports people-first streets - Reinforces designing streets as civic spaces that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, aligning with aspirations for a more walkable, vibrant town centre.
- Guides street hierarchy and typologies - Provides a clear framework for structuring Dartford's street network - from key routes to quieter residential streets - ensuring clarity, legibility and function.
- Improves connectivity and permeability - Emphasises connected walking and cycling networks and filtered permeability, supporting reduced car use and better access across the town centre.
- Enhances place quality and identity - Focus on landscape, enclosure, frontage, and activity helps create distinctive, high-quality streetscapes and public realm.
- Integrates climate and environmental design - Promotes SuDS, street trees and green infrastructure, supporting climate resilience and biodiversity objectives.
- Manages parking and movement better - Encourages integrating parking sensitively and designing for slower vehicle speeds, reducing dominance of cars in the town centre.
- Supports health and social outcomes - By encouraging active travel and social use of streets, it helps create healthier, more inclusive urban environments.

Streets for All, Historic England (2018)

Streets for All is Historic England's guidance on how streets and public spaces in historic places can be improved while conserving and enhancing their character. It provides practical advice for highway engineers, planners and designers on managing change in sensitive town and city centres, with a strong emphasis on reducing street clutter, reinforcing local distinctiveness, using high quality and locally appropriate materials, and balancing accessibility, safety and heritage value. The document promotes coordinated, multidisciplinary working and sets out principles for surfaces, street furniture, traffic management, lighting and planting, demonstrating how well designed public realm can support inclusive access, economic vitality and a strong sense of place without harming historic significance.

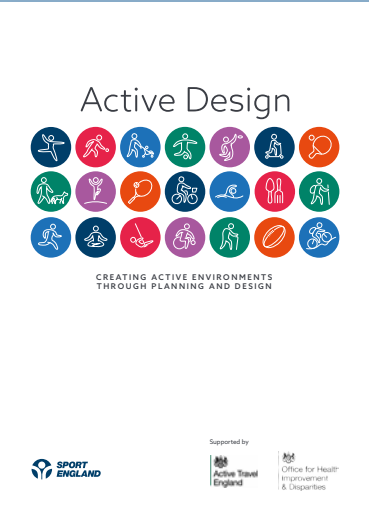


Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Reinforces local character and heritage - Supports understanding and enhancing Dartford's historic assets, ensuring regeneration strengthens local identity rather than diluting it.
- Promotes high-quality, coordinated public realm design - Encourages joined-up working and consistent design approaches across streets, spaces, and infrastructure.
- Supports people-focused streets - Emphasises reducing clutter, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, and creating welcoming, accessible environments.
- Balances transport and placemaking - Provides guidance on integrating traffic management and movement with high-quality place design.
- Enhances economic vitality - Recognises the role of well-designed historic public realm in attracting investment, visitors, and supporting town centre regeneration.
- Encourages long-term stewardship and quality - Promotes durable materials, careful detailing, and ongoing management to ensure lasting value.
- Aligns with sustainability and health objectives - Supports active travel, green infrastructure, and public spaces that encourage social interaction and well-being.

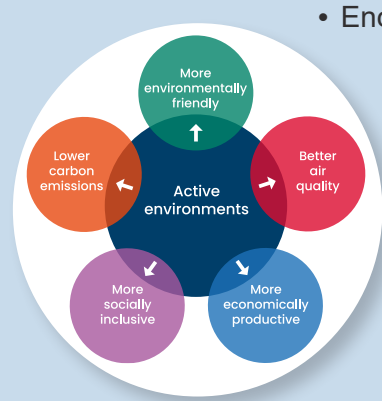
Active Design, Sports England (2023)

Sport England's Active Design guidance outlines how the planning and design of buildings, streets, public spaces and neighbourhoods can support healthier, more physically active lifestyles. The document is built around a foundational principle of “Activity for All”, supported by ten principles that encourage active travel, high-quality public spaces, mixed uses, accessible walking and cycling routes, multifunctional open spaces, and environments that make regular physical activity easy, safe and appealing. Its aim is to help planners, designers and decision-makers create “active environments” where physical activity is embedded into everyday life through good urban design.



Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Promotes a healthy, active town centre - Encourages designing Dartford as a place where walking, cycling and everyday activity are integrated into daily life, supporting public health outcomes.
- Supports mixed-use, compact growth - Emphasises co-location of uses and walkable communities, directly aligning with town centre intensification and regeneration.
- Strengthens movement and connectivity - Provides a clear framework for creating safe, direct and continuous active travel networks linking key destinations across Dartford.
- Enhances public realm and open space - Promotes multifunctional, high-quality public spaces and green infrastructure that support both activity and placemaking.
- Supports inclusive, equitable design - Focus on “activity for all” ensures the town centre responds to diverse users, helping address local health inequalities.



- Encourages activation and vitality - Emphasises programming, events and flexible spaces, supporting a lively and economically resilient town centre.
- Aligns with wider policy objectives - Complements NPPF, National Design Guide and Healthy Homes principles, embedding health, climate and social value into the masterplan.

Healthy Streets (2017)

The Healthy Streets approach is a people centred framework used to put health, well-being and human experience at the heart of street and public realm design. The Healthy Streets guidance was first formally introduced in 2017 and then was formally adopted in 2018 as the core framework of the Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy, giving it policy weight and embedding it across transport, planning and public realm decision making. It is built around 10 Healthy Streets Indicators that capture what makes streets attractive places to walk, cycle and spend time:

- People choose to walk and cycle
- Everyone feels welcome
- Easy to cross
- People feel safe
- Things to do and see
- Places to stop and rest
- People feel relaxed
- Not too noisy
- Clean air
- Shade and shelter



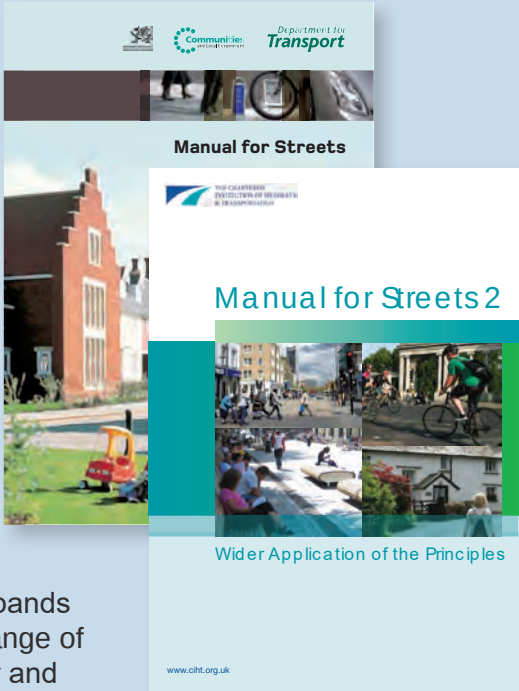
The approach is supported by a suite of practical tools – including on street assessments, design checks, development checks, qualitative assessments, mapping and evaluation frameworks – allowing planners and designers to measure existing conditions, test proposals, and monitor outcomes in a structured, evidence based way. The framework and tools translate health objectives into clear, measurable design and delivery decisions.

Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Provides a clear human-centred framework - The 10 indicators offer a practical tool for testing how well Dartford town centre supports people’s everyday experience of streets and spaces.
- Supports a shift from vehicle-led to place-led design - Reinforces reducing traffic dominance and prioritising walking, cycling and public life within the town centre.
- Improves health and well-being outcomes - Directly links urban design decisions to physical activity, air quality, and safety.
- Guides public realm and street design - Provides detailed prompts that can inform street typologies, design standards and interventions within the masterplan.
- Supports inclusive and accessible environments - Ensures streets work for all users, including children, older people and those with mobility needs.
- Useful for evaluation and benchmarking - The scoring and assessment tools can be used to test existing conditions and compare masterplan options.
- Aligns with wider policy and guidance - Embedding health, sustainability and placemaking into Dartford’s regeneration strategy.

Manual for Streets, Department for Transport (2007)

The Department for Transport’s Manual for Streets (MfS1) and Manual for Streets 2 set out a design-led approach to residential streets and public realm, shifting the focus away from purely traffic movement towards creating places that prioritise people, safety, and quality of environment. MfS1 establishes core principles such as pedestrian priority, integrated street design, and context-led solutions, while MfS2 expands these principles to a wider range of street types, including busier and more complex urban environments. Together, they advocate for balanced street hierarchies, reduced vehicle dominance, lower speeds, and the integration of movement and placemaking functions. A forthcoming Manual for Streets 3 is expected to build on this foundation, further embedding place-based design, sustainable transport, and updated approaches to street design in response to climate, health, and urban growth challenges.

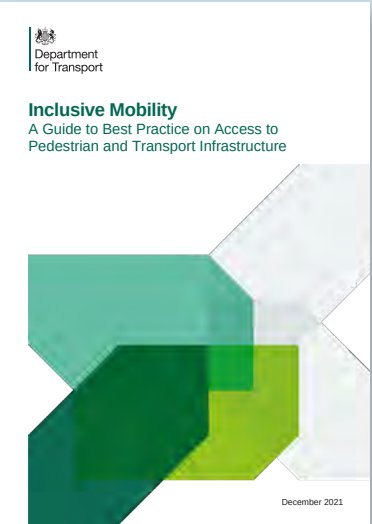


Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- People-first street design - Supports prioritising pedestrians and cyclists to enhance Dartford town centre’s walkability, safety, and attractiveness.
- Integration of movement and place - Reinforces designing streets as public spaces that support social, economic, and civic activity - not just traffic corridors.
- Context-led solutions - Encourages interventions that respond to Dartford’s specific urban character, constraints, and opportunities.
- Healthy and sustainable travel - Aligns with ambitions to promote active travel and reduce reliance on private vehicles in the town centre.
- Flexibility for urban conditions - MfS2 is particularly relevant to a town centre context, addressing more complex, mixed-use streets.
- Future-proofing - Reference to the forthcoming MfS3 highlights an evolving policy direction, supporting a masterplan that anticipates stronger emphasis on sustainability, climate resilience, and place-based outcomes.

Inclusive Mobility, Department for Transport (2021)

The Department for Transport’s Inclusive Mobility guidance provides best practice on designing streets, public spaces, and transport infrastructure to ensure they are accessible and usable by all, particularly disabled people and those with reduced mobility. It promotes an inclusive design approach that removes physical and social barriers, covering aspects such as footway widths, gradients, crossings, wayfinding, street furniture, and the needs of people with visual, hearing, cognitive, and mobility impairments. The document emphasises that inclusive environments should be considered from the outset of planning and design processes, ensuring that accessibility is integral rather than an afterthought, ultimately supporting equal access to services, employment, and public life.

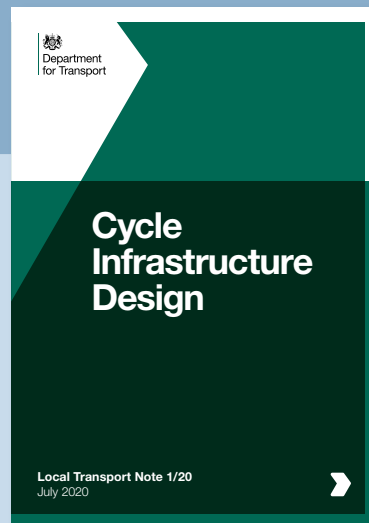


Relevance to the production of Dartford’s Masterplan

- Inclusive access for all - Ensures the town centre is welcoming and navigable for people of all ages and abilities, supporting equality and social inclusion.
- Public realm design standards - Provides detailed parameters for footways, crossings, seating, and wayfinding to improve usability and comfort.
- Supports town centre vitality - Accessible environments enable greater participation, increasing footfall and economic activity.
- Integration with transport hubs - Helps ensure seamless, step-free connections between rail, bus, and key destinations in Dartford.
- Future-proofing - Responds to an ageing population and diverse user needs, ensuring long-term resilience of the town centre.
- Alignment with wider policy - Complements NPPF, PPG, and Manual for Streets principles on creating inclusive, people-centred places.

Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20, Department for Transport (2020)

The Department for Transport's Cycle Infrastructure Design guidance (LTN 1/20) sets out comprehensive standards for the planning and delivery of high-quality cycling infrastructure across England. It promotes cycling as a safe, efficient, and attractive mode of transport, underpinned by core principles including coherence, directness, safety, comfort, and attractiveness. The guidance advocates for physically segregated cycle routes on busier roads, reduced traffic speeds, and the reallocation of road space to prioritise active travel. It also emphasises the need for continuous, legible networks that connect key destinations, alongside integration with public transport and land use planning to support mode shift and healthier, more sustainable travel behaviour.



Relevance to the production of Dartford's Masterplan

- Supports active travel objectives - Provides a framework for embedding safe, high-quality cycle routes into the town centre, encouraging modal shift.
- Network connectivity - Emphasises creating coherent and continuous routes linking key destinations such as the station, retail core, and riverfront.
- Reallocation of street space - Supports reducing vehicle dominance and prioritising cycling alongside walking in Dartford town centre streets.
- Place-based design integration - Aligns with placemaking goals by ensuring cycling infrastructure contributes positively to public realm quality.
- Safety and accessibility - Helps create safer streets for a wider range of users, including less confident cyclists. Integration with wider transport strategy: Supports connections to regional cycling networks and sustainable transport hubs, strengthening Dartford's accessibility.



A.2 Regional planning and policy context

A 2050 Picture of Kent and Medway (2018)

This forms part of the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework and presents a scenario-based exploration of how the county could develop to 2050. Rather than predicting a single future, the document tests four alternative growth scenarios based on differing levels of economic growth and climate change impact, helping to understand long-term pressures and opportunities. It highlights key structural trends shaping the area, including significant population growth (to around 2.3 million), an ageing population, increasing housing demand, technological change, and climate risks such as flooding. The study identifies the resulting need for integrated infrastructure planning - covering housing, transport, utilities, digital connectivity and social services - and emphasises the importance of flexible funding, governance and partnership approaches to ensure future resilience.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

The document helps ensure the Masterplan is future-proofed, resilient and aligned with long-term growth and infrastructure trends.

- Future growth context – highlights significant population and housing growth pressures, directly informing the need for higher density, mixed-use development in Dartford town centre.
- Infrastructure-led planning – reinforces the need to align town centre regeneration with transport, utilities, digital and social infrastructure capacity.
- Town centre transformation – shows potential futures where town centres become more walkable, green, mixed-use and less car-dominated, supporting placemaking ambitions.
- Climate resilience – emphasises the increasing importance of flood risk management, green/blue infrastructure and low-carbon development, all critical for Dartford.
- Economic adaptability – identifies shifts in employment, technology and working patterns, supporting flexible, adaptable town-centre uses and workspace provision.
- Funding and delivery models – highlights the future role of land value capture, private investment and innovative funding mechanisms, which can underpin masterplan delivery strategies.

Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (2018)

A strategic evidence base that identifies the scale, location and infrastructure requirements needed to support housing and economic growth across the county to 2031. It brings together data from Local Plans, infrastructure providers and partners to present a coordinated, county-wide picture of growth, including projections for around 178,600 new homes, 170,000 jobs and 396,000 additional people. The framework highlights that infrastructure delivery is critical to enabling sustainable development, yet currently lags behind growth, with a total infrastructure requirement of over £16bn and a £4bn funding gap. It therefore sets out priorities for investment across transport, utilities, education, health and green infrastructure, while promoting a place-based, partnership-led approach and new funding mechanisms to ensure communities are supported by the right infrastructure.



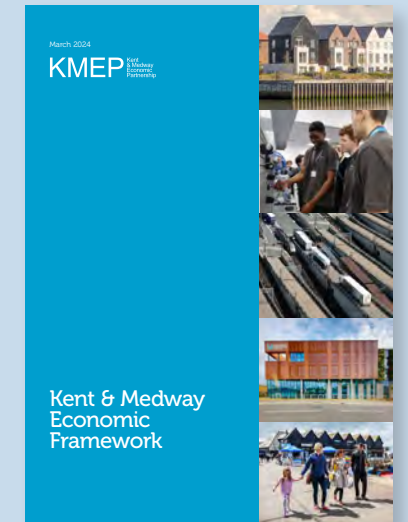
Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

The Growth and Infrastructure Framework will ensure the masterplan is aligned with county-wide growth ambitions, infrastructure priorities and funding realities, improving its robustness and deliverability.

- Defines growth pressures in North Kent, Dartford and the Thames Gateway – identifies significant housing and population growth, reinforcing the need for town centre regeneration.
- Infrastructure-led planning – emphasises that successful growth depends on aligning development with transport, health, education and utilities infrastructure.
- Identifies key investment priorities – highlights major projects (e.g. Lower Thames Crossing, town centre transformation funding) that will directly influence Dartford's accessibility and growth potential.
- Supports town centre regeneration – promotes mixed-use, economically productive centres with adequate commercial space, addressing current shortages of workspace and supporting local employment.
- Provides a funding and delivery context – sets out mechanisms such as developer contributions (s106, CIL), public funding and private investment essential for masterplan delivery.
- Encourages integrated, place-based design – supports creating sustainable communities with strong public realm, green infrastructure and community facilities, aligning with town centre masterplanning objectives.

Kent and Medway Economic Framework (2024)

Setting out a strategic vision to 2030 for developing a more productive, sustainable and inclusive economy across the county. It recognises Kent and Medway's role as a major economic region and international gateway, with strong population and employment growth but ongoing challenges such as skills gaps, infrastructure pressures, productivity disparities and spatial inequalities. The Framework identifies five core ambitions: supporting innovative and productive businesses, improving workforce skills, securing resilient infrastructure, linking economic growth with well-being, and creating vibrant, distinctive places. It emphasises partnership working, investment in infrastructure and skills, and the importance of town centres, cultural assets and place quality in driving long-term, inclusive economic growth.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

Ensuring the Dartford Town Centre Masterplan is aligned with wider economic priorities, supports local growth opportunities, and delivers a resilient, inclusive and place-based regeneration strategy.

- Town centres as economic hubs – identifies town and city centres as focal points for economic, cultural and community activity, supporting mixed-use regeneration and diversified uses.
- Growth in North Kent / Thames Gateway – highlights Dartford's sub-region as a key growth area with strong links to London, reinforcing demand for town centre intensification and investment.
- Focus on place-making and identity – promotes creating "diverse, distinctive and vibrant places," aligning with masterplanning priorities around public realm, culture and local identity.
- Economic diversification and workspace provision – emphasises the need for flexible commercial space, SME support and innovation, relevant to town centre employment strategies.
- Infrastructure-led growth – stresses the importance of transport, digital and energy infrastructure to enable sustainable growth, directly informing masterplan delivery and phasing.
- Inclusive growth and well-being – links economic development with health, skills and social outcomes, supporting masterplans that integrate housing, jobs and community facilities.

Active Travel Strategy (2017)

The Kent County Council Active Travel Strategy sets out a long-term vision to make walking and cycling the preferred choice for short everyday journeys, helping to create healthier, more sustainable communities. It recognises that increasing reliance on cars has reduced physical activity and contributed to congestion, poor air quality and health inequalities. The Strategy therefore promotes a shift towards active travel through better infrastructure (safe, continuous routes), integration with planning and public transport, and behaviour change initiatives. It highlights the wide-ranging benefits of active travel, including improved health, reduced congestion and emissions, as well as economic value, with strong returns on investment. Overall, it provides a framework for embedding walking and cycling into development, transport planning and everyday travel choices across Kent.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

The Strategy helps ensure a Dartford Town Centre Masterplan delivers a sustainable, accessible and people-focused environment, reducing reliance on cars while improving place quality and economic vitality.

- Promoting walkable and cycle-friendly environments – supports designing compact, connected town centres with safe, direct routes between key destinations (shops, stations, homes).
- Reducing congestion and improving air quality – prioritising active travel aligns with reducing car dependency in Dartford's constrained highway network.
- Integrating transport modes – encourages linking walking and cycling routes with public transport hubs (e.g. Dartford Station), strengthening sustainable connectivity.
- Influencing development and planning – requires active travel to be embedded in new development layouts, public realm and infrastructure design from the outset.
- Enhancing town centre vitality – evidence shows pedestrian-friendly streets support local businesses and economic activity.
- Supporting health and inclusive design – ensures town centres cater for all users with accessible, safe and attractive public spaces.

Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the balance (2024)

Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) sets out the long-term strategic framework for transport investment and management across Kent, focusing on supporting sustainable economic growth, improving connectivity, and reducing environmental impacts. The plan promotes a shift towards active travel, public transport, and smarter travel choices, while managing congestion and improving journey reliability. It emphasises integration between land use and transport planning, decarbonisation, health and well-being, and inclusive access. LTP5 also identifies the need for targeted interventions in growth areas, including town centres, to ensure transport networks support regeneration and changing travel behaviours.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

LTP5 provides the strategic transport context and priorities that should shape movement and accessibility within the Dartford Town Centre Masterplan.

- Alignment with strategic transport priorities - Ensures the masterplan supports Kent-wide objectives on sustainability, connectivity, and economic growth.
- Modal shift and active travel - Reinforces the need to prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport within Dartford town centre.
- Managing congestion and improving air quality - Supports interventions to reduce traffic dominance and enhance the town centre environment.
- Integration with growth and regeneration - Aligns transport improvements with Dartford's planned development and intensification.
- Accessibility and inclusion - Promotes improving access to key services, jobs, and transport hubs for all users.
- Funding and delivery context - Provides a framework for securing investment and coordinating transport interventions alongside the masterplan.

Kent Design Guide (2006)

The Kent Design Guide, produced by Kent County Council through the Kent Design Initiative, provides comprehensive guidance on achieving high-quality, sustainable and distinctive development across the county. It sets out clear principles for good design, emphasising respect for local character and context, creating attractive and safe places, supporting sustainable movement, and integrating landscape and open space into development. The guide covers the full design and planning process - from understanding site context and generating layouts, to street design, public realm, building detailing and community engagement - and is intended to be used as a benchmark for assessing planning applications and refusing poor-quality design. It is designed to promote places that are vibrant, liveable and enduring, while still allowing for creativity and contemporary responses rather than prescribing a single architectural style.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

The Kent Design Guide is particularly relevant to creating a Dartford Town Centre Masterplan because it provides county-wide design expectations that help ensure regeneration is high quality, coherent and locally distinctive. In practice, it supports the Dartford masterplan by:

- Reinforcing placemaking principles – guiding the creation of streets, spaces and blocks that feel urban, legible and people-focused rather than traffic-dominated.
- Supporting town-centre mixed use – encouraging a thoughtful mix of uses and active frontages that strengthen vitality and viability in central areas.
- Shaping street and public-realm design – providing guidance on street hierarchy, spatial types, materials and detailing that can inform High Street and gateway improvements.
- Embedding sustainability and movement – promoting walkable layouts, cycling, public transport integration and climate-responsive design, all critical for Dartford's long-term growth.

A new Kent Design Guide is currently in progress so this will soon be out of date. Should this come out before the submission of the masterplan, it should align with this.

Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out a strategic, place-based approach to protecting, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity across the county. It identifies priority habitats, species, and locations for intervention, alongside measures to strengthen ecological networks and deliver wider environmental benefits such as climate resilience and improved water management. Importantly, the strategy includes a strong urban focus, recognising the role of towns and cities in contributing to nature recovery through green infrastructure, urban greening, and nature-based solutions. It promotes integrating biodiversity into development, emphasising multifunctional spaces, partnership working, and embedding nature recovery into planning to secure long-term environmental and social benefits.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

The LNRS provides the ecological framework to embed nature recovery and green infrastructure within Dartford town centre regeneration.

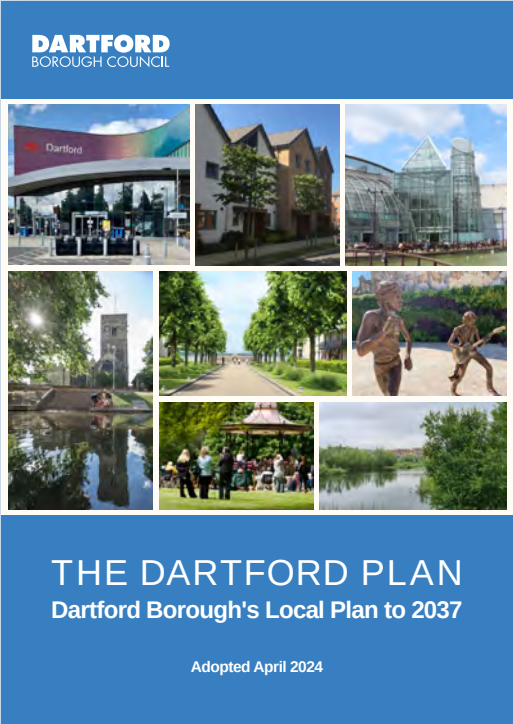
- Green infrastructure integration - Supports incorporating parks, street trees, green corridors, and sustainable drainage into the masterplan.
- Biodiversity net gain - Reinforces requirements to deliver measurable improvements to biodiversity within new development.
- Climate resilience - Encourages nature-based solutions for urban cooling, flood management, and air quality improvement.
- Connecting habitats - Promotes linking the town centre to wider ecological networks, including river corridors and surrounding landscapes.
- Health and well-being - Aligns with creating greener, more attractive environments that support public health and quality of life.
- Policy alignment - Ensures the masterplan responds to emerging local environmental priorities and statutory biodiversity duties.



A.3 Local planning and policy context

Dartford Local Plan (2024)

The Dartford Local Plan 2024–2037 sets a long-term strategy for managing growth, regeneration and environmental enhancement across the Borough, focusing development in the most sustainable locations—Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City—while protecting the Green Belt and strengthening local infrastructure. It plans for 12,640 new homes, prioritising brownfield land, supported by major investment in schools, healthcare, green spaces, walking and cycling networks, public transport (including Fastrack and rail upgrades) and high-quality public realm. The Plan aims to create vibrant, mixed-use town and district centres, deliver significant job growth through modern commercial spaces, and achieve high environmental standards including climate-resilient design, biodiversity net gain and improved air quality. Alongside strategic regeneration in Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet, the Plan emphasises well-designed neighbourhoods, diverse housing (including affordable, specialist and self-build), heritage protection, flood-risk mitigation, and infrastructure-led development that supports healthy, walkable, well-connected communities across Dartford.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- Deliver major regeneration and transformation, positioning Central Dartford as one of the Borough's two priority growth locations.
- Grow the town-centre residential community by enabling over 2,200 new homes through allocations and permissions, strengthening local vitality and supporting a 24-hour sense of activity and safety.
- Create a vibrant mixed-use centre, with a diversified economy including new retail, leisure, food and beverage, cultural, and community uses that complement the town's historic character.
- Regenerate key strategic sites such as Westgate, East of Lowfield Street, Priory Centre and Station Surrounds introducing high-quality public realm, modern commercial spaces and active ground-floor uses.
- Enhance public realm, including further improvements to Market Street/Brewery Square, High Street, and connections to Central Park, creating attractive, pedestrian-friendly spaces.
- Strengthen walking, cycling and sustainable travel, improving movement across the town, including better links across the ring road, access routes to Dartford Station, and contributions to the Green Grid network.
- Improve Dartford Railway Station and interchange, exploring opportunities for enhancement or potential relocation to support higher-quality public transport integration.
- Open up and naturalise the River Darent, improving riverside access, creating green, safe waterfront spaces, and strengthening ecological and active-travel corridors through the town.
- Protect and enhance the Conservation Area and heritage assets, including sensitive refurbishment of historic buildings and maintaining the market-town character.
- Provide new community facilities, ensuring land and infrastructure are delivered to support a growing town-centre population (e.g., healthcare, cultural space, education).
- Improve air quality and reduce congestion by encouraging modal shift to public transport and active travel, supported by town-centre parking strategy updates.
- Support meanwhile and flexible uses to activate vacant sites and encourage creativity, entrepreneurship and cultural programming while long-term redevelopment proceeds.

There are seven policies focused on the aspirations for Dartford Town Centre – D1 to D7:

D1: Central Dartford Strategy

A comprehensive regeneration strategy transforming the town centre with new homes, upgraded public realm, better transport links and connections, cultural facilities with key sites Westgate, Lowfield Street and Priory Centre.

D2: Central Dartford Development Principles

Sets design and placemaking requirements for new development, including supporting mixed uses, enhancing heritage, improving walking/cycling routes, creating high-quality public spaces and ensuring schemes contribute to air-quality, flood-risk and active-travel objectives.

D3: Central Dartford Mix of Uses

Promotes a diverse mix of retail, leisure, community and residential uses; supports active ground-floor frontages; and enables new homes through allocations, conversions and sensitively designed infill within the town centre.

D4: Westgate Allocation

Allocates the Westgate site for mixed-use development including a cinema or major leisure anchor, up to 5,000 sqm of commercial use, and at least 120 homes, with a new public square and restored historic routes.

D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation

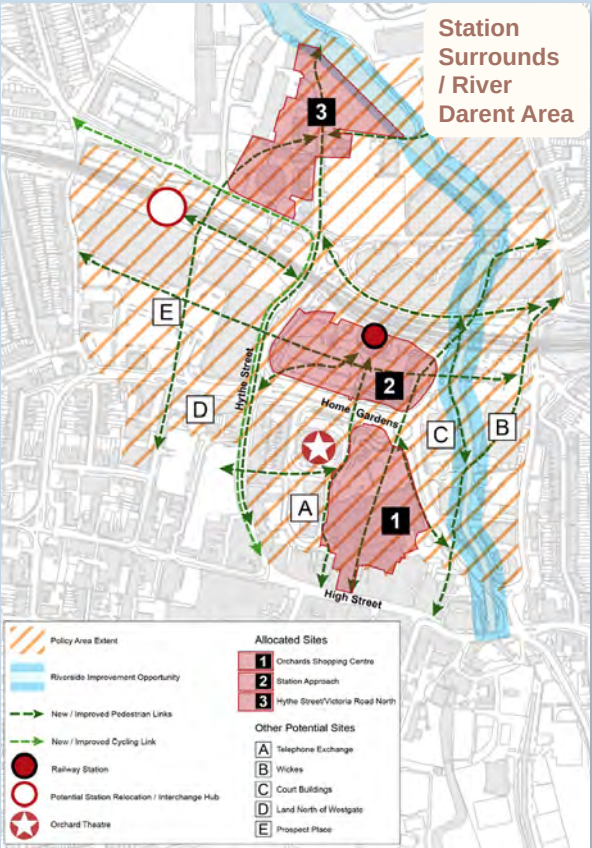
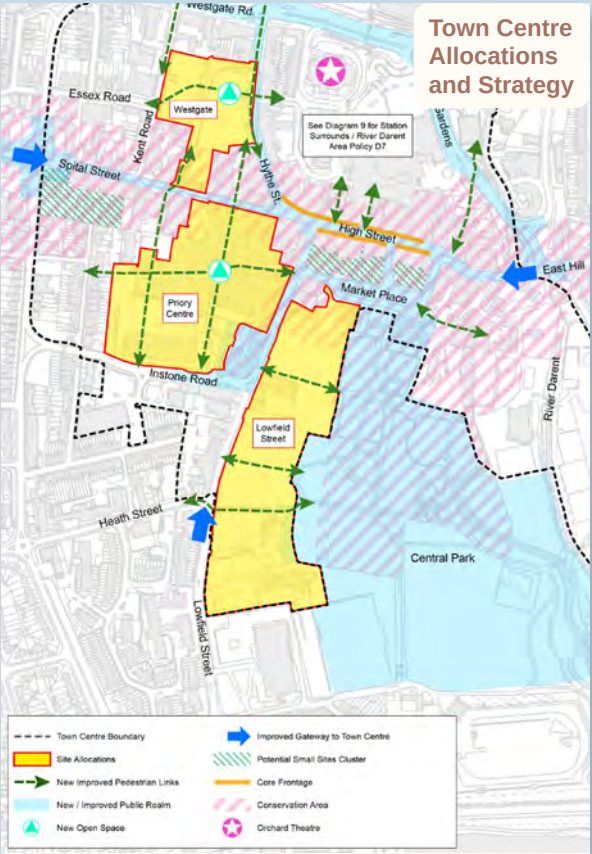
A major residential-led scheme delivering 700+ homes, new retail/leisure space, community facilities and strong pedestrian links into Central Park, while improving Lowfield Street's public realm.

D6: Priory Shopping Centre Allocation

Redevelops the Priory Centre into a high-quality mixed-use quarter with 400+ homes, major retail/leisure/office space, a hotel or town-centre attraction and new pedestrian routes connecting Spital Street, Lowfield Street and Instone Road.

D7: Station Surrounds / River Darent Area

A long-term regeneration area creating new neighbourhoods, commercial spaces and community uses, improving the riverside environment, exploring station upgrades or relocation and delivering new pedestrian and cycle links and green spaces. This policy also allocates a further three sites: Orchards Shopping Centre, Station Approach / Mound, and Hythe Street / Victoria Road North. In addition, it highlights Telephone Exchange, Wickes and Court buildings, Land adjacent to Westgate, and Prospect Place and their significant potential capacity for new homes.



DBC Corporate Plan (2024)



The Corporate Plan sets out Dartford Borough Council's ambitions for 2024–2027 built around seven priority themes: Housing, Economic Growth, Traffic & Transport, Safety, Public Health, Environment, and People &

Communities. Across these themes, the Council emphasises common-sense decision-making, strong local identity, financial stability, and using its influence to secure improvements from external partners. The plan aims to ensure good-quality homes, a greener and healthier borough, strong community cohesion, and a local economy that offers opportunities for all. It also highlights the importance of high-quality public spaces, environmental responsibility, and a safe, well-connected place to live and work.

Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- Make the town centre more vibrant, attractive and accessible, investing in public realm, enhancing culture and leisure (including the Orchard Theatre), and creating a stronger mid-evening economy.
- Increase town centre living, growing the resident community in the town centre to boost activity, resilience and safety, reinforcing Dartford as an economic and cultural focal point.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour by designing out crime, with improved lighting, cleanliness and CCTV as well as fostering a family friendly atmosphere.
- Promote a sustainable and accessible town centre by improving walking, cycling and public transport and managing town-centre parking.
- Enhance green spaces, air quality and active travel links to improve public health as well as providing a more climate-friendly and biodiverse environment.
- Support events, culture and heritage – such as improvements to Dartford Museum and The Orchard Theatre – to increase town centre footfall and boost community identity and pride.

Dartford Net Zero Strategy (2024 – 2030)



Setting out how the Council will achieve its target of reducing its organisational emissions to net zero by 2030, while also influencing borough-wide action on climate change. Dartford will experience hotter, drier summers, as well as wetter winters, increasing the borough's exposure to threats such as flooding, urban heat, and habitat loss.

In order to mitigate and adapt to the growing risks of climate change, the strategy highlights eight priority areas for focus: Organisational emissions, Transport, Built environment, Energy generation, Waste, Land use & biodiversity, Governance, Community engagement. It commits the Council to decarbonising its own estate, improving energy efficiency, supporting renewable energy, facilitating cleaner travel, protecting green spaces, and embedding climate considerations across decision-making. The strategy works alongside the Local Plan, placing strong emphasis on locating development in sustainable, accessible areas, improving walking and cycling networks, and enhancing resilience to flooding and climate impacts. Community involvement is central, with "Planet Dartford" acting as a vehicle for awareness-raising, behaviour change, and partnership working across residents, businesses and organisations.

Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- Prioritising development in sustainable, well-connected locations, reducing the need for car use and encouraging low-carbon living.
- Shift to active and sustainable travel, improving walking and cycling routes and public transport connections.
- Improving air quality through reduced vehicle emissions, modal shift, and alignment with the Air Quality Action Plan.
- Ensuring new development adopts low-carbon design, energy-efficient construction, and sustainable drainage.
- Expanding green and blue infrastructure - public spaces, more trees, biodiversity corridors, and enhanced access to the river.
- Supporting the rollout of EV charging infrastructure to reduce reliance on fossil-fuelled vehicles.
- Encouraging reuse, recycling and waste-reduction facilities within new developments, aligning with circular economy principles.
- Embedding climate-led governance and procurement, ensuring projects and investments reflect carbon-reduction priorities.
- Using community engagement campaigns (via Planet Dartford) to encourage sustainable behaviour among all the community.

Dartford's Economic Development Strategy (2025 – 2027)



The Strategy sets out how the Council will support responsible, inclusive economic growth over the coming years, building on the Borough's strong business base, rapid population growth and strategic location. The Strategy focuses on four priorities: Supporting

productive and dynamic businesses; Encouraging quality, distinctive places; Creating opportunities to access and progress in work; and Overcoming infrastructure barriers to growth. Central to this approach is the transformation of Dartford town centre, the growth of Ebbsfleet Garden City, and investment in infrastructure that enables sustainable travel and reduces congestion. The Strategy emphasises the importance of partnerships with businesses, landowners, education providers and government to unlock investment, broaden local skills, foster innovation, and build a resilient, diverse local economy benefiting all communities.

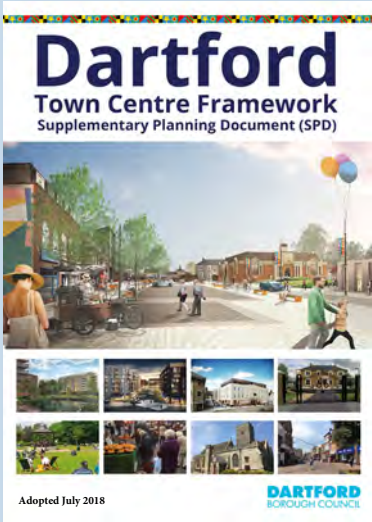
Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- Support major investment in Dartford town centre, recognising it as the Borough's most sustainable and strategically important location for economic activity.
- Diversify the town centre's offer, encouraging new leisure, cultural, community and business uses alongside retail.
- Strengthen partnerships through the Town Centre Partnership, engaging traders, landowners, agents, social enterprises and other stakeholders to coordinate investment and solve problems.
- Enhance the public realm to support footfall, dwell time and business confidence.
- Drive place-making through smaller-scale interventions, including regular events, meaningful public art, and promotion of the town centre's cultural identity to build pride and energy.
- Unlock development on key town centre sites, working with Government (including Homes England) to address viability challenges and bring forward major regeneration schemes.
- Develop Dartford as a cultural and creative hub, supporting the Orchard Theatre, Mick Jagger Centre and creative businesses to boost the town's distinctiveness and economic appeal.
- Improve transport connectivity, reducing severance caused by highways, investing in active travel links and reducing congestion.
- Support town-centre-based small and micro businesses, including start-ups and creative enterprises, through tailored support, workspace opportunities and a business-network.

Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD (2018)

The SPD sets out a long-term vision to guide investment, regeneration and development in the heart of Dartford. It aims to create a high-quality, people-focused town centre that celebrates its rich historic character while accommodating significant new growth. The SPD identifies key challenges – such as congestion, fragmented pedestrian routes, inactive frontages, and under-used public spaces – and responds with a comprehensive strategy to improve movement, enhance public realm, diversify land uses, and strengthen the town’s identity. There are six key objectives for focus in the town centre:

- Movement
- Leisure
- Perception and quality of place
- Town centre economy
- Creative
- Innovation



Central Park, the River Darent, and the town’s historic crossroads form the foundations of this vision, supported by opportunities for major redevelopment, including Lowfield Street, the former Co-op site, Westgate, and Station Quarter. The Framework places strong emphasis on creating a more walkable, cycle-friendly and attractive town centre with better public spaces, improved wayfinding, and an enhanced evening economy.

This masterplan will build upon this Framework, developing further the ideas its set out and going into more depth on the sites and future aspirations.

Key proposals include:

- Major public realm upgrades at Market Street and Market Square
- Improved pedestrian and cycle routes across the ring road and railway viaduct
- Reducing road dominance on key streets such as Hythe Street and Lowfield Street
- Activating frontages, particularly around the Orchard Theatre, Bulls Head Yard and Suffolk Road
- Embedding arts, culture and digital innovation into the town centre experience
- Facilitating mixed-use development with new homes, leisure, community uses and flexible commercial space

The SPD sets out detailed design principles for each opportunity site and establishes an implementation programme aligned with public and private investment to deliver a thriving, distinctive and future-ready Dartford town centre.

Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study (2021)

These documents form part of the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study (AW2EC) and set out a design led, transport informed framework for the regeneration of Dartford. They combine area wide visioning, detailed analysis and masterplanning to identify how improved strategic connectivity (Crossrail extension or enhanced rail/BRT options) could unlock brownfield sites for mixed use regeneration. The work emphasises re-stitching the town centre across the railway and ring road, intensifying development around the station and River Darent, rebalancing retail with residential and employment uses, and embedding green and blue infrastructure to address flood risk, biodiversity and quality of place. Overall, the documents demonstrate how coordinated transport investment, public realm improvements and phased redevelopment could support a more vibrant, accessible and resilient town centre.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- Identified as a priority growth and regeneration area, Dartford has capacity for significant intensification through mixed use redevelopment of underused retail, civic and car park sites.
- Station surrounds (including Station Mound, Prospect Place and Orchard Centre) are critical catalysts for change, with higher densities and landmark development close to the station.
- Improved strategic connectivity and accessibility is essential to unlock viability for town centre sites and justify higher densities.
- Proposals include opening up the River Darent, creating linear parks, enhancing biodiversity and integrating flood mitigation.
- Significant constraints including flooding, air quality, noise, heritage and fragmented ownership must shape development.
- Reconnecting severed parts of the town centre through new pedestrian and cycle routes, river crossings, upgraded underpasses and improved station access are required.
- Retail led areas (Orchards, Priory, Prospect Place) are expected to transition to mixed use neighbourhoods, retaining active frontages while introducing housing, workspace and leisure.
- Heritage and townscape character, particularly around the High Street and Conservation Area, should be respected through stepped heights, finer grain streets and context led design.
- Employment growth is supported through flexible workspace, creative and town centre jobs rather than large scale industry.

Darent Riverside and Flood Management SPD (2026)



This provides a long-term framework for managing flood risk, enhancing biodiversity, and transforming the River Darent corridor into a more resilient, accessible, and attractive environment. Responding to the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan, and the significant growth in Dartford, the strategy sets out nature-based and engineered approaches to strengthen flood defences, restore river habitats, and create well-connected green and blue infrastructure. It identifies opportunities to naturalise river edges, improve public realm and active-travel links, enhance ecological networks extending from the marshes into the town, and coordinate development to deliver consistent, high-quality riverside spaces. Overall, it seeks to make the riverside a unifying asset – supporting environmental resilience, community well-being, and sustainable regeneration.

Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- Improve flood resilience in the town centre, including raising and connecting flood defences, integrating nature-based solutions, and enabling fluvial floodwater to return safely to the river near Hythe Street.
- Create consistent, high-quality river edges by creating natural setbacks, stepped terraces, ecological buffers, and selective wall raising to transform hard urban edges and increase river capacity.
- Enhance access to and along the River Darent, delivering a continuous, attractive river path with improved crossings, wayfinding, lighting, and active-travel infrastructure that connects the town centre with the marshes and Central Park.
- Support regeneration of key development sites, requiring new schemes along Hythe Street, Victoria Road North, Wickes, and Station Approach to provide active frontages, set back defences, and open up new public realm facing the river.
- Celebrate heritage and townscape character, using the river as a focus for heritage trails and improved views, especially near Holy Trinity Church, Acacia Hall, and within the conservation area.
- Integrate biodiversity and chalk-stream restoration into urban sections of the river, building on the Acacia Hall works and creating habitats that support fish, eels, and wildlife migration, as well as using the park for further flood storage
- Support removal or adaptation of the Wellcome Sluice to restore natural sediment movement, improve ecology, increase river capacity, and enhance the town-centre river corridor over time.
- Improve river visibility, reducing ASB on Ecology Island.

Dartford LCWIP (2023)

The Dartford LCWIP (2023) is a strategic, evidence-based plan that identifies a borough-wide network of priority routes and infrastructure improvements to increase walking, cycling and wheeling over a 10-year period.

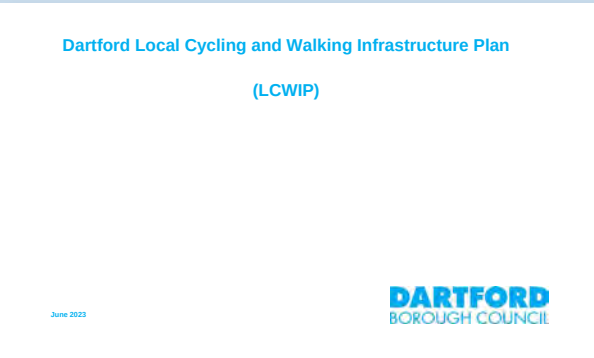
It responds to low levels of active travel and high car dependency in Dartford by mapping key corridors and walking zones—particularly focused around the town centre and northern urban area—and assessing current barriers such as fragmented networks, poor crossings and car-dominated streets. The plan sets out a prioritised pipeline of schemes (including quick wins and longer-term routes), alongside design principles such as safer junctions, wider footways, and segregated cycle infrastructure, and is intended to guide funding bids, inform development and support sustainable growth.

Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

The LCWIP is a key evidence base for shaping a town centre masterplan because it:

- Identifies priority town centre routes and corridors – focuses on Dartford Town Centre walking zone and key cycling corridors (A–E), providing a spatial framework for movement.
- Addresses barriers to accessibility – highlights issues such as poor crossings, narrow footways and car-dominated junctions, directly informing public realm improvements.
- Supports modal shift away from cars – provides a clear strategy to increase walking and cycling, helping reduce congestion and improve air quality in the town centre.
- Guides design interventions – includes practical measures (e.g. continuous footways, segregated cycle lanes, traffic calming, decluttering) that can be embedded in masterplan proposals.
- Aligns with regeneration and development – intended to inform new development and regeneration schemes, ensuring active travel infrastructure is integrated from the outset.
- Supports funding and delivery – acts as an evidence base to prioritise schemes and secure funding (e.g. CIL and external funding), improving deliverability of masterplan projects.

Overall, the LCWIP ensures a Dartford Town Centre Masterplan is people-focused, well-connected and deliverable, with a clear strategy for improving movement, public realm and sustainable transport.



Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail & Leisure Study (2021)

The study provides a comprehensive, evidence based assessment of retail and leisure needs across the Borough to 2036, with a strong focus on Dartford Town Centre, Ebbsfleet Garden City, other District Centres and Bluewater. The study concludes that structural change in retail - accelerated by online shopping and COVID 19 - means that future strategy should prioritise improving quality, diversity and resilience of town centres rather than significant new retail expansion.



Key aims relevant to Dartford town centre:

- No quantitative need for major retail expansion in the short to medium term, with forecast growth expected to support existing and planned shops rather than justify large new retail floorspace.
- A qualitative gap in convenience retail, particularly in fresh food and day to day shopping, indicating scope to strengthen the town centre's food and convenience offer.
- Retail strategy should move beyond traditional comparison retail, focusing instead on diversification into leisure, food and beverage, culture, community uses and flexible space.
- Clear need for a stronger leisure offer, including the delivery of a cinema, cafés, restaurants and evening economy uses, to address low evening activity and improve dwell time.
- Westgate (Hythe Street) regeneration is critical, providing a cinema and leisure anchor to support the Orchard Theatre and catalyse improvements in the daytime and evening economy.
- Town centre housing growth is a major opportunity, with increased resident population creating a stronger "captive catchment" to support shops, services and leisure uses.
- Shopping centres should be repurposed over time to deliver flexible mixed-use and retain active ground floor frontages.
- Street markets are a key asset, helping to differentiate Dartford and supporting footfall, diversity and independent businesses.
- Public realm, walkability and gateways are essential, with further improvements needed to strengthen pedestrian connections to Central Park and arrival routes from the station.
- The Town Centre should be protected through planning policy, including a lower locally set impact threshold for out of centre retail to prevent harm to town centre investment and viability.



A.4 Dartford's key views

Key historic view 1. Mansion House and Holy Trinity Church Viewpoint

The view from the footbridge over the River Darent looking north towards Holy Trinity Church (Grade I listed), with Acacia Hall (Grade II listed) on the left and Acacia Coach House on the right. The view captures Dartford's historic connection to the River Darent and natural environment as well as showcasing its impressive architectural heritage.



Key historic view 2. Market Street

The view from the northern and main entrance to Central Park with the Dartford War Memorial (Grade II listed) on the left and Dartford Library (Grade II listed) on the right, looking north towards Market Place and the High Street. The view captures the important connection between Central Park, the Library - a key historic and community asset - and the High Street.



Key historic view 3. St Edmunds Pleasance Viewpoint

The view from St Edmunds Pleasance Park looking east over the Darent Valley towards West Hill. The view captures the historic settlement of the town in the Darent Valley and surrounded by a tree-lined ridge. Key historic assets can be seen including Acacia Hall (Grade II listed) on the left, Holy Trinity Church (Grade I listed) on the right, and historic buildings fronting East Hill in the centre foreground (including 14, and 16 Est Hill which are Grade II listed).



Key historic view 4. West Hill Views

The view from the top of West Hill looking west towards Holy Trinity Church (Grade I listed) and East Hill, framed by a tree-lined ridge in the background. The view captures the historic importance of Dartford as a strategic connection between London, Kent and Europe – West Hill is the historic Roman Road connecting London to Dover and Richborough via Canterbury and so people have been travelling down this route for millennia.



Key historic view 5. The Manor Gatehouse

The view from Westgate Road, on the northern end of Junction Road and opposite Priory Road looking north towards The Manor Gatehouse. The view captures the historic and important listed building from a busy thoroughfare. There is opportunity to improve this view, opening up views towards this heritage asset.



Key historic view 6. Holy Trinity Church

The view from the River Darent Valley Path on the western side of the river and to the northeast of Dartford County Court looking south towards Holy Trinity Church. The view captures the unique environment of the natural river landscape looking towards the historic and important listed building, one of the older in Dartford, and a view which will have existing for hundreds of years.



Gateway view 1. East Hill

The view from the pavement to the north of East Hill looking west towards Overy Liberty. The view captures the eastern gateway to the High Street at an important historic junction. The buildings on the right are listed and also front Overy Street and Home Gardens. In the background, Bridge House Gardens are on the left - with Acacia Coach House seen through a break in the trees - and St Saviour's Walk on the right. There is an opportunity to improve this view and important gateway, which currently acts as a busy junction and physical and psychological barrier to the town centre.



Gateway view 2. West Hill

The view from the bottom of West Hill at the junction with Spital Street and Highfield Road on the pedestrian island looking east towards the High Street and Holy Trinity Church. The view captures the historic view looking down the original Roman Road towards the High Street and Church which has existed for hundreds of years. Holy Trinity Church sits in the centre of this view, with a tree-lined ridge on East Hill rising behind. There is an opportunity to further improve this view as the western gateway to the town centre, ensuring any new buildings or development protect its significant historic character.



Gateway view 3. Hythe Street

The view from the pavement to the north of the Victoria Road, William Mundy Way, Mill Pond Road and Hythe Street roundabout looking south towards the railway viaduct and down Hythe Street towards the town centre. The view captures a busy vehicular route, the railway arches and the views through to the back of Prospect Place. On the right is the newly constructed residential building with Go Local retail unit on the ground floor. There is an opportunity to better signify this as the northern gateway to the town centre, improving the perception of connection to Dartford despite the physical barrier of the railway.



Gateway view 4. Lowfield Street

The view from the pavement on the western side of Lowfield Street, at the junction with Cranford Road and Phoenix Place looking north towards the town centre. The view captures the corner of Lowfield Street and Cranford Road, with the landscape in front of the Fairfield Leisure Centre on the right and residential properties of varying heights on the left. Central Park can be accessed along Cranford Road. There is an opportunity to improve this view and southern gateway into Dartford and Central Park, particularly regarding the public realm to better highlight the recent upgrades to Fairfield Leisure Centre.



Opportunity view 1. River Darent

The view from the footbridge connecting Station Approach through the Wickes site to Overy Street looking southeast. The view captures the River Darent in the mid-ground and East Hill's tree-lined ridge in the background. Wickes is on the left and an office building is on the right. There is an opportunity to improve the view, improving views towards the River Darent and tree-lined ridge, connecting Dartford with its natural environment.



Opportunity view 2. Home Gardens

The view from Home Gardens footbridge (connecting the station and High Street) looking southeast over the dual carriageway towards East Hill. The view captures the Civic Centre on the left, roundabout and office buildings in the mid-ground and Orchards Shopping Centre on the right with the top of the Holy Trinity Church protruding above. There is a tree-lined ridge in the background, representing Dartford's connection to the natural landscape. There is an opportunity to improve this view by developing frontage to Home Gardens and enable a better view of Holy Trinity Church whilst protecting views towards East Hill.



Opportunity view 3. The Orchards

The view from the Home Gardens footbridge looking southwest over the Orchards Theatre entrance and towards Suffolk Road. The view captures the Orchards Shopping Centre on the left, clock tower in the middle, and Theatre on the right. There is an opportunity to improve this view as an important route connecting the station to the High Street, with potential to reduce clutter, open up views south and create a stronger desire line to the town centre.



Opportunity view 4. Hythe Street

The view from the pavement on the eastern side of Hythe Street, at the junction with Westgate Road and Home Gardens. The view captures the steep bank of Station Mound is on the left sloping down to the busy vehicular junction with Prospect Place on the right. There is an opportunity to improve this view by reducing clutter, improving the pedestrian route across the junction and making it a clearer direct connection down Hythe Street to the High Street.



Opportunity view 5. Victoria Road

The view from pavement of south side of Victoria Road looking southeast towards Langley Square residential development. The view captures Victoria Industrial Park on the left and the medieval, listed Priory Walls (Grade II) on the right. There is an opportunity to improve this view by creating active frontage along the road and improving the setting of the historic wall, particularly as an approach route into Dartford town centre.

