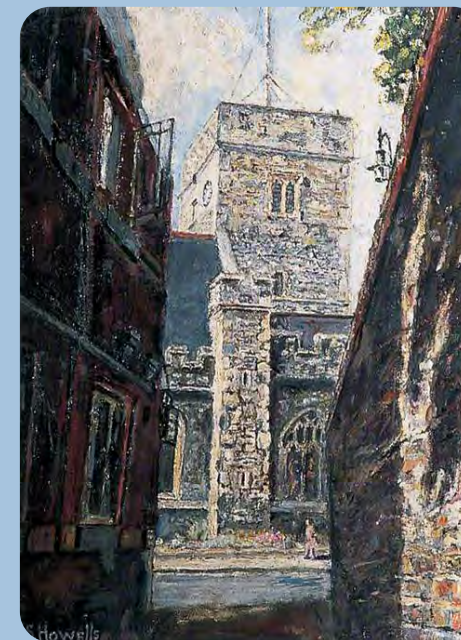


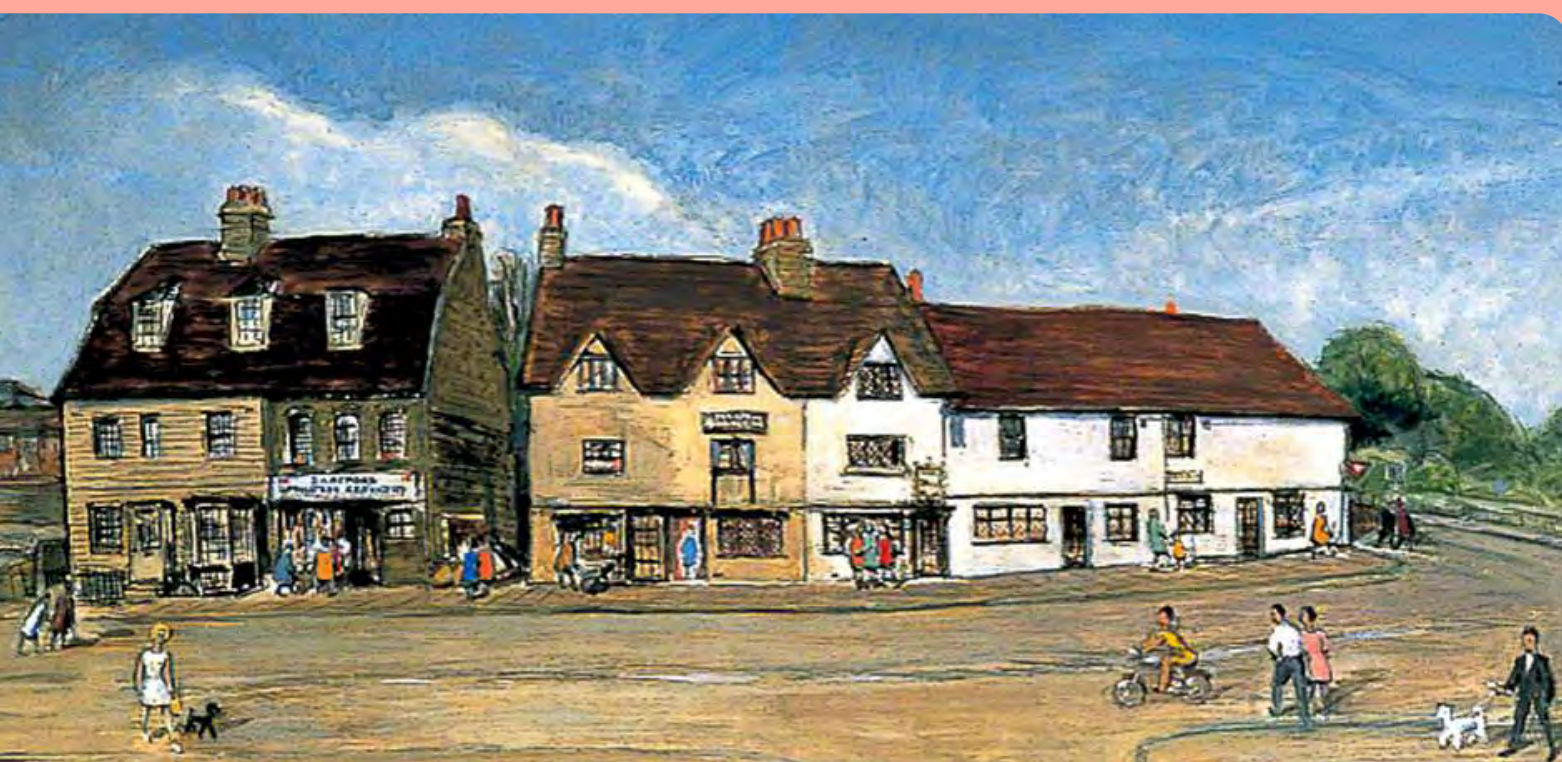
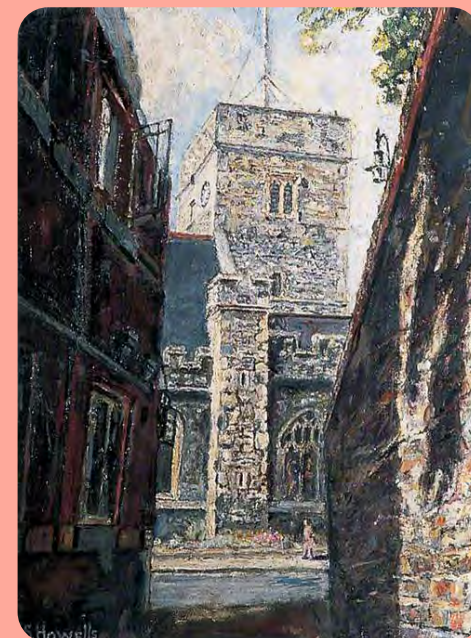
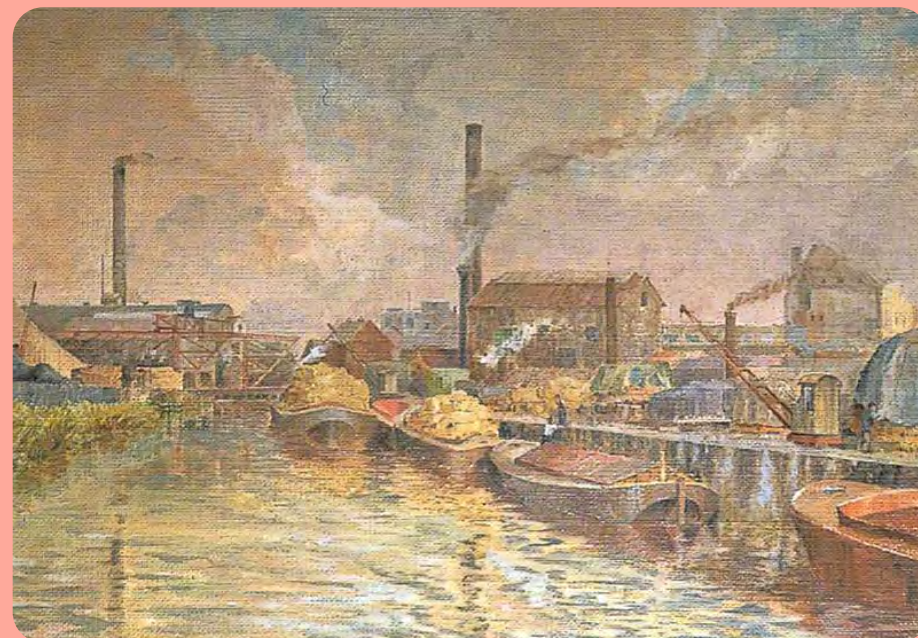
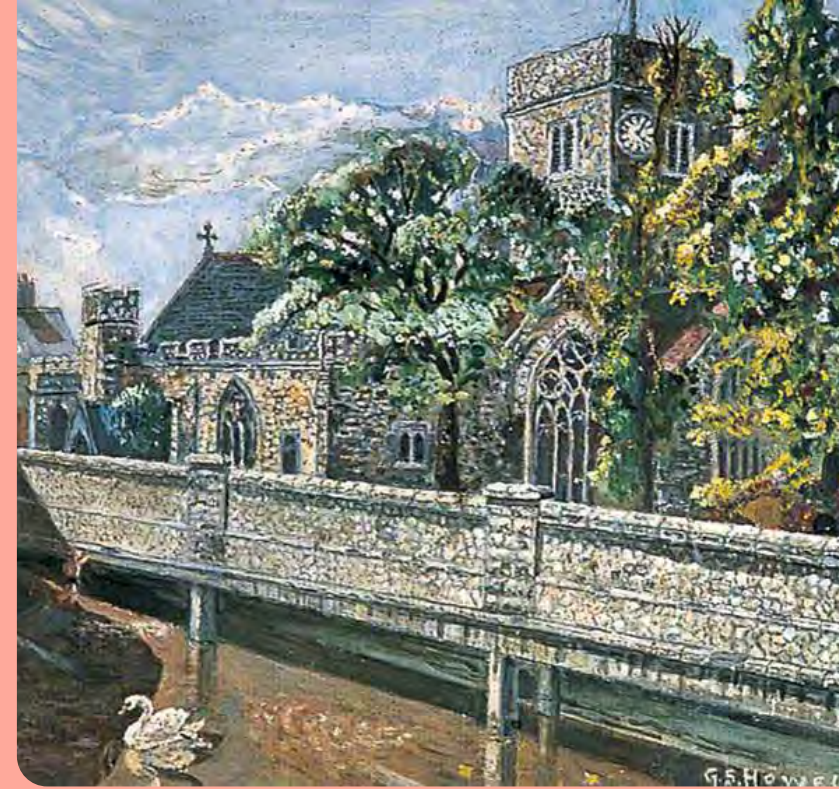
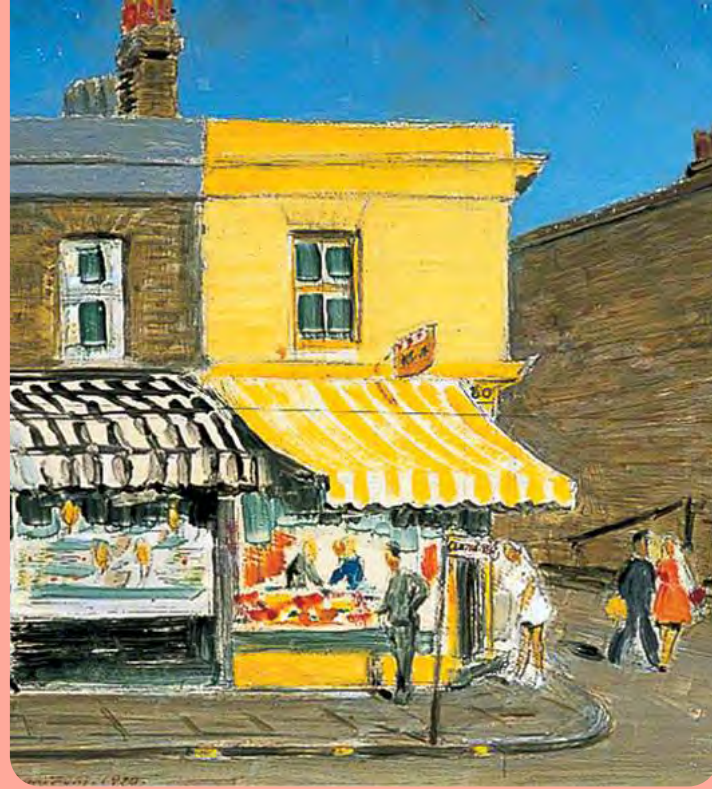
DARTFORD

Town Centre Masterplan



Baseline Analysis
September 2026

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Paintings of Dartford by a variety of artists

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Why do we need a masterplan?

Dartford Borough Council is undertaking a Town Centre Masterplan to set the aspiration and illustrate the development and regeneration ambition for Dartford Town Centre.

Dartford is changing as a Borough; this is a result of planned growth set out in the adopted Dartford Local Plan (2024) which includes a clear vision for regeneration and transformation of the town centre. It identifies Dartford town centre as a priority area for sustainable, residential-led redevelopment. Sites are allocated to come forward in the plan period as well as additional longer-term opportunity areas for development which will help secure the transformation of the town centre.

The council's aim is to ensure all the work, research and strategy completed to date is joined up and progressed in a town centre masterplan, and in due course, design codes. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Dartford Town Centre Regeneration (DTCR) - a Council delivered £20m+ transport and public realm improvement project
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Riverside Strategy for the Lower Darent - including recommendations for river edge and public realm treatment for study area around the Darent
- Extensive masterplanning undertaken for the Crossrail extension business case in 2020-2021

The masterplan will illustrate and give further guidance to the opportunities for the transformation of Dartford over the next 15 years. This provides a consensus of approach enabling support and understanding for a clear vision going forward: for investors, developers, businesses, existing and new residents, visitors, and for Council officers and Members.

With more new homes likely to come forward in and around the town centre, a new community is emerging. Beyond the need for services and infrastructure, this growth will bring about community and cultural opportunities that need to be identified. We aspire for the emerging community as well as the existing community to be involved in this work.

Structure of the Baseline Analysis Report

This report compiles the baseline analysis undertaken for the Dartford Town Centre Masterplan. There are three chapters, these include:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**
Overview of the masterplan and boundary for the study.
- **Chapter 2: Planning and policy review**
A summary of the relevant national, regional and local policy and strategy documents and an overview of the recent development context in Dartford.
- **Chapter 3: Mapping and analysis**
Analysis at a strategic, borough, and town centre context including mapping on policy, built environment, movement, the natural environment, public realms, views, local economy and socio-economic data.



1.2 An overview of central Dartford

Where will the masterplan focus?

The red-line boundary shown in this plan is taken from the Dartford Local Plan as the core town centre area. However, the masterplan does not have a fixed red-line boundary. It will focus on the area within the red-line, but it will also look beyond this to how the town centre is approached from the north, east, south and west, ensuring the masterplan supports an outward-looking place and surrounding neighbourhoods are well integrated.





Planning & policy review

2.1 National, regional and local planning and policy context

Overview

The Dartford Town Centre Masterplan is being prepared within a comprehensive planning and policy framework that operates at national, regional and local levels. Together, these documents establish the strategic priorities, development principles and delivery mechanisms that will shape the future growth and regeneration of Dartford town centre. They provide both the policy justification for intervention and the framework against which the masterplan's vision, objectives and proposals should be developed.

National planning policies

At the national level, planning policy puts strong emphasis on sustainable development, town centre vitality, high-quality design, climate resilience, healthy communities and active travel. Documents such as the National Planning Policy Framework, National Design Guide and National Model Design Code promote compact, mixed-use development, effective use of brownfield land, and the creation of distinctive and attractive places that respond to local character. These principles provide the foundation for a people-focused and design-led approach to town centre regeneration. The policy documents reviewed are:

- National Planning Policy Framework, MHCLG (2025)
- Planning Practice Guidance, MHCLG
- National Design Guide, MHCLG (2021)
- National Model Design Code, MHCLG (2021)
- Building for a Healthy Life, Homes England (2026)
- Healthy Homes, Homes England (2026)
- Sustainable placemaking guidance for successful local centres, Homes England (2026)
- Sustainable placemaking guidance for mobility hubs, Homes England (2026)
- Parking - What works where, Homes England (2026)
- Streets for a Healthy Life, Homes England (2026)
- Streets for All, Historic England (2018)
- Active Design, Sports England (2023)
- Healthy Streets (2017)
- Manual for Streets, Department for Transport (2007)
- Inclusive Mobility, Department for Transport (2021)
- Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20, Department for Transport (2020)

Regional planning policies

At the regional and county level, strategies prepared by Kent County Council and its partners recognise Dartford's strategic role within the Thames Gateway and wider Kent economy. These documents highlight the need to accommodate significant population and employment growth, support sustainable transport, improve infrastructure provision, strengthen economic competitiveness and respond to climate change. They reinforce the importance of creating vibrant, accessible and resilient town centres that can support future growth while improving environmental and social outcomes. The policy documents reviewed are:

- A 2050 Picture of Kent and Medway (2018)
- Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (2018)
- Kent and Medway Economic Framework (2024)
- Active Travel Strategy (2017)
- Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the balance (2024)
- Kent Design Guide (2006)
- Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)

Local planning policies

At the local level, the adopted Dartford Local Plan provides the primary policy framework for the transformation of Central Dartford, identifying the town centre as a priority location for regeneration, new homes, employment, leisure and public realm investment. This is supported by a range of borough-wide strategies and supplementary planning documents relating to economic development, climate change, movement, the River Darent corridor and town centre regeneration. Collectively, these documents establish a clear ambition to create a more walkable, sustainable, prosperous and distinctive town centre that supports a growing residential population while celebrating Dartford's heritage, culture and natural assets. The policy documents reviewed are:

- Dartford Local Plan (2024)
- DBC Corporate Plan (2024)
- Dartford Net Zero Strategy (2024 – 2030)
- Dartford's Economic Development Strategy (2025 – 2027)
- Dartford Town Centre Framework SPD (2018)
- Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet Connectivity Study (2021)
- Darent Riverside and Flood Management SPD (2026)
- Dartford LCWIP (2023)
- Dartford & Ebbsfleet Retail & Leisure Study (2021)

Please see the appendix for a detailed summary of the key national, regional and local policy documents most relevant to the production of the Dartford Town Centre Masterplan. This identifies the principal themes set out in policy that should inform the development of the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the town centre.



2.2 Development context

A lot is already happening in Dartford town centre. This page outlines the recently completed and ongoing projects from both public and private sectors.



A five-storey apartment block in the town centre housing four 2-bed and ten 1-bed flats. It will be constructed from rammed earth blocks, an ancient and highly sustainable building technique. The new block will also feature a rooftop garden, 21 bicycle spaces, and will be car-free, given its close proximity to public transport connections.



A residential-led regeneration scheme immediately north of Dartford railway station, alongside the River Darent and the historic Mill Pond. It was delivered by Weston Homes on the former industrial land of the Wellcome factory, creating over 800 new homes across a mix of 1-bed, 2-bed, and 3-bed flats, as well as 5 ground-floor commercial units. The development also includes parking, cycle storage, and new public realm spaces including children's play.



A housing-led, mixed-use regeneration scheme on the former Co-op site between Spital Street, Hythe Street and Orchard Street is being developed by the council, which acquired the land from Homes England in 2022. The project will deliver 69 homes with 33 houses and 36 flats / maisonettes in buildings up to 4-storeys and with 20% affordable provision, providing a low-rise but high-density scheme.



A mixed-use, residential-led scheme in the town centre developed by Bellway

Homes and adjacent to Dartford's Central Park. It comprises mostly studios, 1-bed, and 2-bed apartments, delivering a total of 550 new homes. The buildings range from 4 to 8 storeys across multiple perimeter blocks with landscaped communal spaces, as well as creating new pedestrian links into the park.

- Development site
- Dartford Town Centre Regeneration
- Refurbishment
- DTCR ongoing and future phases

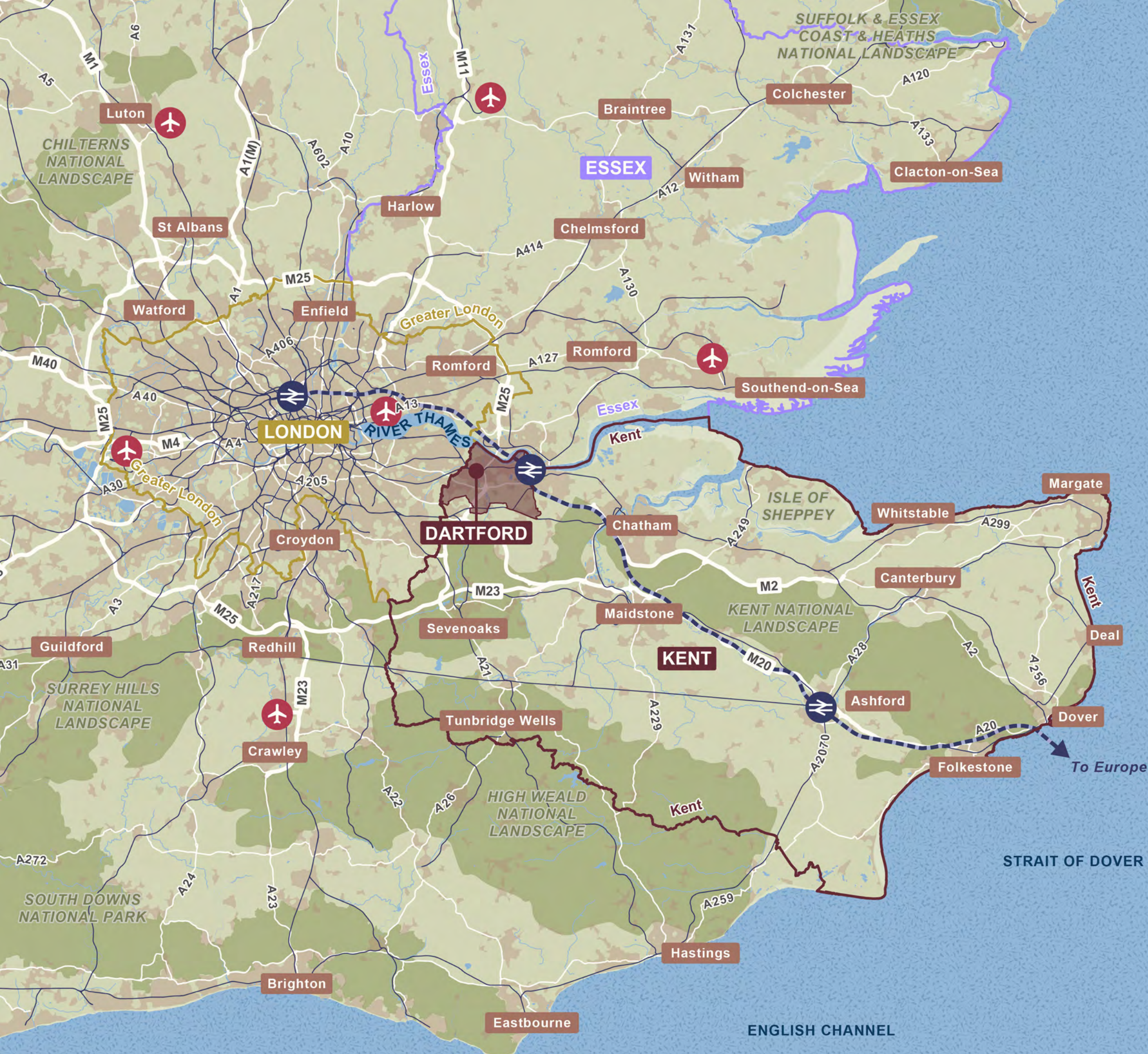


The Dartford Town Centre Regeneration (DTCR) is a transport and public realm improvement scheme delivering a long term phased transformation of streets, spaces and key junctions across the town centre. Led by the Council, with funding linked to new development, work started in 2019 and has delivered improvements in High Street, Market Street, Lowfield Street, West Hill junction and Spital Street. With future phases delivering improvements to Hythe Street and its junction with Home Gardens.



A large, stylized number '8' in a light blue-grey color serves as a background element, positioned on the right side of the slide. It is composed of two concentric loops, with the inner loop being a darker shade of blue than the outer one.

Mapping & analysis



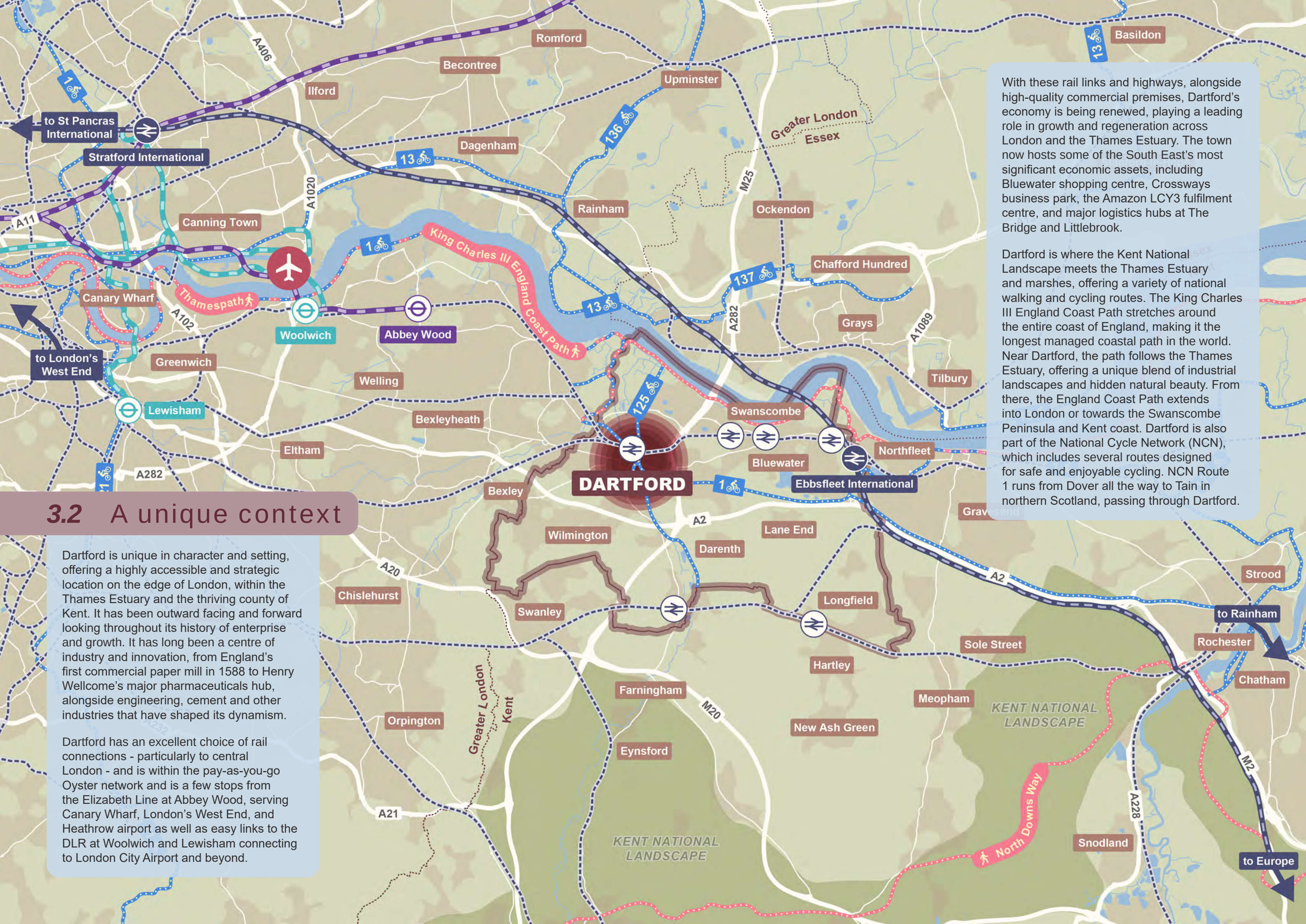
3.1 Dartford's strategic location

A gateway to Kent on the edge of London

Dartford occupies a strategic gateway position between London and Kent, offering a highly accessible location on the eastern edge of Greater London and at the western end of the Thames Gateway growth corridor. At a crossroads of national and international routes, Dartford is the gateway in northern Kent to Europe, as well as the coast and countryside of the garden of England.

It is well connected, with Dartford railway station being the busiest in Kent and providing frequent direct services to central London (London Bridge, Cannon Street and Charing Cross), and many locations across the south-east via the Thameslink service, as well as High Speed One links from Ebbsfleet International to the Kent coast and across the English Channel. Its location also provides immediate road access to the A2 and M25, including the Dartford Crossing linking Kent and Essex.

The borough is framed by nationally significant landscapes, lying close to the River Thames and within the River Darent valley - an area of the Kent National Landscape characterised by rolling chalk hills and woodland. Its combination of strong national and international transport connectivity, economic growth corridors and high-quality natural assets underpins Dartford's role as a key location for growth and regeneration within South East England.



With these rail links and highways, alongside high-quality commercial premises, Dartford's economy is being renewed, playing a leading role in growth and regeneration across London and the Thames Estuary. The town now hosts some of the South East's most significant economic assets, including Bluewater shopping centre, Crossways business park, the Amazon LCY3 fulfilment centre, and major logistics hubs at The Bridge and Littlebrook.

Dartford is where the Kent National Landscape meets the Thames Estuary and marshes, offering a variety of national walking and cycling routes. The King Charles III England Coast Path stretches around the entire coast of England, making it the longest managed coastal path in the world. Near Dartford, the path follows the Thames Estuary, offering a unique blend of industrial landscapes and hidden natural beauty. From there, the England Coast Path extends into London or towards the Swanscombe Peninsula and Kent coast. Dartford is also part of the National Cycle Network (NCN), which includes several routes designed for safe and enjoyable cycling. NCN Route 1 runs from Dover all the way to Tain in northern Scotland, passing through Dartford.

3.2 A unique context

Dartford is unique in character and setting, offering a highly accessible and strategic location on the edge of London, within the Thames Estuary and the thriving county of Kent. It has been outward facing and forward looking throughout its history of enterprise and growth. It has long been a centre of industry and innovation, from England's first commercial paper mill in 1588 to Henry Wellcome's major pharmaceuticals hub, alongside engineering, cement and other industries that have shaped its dynamism.

Dartford has an excellent choice of rail connections - particularly to central London - and is within the pay-as-you-go Oyster network and is a few stops from the Elizabeth Line at Abbey Wood, serving Canary Wharf, London's West End, and Heathrow airport as well as easy links to the DLR at Woolwich and Lewisham connecting to London City Airport and beyond.



London to Dover, 1675

3.3 Dartford's history

Prehistoric & Ancient Foundations

c. 250,000 years ago: Prehistoric human activity recorded in the Dartford area, notably at Swanscombe, indicating early Iron Age settlement in the Darent Valley.

Early Medieval Period

Dartford derives from the Old English Darent + ford, meaning "the ford of the River Darent," an Anglo-Saxon name reflecting its 'use' and 'geography'.

5th – 7th centuries: Following the end of Roman control, an Anglo-Saxon settlement consolidated at the River Darent crossing, continuing to use the former Roman route to establish local power, trade and movement control, laying the foundations of Dartford.

Medieval Market Town

12th – 13th centuries: Dartford formally develops as a market town, focused around the High Street, parish church (Holy Trinity), and river crossing.

1356: Dartford Priory founded just west of the High Street, becoming a major religious and economic landholder influencing the layout of the town centre.

14th – 15th centuries: Growth of inns, workshops, and cottages along the High Street and surrounding lanes; Dartford serves pilgrims travelling to Canterbury.



High Street 1830

Tudor Transformation

1530s: Dissolution of the Monasteries leads to the destruction of Dartford Priory; the site is redeveloped as a royal manor for Henry VIII, altering land ownership and town structure.

1576: Dartford Grammar School founded near the town centre, reinforcing Dartford's civic importance.

Industrial Revolution

18th century: Dartford town centre thrives as an industrial and engineering hub, with paper mills, iron works, and engineering workshops clustered close to the river and High Street.

1785: J & E Hall engineering works established in Dartford, reinforcing the town centre's role in innovation and manufacturing.

Early 20th century

Early 1900s: Dartford town centre remains busy, mixing retail, markets, industry, and civic uses; paper and pharmaceutical industries dominate employment. Public library opens (1916), Dartford Museum opens (1921) and War Memorial is unveiled (1922).

Interwar period: Gradual decline of river-based industry begins, though the town centre remains a strong retail and service hub.



Dartford Creek 1950

Late 20th Century Retail Era

1980s – 1990s: Opening of the Priory Shopping Centre introduces covered shopping and large retail units, shifting focus away from traditional street-based shopping.

Late 1990s: Decline of several independent shops and under-investment in public realm begins to impact town centre vitality.



Burrough Wellcome Chemical Works, 1921

Roman period

1st – 4th centuries AD: Dartford first developed as at a ford of the River Darent on a key Roman road – Watling Street

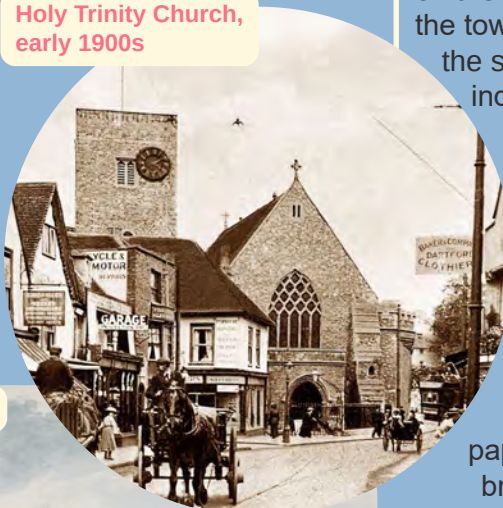
This was a strategic river crossing as Watling Street was one of the most important Roman roads in Britain. It connected the Roman ports of Kent such as Richborough and Dover to London and then onward to other major Roman cities in western Britain such as Wroxeter.

Dartford was a natural stopping point along this route and became a place of trade and exchange.

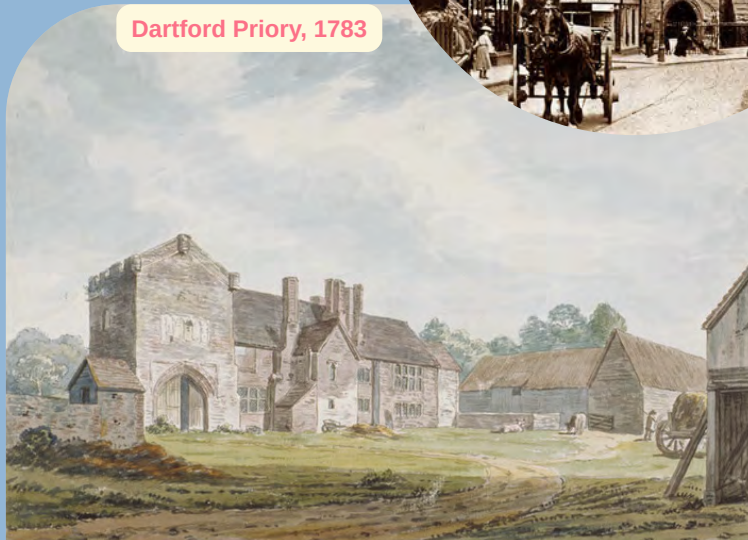
9th – 10th centuries: By the late Saxon period, Dartford becomes part of a royal estate, with evidence of early trade and river-based activity near the current town centre.

11th century (1086): Dartford is recorded in the Domesday Book as a royal manor – being land formerly held by King Edward the Confessor – confirming its importance as an established settlement.

Holy Trinity Church, early 1900s



Dartford Priory, 1783



1588: England's first commercially successful paper mill established on the River Darent near the town centre, marking the start of Dartford's industrial identity.

Early Industrial Expansion

17th century: Water- powered industries grow along the Darent: paper-making, fulling, brewing, and milling, tightly linked to the town centre.

Late 1600s: The central area becomes more densely developed, with merchants' houses, inns, and civic buildings along the High Street.

Early 1800s: Introduction of mechanised paper-making technology accelerates industrial growth around the Darent.

1827: Gas lights are introduced to streets.

Victorian Town

Mid-19th century: Arrival of the railway (1849) shifts the town's centre of gravity slightly north-east but strengthens Dartford as a commuter and industrial town.

Late 19th century: Expansion of civic buildings, banks, shops, and public institutions; the High Street becomes more commercial in character.



High Street 1902

Post-War

1940s – 1950s: Bomb damage from WWII followed by reconstruction; modern buildings appear alongside older street patterns.

1960s – 1970s: Construction of road infrastructure and ring roads begins to prioritise vehicle movement over pedestrian experience in the town centre.

1970s: Development of modern retail blocks and car-dominated layouts alters the historic High Street environment.

Early 21st Century Challenges

2000 – 2020: Property acquisition on Lowfield Street for a proposed Tesco scheme led to vacancy and decline in the southern area and exacerbated by the Co-op closure in 2007. Regeneration momentum has returned from 2016 through new residential development and renewed investment interest.

High Street 1920



Present Day

Ongoing regeneration, including major Council investment in housing, culture and public realm, is driving Dartford Town Centre's transformation into a walkable, mixed-use destination and supporting new private investment and economic growth.

Market Day 1936



3.4 Dartford today

Dartford as a whole is just 28 square miles in size, more compact than a number of London Boroughs, with the town centre central to all facilities. The town’s railway station sees 4.5 million passengers a year, the busiest station in Kent.

By 2024, the area’s population had expanded to 125,000 (an annual increase rate placing Dartford in the top 10% of all authorities in England & Wales, and at double the average growth).

The median age in Dartford was 37.2 years in 2022, compared with 40.7 across the UK – making Dartford one of the youngest local authority areas outside London and the university cities.



Holy Trinity Church



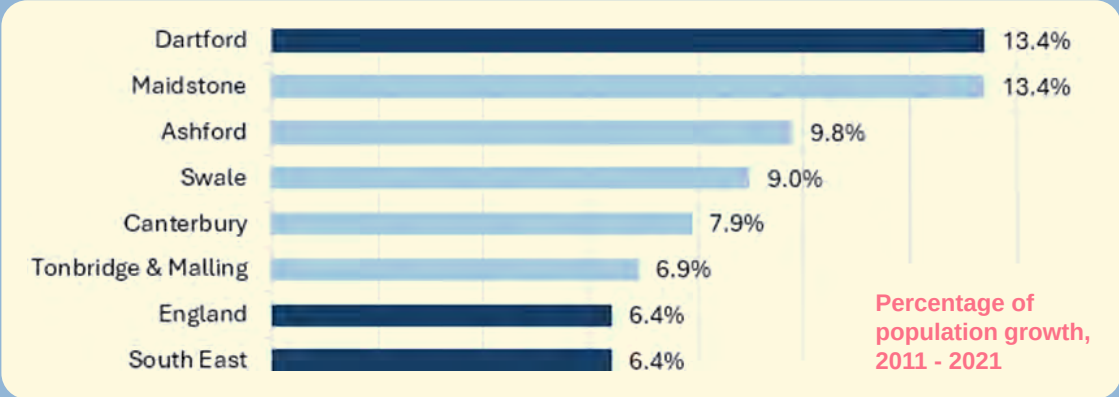
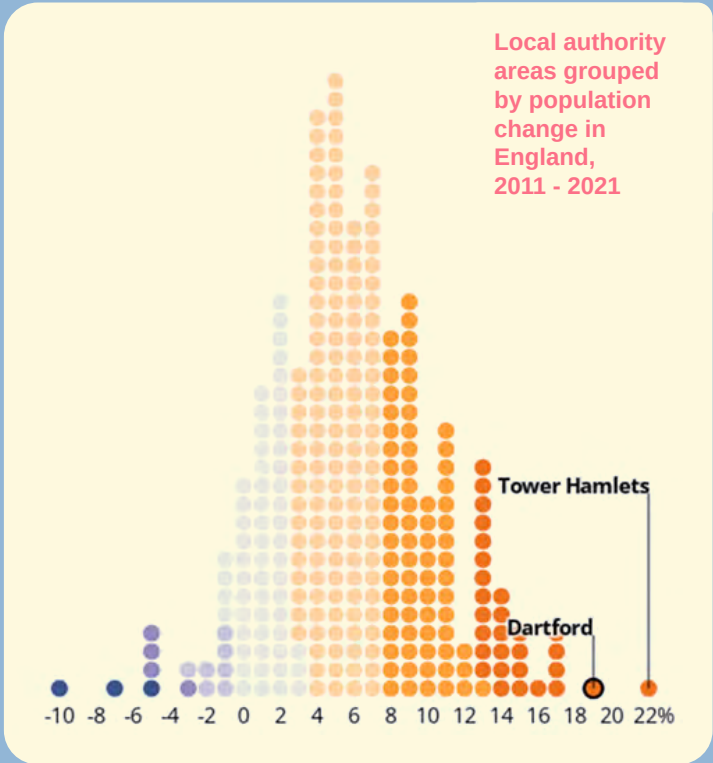
New public realm regeneration works on Market Street

Dynamic growth

Dartford is known for its rapidly growing resident population and pool of local employees. This results from the past couple of decades which have seen very rapid population growth: over the last 20 years, Dartford’s population has grown the fastest of all Kent local authorities increasing by 39%.

Dartford has the:

- Fastest growing young population in country (under 15s increased by nearly 1/3)
- Second fastest growing place overall in country (% increase in residents), the last census showed.
- It is becoming increasingly vibrant and diverse: at the time of the 2011 census, the Borough was slightly less ethnically diverse than the rest of England: by 2021, it was substantially more so.
- Looking ahead to 2032 the population is projected by ONS to increase by nearly 16,000, bringing the total to approximately 135,000. This is equivalent to a +13.4% increase.
- Dartford is projected to experience the largest population increase of all areas in Kent; and this rate is over double the South East and England as a whole that both average +6.4%.



Langley Square development



Economic success

Dartford has seen major jobs growth – an increase of 57% between 2000 and 2021. Businesses are expanding across a wide range of sectors, generating annual output of about £4 billion. Key successes include:

- Business growth has been strong in recent years. In the decade to 2023, Dartford’s total business stock grew by around 37%, compared with 20% nationally.
- Even after accounting for the booming population, new jobs for local residents have expanded. The number of jobs per ‘working age’ resident has increased over time: there is approximately one job for each person aged between 16 and 64, with around 75,000 jobs across the area.
- Levels of economic activity have been consistently higher than the national average: in 2023, 86% of people aged between 16 and 64 were economically active (compared with 78% in the UK overall), and of them, about 86% were in employment.
- Bluewater employs over 7000 people. It is sited in a former quarry of approximately 100 ha (240 acres) in size. With more than 150,000 sqm floorspace (over 300 shops), it is the largest shopping centre in the country outside of London and north-east England.
- The Amazon fulfilment centre in Dartford opened in August 2021 has more than 2,500 permanent employees.



High Street cafés and shops

Town centre strengths

Dartford has a historic market charter, and today is a recognisably active market town. The town has major cultural assets and some of the best secondary schools in London and the South East. Dartford town centre has a number of new shops and exciting independent retailers:

- The town centre has a very low vacancy rate, 5% in the town’s core frontage (2024). This very high occupancy compares favourably with the national vacancy rate of 14% in town centres.
- Dartford’s schools new and old are very popular, in particular the town’s high performing secondary schools. A number regularly feature in the top rated national state schools by the Sunday Times. For example 98.4% of Dartford Grammar School pupils achieved grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs, compared to the national average of 45.9%, according to government data. This made Dartford Grammar School the most over-subscribed school in England per available place in 2024.



Dartford Central Park and Library

3.5 Dartford town centre: central to a growing and green Borough

Thousands of new homes have brought vibrancy and a growing workforce to Dartford town centre, with further development planned in the town centre.

The Fastrack bus rapid transit with dedicated routeways provides connectivity between Dartford town centre, Bluewater, Ebbsfleet and the Borough’s many large employers. This all makes Dartford a place of choice for new residents in the town centre and an unparalleled connected location for business.

Dartford town centre is a vibrant urban hub and market town, it is compact and well-suited for modern business and living, with easy access to the rivers, woodlands, hills and villages of North Kent. Central Park and the River Darent run through the town centre, placing green countryside and the Thames Estuary within a short walk.

The town centre continues to transform, with new apartments and expanding cultural attractions building on the success of the Orchard Theatre, alongside improved local services. New schools complement popular existing secondary schools, and Darent Valley Hospital continues to expand, serving much of Kent and south-east London.

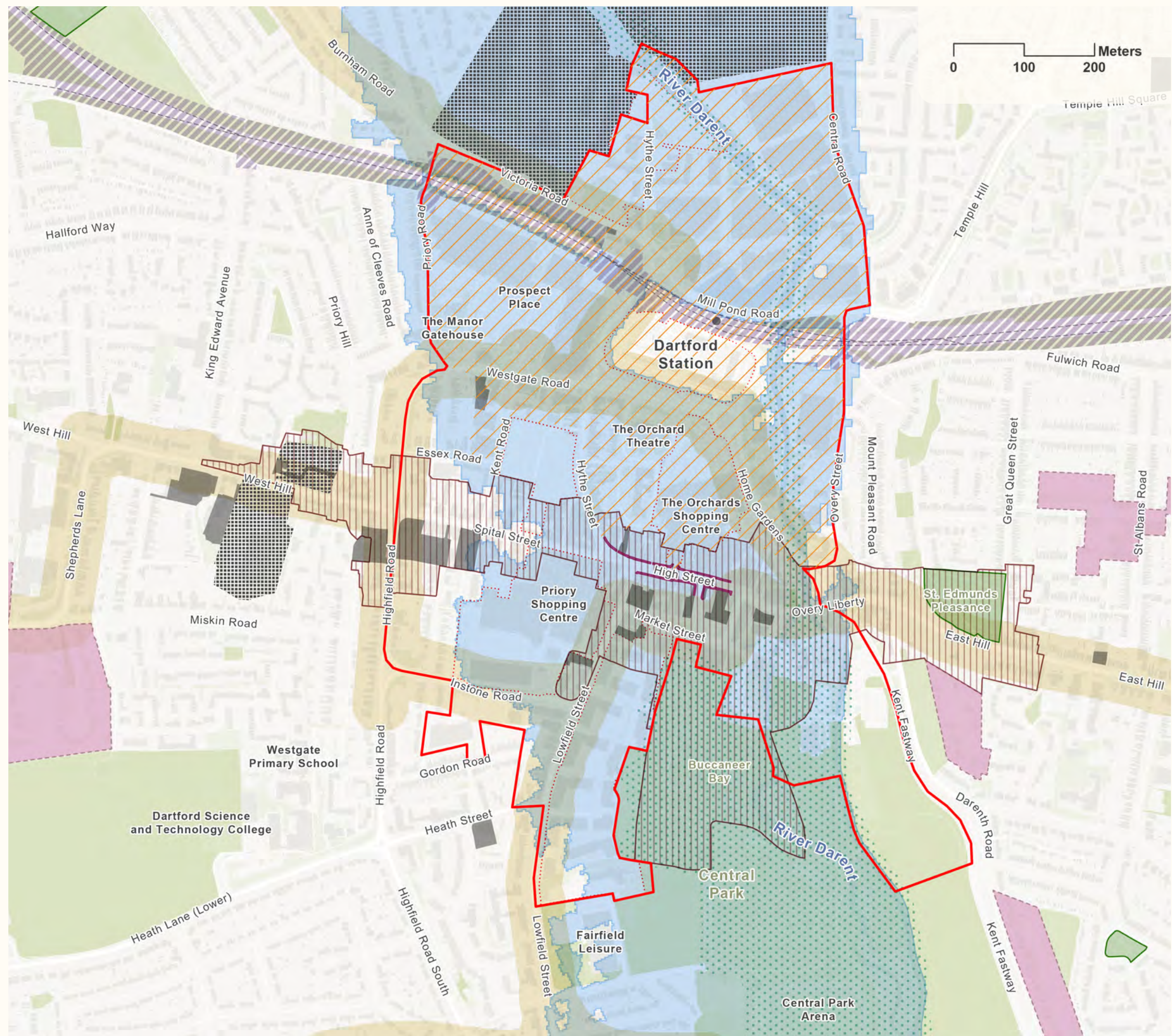
Dartford is a place that will continue to grow and evolve, the masterplan offers an opportunity to be able to shape this change in a positive way, for residents, businesses, and visitors.



Local policy and planning context

The plan illustrates the layered local policy and planning designations that shape Dartford town centre, highlighting a complex interplay between growth opportunities and environmental and heritage constraints. The town centre sits largely within areas of flood risk associated with the River Darent, while also accommodating strategic allocations, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites, and identified employment areas that support regeneration and intensification. Key retail frontages along High Street and the shopping centres are protected, alongside areas of special character and conservation that reflect Dartford's historic core. The plan also identifies borough open spaces, protected green spaces and biodiversity opportunity areas - particularly to the south around Central Park - emphasising the importance of green infrastructure. Together, these overlapping designations establish a strong policy framework that both guides development and influences the form, location and sustainability of future growth within the town centre.

- Air quality management areas
- Area of special character
- Biodiversity opportunity areas
- Borough open space
- Conservation area
- Core frontage
- Crossrail safeguarding area
- Central Dartford boundary
- Flood risk area
- Identified employment areas
- Protected local green space
- Strategic allocations
- SHLAA sites
- Station surrounds and River Darent area



3.7 Built environment

Figure ground

The figure ground plan highlights the spatial structure of Dartford town centre, illustrating a clear contrast between the dense, continuous urban form of the historic core and the more fragmented grain beyond. Along the High Street and within the primary retail area, building footprints form a tight, fine-grain pattern that reinforces active frontages and enclosure. This is punctuated by larger, monolithic blocks such as the Priory and Orchards shopping centres and civic or commercial buildings around the station, which interrupt the finer grain. Surrounding residential areas display a looser, more regular pattern of smaller plots. The River Darent corridor and Central Park introduce significant open space to the south, creating a distinct break in the urban fabric. Overall, the plan reveals a town centre defined by a compact core, larger-scale developments, and strong edges formed by infrastructure and green space.





Urban structure

The urban structure plan illustrates the organisation of Dartford town centre through its network of blocks, streets and key movement corridors. The town centre is structured around the historic High Street, which forms the primary east–west spine, linking a series of interconnected blocks of varying scale and permeability. Larger urban blocks associated with the shopping centres, civic uses and the station area contrast with the finer-grain blocks of the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. The River Darent and Central Park create a strong north–south green corridor that interrupts the block structure and provides a significant landscape setting, while major roads and railway infrastructure act as physical edges and barriers. Home Gardens is a notably wide, dominant corridor, accommodating multiple traffic lanes and forming a significant spatial and visual break in the urban fabric. Its scale contrasts with the finer-grain streets of the surrounding network, creating a vehicle-focused environment that limits pedestrian permeability and weakens connections between the High Street, the station area, and Central Park. As a result, Home Gardens reads less as an integrated street and more as a barrier within the overall urban structure. Overall, the plan highlights a clear but fragmented urban framework, where connectivity and block permeability vary across the town centre.

Urban block





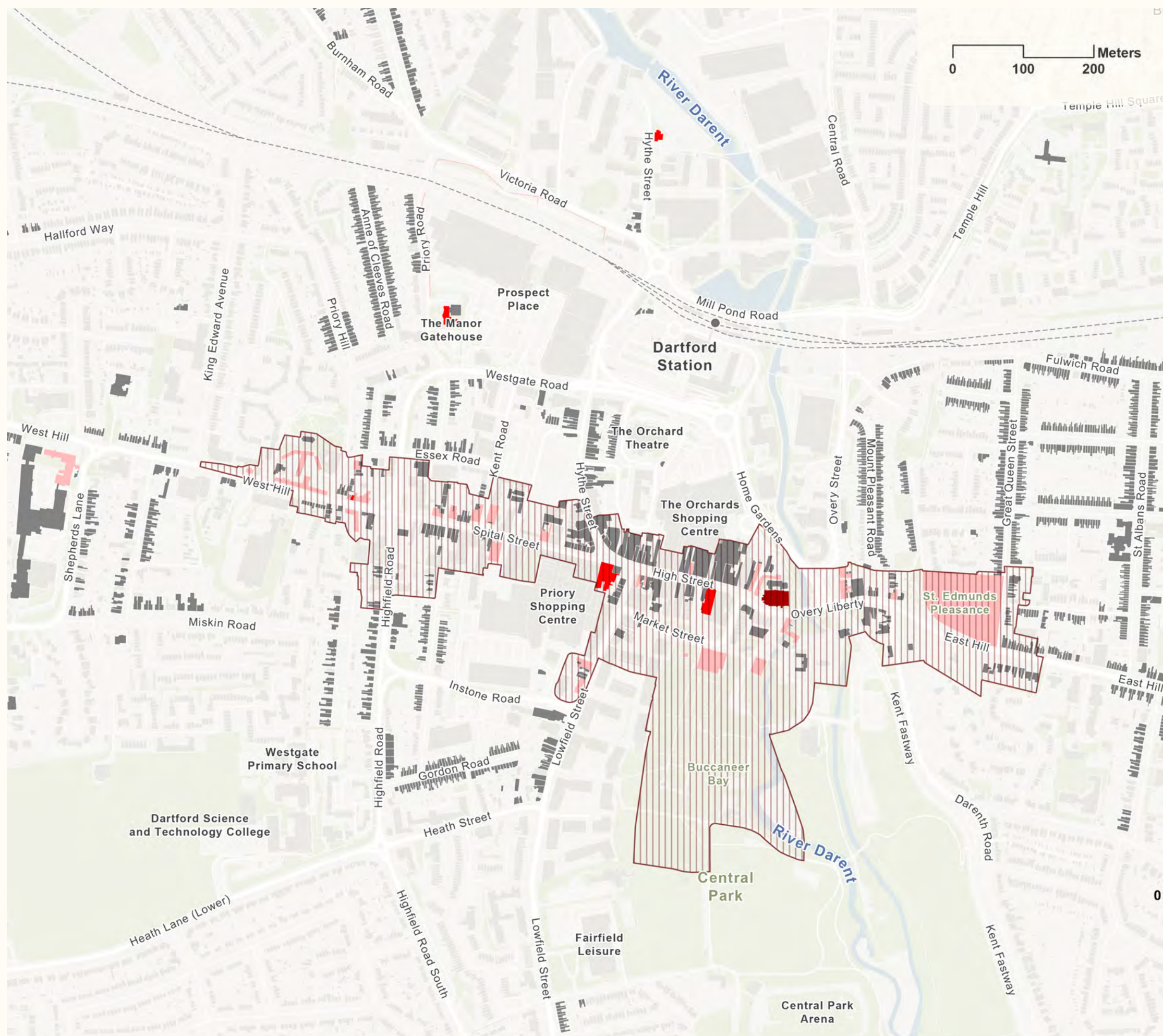
Conservation and heritage

The plan illustrates the distribution of heritage assets and the conservation area within Dartford town centre, highlighting a strong historic spine centred along the High Street (the Roman Road Watling Street) and extending east-west. The conservation area encompasses much of this corridor, reflecting its significance as the historic core, with a concentration of listed buildings - including Grade I, II* and II - clustered along key frontages and around Market Street. These assets are complemented by a wider pattern of pre-1919 buildings that reinforce the traditional urban grain and character. Key buildings here include Church of the Holy Trinity (Grade I), 45 High Street and The Royal Victoria and Bull Inn (Grade II*), and Acacia Hall, Dartford Museum and Library, the Bridge House, and 1-17 Overy Street.

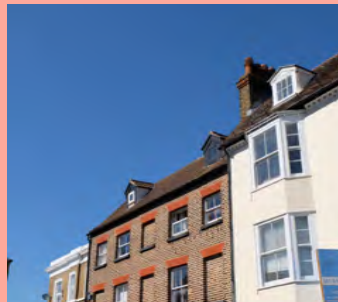
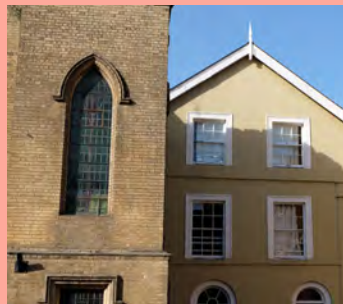
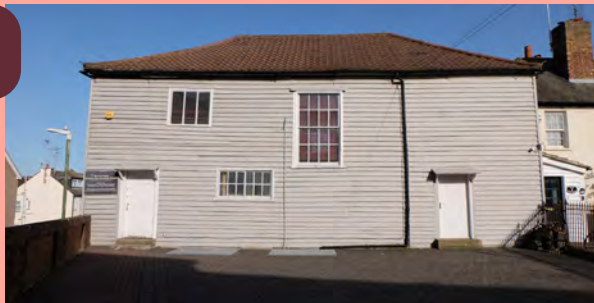
Beyond the core, heritage features become more dispersed but with notable landmarks such as The Manor Gatehouse and 151 Hythe Street - both Grade II* buildings - being focal points. St Edmunds Pleasance garden sits on East Hill, on the eastern edge of the town centre and offers wide views across Dartford. The River Darent corridor and later town centre developments create areas where historic continuity is weaker, emphasising the importance of conserving and enhancing the remaining heritage fabric as part of future regeneration.

There are a number of high-quality historic buildings which are currently vacant and falling into disrepair including Acacia Hall and Coach House, and the Grade II* listed 45 High Street.

-  Conservation area
-  Grade II*
-  Grade I
-  Grade II
- Building period
-  Pre 1919



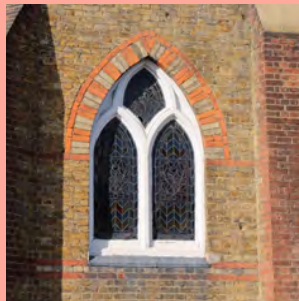
Historic buildings



Architectural details



Architectural details



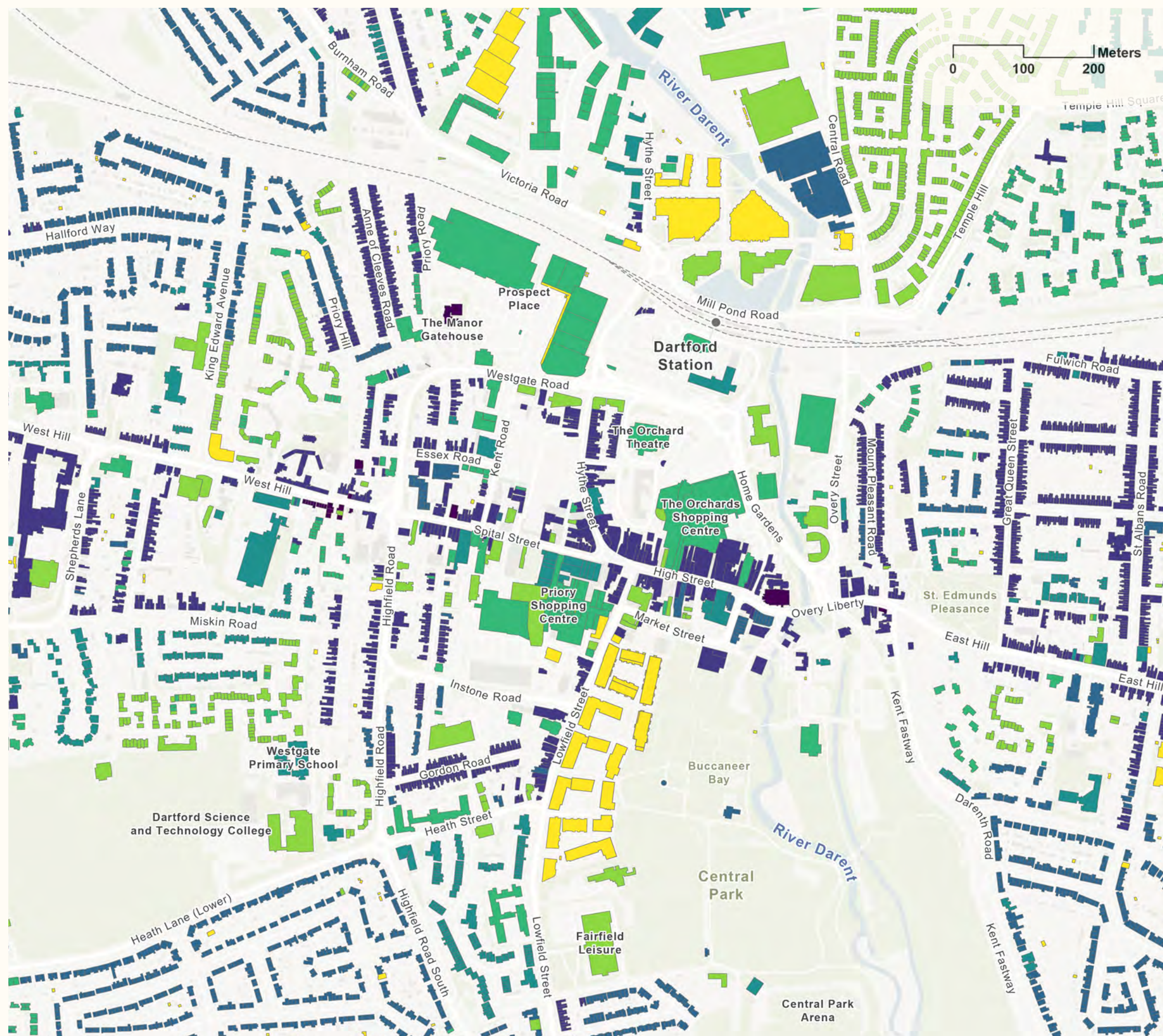


Building character

The building character plan reveals the varied architectural periods and layers that define Dartford town centre, illustrating a clear concentration of historic buildings along the High Street and surrounding streets, where pre-1919 and early 20th-century structures reinforce the traditional grain and identity of the town. Post-war redevelopment has introduced larger, more uniform building forms, particularly around the Priory and Orchards shopping centres and the station area, creating a noticeable contrast in scale and character. More recent development is evident in pockets around the town centre core and along the river corridor, reflecting ongoing regeneration. The surrounding residential areas are largely characterised by consistent mid-20th century housing, with more contemporary infill. Overall, the plan highlights a diverse but fragmented townscape, where historic character coexists alongside modern interventions.

Building Period

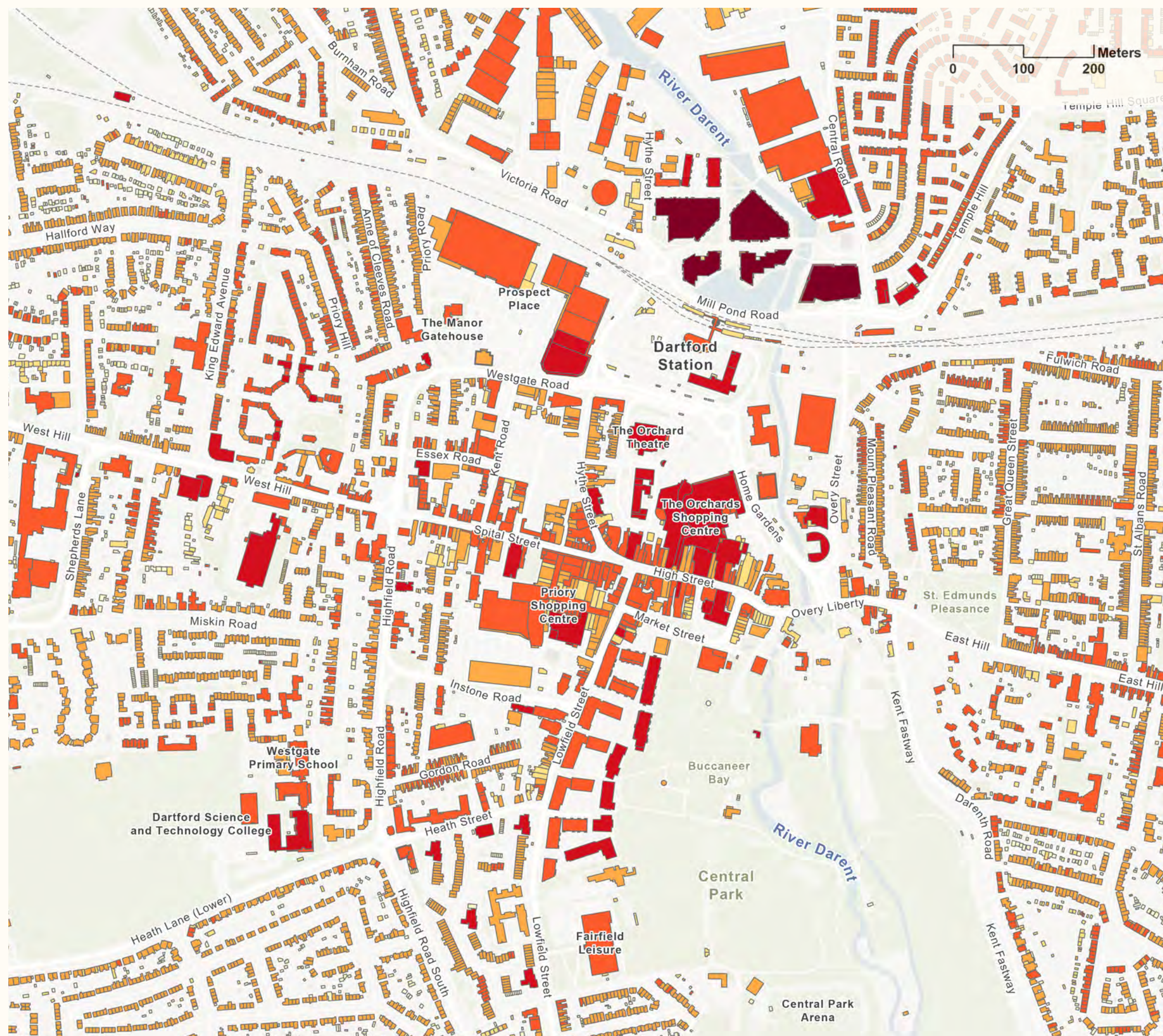
- Pre-1837
- Pre-1919
- 1919-1944
- 1945-1979
- 1980-1999
- 2000-2019
- 2020- present





Building heights

The building heights plan shows that Dartford town centre is generally characterised by a predominantly low- to medium-rise urban form, with most buildings ranging between 2-5 storeys across the wider area. Taller buildings are concentrated in key locations, particularly around the station, Mill Pond Road, and within recent redevelopment areas, where buildings of 6-8 storeys and above form localised clusters and landmarks. The High Street maintains a relatively consistent mid-rise scale, reinforcing its historic character, while surrounding residential neighbourhoods are typically lower in height. This variation creates a clear hierarchy, with taller elements marking areas of intensification and transport connectivity, set against a largely modest townscape.

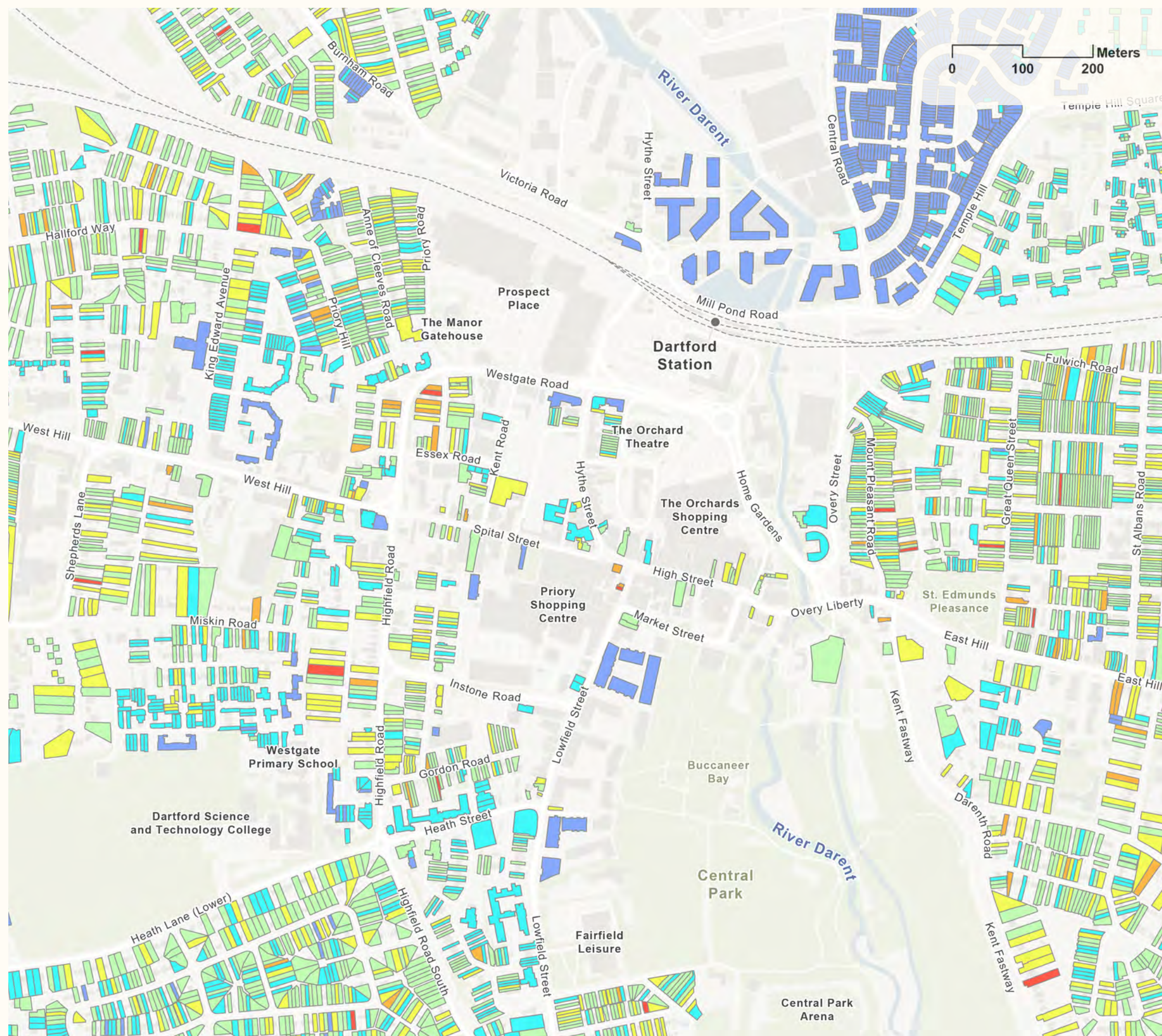
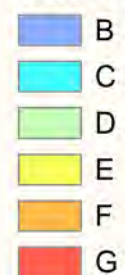




Climate efficiency

The energy efficiency plan illustrates the distribution of EPC ratings across Dartford town centre, revealing a varied performance profile with a broad mix of ratings from B-D to lower-performing E-G buildings. There are no A rated buildings currently measured in Dartford, presenting significant room for continued improvement. Some higher-rated properties are scattered throughout, but there are clusters of more efficient buildings in newer residential areas around Mill Pond Road, Temple Hill and Lowfield Street, while older housing stock and parts of the historic core tend to exhibit lower energy performance. However, the plan also clearly highlights a significant limitation: large areas of the town centre - particularly key commercial sites and town centre blocks - lack available EPC data. This absence of comprehensive information presents a challenge for fully understanding energy performance patterns and identifying priority areas for retrofit, limiting the ability to develop a robust, evidence-led decarbonisation strategy.

Current EPC rating



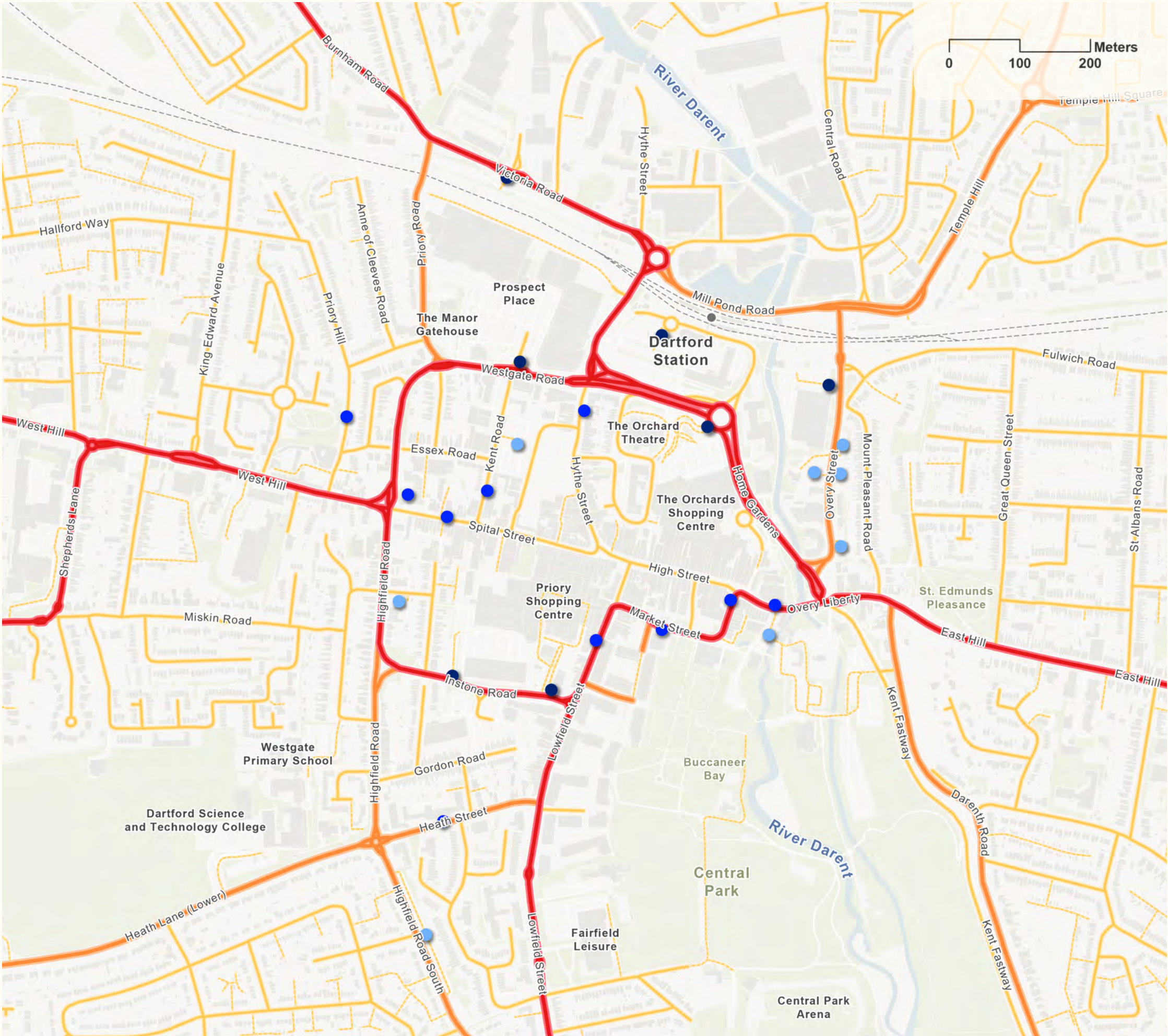
Vehicular movement and parking

The vehicular movement plan highlights a strongly defined road hierarchy within Dartford town centre, structured around a series of primary A-roads that form a ring and radial network accommodating through-traffic. Key corridors, including East Hill, West Hill, and Home Gardens, carry significant traffic volumes and connect to strategic junctions around the station and town centre core. Secondary and local streets provide finer-grain access into residential areas and the High Street, although connectivity is often indirect.

The concentration of junctions and the scale of primary routes create areas of congestion and act as barriers to movement, particularly for pedestrians. Traffic is also a significant issue in Dartford. Congestion around the Dartford Crossing has a knock-on effect on Dartford town centre, causing frequent delays, increased pollution, and reduced accessibility. This in addition to local traffic often impacts key local routes and junctions, particularly during peak times. This congestion can deter visitors, affect local trade, and contribute to a generally less pleasant urban environment.

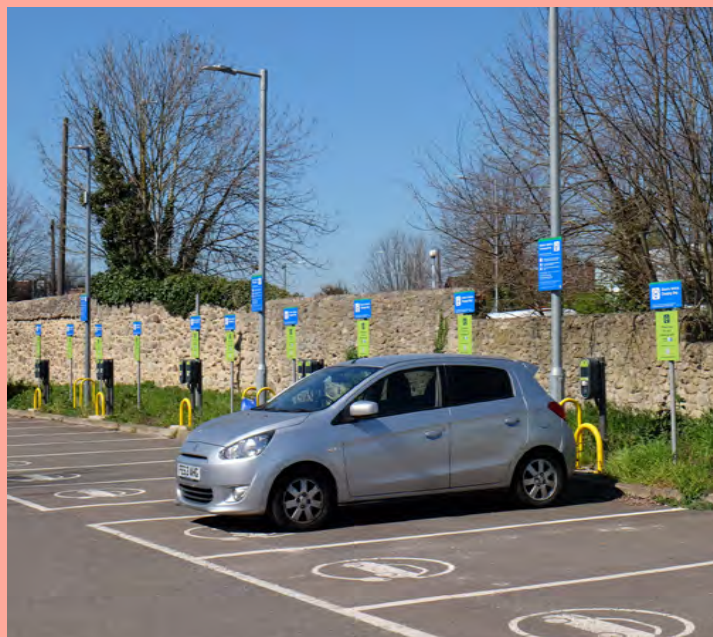
The plan also shows a distribution of car parks - both public and private - reinforcing the town centre's accessibility by car but further embedding a vehicle-dominated environment.

- Primary A Road
- Secondary Road
- Local Road
- Access Road
- Car parks
- Council
- On street
- Private



Vehicular issues

Dartford is significantly affected by traffic dominance, extensive surface parking and vehicle-focused streets which reduce the quality and attractiveness of the town centre. Roads and large junctions create physical and psychological barriers to pedestrian movement, fragmenting key destinations and limiting opportunities for active travel. Car parking often occupies spaces in front of buildings and along important streets, creating inactive edges and weakening the relationship between buildings and the public realm. Congestion is a recurring issue on key routes, while evidence of illegal and informal parking, including on recently enhanced public spaces, undermines investment in the town centre environment. The continued use of historic streets by large goods vehicles further exacerbates these challenges, generating noise, pollution and safety concerns that are often incompatible with the scale and character of the town's older urban areas.

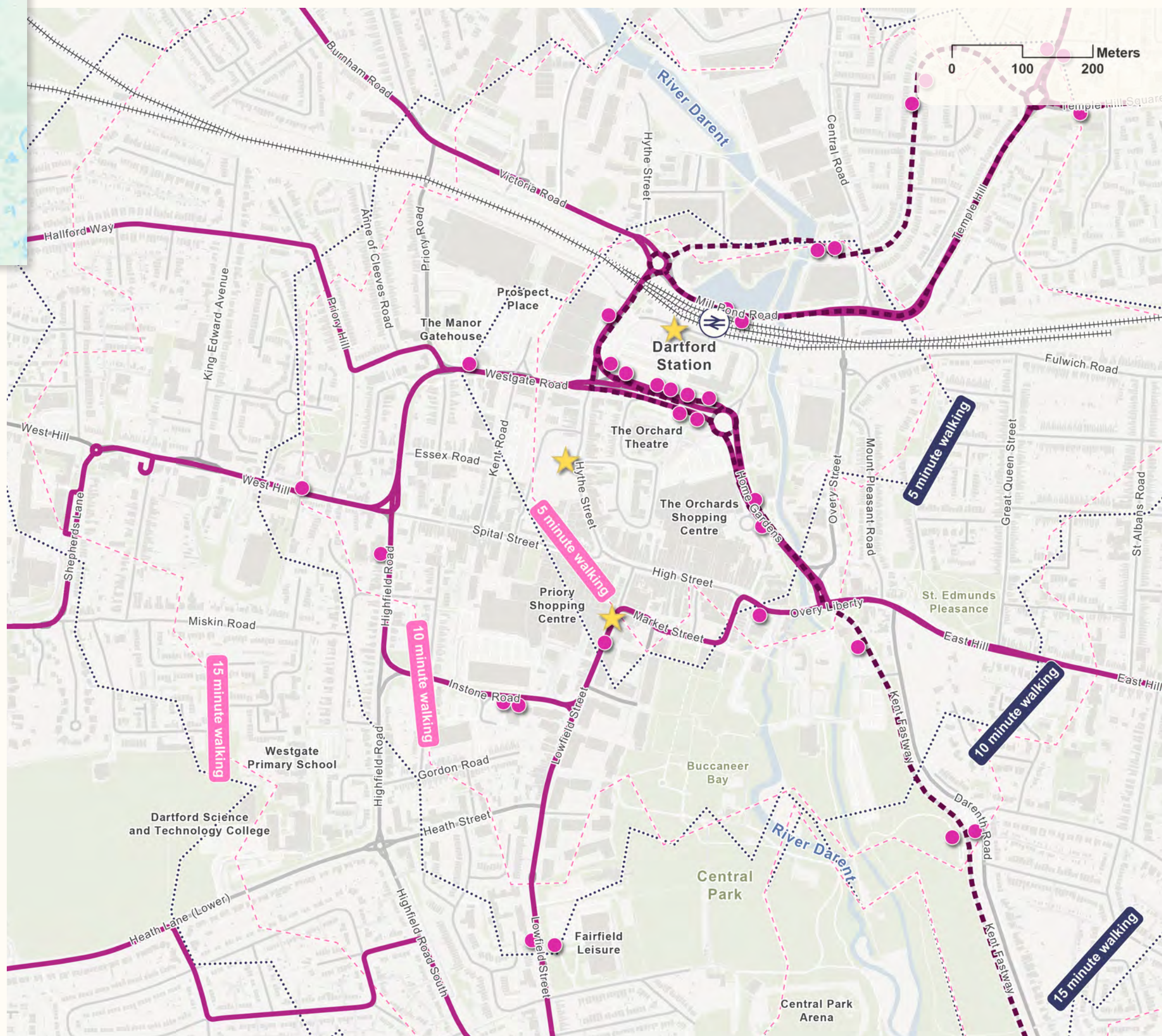




Public transport

The public transport plan highlights Dartford as a key transport hub, centred on Dartford Station which provides strong rail connectivity and is a primary interchange point for many regional lines. Bus routes converge to the south of the station on Home Gardens, as well as a high concentration of bus stops serving the periphery of the town centre core and High Street. The Fastrack bus network provides higher-frequency services along strategic routes, improving connections to surrounding areas. However, pedestrian connections between Home Gardens and the Station and town centre are made difficult due to the level changes of the Station Mound and a lack of safe crossings, as well as a lack of clear wayfinding contributing to the poor legibility. Taxi ranks are located at key destinations, presenting accessibility for different users. The concentration of services around the station and main roads reflects a transport network that is efficient but somewhat corridor-focused, with more limited penetration into surrounding areas away from the primary routes.

- Fastrack Bus Network
- Bus routes
- Primary A Road
- Secondary Road
- Local Road
- Access Road
- ==== Rail line
- Bus stop
- ★ Taxi rank
- Walking Time from Dartford bus stops (Home Gardens)
- Walking Time from Station



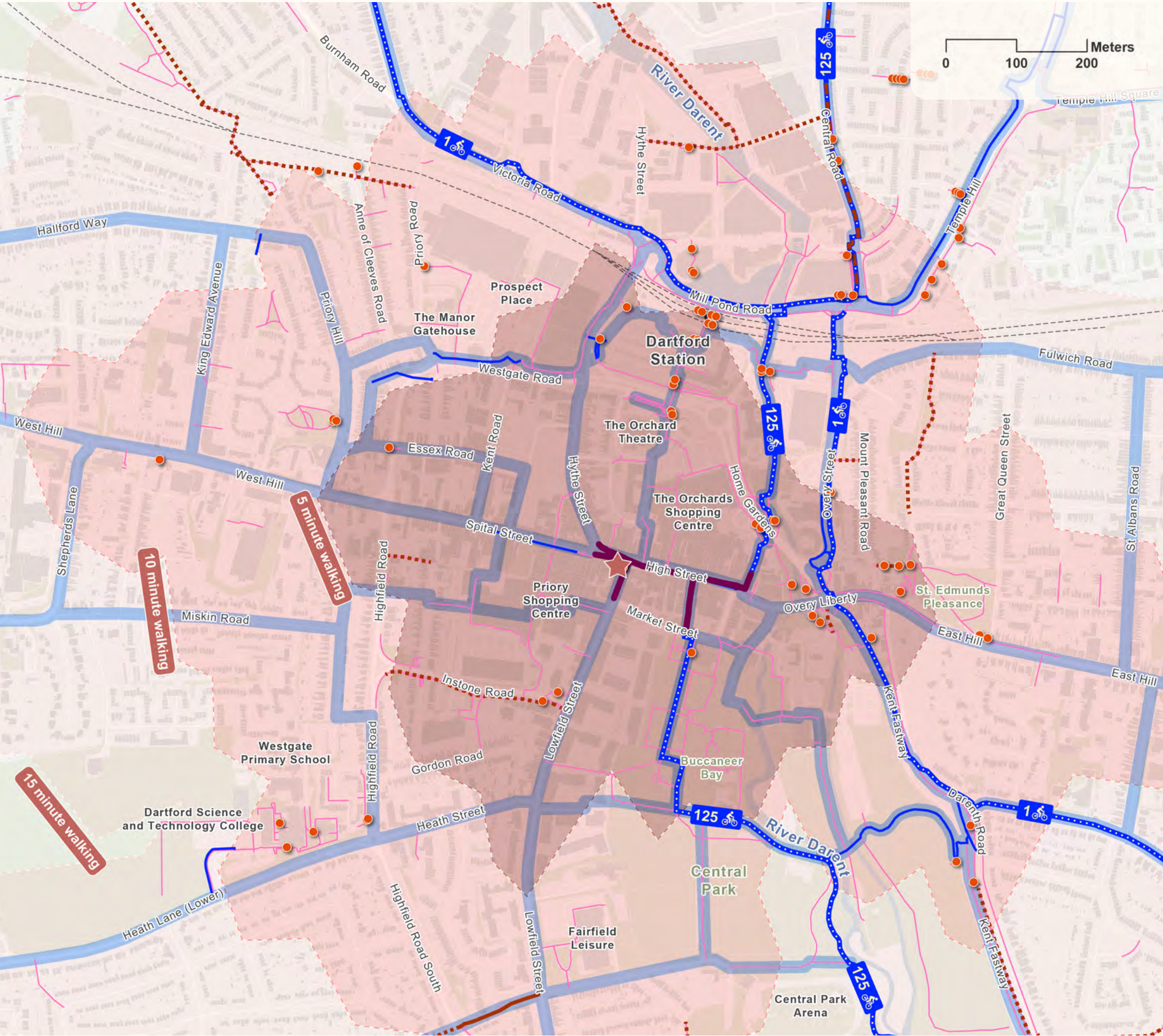


Walking and cycling

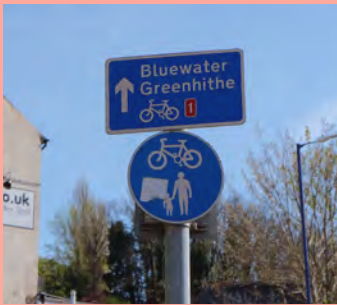
The walking and cycling plan illustrates the existing and proposed active travel network within Dartford town centre, highlighting a mix of national and local pedestrian routes, cycle infrastructure and public rights of way. The town centre core benefits from a relatively dense network of footways and pedestrianised streets, particularly along the High Street, with most key destinations falling within a 5-minute walking catchment from the centre (notionally One Bell Corner on the High Street).

Strategic cycle routes, including the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 and 125, run through the area - along the River Darent corridor and the north-south route Overy Street. NCN Route 125 is a shorter, 3.6-mile route that connects Brooklands Lake to the River Thames via Dartford town centre and Central Park. This route is mostly traffic-free and includes scenic views along the River Darent. These will be supported by the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) proposed improvements, enabling better integration across Dartford. However, connectivity is uneven, with discontinuities in cycling infrastructure and barriers created by major roads and junctions. The plan also highlights constraints such as steps and limited east-west permeability, indicating opportunities to enhance legibility, safety and continuity for walking and cycling across the town centre.

- National cycle route
 - Cycleway
 - LCWIP proposed routes
 - Pedestrianised street
 - Footway
 - Steps
 - ★ Walking Time from Dartford town centre (One Bell Corner)
 - ≤5 mins
 - ≤10 mins
 - ≤15 mins
- PROWs
- Public Bridleway
 - Public Footpath
 - Restricted Byway



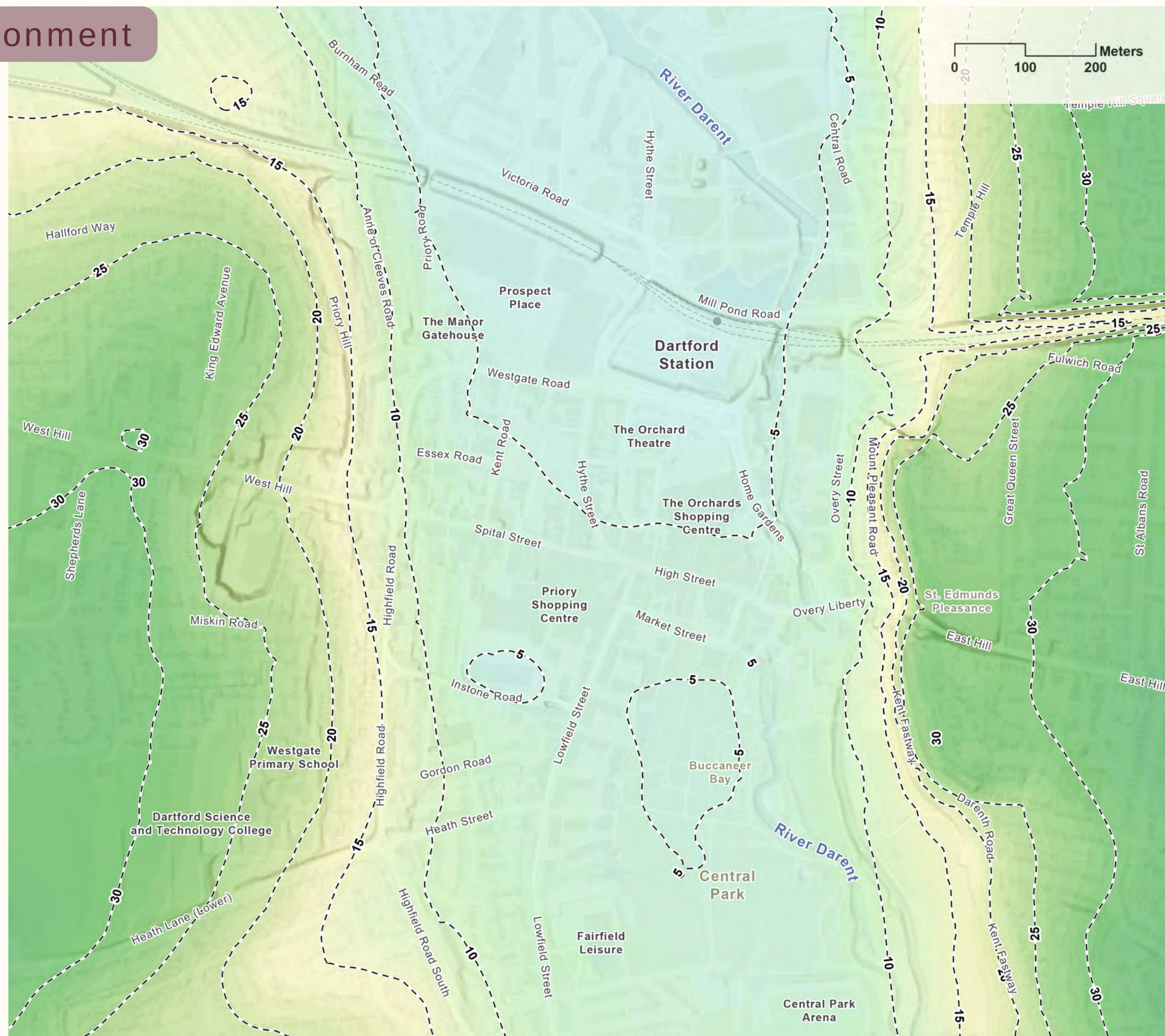
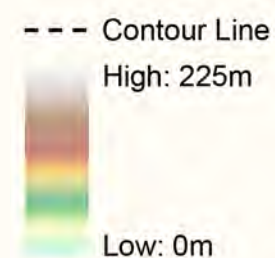
Active movement



3.9 Natural environment

Topography

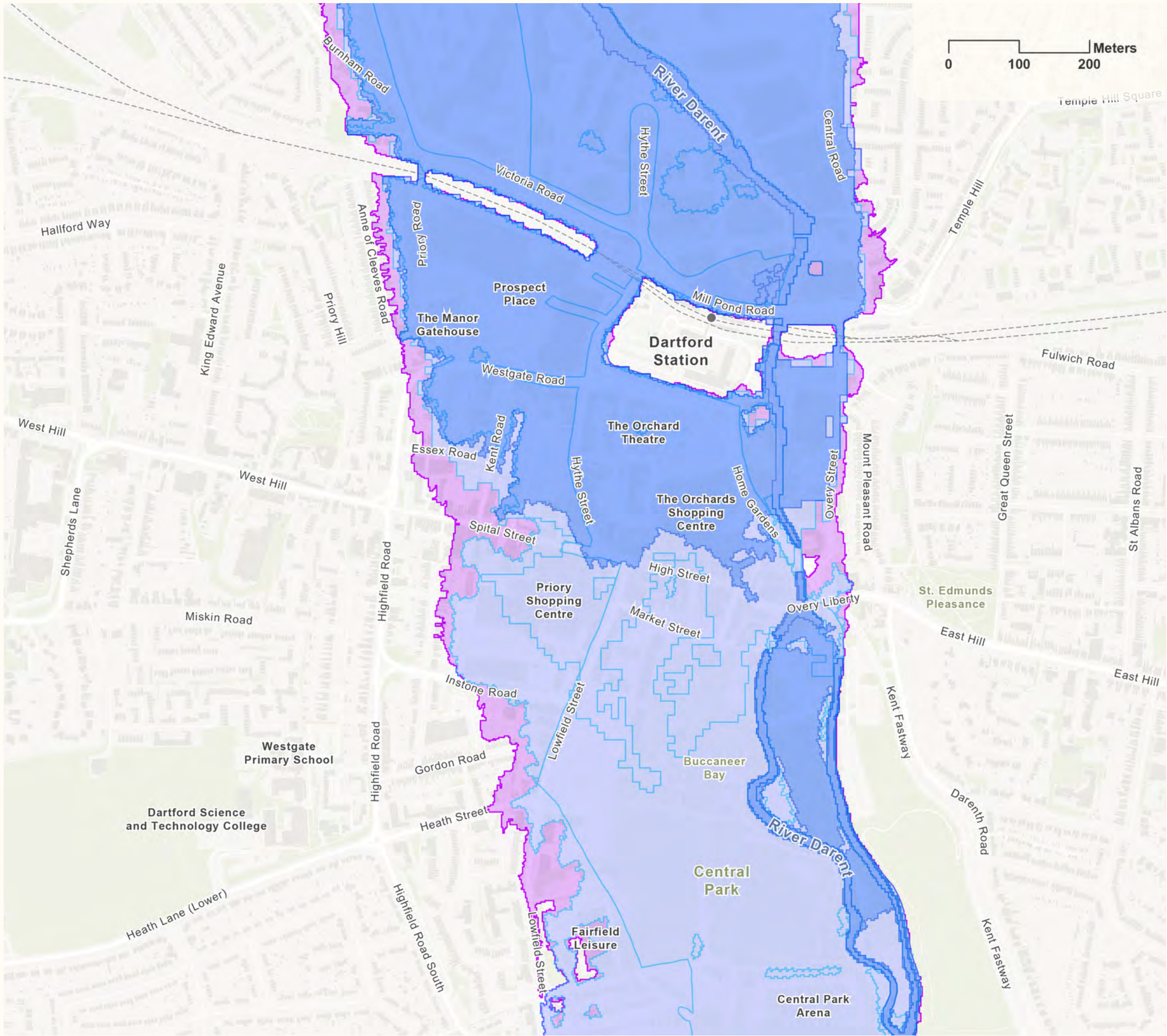
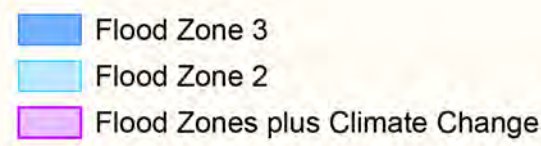
The topography plan demonstrates that Dartford town centre is positioned within a low-lying river valley, shaped by the River Darent which runs north-south through the area. The town centre core, including the High Street and station, sits on the lowest ground, generally around 5–10 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), creating a relatively flat central area. This is framed by rising land to the east and west, where levels increase more steeply to around 25–30 metres, particularly along East Hill, West Hill and surrounding residential areas. These changes in elevation create a defined bowl-like landform, influencing key routes, views and movement patterns, while also reinforcing the prominence of higher ground and the spatial containment of the town centre.





Flooding

The flooding plan highlights the significant influence of the River Darent on Dartford town centre, with the entire town centre valley falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The highest risk areas are concentrated along the river corridor, extending through Central Park and into the town centre core around the station, High Street, and shopping centres. When accounting for climate change, the extent of flood risk areas increases further, affecting a substantial proportion of the town centre. In contrast, surrounding higher ground to the east and west sits outside of flood risk areas. This pattern reflects the underlying topography and emphasises the need for careful flood risk management and resilient design in future development, particularly within the low-lying central areas.





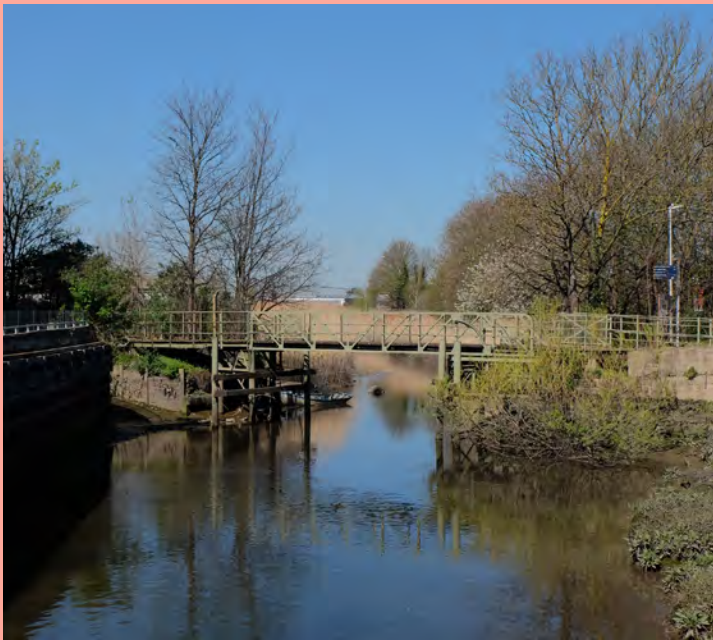
Green and blue infrastructure

The green and blue infrastructure plan highlights the role of the River Darent as the primary green and blue corridor running north–south through Dartford town centre, forming a central environmental and landscape asset. This is complemented by significant areas of green space, most notably Central Park to the south, which provides a large, multifunctional open space including sports pitches, formal gardens, and tree-lined areas. Smaller pockets of green infrastructure, including public parks, incidental green spaces, and street trees, are distributed more sparsely throughout the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods. While these assets contribute to biodiversity, recreation and visual amenity, the plan indicates that green infrastructure within the core is relatively fragmented, with limited connectivity between spaces. This highlights opportunities to strengthen green links, enhance the river corridor, and integrate nature more effectively into the urban fabric.

- Water
- Trees
- Public park
- Green space
- Woodland
- Roadside natural fill
- Public garden
- Sports pitch
- Playground



Open spaces





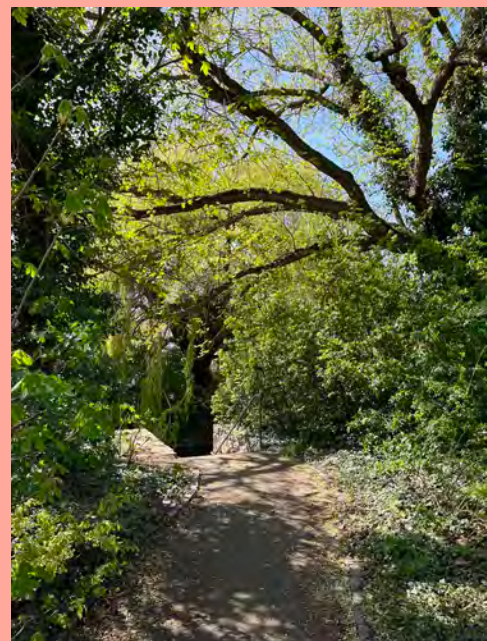
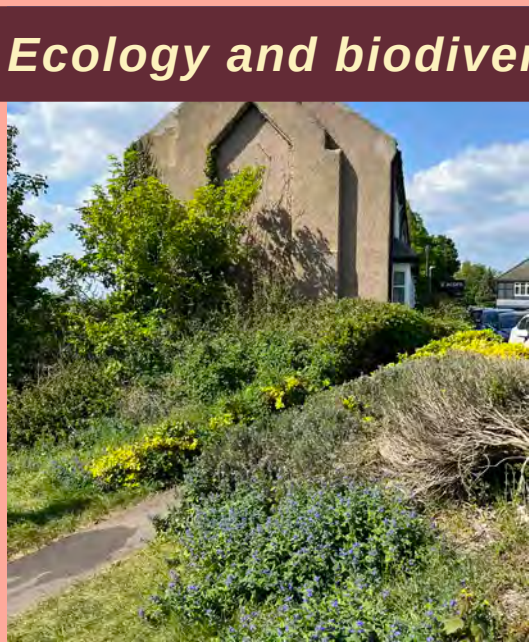
Ecology

The plan illustrates the distribution of biodiversity assets and constraints across Dartford, highlighting the River Darent corridor and Central Park as the primary ecological spine. Dartford supports a mix of habitats, including freshwater environments, grassland, and tree cover, with concentrations of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) contributing to ecological value. Areas identified as important for biodiversity and potential habitat enhancement are focused along the river and green spaces and pockets of irreplaceable habitat reinforce their sensitivity. The wider town centre is characterised by a more limited and fragmented ecological network. The plan also identifies varying tree conditions and requirements for new planting, emphasising opportunities to strengthen biodiversity, improve habitat connectivity, and integrate green infrastructure more effectively within future development.

- Trees
- Tree Preservation Orders**
 - T.P.O. Trees
 - T.P.O. Group
 - T.P.O. Area
 - T.P.O. Woodland
- Elm Tree Location**
 - Existing
 - Required
 - T.P.O. Woodland
- Tree Survey 2025**
 - Dead
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Areas Could be Important for Biodiversity (KCC)
- Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (KCC)**
 - Areas of Irreplaceable Habitat
- Potential Measures (Kent Wildlife Trust)**
 - Urban
 - Species Rich Grasslands
 - Freshwater Habitats
 - Coastal Habitats



Ecology and biodiversity

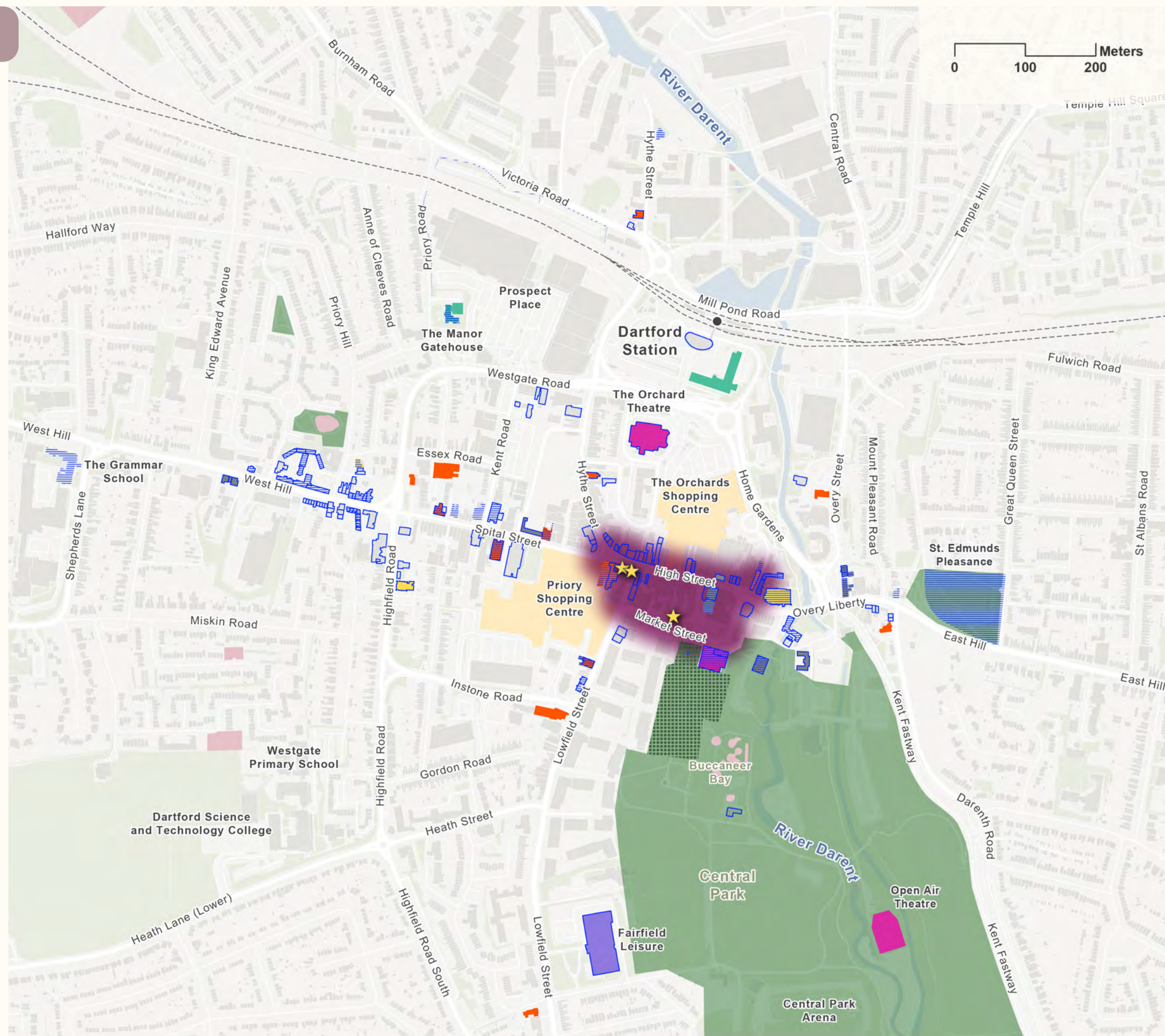


3.10 Public realm

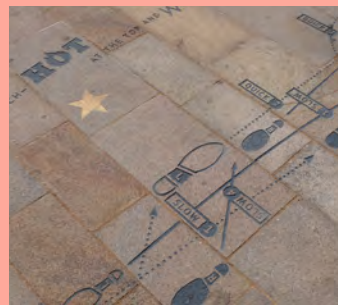
Key landmarks and points of interest

The plan highlights a concentration of key landmarks and points of interest within Dartford town centre, particularly along the High Street and historic east-west spine road (The London to Dover Roman road - Watling Street) including West Hill, Spital Street and East Hill, which form the primary activity spine. Cultural and civic landmarks, including the Orchard Theatre, the Holy Trinity Church, Dartford Library and Museum, and other prominent buildings, act as key anchors, while heritage assets and listed buildings are dispersed along historic routes. Central Park to the south provides a significant recreational landmark, complementing smaller public spaces and pedestrianised areas within the core. A number of listed buildings are vacant, presenting an opportunity for regeneration and to create a stronger town centre with a unique identity. Overall, the pattern reflects a well-defined centre with a strong cluster of destinations, supported by more distributed features across the wider area.

-  Listed building
-  Key high-quality building
-  Vacant key building
-  Cultural landmark
-  Civic landmark
-  Historic church
-  Pub or social club
-  Fairfield Leisure Centre
-  Public park
-  Playground
-  Public garden
-  Shopping Centre
-  Public art
-  Pedestrianised area

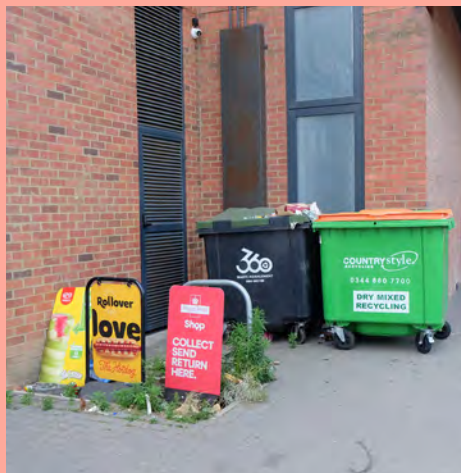


Key streets and spaces



Public realm issues

Parts of Dartford town centre suffer from a range of public realm issues that detract from its quality, character and usability. Although a number of town centre streets are undergoing a programme of improvement works, some Pedestrian routes are compromised by poor pavement treatments, inconsistent surfacing and areas where footways disappear. The streetscape is affected by visual clutter, with an over-abundance of signage, bollards and utility cabinets competing for space and reducing legibility. Poorly located bins and service infrastructure add to the sense of disorder, while some landscape areas are under-maintained, with patchy and dying planting, overgrown vegetation and neglected green spaces diminishing the overall appearance of the town centre. Cycling infrastructure is also fragmented, with cycle lanes that are discontinuous, poorly defined and often in conflict with pedestrian routes, discouraging active travel. Collectively, these issues can, in some areas, create an environment that feels fragmented, unattractive and dominated by vehicles rather than pedestrians and cyclists.



Signage issues

Some parts of Dartford town centre are affected by poor-quality and visually intrusive signage that detracts from the character and appearance of the streetscape. Shopfronts often feature large, brightly coloured and inconsistent signage, with advertising boards, window graphics and illuminated displays creating a cluttered and fragmented visual environment. In many locations, shop windows are heavily covered with posters, vinyl wraps and advertisements, reducing visibility into active frontages and creating a blank, unwelcoming appearance at street level. The lack of a coordinated design approach results in poor integration with surrounding buildings, particularly in heritage areas, reducing the sense of place, weakening the town centre's identity and undermine the quality of the public realm.



3.11 Key views





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.



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.



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 East Hill which are Grade II listed).



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.



5. The Manor House

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.



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.





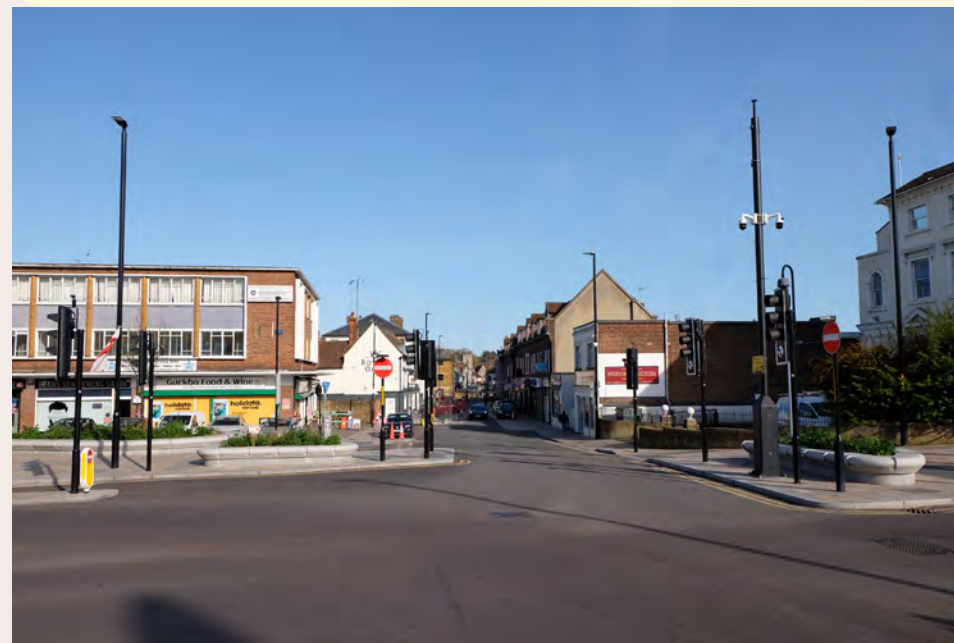
1. East Hill

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.



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.



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.



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.





1. River Darent Views

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.



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.



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.



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.



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.

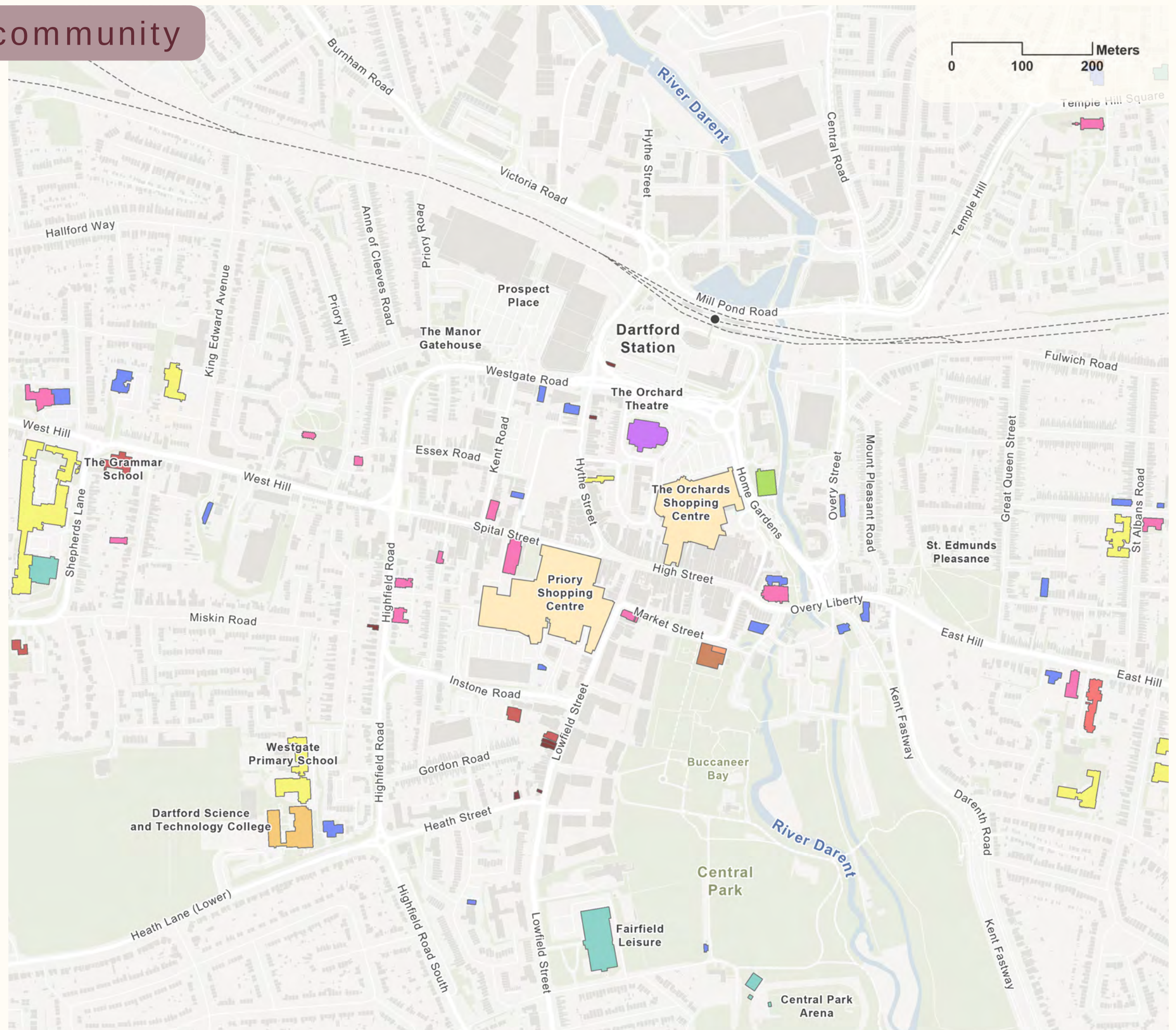


3.12 Culture and community

Cultural and community spaces

The plan highlights the distribution of cultural, community, and civic assets across Dartford town centre, illustrating a concentration of key facilities within and around the High Street core. Major anchors include the Orchard Theatre, Fairfield Leisure Centre and the Priory and Orchards Shopping Centres, which play a central role in shaping the town centre's cultural and commercial identity. However, vacancy is relatively high within the shopping centres in comparison to the rest of the town centre, particularly in the Priory Shopping Centre. Therefore, there is an opportunity to rethink how these areas can be made more resilient and flexible. Educational uses, including schools and the college, are located primarily on the edges of the centre, while community facilities, places of worship, and healthcare services are more dispersed throughout the town centre as well as in surrounding neighbourhoods. This pattern creates a strong central hub of activity supported by a wider network of local services. Overall, the plan demonstrates a relatively well-provided but spatially varied distribution of community infrastructure, highlighting opportunities to strengthen connections and accessibility between these assets.

- School
- College
- Library
- Museum
- Theatre
- Place Of Worship
- Community Space
- Leisure Or Sports Building
- Hospital
- Health Centre
- Other Medical Building
- Law Court
- Shopping Centre

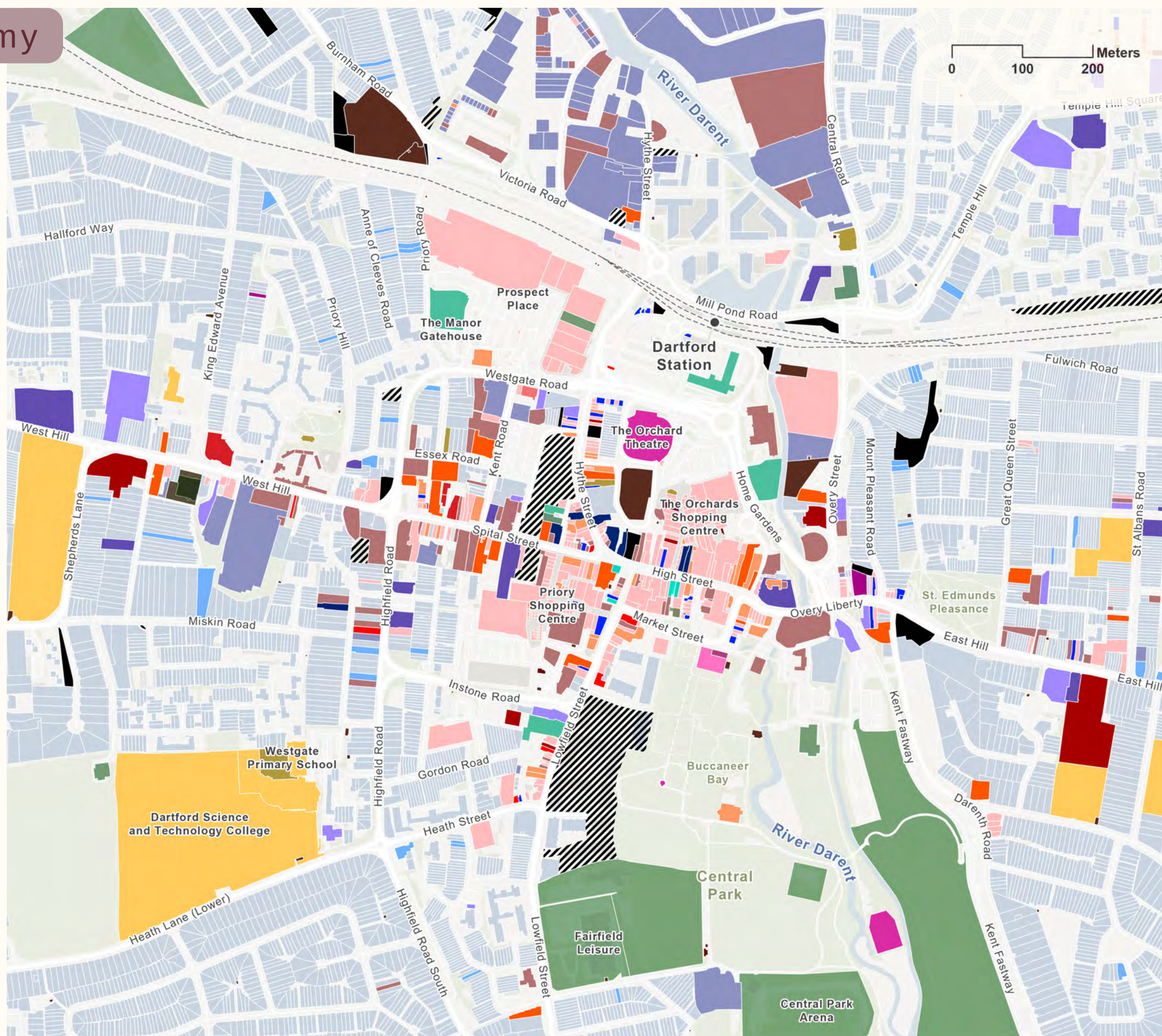


3.13 Local economy

Land use

The land use plan shows a clear concentration of retail, leisure and commercial uses within the town centre core, particularly along the High Street and around the Priors and Orchards Shopping Centres. This is surrounded by predominantly residential neighbourhoods, with community, education and healthcare uses more dispersed throughout. Larger leisure and open space uses are located to the south around Central Park. Overall, the plan highlights a compact, mixed-use centre supported by a wider residential catchment, with some vacant and development sites providing opportunities for regeneration.

- Civic Building
- Museums and Galleries
- Theatres
- Library
- Education
- Nursery
- Community Hall
- Places of Worship
- Health
- Dentist
- Animal Care
- Sports and Leisure
- Commercial
- Retail
- Pubs, Bars and Nightclubs
- Restaurant and Cafes
- Fastfood and Takeaways
- Banks and Financial Services
- Gambling Premises
- Hotels
- Light Industrial
- Public Toilets
- Utilities
- Development Sites
- Vacant Land or Buildings
- Residential
- Homes of Multiple Occupancy
- Care Home

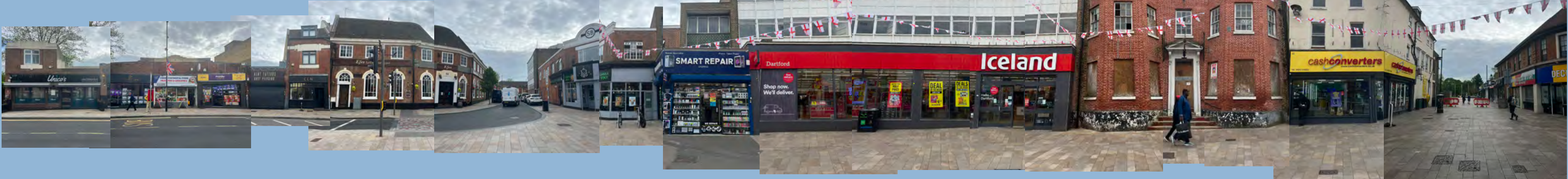


Local businesses



Dartford High Street

Southern elevation



Unico's Mediterranean Restaurant Property King Estate Agents Chari Continental Foods Grocery Store Premier Off-Licence Kent Tattoos Tattoo Shop CLN Beauty Salon Efes Turkish Restaurant Market Street Lanka Spice Restaurant Smart Repair Electronics Iceland Supermarket Vacant Cash Converters Pawnbrokers Market Place



Market Place Decebal Romanian and Bulgarian Grocery Store Wimpy Fast Food Restaurant Savers Discount Store Coral Betting Shop Admiral Betting Shop and Casino Memz Hairdressers Ryman Stationary Shop TG Jones Stationary Shop Post Office Vacant IQ Gadgets Electronics Valentino's Barber Premier Work Support Recruitment Agency Esquires Coffee Cafe Lowfield Street



Lowfield Street Paddy Power Betting Shop The Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel Hotel and Pub

The southern elevation of Dartford's High Street is where a number of streets join the historic road, including Market Street, Market Place and Lowfield Street, contrasting with the northern side which has historic passageways. The units include three Betting and Gambling Shops, fast food takeaways, a cafe, two restaurants, hotel, two stationary shops and post office, grocery stores, and a number of discount and other stores. There are two vacant units, one of which is a large, grand listed building, next door to Iceland, having a big negative impact on the High Street.

Northern elevation



Clifton & Co Estate Agents Lloyds Bank Vacant Natwest Bank Pickwick Jewellers Pawnbrokers Holland and Barrett Health Store Vacant SHAN'S Fishmongers, Butchers and Grocery Store Bulls Head Yard Veg & More Grocery Store Valentino's Barber Greggs MK Mix London Orchard's Shopping Centre



Orchard's Shopping Centre HSBC Bank Santander Bank Bella Venezia Cafe Boots Pharmacy, Opticians and Beauty Store Specsavers Opticians M&B Newsagent News and Off-Licence Vacant rimzi Hair and Beauty Store Lucky Nails & Spa Nail Salon All Day Cafe Ali's Cafe



Ali's Cafe Vacant Tongxin Restaurant Chinese Restaurant Wat Tyler Pub Bullace Lane ellenor Charity Shop Hilt Trinity Church

The northern elevation of Dartford's High Street includes a number of passageways and pedestrian routes north, including Bulls Head Yard, Bullace Lane, and the Orchard's Shopping Centre. There is a mixture of historic and modern infill buildings, such as Boots, and the Orchard's. There are a variety of retail uses, including four banks, two health stores, an opticians, grocery stores, fast food takeaways, cafés, budget clothes and charity shops, and a number of beauty and hair salons. There are currently four units which are vacant - two of which are larger units - which has a negative impact on the High Street.

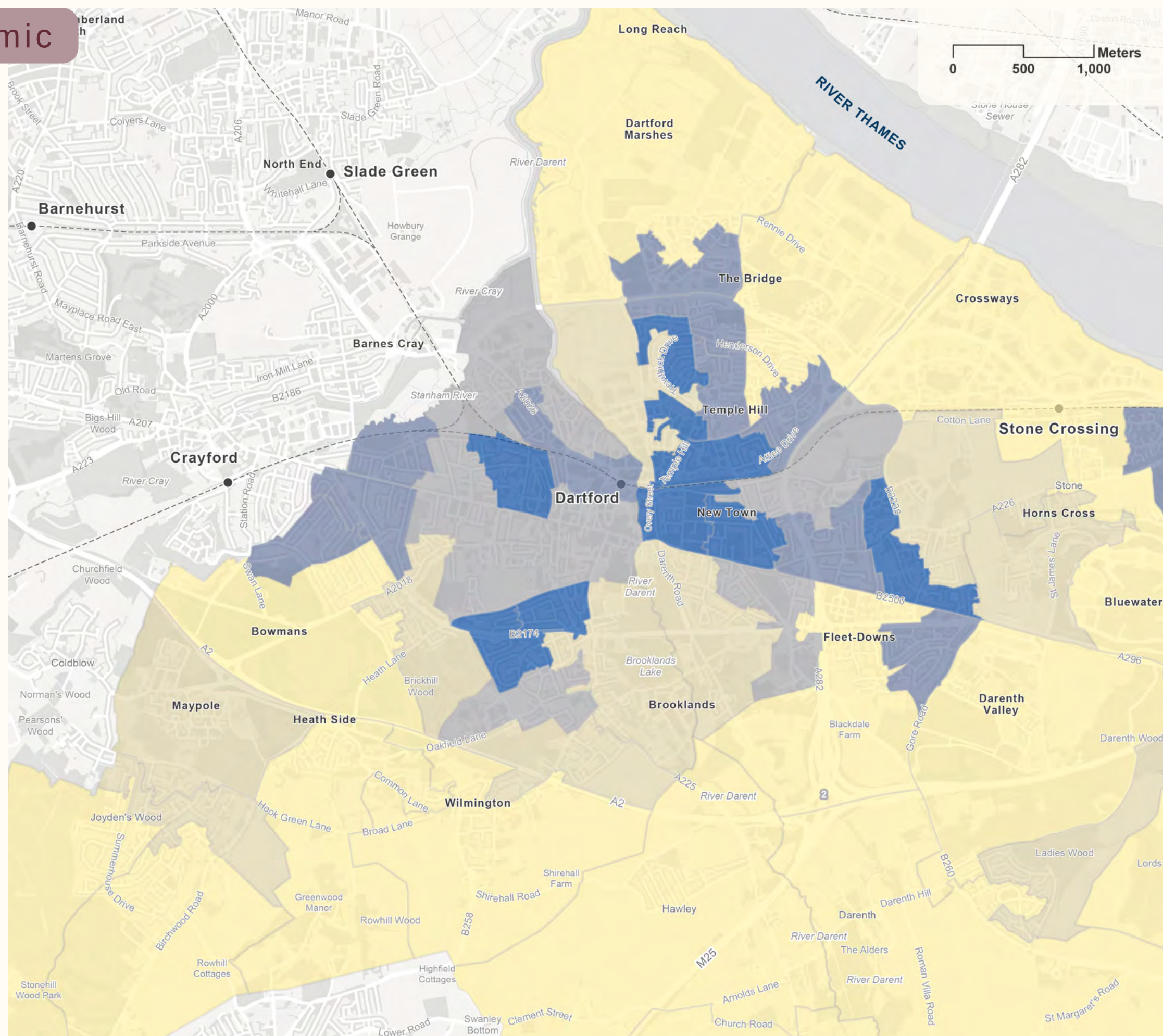
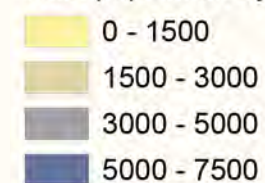


3.14 Socio-economic

Population density (2025)

The population density plan shows that Dartford town centre sits within a broader band of relatively high-density wards extending east-west, reflecting its role as a key urban centre. The highest concentrations are focused around the town centre and nearby neighbourhoods, particularly areas benefiting from good transport connectivity. Surrounding areas vary in density, with lower-density residential and suburban areas to the south and more mixed densities to the north closer to the Thames. Overall, the plan highlights Dartford's function as a central population hub within the wider borough, and presents the opportunity to increase population density in the town centre

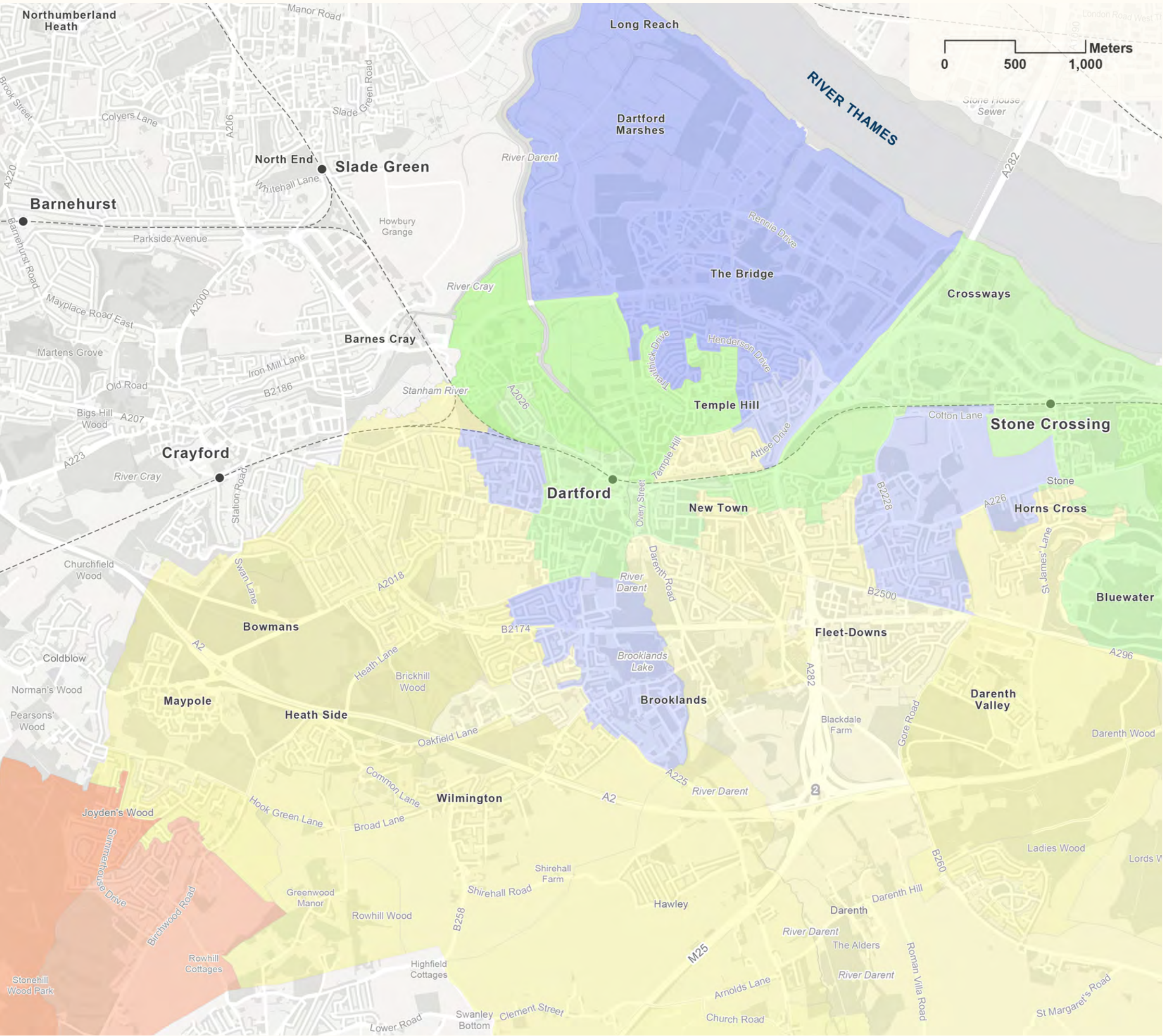
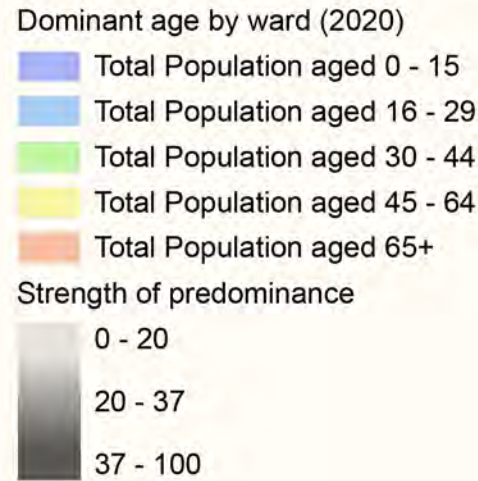
Total population by ward (2025)





Age diversity (2020)

The age diversity plan shows a varied demographic profile across Dartford, with different age groups dominant in different areas. Younger populations (16–29) are more prominent around the town centre - to the north, south, and west - reflecting proximity to transport, employment, and services. Family-age groups (30–44) are more common in Dartford town centre, as well as to the north of the rail line and northeast towards Stone. Regarding the town centre, this could reflect first-time buyers moving into the newly built, high-density flats. Older populations (45+ and 65+) are more prevalent in more peripheral and residential areas to the southeast, south and southwest, where larger family-homes are prevalent. Overall, the plan highlights a balanced but spatially distinct age profile, with the town centre acting as a hub for younger residents.





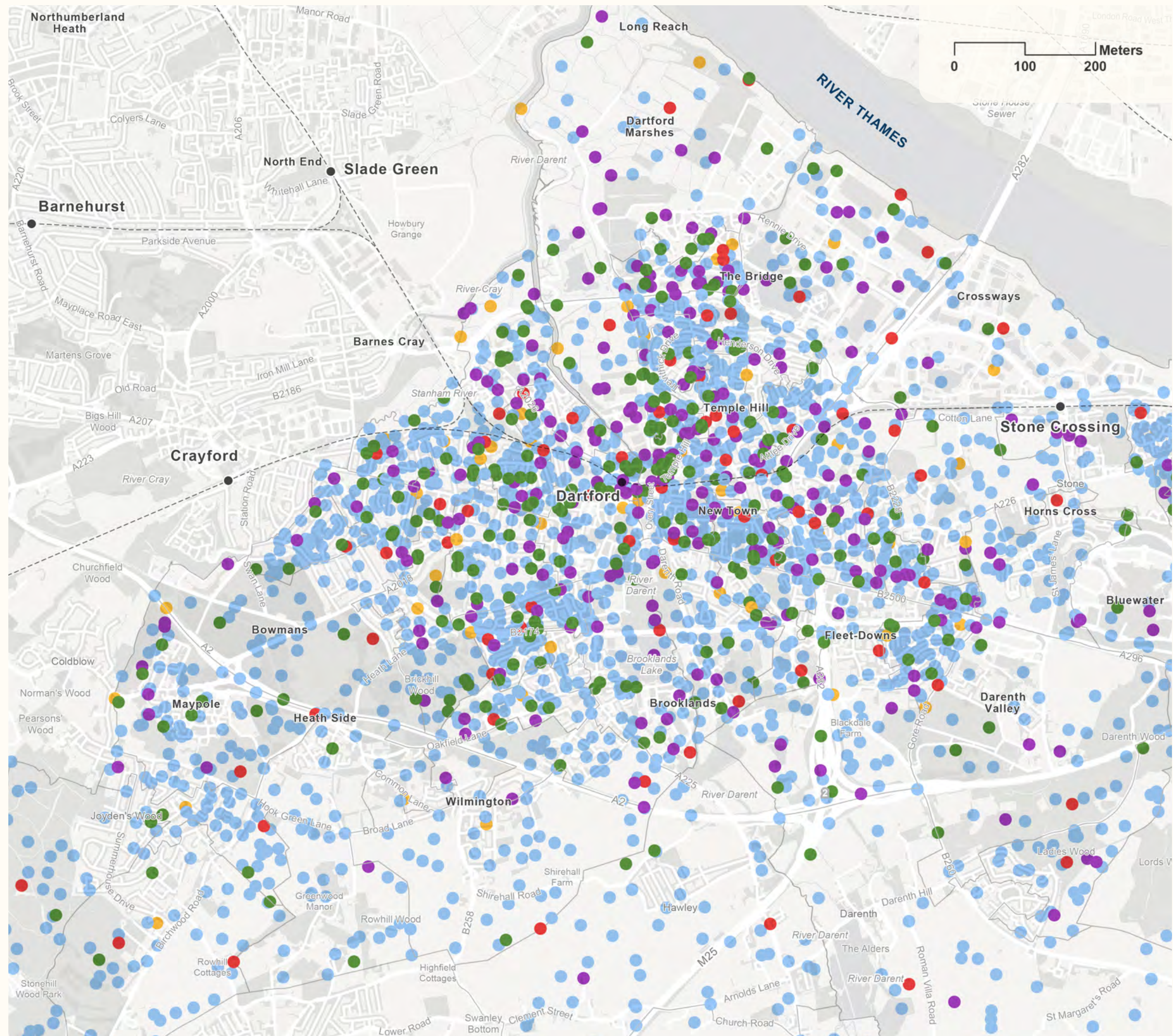
Ethnic diversity (2025)

The ethnic diversity plan illustrates a broadly mixed population across Dartford, with a wide distribution of different ethnic groups throughout the town. While White populations form the majority, there is a notable presence of Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups, particularly within and around the town centre and areas with good connectivity. Diversity appears most concentrated in central neighbourhoods, with a more dispersed pattern in suburban areas. Overall, the plan highlights Dartford as a diverse and increasingly multicultural town, with no single group dominating uniformly across the area, particularly in the town centre.

Ethnic group (2025)

1 Dot = 36 people (approx)

- Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh
- Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African
- Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- White
- Other ethnic group





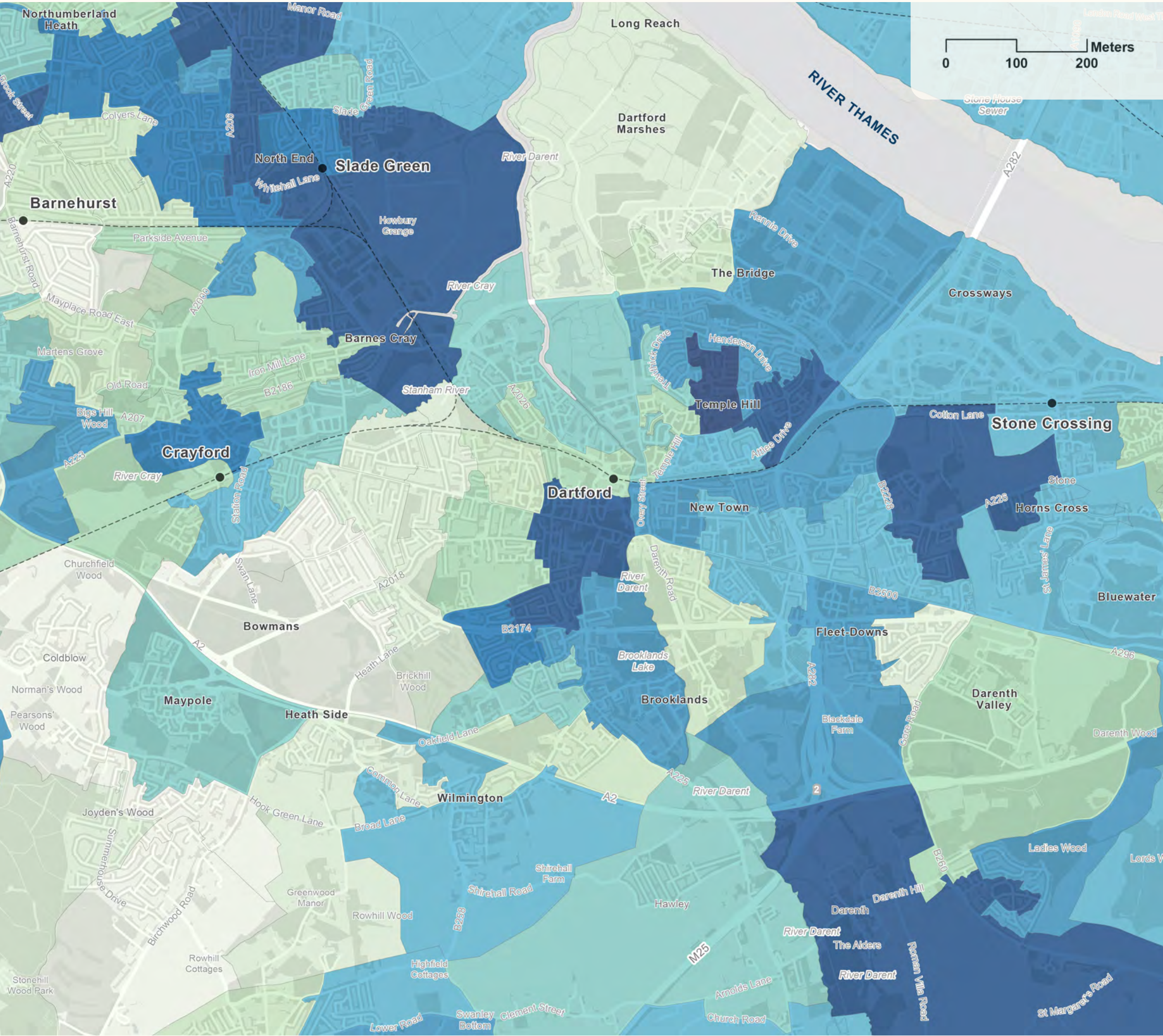
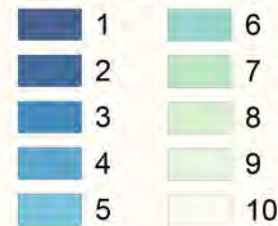
Index of Multiple Deprivation (2025)

The plan illustrates spatial variations in relative deprivation across Dartford using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), highlighting a mixed socio-economic profile. IMD measures relative levels of deprivation across small geographic areas across 7 key factors. These include: Income deprivation; Employment deprivation; Education, skills and training; Health deprivation and disability; Crime; Barriers to housing and services; Living environment. The IMD provides a robust, evidence-based way to understand where social, economic, and environmental inequalities are most concentrated. It helps target interventions, prioritise investment, and justify regeneration by highlighting areas with the greatest need across factors like health, housing, and access to services. Using IMD supports more equitable, data-led decision making and ensures that any planning and design strategies respond to real community challenges rather than assumptions.

Areas within and around the town centre generally fall within mid-range deciles, indicating moderate levels of deprivation, while some adjacent neighbourhoods - particularly to the east and south and the town centre itself - show higher levels of deprivation. In contrast, lower levels of deprivation are more evident in suburban and peripheral areas to the west. Overall, the pattern reveals notable variation across short distances, emphasising the need for targeted regeneration to address inequality within and around the town centre.

The following pages show the levels of relative deprivation for each of the 7 key measures.

IMD Decile by ward (2025)



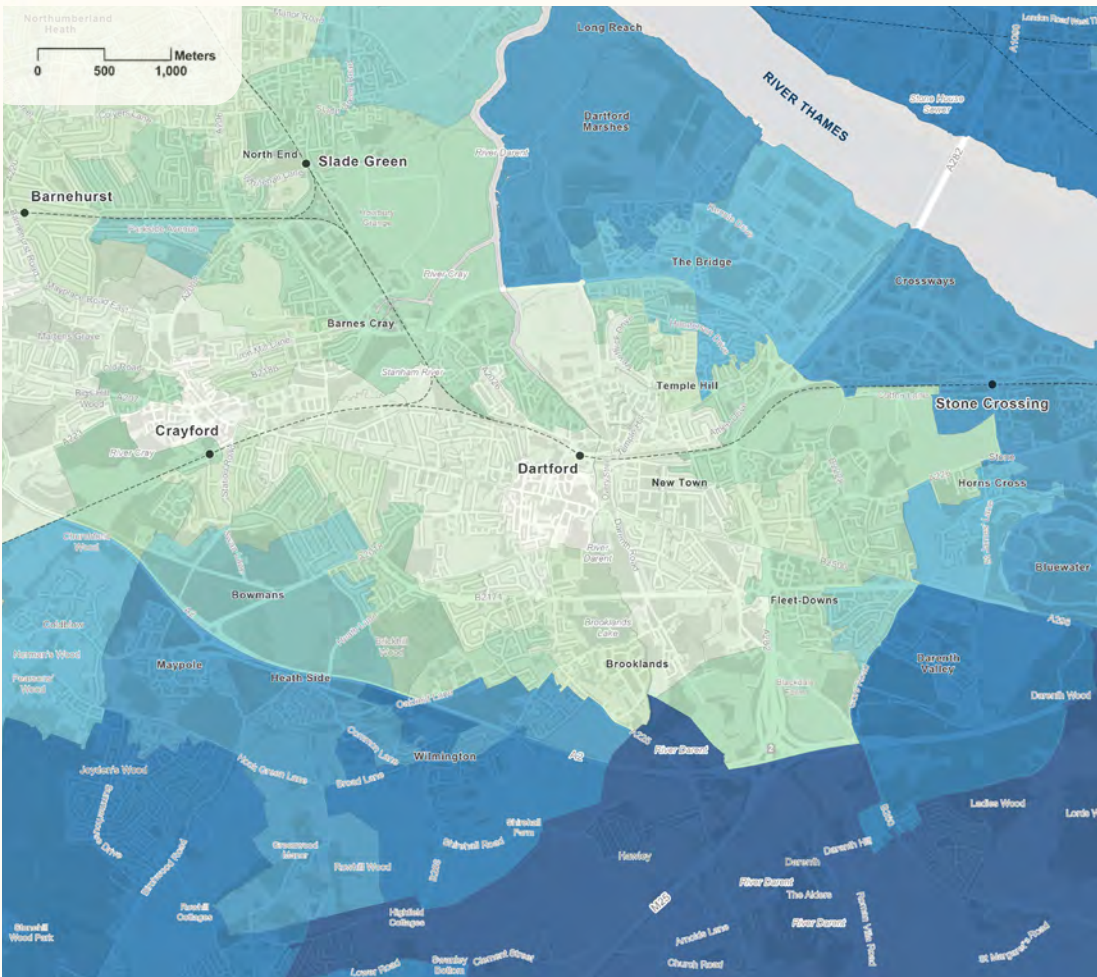
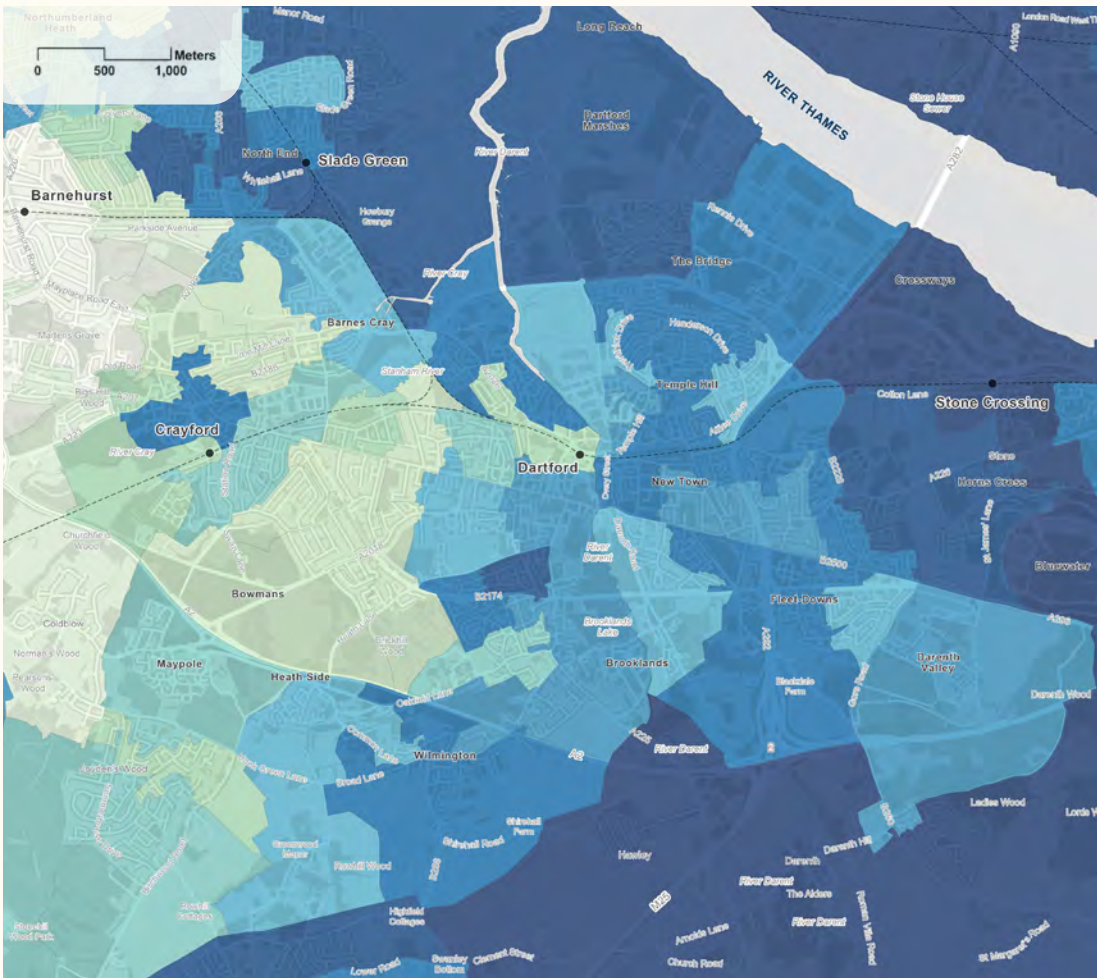


Barriers to Housing and Services (2025)

The barriers to housing and services plan highlights that much of Dartford, including the town centre, falls within lower deciles, indicating relatively higher barriers to accessing affordable housing and key services. These challenges are particularly evident in central areas and north, east and south reflecting pressures on housing availability, cost, and accessibility. Some western suburban areas show lower levels, indicating better access.

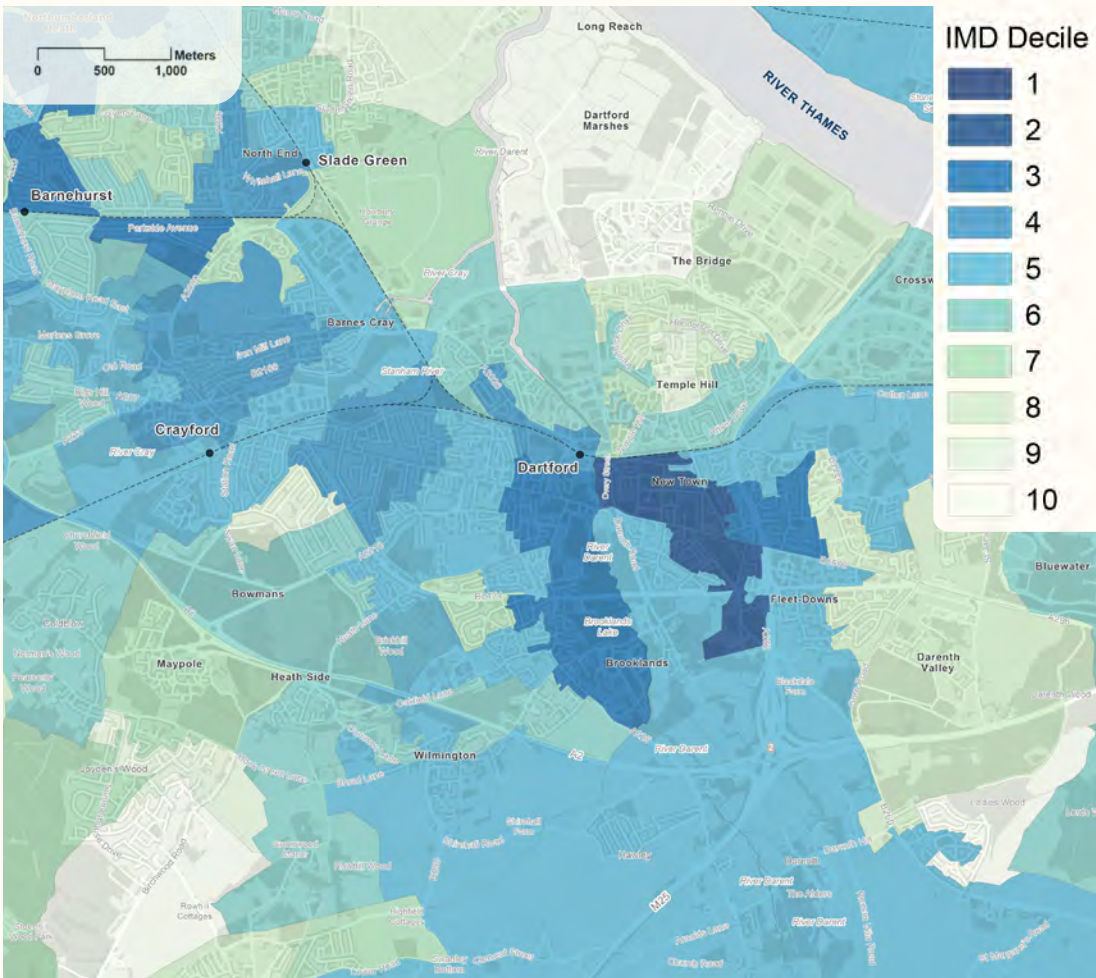
Geographical Barriers (2025)

The geographical barriers plan indicates that Dartford town centre and its immediate surroundings fall within higher deciles, reflecting relatively good access to services and facilities, particularly in the town centre. In contrast, increased barriers are evident in more peripheral areas, particularly further north, east and south, where distance to key services and limited connectivity are greater constraints. Overall, the pattern highlights a clear centre - periphery gradient in access across the Dartford.



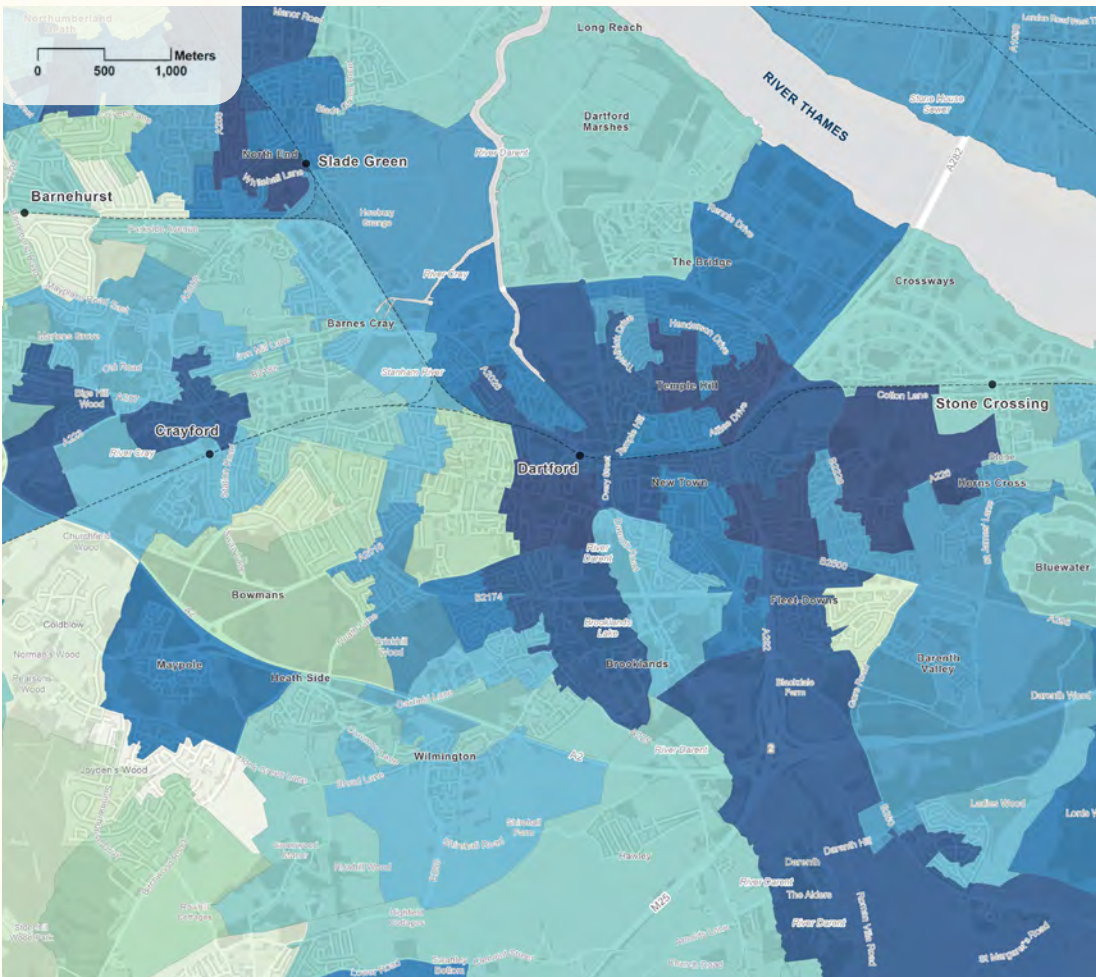
Living Environment (2025)

The living environment plan highlights variations in environmental quality across Dartford, with the town centre and several surrounding areas falling within lower deciles, indicating poorer living conditions. These patterns are likely influenced by higher densities, traffic levels, and limited access to high-quality open space - despite Central Park being a key asset. In contrast, more suburban areas to the southwest and north of the area generally show better living environment conditions.



Crime (2025)

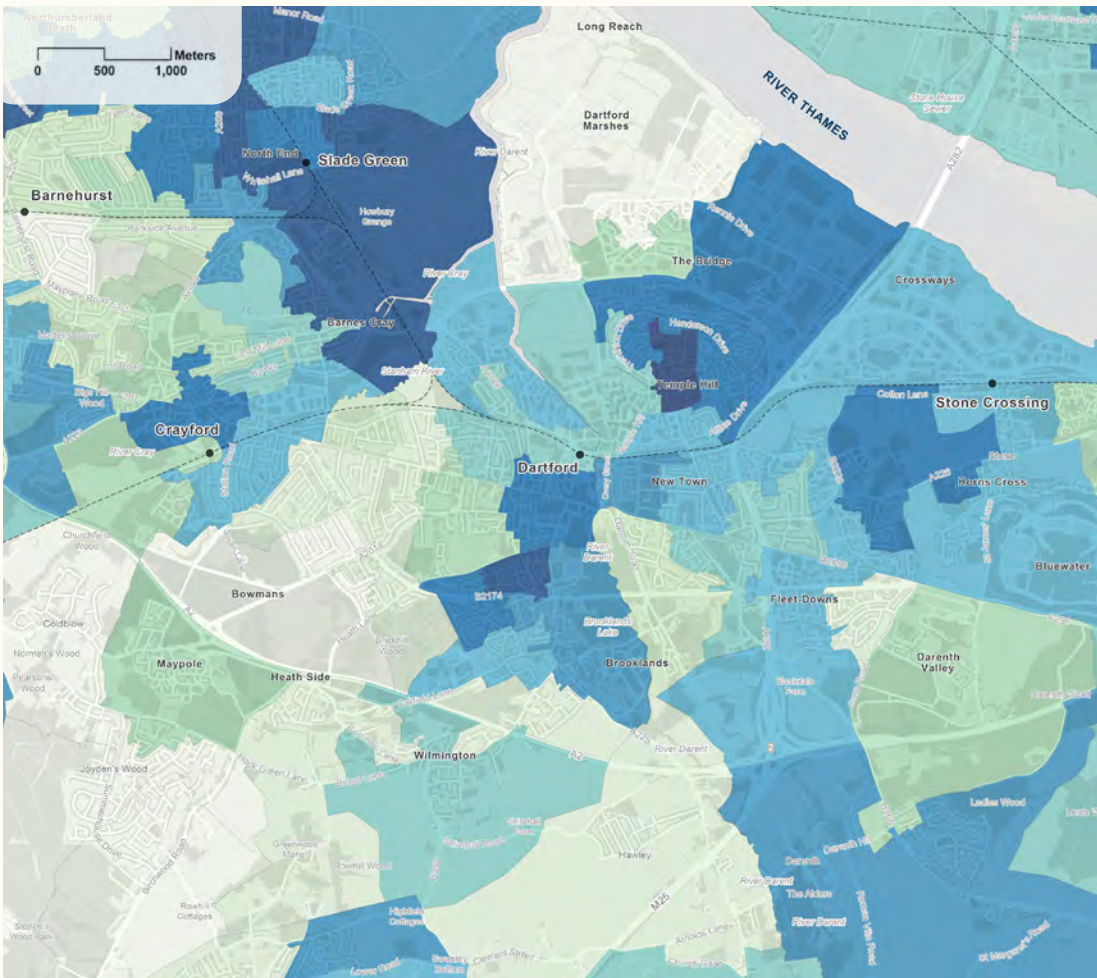
The crime plan highlights that Dartford town centre and several surrounding neighbourhoods fall within lower deciles, indicating higher levels of crime relative to other areas. The crime data represents worse deprivation experienced than other IMD factors on this page, particularly in the town centre and to the north, east and south. These patterns are broadly aligned with areas of higher activity and population density. In contrast, lower crime levels are generally found in more suburban and peripheral areas, illustrating a clear spatial variation across the area.





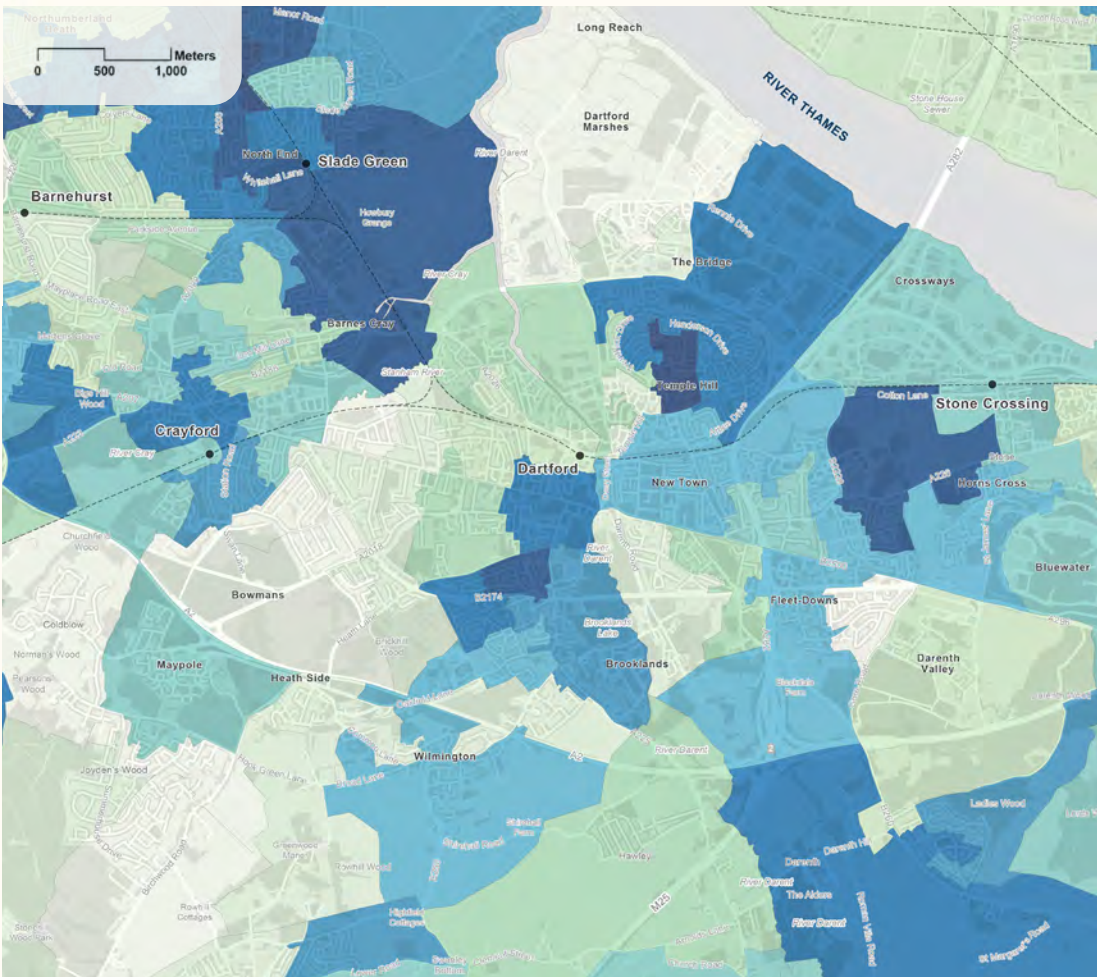
Income (2025)

The income plan highlights variations in household income across Dartford, showing a mixed socio-economic profile in and around the town centre. Central areas generally fall within mid-range income deciles, with pockets of lower income evident in some adjacent neighbourhoods, particularly to the northeast and south, while higher-income areas are more prevalent in suburban locations to the west and further south.



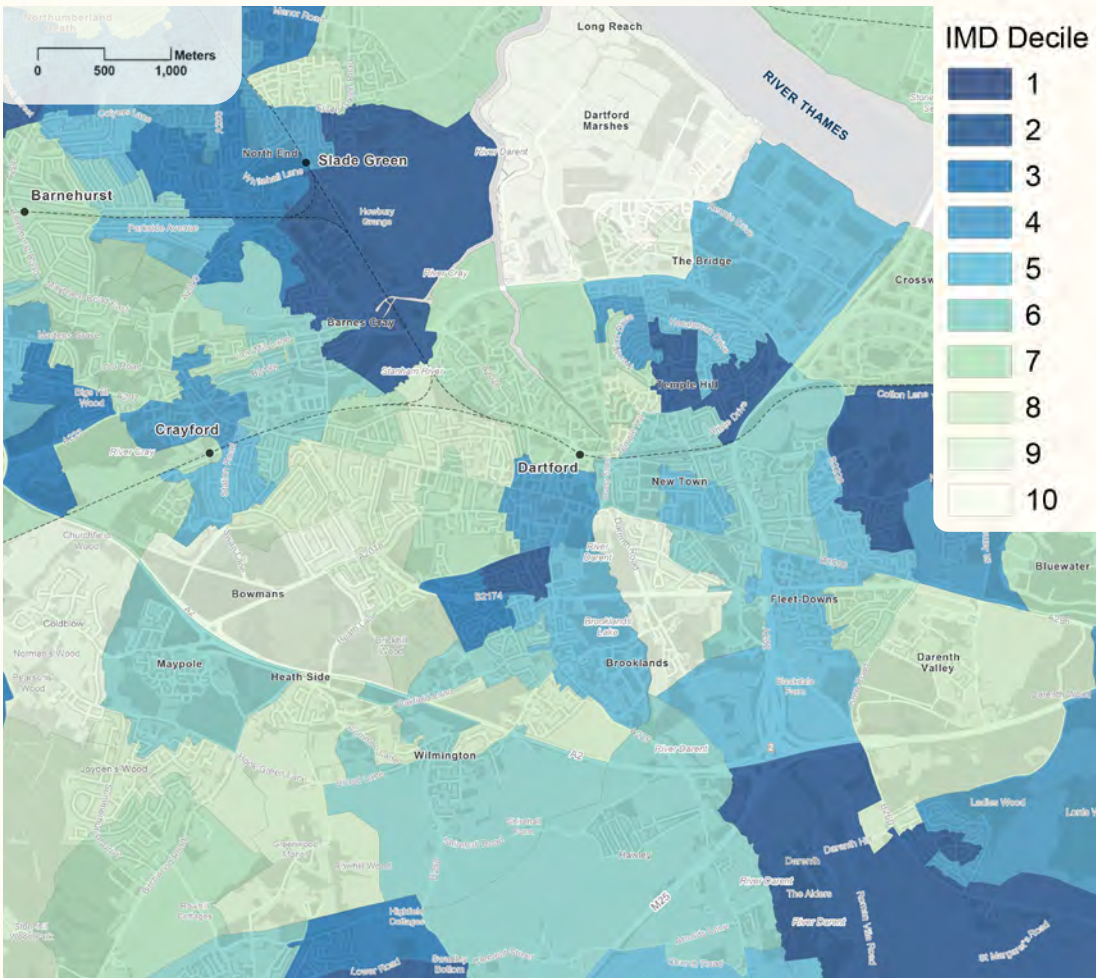
Employment (2025)

The employment plan highlights a varied pattern of employment deprivation across Dartford, with the town centre and several surrounding neighbourhoods falling within lower deciles, indicating higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity. Areas of stronger employment performance are more evident in suburban locations to the south and to the north and west of the town. Overall, the plan reveals clear spatial disparities, reinforcing the importance of targeted economic growth within the town centre.



Education (2025)

The education plan highlights variations in educational attainment and deprivation across Dartford, with the town centre and several surrounding neighbourhoods falling within lower deciles, indicating comparatively poorer outcomes. Higher-performing areas are generally located in more suburban locations to the south and west. Overall, the pattern reflects clear and stark spatial disparities in educational attainment around Dartford, but shows lower deprivation than in other IMD categories.



Health (2025)

The health plan highlights clear spatial variations in health outcomes across Dartford, with the town centre and several surrounding neighbourhoods falling within lower deciles, indicating poorer overall health conditions. Stronger health outcomes are generally observed in more suburban areas to the south and parts of the west. Overall, the pattern reflects inequalities in health that align with broader socio-economic conditions across the borough, especially education, employment and income.

