

**Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

# **Core Strategy**

**As adopted by the Council**

25 September 2007



<b>CONTENTS</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose	1
1.2	The New Planning System	1
1.3	Consultation	2
2.	Influences on the Strategy	7
2.1	Geography	7
2.2	Policy Context	8
2.3	Strategic Planning Constraints	9
2.4	Community Aspirations	10
2.5	Baseline Studies	11
2.6	Sustainability Appraisal	14
2.7	Minerals and Waste	15
3.	The Vision	17
4.	Aims and Objectives	19
5.	The Strategy	21
6.	Core Policies	25
6.1	Creating Sustainable Communities in the Borough	25
6.2	Strategic Policy Constraints	28
6.3	Location of Development	37
6.4	Quality of Life	57
7.	Implementation and Monitoring	65
7.1	Implementation and Delivery	65
7.2	Monitoring	66
 <i>Annexes</i>		
Annex A	Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements	69
Annex B	Other Planning Policies and Strategies	73
Annex C	Housing Trajectory	77
Annex D	Monitoring and Delivery	85
Annex E	Performance Indicators	89
Annex F	Glossary and Abbreviations	99
Map	KEY DIAGRAM	

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## **INDEX TO POLICIES**

## **Page**

Policy CP1	Sustainable Development	25
Policy CP2	Sustainable Transport	28
Policy CP3	Metropolitan Green Belt	30
Policy CP4	Safeguarded Land	30
Policy CP5	Strategic Gap	31
Policy CP6	Separate Identity of Settlements	32
Policy CP7	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	33
Policy CP8	Sites of Special Scientific Interest	33
Policy CP9	Agricultural Land	34
Policy CP10	Flood Protection	36
Policy CP11	Urban Areas	37
Policy CP12	Rural Service Centres	38
Policy CP13	Other Rural Settlements	39
Policy CP14	Development in the Countryside	40
Policy CP15	Housing Provision	42
Policy CP16	Bushey Wood Area of Opportunity	44
Policy CP17	Affordable Housing	46
Policy CP18	Isles Quarry West, Borough Green	48
Policy CP19	Exception Site Policy	49
Policy CP20	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	50
Policy CP21	Employment Provision	52
Policy CP22	Retail Development	53
Policy CP23	Tonbridge Town Centre	56
Policy CP24	Achieving a High Quality Environment	58
Policy CP25	Mitigation of Development Impacts	59
Policy CP26	Safeguarding of Community Services and Transport	62

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The Core Strategy is a key planning document under the new planning regime. It sets out the Council's vision, aims and objectives which will determine the future pattern of development in the Borough over the period up until 2021 and the way in which the social, economic and environmental needs of the area can be delivered in the most sustainable way.
- 1.1.2 The Core Strategy indicates general locations for delivering housing and other strategic development requirements and broad areas of constraints on development. It is illustrated by a Key Diagram. A Development Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) will identify the precise extent of development proposals on the Proposals Map and will specify detailed planning requirements in respect of land identified for development. General development control policies dealing with the details of all development will be included in a separate Development Plan Document.
- 1.1.3 The Core Strategy summarises the broad planning strategy aimed at meeting the vision and then includes a series of Core Policies which provide the context for the preparation of other, more detailed, Local Development Documents as set out in the Local Development Scheme. However, some of the policies also provide a high level context for the determination of planning applications.
- 1.1.4 The Core Strategy is intended to provide a robust planning framework to guide development and investment over the entire plan period up to 2021. Its effectiveness will be monitored on an annual basis through the Annual Monitoring Report and it will be reviewed as necessary. However, the Development Land Allocations DPD is likely to be revised more frequently within the broad context of a relatively unchanging Core Strategy.

## 1.2 The New Planning System

- 1.2.1 The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new planning system which requires the Borough Council to produce a **Local Development Framework** (LDF) for the entire Borough. The LDF will contain a series of **Local Development Documents** (LDDs) that will, together, set out the planning policies for the Borough. Those which form part of the statutory **Development Plan** will be known as **Development Plan Documents** (DPDs). The Development Plan comprises the LDF and the **Regional Spatial Strategy** (RSS) produced by the South East of England Regional Assembly, as well as Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks prepared by the County Council.

- 1.2.2 The **Local Development Scheme** (LDS) is a management plan setting out the Local Development Documents that will be produced and the timescale for producing them. The LDS, which must be reviewed on an annual basis, has been approved by the Secretary of State. It indicates that the Council will be producing a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) in two tranches (see **Fig 1**).

**First Tranche**

- Core Strategy
- Development Land Allocations DPD
- Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan

**Second Tranche**

- Managing Development and the Environment DPD

- 1.2.3 The policies in the **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan** (Adopted, December 1998) remain in force until September 2007, or when they are superseded by replacement policies contained in an LDD, unless the Secretary of State agrees that the policies can be saved beyond that date. The adopted Local Plan **Proposals Map** is saved until September 2007 or until superseded by the LDF. The Proposals Map will be republished once all of the first tranche DPDs have been adopted.

- 1.2.4 Decisions on individual planning applications will be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Such material considerations can include a change to national policy, a significant local issue which has arisen since the plan was prepared, or the particular circumstances of the case.

- 1.2.5 In making development control decisions the Council will apply all relevant policies in the Development Plan even when it appears that the proposal may be wholly consistent with a single policy. This is because the whole Plan and all of its policies must be used as a basis for decision-making, not just an individual policy.

## **1.3 Consultation**

- 1.3.1 The process for preparing the LDF is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004. It involves continuous public and stakeholder engagement with the aim of involving people in decisions as early as possible. The process is summarised in **Fig 2**.
- 1.3.2 The **Statement of Community Involvement** (SCI) sets out the Council's strategy for community involvement in the planning process. It outlines how the Council aims to establish common ground with the community and stakeholders, promoting consensus on the form and

content of the LDF. Following public consultation and independent examination the SCI was adopted by the Borough Council in July 2005.

1.3.3 Details of the consultation process are set out in the **Statement of Compliance**, but in summary, the following stages of consultation have been undertaken in preparing the Core Strategy:

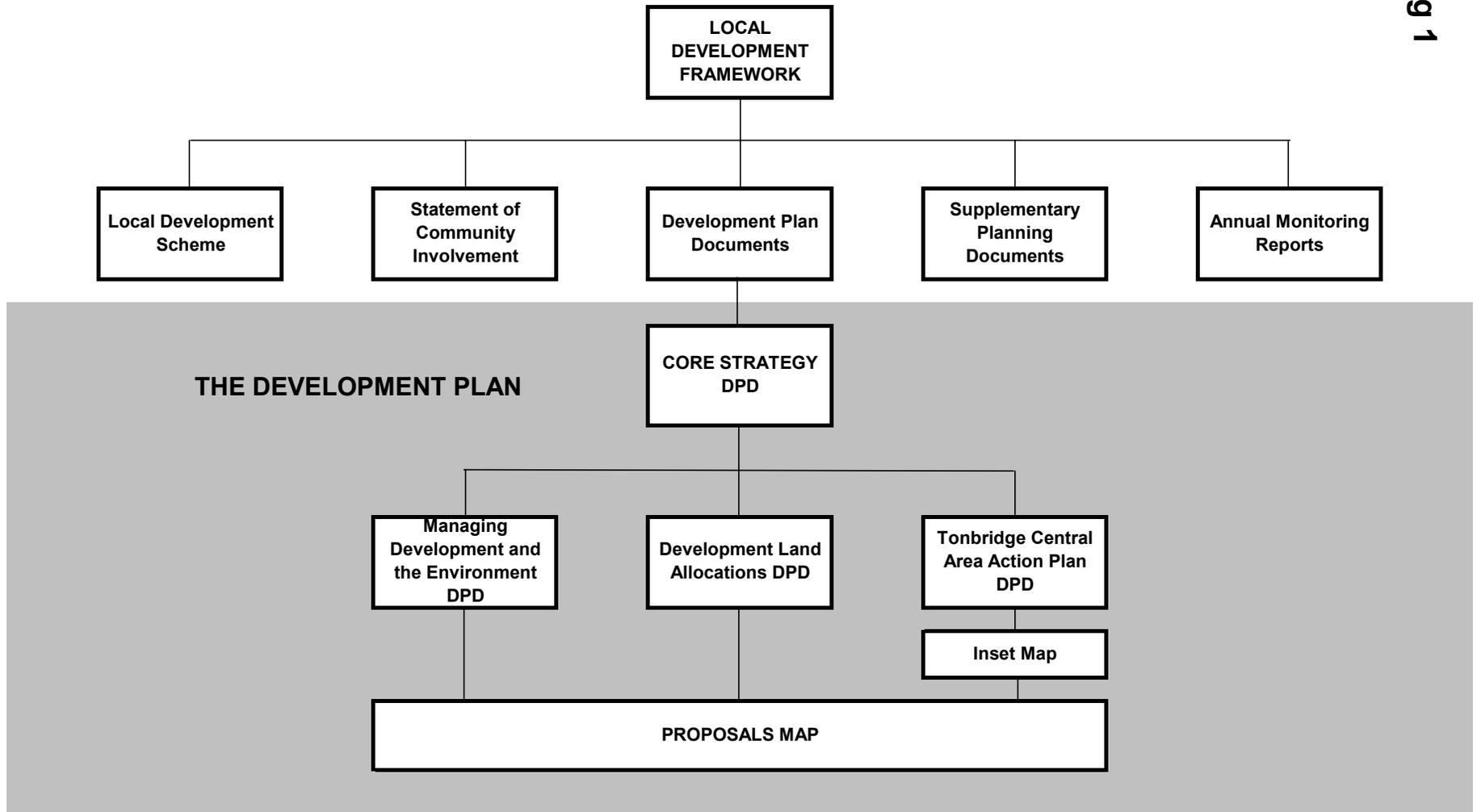
- **Issues Report** (September 2003). This consultation sought views early in the process on the issues and choices for the review of the Local Plan. This consultation can be taken into account, even though it was undertaken before the new legislation came into effect. The response to representations is published in the **Response to Issues Report Consultation** document.
- **Consultation on Options** This was an on-going process during the early part of 2005, involving informal meetings with community representatives and other stakeholders. Consultation was also undertaken in May 2005 on a draft of the Core Strategy with targeted technical consultees. A number of changes were made in response as set out in the **Response to Consultations (under Reg 25 and Reg 26)** document.
- **Preferred Options Report** (September 2005). Public participation took place between 7 October and 18 November 2005, preceded by a three week information period including exhibitions and a series of conferences/meetings. Details of the exercise are set out in the **Statement of Compliance** and the Council's response to the representations received is set out in the **Response to Consultations (under Reg 25 and Reg 26)** document.
- **Submission to the Secretary of State** (September 2006). The Core Strategy, as revised, was subject to another period of consultation over six weeks commencing 1 September 2006.
- **Public Examination** The Core Strategy was subject to Public Examination during May 2007. The Inspector's Report containing binding recommendations was received in August 2007. **The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 25 September 2007.**

1.3.4 All of the published documents referred to in this Section are available for sale or can be inspected at the Council's offices or viewed on the Council's Website ([www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk)).

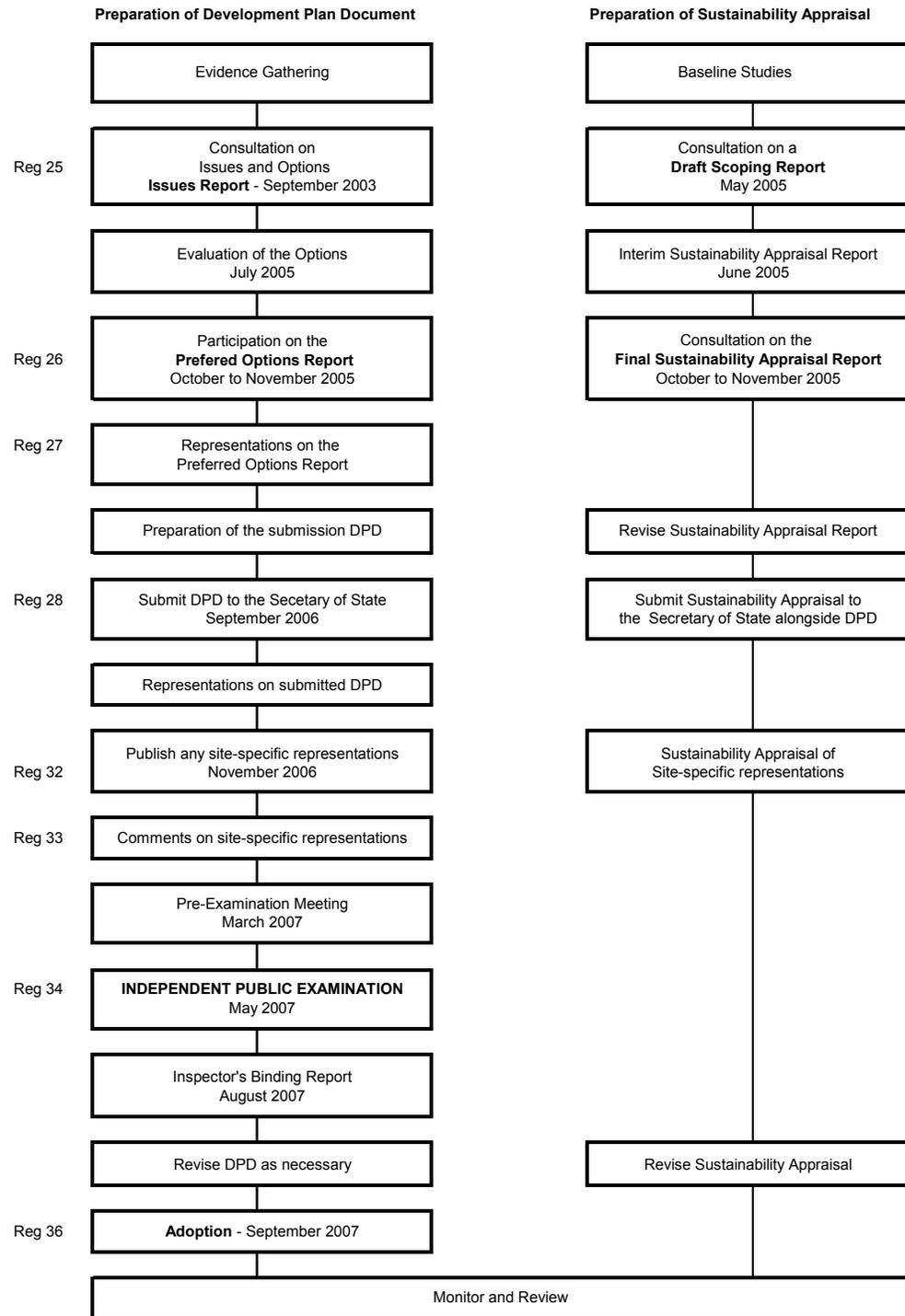


**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE AND CONTENT**

**Fig 1**



**Fig 2 Process and Timetable for Preparing the First Tranche of Development Plan Documents**



## **2. Influences on the Strategy**

### **2.1 Geography**

- 2.1.1 The Borough of Tonbridge and Malling, with a population in 2001 of 107,561, covers an area of 24,013 hectares and is located in West Kent. Immediately to the east lies the County town of Maidstone. Sevenoaks lies some 10km to the west and Tunbridge Wells is located to the south close to the market town of Tonbridge. The Borough does not have a single urban focus but comprises a number of diverse, contrasting settlements and neighbourhoods.
- 2.1.2 It stretches north, beyond the M2 motorway, encompassing Blue Bell Hill village and parts of Walderslade on top of the North Downs. To the south of the M2 is an area of the Borough known locally as the 'Medway Gap' where the River Medway cuts through the North Downs. This area includes a number of villages on the east and west banks of the River Medway which are based on a history of cement and paper-making. The urban area immediately to the south, which has resulted from the amalgamation of a series of former villages, comprises the parishes of Leybourne, East Malling and Larkfield, Ditton and Aylesford, and looks predominantly eastwards to Maidstone for other than day-to-day services.
- 2.1.3 Most of the Borough is rural in character, with villages and small towns of varying size and character, many of which are of architectural or historic interest. The largest rural settlements are West Malling, Borough Green, Hadlow, Hildenborough and East Peckham. Kings Hill is a new mixed use community which is under construction on the former West Malling Airfield. When complete, it will include some 186,000 sq metres of business floorspace and nearly 3,000 dwellings together with shops, schools and other community and recreation facilities.
- 2.1.4 The geography and landscape of the Borough is dictated by the underlying geology with alternating bands of hard and soft rock leading to a strong east-west grain to the landscape. This geological sequence is important in determining the character of the landscape and the historic nature of land use, with predominantly agriculture on the low-lying areas and woodland on the higher ground. In particular, the underlying geology has resulted in extensive areas of quarrying in the Borough, some still active, but with much land despoiled by former quarrying. Some of these areas have provided, and others still provide, opportunities for development on damaged land.
- 2.1.5 The River Medway and its tributaries pass through the Borough. The only crossing point of the river in the northern part of the Borough is at Aylesford, which tends to isolate the east bank of the Medway. In Tonbridge there are only two road crossing points, one being the High Street. An extensive area of the Borough lies in the floodplain of the

River Medway. However, the potential impact of this in Tonbridge is reduced to some extent by the Leigh Barrier to the west of the town.

- 2.1.6 This rich heritage and geographic pattern of land use and settlement has an important influence on the nature of planning strategy in the Borough.

## 2.2 Policy Context

- 2.2.1 The LDF has to be prepared in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. Regard must also be had to the policies of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006) prepared jointly by Kent County Council and Medway Council. This Structure Plan was adopted in July 2006. The policies of the Structure Plan will be saved for a period of three years from this date but may be superseded by the approval of the Regional Spatial Strategy within the three years.
- 2.2.2 The LDF must also be prepared in the context of national planning policies. National planning policy is set out in a series of **Planning Policy Guidance Notes** (PPGs) published by the Government which are progressively being updated and replaced by **Planning Policy Statements** (PPSs). The PPGs and PPSs that are particularly relevant to the preparation of the first tranche of Local Development documents are listed in **Annex A**.
- 2.2.3 The current **Regional Spatial Strategy** is RPG9, approved by the Secretary of State in 2001 with selected topic-based revisions since that time. RPG9 has a time horizon of 2016. The Regional Spatial Strategy is under review. A draft of the new Regional Spatial Strategy, known as the **South East Plan**, was submitted to the Secretary of State at the end of March 2006 and was subject to an Examination in Public from October 2006 to March 2007. The expectation is that the South East Plan will be approved by the Secretary of State during 2008.
- 2.2.4 Once approved by the Secretary of State, it will supersede the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. **The LDF is therefore being prepared in general conformity with the evolving South East Plan**, and will need to be flexible enough to take into account any changes that are made to the Plan during the course of its preparation. The expectation is that the South East Plan will be approved at about the same time as the first tranche of Local Development Documents in the LDF are finally adopted. The LDF will, therefore, have the most up-to-date strategic planning context possible. However, if following the final approval of the South East Plan it is found that the Core Strategy is no longer in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy then there may need to be an early review of the Core Strategy.
- 2.2.5 The **South East Plan** looks forward to 2026. It aims to concentrate development at the existing built up areas and seeks high quality development, the co-ordination of services, and the management and

enhancement of important built and natural environments. The development strategy for the South East Plan is to concentrate growth at Kent Thames Gateway and Ashford. The north eastern part of Tonbridge and Malling Borough lies within the 'sphere of influence' of Kent Thames Gateway for the purpose of planning strategic infrastructure, but the whole of the Borough lies outside the area where the growth needs are to be met. The Borough is, therefore, to be subject to a general policy of restraint aimed principally at meeting its locally generated needs. Tonbridge is identified together with Tunbridge Wells as a Regional Hub. The M20/M26 corridor, A21 and Redhill to Ashford railway line through Tonbridge are identified as Regional Spokes where services should be upgraded as necessary to support the regional strategy. The submitted version of the South East Plan required the provision of 8,500 dwellings in Tonbridge and Malling between 2006 and 2026. It is recognised that these figures may change. The LDF has been prepared with this in mind.

- 2.2.6 Whilst the adopted **Kent and Medway Structure Plan** is a material consideration for the LDF there is no requirement for the LDF to be prepared in conformity with it. The approach that has been adopted is to take into account such elements as are considered appropriate from the Structure Plan and to incorporate them in the Core Strategy. However, no overt reference is made to the Structure Plan because the Structure Plan is likely to be superseded by the South East Plan by the time of the adoption of the first tranche of LDDs. Even if it is not, it will have a very short life and the South East Plan will be the more relevant document being the most recently prepared.
- 2.2.7 The **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan** was adopted in 1998. It deals with the period from 1996 to 2011 and was prepared in the context of the Kent Structure Plan 1996. The policies of the Local Plan will all be reviewed as part of preparing the LDF. Some of the existing policies were intended to endure for the long term and will, if appropriate, be carried forward into the relevant Development Plan Document. The Local Development Scheme indicates in an Annex which policy issues are to be considered in relation to each of the proposed Development Plan Documents. It also indicates which policies are to be saved and how they will be superseded.
- 2.2.8 In addition to the planning policy framework the Core Strategy has had regard to a wide range of other Policy Documents as listed under **Annex B**.

## **2.3 Strategic Planning Constraints**

- 2.3.1 The extent of land to which the strategic spatial policies apply is identified on the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan Proposals Map. Only some of these policy areas are within the control of the Borough Council and can be reviewed as part of the LDF process. The planning policy context is therefore highly constrained by factors beyond the Borough Council's control.

- 2.3.2 For a start, nearly threequarters of the Borough is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt. Within Green Belts the expansion of existing settlements, including Tonbridge, is tightly restricted. PPG2 makes it clear that a key feature of Green Belts is their permanence. Green Belt boundaries should be changed only in exceptional circumstances. The South East Plan does not identify any strategic case for a change to Green Belt boundaries in Kent. The part of the Borough outside the Green Belt includes the important Strategic Gap separating the Medway Gap from Maidstone and the Medway Towns, extensive parts of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, areas of the “best and most versatile” agricultural land and areas of national and local nature conservation interest. Furthermore, much of the lower lying land in the Medway Valley lies within the floodplain of the River Medway and is subject to varying degrees of flooding constraint.
- 2.3.3 The main areas to fall through this sieve of strategic constraints are a series of predominantly brownfield sites in the Medway Gap area, at Holborough Quarry, Snodland, Kings Hill (the former West Malling Airfield), and land on the East Bank of the Medway. These major sites, together with the site of the former Leybourne Grange Hospital were all identified as being Strategic Development Locations in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. Planning permission now exists for the development at Kings Hill, Holborough, Leybourne Grange and Peters Pit and so the future of these three sites is not a matter for the LDF.
- 2.3.4 The agenda for change to meet local needs for development and services has therefore to be carefully formulated within this highly constrained policy framework.

## 2.4 Community Aspirations

- 2.4.1 The Community Strategy for Tonbridge and Malling, ‘**Serving You Better**’, includes a ten year vision for the Borough:

*A Borough which is safe and clean, with less traffic congestion, and comprises vibrant, healthy and distinctive local communities where there is good access to jobs, housing, leisure opportunities and social care.*

- 2.4.2 The Community Strategy seeks to improve the quality of life in Tonbridge and Malling. As such, it deals with a wide range of public service issues. Consultation with local people on the latest Strategy has revealed a high level of concern about issues that are central to the LDF :
- Controlling new development in urban areas was named within the top 10 priorities for improvement in a survey of the Council’s Residents’ Panel. Affordable housing provision and flood prevention were also areas of concern.

- Parish Councils expressed concern about the need for countryside protection and ensuring new development was adequately served by schools and community infrastructure.
- Businesses felt that the lack of affordable housing in the Borough was the most negative aspect of operating in Tonbridge and Malling.
- Young people had a wide range of concerns about affordable housing, the amount of development taking place locally, safer routes to school, and public transport.

2.4.3 The Community Strategy places considerable emphasis on the LDF as a means by which key concerns of the local community about environmental issues can be addressed to ensure greater public confidence about an appropriate balance between future development in the Borough and the protection of the environment. A specific action in the Strategy requires that, via the Local Development Framework, the character of the Borough's villages, towns and countryside should be protected whilst the need for new development is met in a sustainable manner. The Strategy also acknowledges the need for the town centre in Tonbridge to be further enhanced.

## 2.5 Baseline Studies

2.5.1 In addition to the contextual plans and policies referred to above, a series of baseline studies have informed the content of the Core Strategy. The Council has also paid regard to the results of monitoring as set out in the **Annual Monitoring Reports**.

### ***Housing Land Supply***

2.5.2 One of the aims of the Strategy is to provide for the housing requirements for the Borough established in the South East Plan. In order to understand whether the supply of land for housing is sufficient to meet the regional planning requirements or whether additional land is required, it is necessary to have an up-to-date indication of the supply of housing land in the Borough.

2.5.3 **Annex C** is a Housing Trajectory, prepared in accordance with Government advice, which compares the committed supply of housing, with the housing requirements for Tonbridge and Malling 2006-2021 as set out in the submitted version of the South East Plan. Committed supply comprises:

- 4606 dwellings on sites already with planning permission as at 31 March 2006 likely to be implemented during this period;
- Unimplemented housing allocations in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan likely to be implemented before 2021 totalling 1065 dwellings. In this respect, it should be noted that 1000 of these dwellings are at Peters Pit which has been granted planning

permission since the base date of 31 March 2006. The other 65 are on the remaining part of Kings Hill that does not yet have planning permission.

The total firm supply therefore equals 5671 dwellings, which is 704 below the submitted RSS requirement of 6375 dwellings for the 2006-2021 period. However, on the basis of past performance, windfall development is likely to contribute at least an additional 2330 dwellings during this period which will mean that the overall requirement will be exceeded. In line with PPS3, there is more than sufficient land allocated to meet the requirements for the first 10 years following the anticipated adoption of the LDF (ie up to 2018) without relying on windfalls.

- 2.5.4 Disregarding windfalls up to 2018 there will, on the basis of the submitted South East Plan, be an overall shortfall of just 194 dwellings up to 2021. Assuming the approved South East Plan requirements are not dissimilar, this means that the only justification for the release of greenfield sites for housing through the LDF would be if it proves impossible to identify sites for 194 dwellings on previously developed land. This is fundamental to the Core Strategy.

#### ***Urban Capacity Study and Windfall Projection***

- 2.5.5 An Urban Capacity Study has been completed in accordance with the advice in **Tapping the Potential**. For consistency of approach it has been prepared in broad accordance with a protocol agreed with other authorities in Kent. Most of the sites identified through the Study will be brought forward as housing allocations in the Development Allocations DPD.
- 2.5.6 **Windfall development** is development that takes place on sites which have not specifically been identified as being available through the Development Plan process. PPS3 makes it clear that an allowance for windfalls should not be included in the first 10 years of land supply unless Local Planning Authorities can provide robust evidence of local circumstances that prevent sites being identified.
- 2.5.7 The yield from small windfall sites (below 5 dwellings) is projected to be some 70 dwellings per year. The overall projected yield from larger sites (5 dwellings or more) is projected to be 1280 dwellings (2006-2021). This excludes existing permissions for windfall development and potential allocations to avoid double counting. These estimates will be subject to regular monitoring. In the Housing Trajectory (Annex C) windfalls are only counted beyond 10 years from the anticipated date of adoption of the Core Strategy.

### **Housing and Market Needs Assessment**

- 2.5.8 The affordable housing policies in the Core Strategy are based upon a Housing and Market Needs Assessment undertaken in 2005, the most significant findings of which are as follows:
- Average house prices have risen by 19.6% since the previous study was undertaken in 2002;
  - The numbers of households on the Housing Register have increased by 400 since the previous Study;
  - The income levels of around 40% of new households who formed in the last two years are below the level necessary to be able to buy or rent on the open market;
  - 76% of concealed household could not afford to buy the cheapest one bedroomed flat in the Borough;
  - 194 affordable dwellings would need to be provided each year to reduce the backlog of housing need over the next 5 years;
  - The total annual level of outstanding affordable housing need, after allowing for re-lets is 554 units per annum, which is above the annual South East Plan requirement (only a proportion of which would be above the defined thresholds) and significantly higher than previous studies.
- 2.5.9 On the basis of the Study and experience elsewhere the consultants recommended that the Council adopts a policy of seeking 40% of dwellings (above a defined threshold) to be affordable, comprising 70% social rented and 30% intermediate housing (shared ownership and subsidised market housing).
- 2.5.10 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has also been carried out for the sub-region including the Boroughs of Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone, Ashford and Tunbridge Wells. In accordance with the requirements of Circular 01/06 (Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites) this information has been fed into the partial review of the South East Plan.

### **Employment Land Review**

- 2.5.11 An Employment Land Review for the Borough was undertaken during 2005 in accordance with ODPM guidance published in December 2004. This reached the following headline conclusions:-
- Forecast office requirements are anticipated to increase. Existing land supply for offices in the Borough already substantially exceeds this requirement. Supply of office sites is concentrated at Kings Hill which performs a regional role.
  - Forecast requirements for industrial land are set to decline over the period to 2016. There will be a surplus of land for this sector across the Borough.

- Forecast requirements for warehousing are predicted to grow with net employment land supply (excluding vacancies and redevelopment opportunities) likely to be slightly below the minimum forecast requirements. There is likely to be scope to increase supply through redistributing space identified for manufacturing to warehousing. This could also include use of vacant manufacturing premises for occupation or redevelopment to warehousing.

2.5.12 A qualitative assessment of the existing employment sites in the Borough was undertaken. This showed that certain sites perform poorly or are otherwise constrained and could be considered for transfer to alternative uses. It also confirmed that most other sites should be retained or safeguarded for employment use. Importantly for the Core Strategy, it was not considered that any new sites would be required to meet future employment land requirements up to 2016, though the matter will need to be kept under review.

### **Retail Studies**

2.5.13 Retail studies have confirmed that there is significant quantitative potential and qualitative need for additional retail floorspace in Tonbridge, particularly for comparison shopping. The retail hierarchy has also been reviewed throughout the rest of the Borough but there is not considered to be any potential for significant additional floorspace. There may be scope for some limited retail development at Snodland, Martin Square/Larkfield, Borough Green and West Malling subject to site availability, but the main need is to retain what exists.

2.5.14 In terms of retail warehousing, the comparison catchment area in the north of the Borough overlaps significantly with the catchment area for Maidstone. In accordance with the sequential approach, any identified capacity for comparison floorspace should ideally be accommodated within the Maidstone urban area. However, if there are no suitable sites in Maidstone the identified retail need could be accommodated at Quarry Wood.

## **2.6 Sustainability Appraisal**

2.6.1 The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process is to aid decision-making and ensure sustainability considerations are incorporated into the DPDs from an early stage. It includes Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SA/SEA process has been integrated with the development plan process as indicated in **Fig 2**.

2.6.2 In April 2005 a draft **Scoping Report** was published and consulted upon. The purpose of the Scoping Report was to document the initial findings from the context review and baseline data gathering and identify key sustainability issues and objectives. The next stage involved the development of a set of 21 SA objectives. These were

based upon the objectives in the **South East Integrated Regional Framework**. These objectives provided a means of systematically appraising the preferred options for the first tranche of DPDs.

- 2.6.3 To inform decision making on the preferred options, the consultants produced an **Interim SA Report**. This appraised the draft Core Strategy Objectives and the various options as described in Part 2 of the Preferred Options Report. The conclusion was that, in general, the options performed well in sustainability terms and the choices between them were unlikely to generate significant sustainability effects.
- 2.6.4 The **Final SA Report** was published for public comment alongside the Preferred Options Report. It assessed the potential economic, social and environmental implications of the draft policies and proposals it contained. The assessment found that the Preferred Options performed well in sustainability terms. The conclusion was that the options are generally geared towards accommodating new housing development as sustainably as possible; providing for affordable housing needs (particularly in rural areas); reducing the need to travel; and protecting the Borough's countryside. Their more detailed conclusions and recommendations are set out in the published **Final SA Report**. The Council's response to their recommendations is set out in the **Sustainability Appraisal of Significant Changes Report**.
- 2.6.5 The Sustainability Appraisal of Significant Changes Report also appraises the changes made by the Council in response to consultation on the Preferred Options Report. It concludes that the changes are either beneficial or neutral in their effect.
- 2.6.6 The changes identified by the Inspector in the binding report were appraised early in the process and the outcomes are set out in the Interim SA Report. There is therefore no need to amend the Final SA Report or the Sustainability Appraisal of Significant Changes Report.
- 2.6.7 On adoption the Council published an **Adoption Statement** outlining how it took into account the findings of the SA process and how sustainability considerations more generally have been integrated into the Core Strategy.

## **2.7 Minerals and Waste**

- 2.7.1 The preparation of a Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework is the responsibility of Kent County Council. These matters are therefore **not** addressed in the LDF. However site-specific proposals for minerals and waste must be shown on the LDF Proposals Map **for information only** and to ensure proper integration of the Development Plan.



### 3. The Vision

- 3.1.1 The Vision sets an overview of what the Local Development Framework will seek to achieve. It has been developed from the Community Strategy Vision, with a view to delivering the spatial and land use elements of the Community Strategy.

***To make Tonbridge and Malling Borough a safe and excellent place to live, work and visit for existing and future generations. To make it a place where its natural beauty, biodiversity, historic environment and public places are valued, protected or enhanced; where the built environment is sustainable, properly served and of high quality; and housing, economic and social needs of all sectors of society are met and reconciled with any environmental conflicts.***



## 4. Aims and Objectives

4.1.1 The vision will be delivered through the following broad aims and more detailed objectives:

***Aim 1 To ensure that new development is achieved in accordance with the principles of sustainability;***

This will be achieved by:

- (a) Making sure that sufficient deliverable land is identified and available for development to meet regional and locally identified needs for housing, employment and other key land uses;
- (b) Making sure that development makes the most efficient use of land and is designed to minimise energy consumption, optimise use of renewable energy resources, and use sustainable construction techniques;
- (c) Concentrating development on previously developed and other damaged land within built-up areas before considering development of 'fresh land' in the countryside;
- (d) Minimising the need to travel and providing the opportunity for trips to be made by a choice of modes of transport;
- (e) Conserving, and wherever possible enhancing, the natural and historic environment and local diversity;
- (f) Meeting the diverse social needs of local communities, including gypsies and travellers, and ensuring fair and equal access to housing and services for all sectors of society.

***Aim 2 To establish a spatial context to guide new development and co-ordinate the transport and community infrastructure needed to serve that development;***

This will be achieved by:

- (a) Concentrating development at existing or proposed settlements where a range of services is available or planned, or where reasonable public transport to services exists or is proposed;
- (b) Protecting the Green Belt and Strategic Gap and maintaining the separation and individual identity of settlements;

- (c) Avoiding the adverse effects of development in areas of significance for landscape or nature conservation, areas at risk of flooding, important historic assets and the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- (d) Ensuring infrastructure and services are co-ordinated to meet the needs of existing and any new communities, wherever required in association with new development;
- (e) Safeguarding land for the construction of necessary transport and community infrastructure.

**Aim 3    *To ensure that new development and other actions result in a high quality environment;***

This will be achieved by:

- (a) Promoting and delivering new development that can positively contribute to the vibrancy and spatial quality of towns and villages;
- (b) Maintaining or enhancing local distinctiveness;
- (c) Requiring a high standard of design of buildings and spaces in new developments;
- (d) Providing landscaping and new open space, including natural greenspace and amenity planting, and enhancement of biodiversity and existing open spaces;
- (e) Minimising the number and length of trips and the speed of traffic within residential and other sensitive areas and managing on-street parking;
- (f) Ensuring a high quality living environment, safe from crime and the fear of crime and free from the risks of flooding, land contamination, noise and air pollution;
- (g) Safeguarding and enhancing existing services and facilities, and in particular the vitality and viability of Tonbridge Town Centre and other retail centres;
- (h) Protecting and enhancing public access for all to the Borough's natural and historic heritage in a managed way which recognises the fragility of these resources;
- (i) Providing art in major development schemes and in the public realm generally.

## 5. The Strategy

- 5.1.1 The planning strategy for the Borough is largely determined by its geography, the extent of higher-level planning policy constraints and by the level and location of existing commitments.
- 5.1.2 Within this context, the driving force behind the locational strategy is the Council's desire to reflect the wishes of its residents to protect and enhance the countryside and avoid the use of greenfield sites for development unless absolutely necessary, whilst meeting future housing needs and the needs of existing and future businesses. The planning strategy must reflect this balance. A sustainable pattern of high quality development will therefore be pursued. This will seek to maintain the separation and individual identity of settlements, preserve and enhance areas of landscape quality, and areas of nature conservation, architectural or historic interest and minimise the need to travel.
- 5.1.3 Nearly three quarters of the Borough lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where, other than a very limited range of uses defined in PPG2, there is a strong presumption against development unless justified by very special circumstances. Much of the remaining part of the Borough is covered by:
- the important Strategic Gap separating Maidstone and the Medway Towns from the Medway Gap
  - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - areas liable to flood
  - sites of nature conservation interest.
- 5.1.4 New development will therefore be concentrated at the main urban areas of the Medway Gap (including Kings Hill and Snodland), Tonbridge and the Walderslade part of the Medway Towns urban area and at those larger rural settlements that have a range of services or reasonable access to them. New development will be located within the built-up areas of these settlements mainly on previously developed land or by conversion of existing buildings. In addition, there are four major brownfield sites where development has already been permitted which will accommodate and ensure delivery of the major part of the Borough's strategic housing requirement up to 2021. Development elsewhere, in the countryside and at smaller rural settlements more remote from services, will be more restricted. No greenfield sites will be required for housing development to meet strategic needs up to 2021.
- 5.1.5 Because of the extent of the planning policy constraints the Council has long believed that it is strategically sensible to identify the direction for longer-term development in the Borough. Within this context, the only part of the Borough that remains relatively unconstrained is the East Bank of the Medway, between the River Medway and the North Downs.

This area contains extensive areas of derelict and despoiled land, but is currently relatively inaccessible.

- 5.1.6 The development strategy for the East Bank of the Medway, carried forward from the previous Local Plan, is to plan for development in this area supported by improved access by means of a new bridge across the Medway. The intention is to secure improvements in local access and facilities for the existing communities of the East Bank, whilst avoiding conflicts with areas of nature conservation and landscape importance. To this end, Peters Pit, which now has planning permission, is identified as a strategic development location. In addition, land at Bushey Wood, near Eccles, continues to be safeguarded for potential development beyond the end of the plan period. The extent of the safeguarded area encompasses all of the damaged land in this locality.
- 5.1.7 The development strategy for Tonbridge, which is surrounded by the Green Belt, is to continue to meet the needs of the town within its existing built confines. Optimum use will therefore be made of development opportunities that arise within the built-up area, particularly in or near the town centre. Land continues to be excluded from the Green Belt and safeguarded outside the built-up area of the town to meet any long-term needs that cannot be met in any other way, but it is not expected that these areas will need to be released for development before 2021.
- 5.1.8 In the central area of the town opportunities will be sought to strengthen its retail base, improve employment opportunities, enhance the environment and increase the number of people living close to the town centre. The focus will be on high quality design and mixed-use development that respects and enhances local character. This is central to the Council's planning strategy. The Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan will set out the development and regeneration opportunities and proposals and policy criteria that the Council will wish to promote and see implemented in conjunction with the private sector and local communities. The overall objective is to build upon the considerable advantages of the town centre and sustain a vibrant hub for shopping, living, working and leisure for Borough residents and visitors.
- 5.1.9 The affordable housing needs of the Borough will be met by direct provision by Registered Social Landlords and by negotiation on development sites in excess of a prescribed threshold which has been set at a lower level in rural areas. The majority of affordable housing need arising in the more remote parts of the Malling rural area will be met at the rural service centre of Borough Green, on a derelict site to the south of the town which has consequently been removed from the Green Belt. Elsewhere in the rural area, affordable housing may be provided on sites released as an exception to policy or on sites specifically allocated for this purpose.

- 5.1.10 The employment strategy is based upon meeting the employment needs of Borough residents and the development needs of existing firms and firms looking to locate in the Borough. The main opportunities lie at Kings Hill where a high quality employment environment exists and on sites within the existing main employment areas in the Borough. Those that are well located and suited to future employment needs will be safeguarded. Other less well-located sites may be redeveloped for housing or other uses. Allowing for this, there is sufficient land identified for employment in the Borough to meet future needs. There is therefore no need for any greenfield land to be released for employment use.
- 5.1.11 The Borough has seen, and will continue to see, growth in development to meet the needs of local people. It is vital that the provision of community facilities and transport provision to meet the needs of all sectors of society advance in parallel with housing and commercial development. Communities will only be sustainable if they are fully inclusive and deliver the necessary standards of service for all. It is therefore important that development should contribute towards meeting the needs of all sectors of the community and help to encourage social cohesion and inclusion.
- 5.1.12 Considerable investment in transport infrastructure has already taken place, particularly in the north of the Borough. These sorts of improvements are needed in order to avoid congestion and inappropriate use of minor roads and to maintain or improve air quality. Investment in public transport services and other alternative transport modes should also run hand-in-hand with new development. In Tonbridge the opportunities for managing transportation need to come forward as part of an overall package of proposals for improving the functioning and vitality of the Town Centre. The Council will work in partnership with service providers with a view to aligning as closely as possible service provision with new development.

***The remainder of this document contains policies on how the Vision, Aims and Objectives of this Spatial Strategy are to be achieved.***

***It sets out a suite of Core Policies that provide a context for development control decisions, guidance for investment decisions by the private and public sector and a context for the preparation of more detailed Development Plan Documents (DPDs).***

***The Strategy is illustrated diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. The precise extent of policy areas is shown on an Ordnance Survey base on the Proposals Map.***



## 6. Core Policies

### 6.1 Creating Sustainable Communities in the Borough

#### *Sustainable Development*

- 6.1.1 The principles of sustainability underpin all of the detailed policies contained in the Core Strategy and the more detailed DPDs that the Council will produce. The high level policies in this section of the Core Strategy are over-arching policies that should be applied, as appropriate, to all new development and provide the context for the other spatial policies that follow in the Core Strategy.
- 6.1.2 A widely used definition of Sustainability is “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This involves reconciling environmental and cultural considerations with social and economic objectives. The Government has set out its principles for sustainable development in **Securing the Future – the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy** (March 2005). The Council has paid regard to this in preparing the Core Strategy.
- 6.1.3 The Local Development Framework deals primarily with the delivery of new development and land use, but also has a key influence over the quality of the environment and investment in services and consequently the overall spatial functioning of the area. It has an important role in establishing where new development should take place in terms of reducing the need to travel, whilst conserving the natural and historic environment and addressing issues of social inclusion. It is therefore important that the identified housing and economic needs of the Borough are delivered, and properly co-ordinated with the provision of transport and community infrastructure.
- 6.1.4 The following two high-level policies seek to ensure that new development in the Borough, whether proposed through the development plan or granted planning permission, will be as sustainable as possible. Together, they provide the context for the policies that follow and for the determination of planning applications where appropriate.

- POLICY CP1**
- 1. All proposals for new development must result in a high quality sustainable environment.**
  - 2. Provision will be made for housing, employment and other development to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the Borough in line with the evolving housing requirements of the South East Plan and local studies aimed at**

informing the need for, and form of, development required.

3. The need for development will be balanced against the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment. In selecting locations for development and determining planning applications the quality of the natural and historic environment, the countryside, residential amenity and land, air and water quality will be preserved and, wherever possible, enhanced.

4. In selecting locations for development and determining planning applications the Borough Council will seek to minimise waste generation, reduce the need to travel and minimise water and energy consumption having regard to the need for 10% of energy requirements to be generated on-site from alternative energy sources and the potential for recycling water. Where possible, areas liable to flood will be avoided.

5. Where practicable, new housing development should include a mix of house types and tenure and must meet identified needs in terms of affordability. For those with a nomadic way of life, such as gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople, appropriate provision should be made if a need exists. Mixed-use developments will be promoted where appropriate, particularly in town and rural service centres.

6. Development will be concentrated at the highest density compatible with the local built and natural environment mainly on previously developed land and at those urban and rural settlements where a reasonable range of services is available and where there is the potential to be well served by sustainable modes of transport. Best use will be made of the existing housing stock.

7. Development must minimise the risk of crime and should make appropriate provision for the infrastructure necessary to serve new development, including social, leisure, cultural and community facilities and adequate open space accessible to all. If still needed, existing facilities will be protected and land required to meet future community needs will be identified and safeguarded for that purpose.

6.1.5 A high quality, sustainable environment may be achieved, depending upon the nature and scale of development, by such measures as:

- making the most efficient use of land and infrastructure;
- minimising the use of scarce resources and energy and the inclusion, where appropriate, of renewable energy technologies;
- protecting and enhancing biodiversity and wildlife and avoiding impact on areas of nature conservation interest;
- protecting the quality and potential yield of water resources;
- conserving other natural resources including, air quality and soil and, wherever possible, enhancing them;
- the natural drainage of surface water, including, where appropriate, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS);
- taking account of tidal and fluvial flood risk;
- aiming to meet Code Level 3 of the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes for new-build dwellings;
- maximising the efficient use of water including recycling of dirty water;
- maximising the use of recycled materials;
- wherever possible, creating carbon neutral development;
- making a positive contribution towards the vitality of the area through an appropriate mix of uses;
- creating a safe environment which enhances the quality of the public realm;
- conserving and, wherever possible, enhancing the character and quality of local landscapes and the wider countryside and public access to them, in a way that recognises and protects the fragility of these resources;
- making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, character, townscape and the setting of settlements;
- conserving or enhancing the historic environment;
- providing the infrastructure and services necessary to serve the development;
- incorporating the principles of sustainable construction including provision for recycling;
- orientating buildings to maximise the benefit from sunlight and passive solar heating unless to do so would conflict with the grain of the surrounding area's townscape, landscape or topography.

It must be recognised that not all of the above can be achieved solely through the planning process. Some can be encouraged by financial assistance and others by education, training and constructive advice. Detailed advice on achieving high quality sustainable design is contained in **Kent Design** which is supplementary to Core Policy CP24.

## **Sustainable Transport**

- 6.1.6 Transport is an important aspect of sustainability. The aim is to reduce the overall need to travel, particularly by car, by providing choices of modes of transport, making new developments and services as accessible as possible, and providing high quality links between new developments and existing journey destinations. The aim is to reduce trip generation to the greatest degree possible at source, through such measures as Travel Plans that are specific, measurable and monitored, with effective targets and incentives to meet them. Transport Assessments will be required for all new development likely to generate a significant number of trips. Where new transport infrastructure is provided, measures to minimise its impact will be needed. The following policy has been paid regard to in determining the development strategy and will apply to windfall development.

### **POLICY CP2 New development that is likely to generate a significant number of trips should:**

- (a) be well located relative to public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes and with good access to local service centres;**
- (b) minimise the need to travel through the implementation of Travel Plans and the provision or retention of local services and facilities;**
- (c) either provide or make use of, and if necessary enhance, a choice of transport modes, including public transport, cycling and walking;**
- (d) be compatible with the character and capacity of the highway network in terms of the volume and nature of traffic generated;**
- (e) provide for any necessary enhancements to the safety of the highway network and capacity of transport infrastructure whilst avoiding road improvements that significantly harm the natural or historic environment or the character of the area; and,**
- (f) ensure accessibility for all, including elderly people, people with disabilities and others with restricted mobility.**

## **6.2 Strategic Policy Constraints**

- 6.2.1 A combination of the physical characteristics of the Borough, sustainability objectives and Government policy largely determines where new development should be located in Tonbridge and Malling Borough. This Core Strategy has regard to these influences, and seeks to interpret them at the local level.

### **Metropolitan Green Belt**

- 6.2.2 National Green Belt policy is set out in PPG2. In Tonbridge and Malling, the Green Belt comprises part of the outer edge of the Green Belt surrounding London. The importance of Green Belts lies in preventing major expansion of settlements or their coalescence, and preventing development in the countryside that would affect its openness. A key feature of Green Belts is their permanence. Very special circumstances are required for any departure from Green Belt policy and an exceptional justification is required for any change to existing Green Belt boundaries.
- 6.2.3 Nearly three-quarters of the Borough lies within the Green Belt. Over the years, this policy has helped to retain the rural character of the countryside and settlements within this part of the Borough. The boundaries of the Green Belt have been set in previous local plans. The general extent of the Green Belt is illustrated on the Key Diagram. The detailed boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map. The South East Plan has not identified any case for a strategic change to Green Belt boundaries in Kent.
- 6.2.4 It is a matter for the LDF to assess whether there are any local circumstances that justify changes to Green Belt boundaries in the Borough. In preparing the Core Strategy the Council identified only one significant location where it believes exceptional circumstances exist that justify the removal of land from the Green Belt. In addition, there were some minor refinements to the village confines of Birling, Ryarsh, Wrotham, Plaxtol and Platt and the urban area of Tonbridge at the Weald of Kent School..
- 6.2.5 **Isles Quarry West at Borough Green** is a site damaged by former quarrying and associated uses. It contains some commercial development. This site is strategically suitable to meet affordable housing needs of the more remote part of the Malling rural area that lies within the Green Belt. The exceptional case for its release is explained in the section of the Core Strategy dealing with affordable housing (see para 6.3.31 *et seq*).
- 6.2.6 Comprehensive development of the site would enable the following benefits to be achieved:
- maximising beneficial use of land damaged by previous uses;
  - achieving full restoration of Isles Quarry West;
  - providing an opportunity to enhance biodiversity in the vicinity of the site through better management of existing habitats and new habitat creation;
  - removal of existing intrusive employment uses to the benefit of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within which the quarry lies;
  - the ability to meet affordable housing needs arising from the more remote parts of the Malling rural area in the most sustainable way;

- supporting the viability and vitality of local services at Borough Green; and
- since the site lies within a quarry, development would not impact significantly on the wider landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6.2.7 This site has therefore been removed from the Green and identified as a strategic location for development (see Policy CP18). Detailed proposals for the site will be made in the Development Land Allocations DPD. The following policy establishes the extent of the Green Belt.

**POLICY CP3 1. National Green Belt policy will be applied generally to the west of the A228 and the settlements of Snodland, Leybourne, West Malling and Kings Hill, and to the south of Kings Hill and east of Watringbury.**

**2. Land at Isles Quarry West is excluded from the Green Belt to enable its comprehensive development in accordance with Policy CP18.**

The location of Isles Quarry West is identified diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. The precise extent of the allocated area and therefore the land to be excluded from the Green Belt will be shown on the Proposals Map pursuant to a policy in the Development Land Allocations DPD.

6.2.8 It is also a matter for the LDF to identify existing major developed sites within the Green Belt where infilling or redevelopment may be permitted. Those which have not already been implemented will be carried forward from the adopted Local Plan and identified in the Development Land Allocations DPD.

### ***Safeguarded Land***

6.2.9 The inner boundary of the Green Belt around settlements was defined in previous Local Plans. In accordance with the advice contained in Annex B of PPG2 (Green Belts), and to ensure that the boundaries of the Green Belt would endure, the Council specifically excluded certain sites from the Green Belt around Tonbridge and at Hadlow, Wrotham and Plaxtol so that they could remain available to meet the long-term development needs. Those areas that have not been developed will be retained as safeguarded land.

**POLICY CP4 The following areas are defined as Safeguarded Land and reserved for future development.**

- (a) North of Lower Haysden Lane, Tonbridge;
- (b) North of Dry Hill Park Road, Tonbridge;
- (c) Carpenters lane, Hadlow;
- (d) Land at Howlands Allotments, Wrotham.

**They will not be released for development before 2021 other than through a review of the Local Development Framework and only then if there is a demonstrable shortfall of housing land relative to the prevailing requirements of the South East Plan.**

The location of sites (a) and (b), which are significantly larger than the Hadlow and Wrotham sites, are identified diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. The precise extent of all sites listed in this Policy is shown on the Proposals Map.

### ***Strategic Gap***

- 6.2.10 Policy CC10b of the South East Plan indicates that where there is a need to prevent the coalescence of settlements in order to retain their separate identity local authorities may identify the boundaries of Strategic Gaps in their Local Development Documents. Within Strategic Gaps development should only be permitted where it would not compromise the integrity and purpose of the Gap. Policies KTG3 and KTG11 in the section of the Plan dealing with the Thames Gateway indicate that a Strategic Gap to the south, east and west of the Medway urban area and between Maidstone and the Medway Gap will be protected from development.

**POLICY CP5 Unless justified by special circumstances, development will not be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted that would harm the function of the mid-Kent Strategic Gap as a physical break maintaining the separation and separate identities of the built-up areas of Maidstone, Medway Towns and the Medway Gap.**

- 6.2.11 Special circumstances would include a shortfall in strategic housing provision sufficient to justify the release of additional land for residential development in the Bushey Wood Area of Opportunity prior to 2021 (see Policy CP16). The general extent of the Strategic Gap, insofar as it lies within Tonbridge and Malling, is shown on the Key Diagram. Pursuant to this Policy the detailed boundaries are defined on the Proposals Map and include the Area of Opportunity at Bushey Wood.

### ***Separate Identity of Settlements***

- 6.2.12 Development should not result in settlements being joined together. The green wedges that separate villages and the areas of local landscape importance that enhance their setting should therefore be protected. Development should also not take place where it would result in a loss of local character and individual identity. Development should enhance the setting of settlements.

**POLICY CP6** 1. Development will not be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted within the countryside or on the edge of a settlement where it might unduly erode the separate identity of settlements or harm the setting or character of a settlement when viewed from the countryside or from adjoining settlements.

2. Any development that is considered acceptable in terms of this policy should maintain or enhance the setting and identity of the settlement, and in the countryside, be consistent with Policy CP14.

6.2.13 In the light of this policy and the advice in PPS7 Areas of Local Landscape Importance and Green Wedges will no longer specifically be identified on the Proposals Map.

### ***Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty***

6.2.14 Tonbridge and Malling Borough contains part of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the Kent Downs and High Weald. These areas are designated for the national importance of their landscape. Proposals for the designation of AONBs are identified and consulted upon by Natural England and the final boundaries are approved by the Secretary of State. The Borough Council cannot change them. Within AONBs, it is Government policy to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, whilst having due regard to social and economic considerations. Large-scale developments are only likely to be acceptable where they are in the national interest.

6.2.15 The Kent Downs AONB comprises 27% of the Borough and forms a striking range of hills. This area is an important amenity and recreation area for both local people and visitors, particularly for walking and cycling. It also forms an attractive backdrop to settlements in the Medway Gap. A small part of the High Weald AONB impinges on the southern margins of the Borough with the Bidborough Ridge forming a landscape backdrop to the south of Tonbridge. The general extent of AONBs in the Borough is illustrated on the Key Diagram. Pursuant to the following Policy their precise area of cover is shown on the Proposals Map.

6.2.16 The Council will seek practical ways, in partnership with others, to conserve and enhance the AONBs in the Borough. In assessing the landscape impact of any development regard will be had to Landscape Character Assessments prepared by Kent County Council and the **Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook** prepared by the Kent Downs AONB Joint Committee which has been adopted by the Borough Council as a material consideration for development control. A detailed study of the potential for enhancement of access and landscape character in the Lower Medway Valley section of the Kent Downs

AONB has been undertaken, and the Council is working with partners to implement its recommendations.

- 6.2.17 Within AONBs the Borough Council will give priority to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area, including landscape, wildlife and geological features, over other planning considerations.

**POLICY CP7** Development will not be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, which would be detrimental to the natural beauty and quiet enjoyment of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including their landscape, wildlife and geological interest, other than in the exceptional circumstances of:

- (a) major development that is demonstrably in the national interest and where there are no alternative sites available or the need cannot be met in any other way; or
- (b) any other development that is essential to meet local social or economic needs.

**Any such development must have regard to local distinctiveness and landscape character, and use sympathetic materials and appropriate design.**

#### ***Sites of Special Scientific Interest***

- 6.2.18 Some sites of nature conservation importance in the Borough are of national or European significance. Sites of national significance are designated by Natural England as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). They comprise areas of outstanding biological, geological or physiographic interest of national significance. The Borough Council must further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs and ensure that nature conservation factors are taken into account before any planning permission is granted which might affect them.

- 6.2.19 The SSSIs in the Borough recognised as being of European importance are known as Special Areas for Conservation (SAC). Where a proposal may impact upon a SAC within the Borough, the proposal will be assessed in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994.

**POLICY CP8** Development will not be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, where it would directly, indirectly or cumulatively cause material harm to the scientific or nature conservation interest of a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

6.2.20 The general extent of the larger SSSIs in the Borough, some of which are also SACs, is shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. These are the sites which, because of their size, are of such strategic significance that they affect the spatial strategy. The precise extent of all SSSIs is shown on the Proposals Map. The above Policy will also apply to any new SSSIs or SACs designated during the lifetime of the LDF. Detailed policies relating to Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodlands will be included in the Managing Development and the Environment DPD. They are all covered by the general terms of Policy CP1.

### **Agricultural Land**

6.2.21 PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) makes it clear that the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) should be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations when determining planning applications or proposing development. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, areas of poorer quality land should be sought in preference to the best and most versatile land, except where this might be inconsistent with sustainability considerations. It indicates that authorities may include policies to protect specific areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

6.2.22 The Borough contains extensive areas of high quality agricultural land along the foot of the North Downs, including parts of the East Bank of the Medway, and following the Greensand Ridge. These broad areas are shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram and have a significant influence on the development strategy in the Borough which seeks to concentrate development within the built-up areas and on land damaged by former uses. The following policy therefore is intended to determine the pattern of development proposed in the LDF. Individual planning applications will continue to be considered on their merits in the light of the advice in PPS7.

**POLICY CP9 Development of the best and most versatile land (DEFRA Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will be not be proposed in the LDF unless there is an overriding need, and**

- (a) there is no suitable site in a sustainable location on land of poorer agricultural quality;**  
**or**
- (b) alternative sites have greater value for their landscape, biodiversity, amenity, heritage or natural resources or are subject to other constraints such as flooding.**

### **Flood Protection**

- 6.2.23 Flooding can be caused by tidal inundation, flooding from rivers after heavy rainfall, and flash flooding caused by rainfall running off hard surfaces in built-up areas or from fields in rural areas. Flooding can also overload sewerage and drainage systems and increase the risk of pollution and nuisance. Extensive areas of the Borough in the vicinity of the River Medway and its tributaries are subject to flooding.
- 6.2.24 Evolving Government Policy on flood risk is contained in PPS25 which indicates that Local Planning Authorities should seek to avoid flood risk to people and property where possible and manage it elsewhere. Flood risk has to be considered alongside other issues such as transport, housing, economic growth, natural resources and particularly achieving sustainable regeneration. A risk-based approach to planning new development is therefore recommended that seeks to avoid inappropriate development in flood risk areas, minimise run-off from new development and manage flood pathways and flood storage.
- 6.2.25 A sequential approach to determining the suitability of land for development in flood risk areas is central to the guidance. Authorities must therefore be able to demonstrate, in identifying sites for development, that there are no alternative sites available in areas with a lower probability of flooding that would be appropriate for the type of development proposed. Departures from the sequential approach will only be justified in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to meet wider aims of sustainable development. This approach is appropriate when there are large areas liable to flood but where development is necessary for wider sustainable development reasons. The approach is also appropriate where restrictive designations prevent the availability of unconstrained sites in lower risk areas.
- 6.2.26 The **Catchment Flood Management Plan** for the River Medway, prepared by the Environment Agency, sets an overall context for the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which has informed the policies of the Local Development Framework. Proposals for the development of new or replacement flood protection measures will be identified in the Upper and Lower Medway Strategies also prepared by the Environment Agency.
- 6.2.27 The Environment Agency's floodplain maps show the limits of the floodplain which is identified diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. This includes the indicative areas that could be affected by 1 in 100-year fluvial, and 1 in 200-year tidal, flood events. The Council has prepared, in conjunction with the Environment Agency, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for those areas where development might be proposed. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will need to be supplemented by the preparation of site-specific Flood Risk Assessments, preferably at the stage of pre-application discussion or when more detailed Development Briefs are being prepared and/or when a planning application is submitted.

- 6.2.28 The South East Plan, in Policy NRM3, indicates that inappropriate development should not be proposed in zones 2 or 3 of the floodplain (as defined by the Environment Agency) or in areas with a history of groundwater flooding or where it would increase flood risk elsewhere, unless there is an over-riding need and absence of alternatives. The Council will have regard to this policy, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and PPS25 and aim to minimise and manage flood risk associated with new developments.
- 6.2.29 Some redevelopment sites within the built-up areas, particularly in the central area of Tonbridge and along the riverside at Aylesford, are likely to be identified for redevelopment, or will come forward as windfalls, within areas which are at medium to high risk of flooding. In these cases the economic, social, environmental and regeneration benefits of redevelopment have to be weighed, as part of the PPS25 sequential test, against the actual risk of flooding. In these locations the aim should be, in consultation with the Environment Agency, to minimise and manage any flood risk in the detailed design of such developments. The following policy will apply to all forms of development other than changes of use or minor householder development:

**POLICY CP10 1. Within the floodplain development should first seek to make use of areas at no or low risk to flooding before areas at higher risk, where this is possible and compatible with other policies aimed at achieving a sustainable pattern of development.**

**2. Development which is acceptable (in terms of PPS25) or otherwise exceptionally justified within areas at risk of flooding must:**

- (a) be subject to a flood risk assessment; and**
- (b) include an appropriately safe means of escape above flood levels anticipated during the lifetime of the development; and**
- (c) be designed and controlled to mitigate the effects of flooding on the site and the potential impact of the development on flooding elsewhere in the floodplain.**

## 6.3 Location of Development

### *Urban Areas*

6.3.1 In accordance with the principles of sustainability, as set out in policies CP1 and CP2, development should be concentrated at the urban areas where there is the greatest potential for re-use of previously developed land and other land damaged by former uses. Development at the urban areas can also minimise the need to travel, by being located close to existing services, jobs and public transport.

**POLICY CP11 1. Development will be concentrated within the confines of the urban areas of:**

- (a) **Tonbridge (including Hilden Park);**
- (b) **The Medway Gap (i.e. the major developed parts of Kings Hill, Leybourne, East Malling, Larkfield, Lunsford Park, Ditton and Aylesford south of the River Medway, Aylesford Forstal, and Snodland);**
- (c) **The part of the Medway Towns urban area that lies within Tonbridge and Malling Borough (Walderslade).**

**2. Development adjoining these urban areas will only be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, where there is an identified need and there are no suitable sites within the urban areas. Priority will be afforded to the use of previously developed land. In the case of Tonbridge, priority will be afforded to the use of the safeguarded land identified under Policy CP4.**

The general location of the urban areas is shown on the Key Diagram. The precise extent of the existing and proposed confines of these areas is shown on the Proposals Map.

### *Rural Service Centres*

6.3.2 PPS7 states that, away from larger urban areas, development should be focussed in or near to local service centres where housing, employment, services and other facilities can be provided close together. In the rural areas, a balance therefore needs to be struck between conserving the countryside and maintaining or enhancing the functioning of settlements.

6.3.3 Rural Service Centres are those rural settlements where a reasonable range of services exist or are easily accessible. All rural settlements in the Borough were assessed on the basis of whether they either contained, or were within 1.5km of, all of the following services:

- a reasonable range of shops selling convenience goods;
- a doctor's surgery or clinic;
- a primary school;
- a public transport route with a reasonable level of service to at least one of the main urban areas (*a reasonable level of service is defined as a minimum of an hourly bus or train service in each direction during weekday peak periods*).

Rural settlements meeting these criteria were considered to be the most sustainable locations for further housing and employment development within the rural area. The following policy applies to those settlements that meet the above criteria.

**POLICY CP12 1. Housing and employment development or redevelopment, conversions and changes of use will be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted within the confines of the following rural settlements which are defined as Rural Service Centres:**

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| (a) Borough Green; | (d) Hildenborough; |
| (b) East Peckham;  | (e) West Malling.  |
| (c) Hadlow;        |                    |

**2. Development adjoining these settlements will only be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, where there are no suitable sites within their built confines and where there is a local justification related to the housing, employment, community or social needs of the settlement and its environs.**

**3. Within the Green Belt, development will only be permitted if it is justified by very special circumstances, and in the case of housing, complies with Exception Site Policy CP19.**

6.3.4 The location of these rural settlements is shown on the Key Diagram. Their confines are shown on the Proposals Map.

#### ***Other Rural Settlements***

6.3.5 At all other rural settlements, more remote from services, the level of housing development will be limited to development appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement which should not significantly worsen the sustainability of the settlement. Any proposals for affordable housing of more than a minor scale at these villages would need to be treated as an exception under the terms of Policy CP19 because the policy presumption is that the majority of rural affordable housing will be

located at the Rural Service Centres and, in particular, at Borough Green. Other forms of development will be considered on their merits but the presumption is that most employment and service development will likewise be concentrated at the Rural Service Centres. The following policy will apply:

**POLICY CP13 New development within the confines of the following rural settlements will be restricted to minor development appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement. In the case of redevelopment or change of use of an existing building, development will only be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, if: the overall trip generation is projected to be lower than that associated with the former use; or if there is some significant improvement to the appearance, character and functioning of the settlement; or there is an exceptional local need for affordable housing in terms of Policy CP19.**

(a) Addington	(n) Ightham
(b) Addington Clearway	(o) Mereworth
(c) Aylesford Village	(p) Offham
(d) Birling	(q) Platt
(e) Blue Bell Hill	(r) Plaxtol
(f) Burham	(s) Ryarsh
(g) Crouch	(t) Snoll Hatch
(h) Dunks Green	(u) Trottiscliffe
(i) East Malling Village	(v) Wateringbury
(j) Eccles	(w) West Peckham
(k) Fairseat	(x) Wouldham
(l) Golden Green	(y) Wrotham Heath
(m) Hale Street	(z) Wrotham

**Note: Dunks Green, Fairseat and Snoll Hatch are washed over by the Green Belt which means that any development within them must be limited to infill subject to no adverse effect on the character of the settlement.**

- 6.3.6 The location of these rural settlements is shown on the Key Diagram. Their confines are shown on the Proposals Map.

### ***Development in the Countryside***

- 6.3.7 The concept of sustainability argues in favour of concentrating most development in or adjoining existing built-up areas. However, there can be cases where some development and diversification of use in the countryside can be beneficial and sustainable. For instance, some farm businesses may benefit from diversification and an increased number of

visits to the countryside can help the rural economy. However this needs to be appropriate to the character of the countryside which also needs to be sustained. Where development in the countryside is justified, the preference will be for the re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings. For the purposes of interpreting the following policy “the countryside” is defined as that part of the Borough lying outside the confines of the urban areas identified in Policy CP11 and the rural settlements identified under Policies CP12 and CP13.

**POLICY CP14 In the countryside development will be restricted to:**

- (a) extensions to existing settlements in accordance with Policies CP11 or CP12 ; or,
- (b) the one-for-one replacement, or appropriate extension, of an existing dwelling, or conversion of an existing building for residential use; or
- (c) development that is necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry, including essential housing for farm or forestry workers; or
- (d) development required for the limited expansion of an existing authorised employment use; or
- (e) development that secures the viability of a farm, provided it forms part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme supported by a business case; or
- (f) redevelopment of the defined Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt which improves visual appearance, enhances openness and improves sustainability, or
- (g) affordable housing which is justified as an exception under Policy CP19; or
- (h) predominantly open recreation uses together with associated essential built infrastructure; or
- (i) any other development for which a rural location is essential.

**Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development which is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy will still be need to be justified by very special circumstances.**

***Housing Provision***

- 6.3.8 The Government is committed to promoting sustainable patterns of housing development through concentrating most additional housing within urban areas and making the most efficient use of land. It is the Government’s key objective to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home which they can afford, in a community where they want to live.

- 6.3.9 The Borough Council, working in partnership with the private sector, Registered Social Landlords and other agencies, is committed to the delivery of good quality housing to meet identified needs and demand. It aims to achieve a sustainable pattern of development so that communities are vibrant and well provided with services and local facilities.
- 6.3.10 The submission version of the South East Plan requires an average rate of development in Tonbridge and Malling Borough of 425 dwellings per annum for the 2006-21 period; a total of 6,375 dwellings. PPS3 (Housing) and South East Plan Policy H3 specify a target of 60% of new development to be located on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings. In Tonbridge and Malling, over 90% of all housing development will take place on previously developed land; well in excess of the Government's target.
- 6.3.11 There is significant scope for additional development and re-development within existing settlements as identified in the Council's Urban Capacity Study. In addition, there are four large 'brownfield' sites adjoining or close to the Medway Gap Urban Area (at Holborough, Kings Hill, Leybourne Grange and Peters Pit). Together with projected windfalls in the 10-15 year period, these sites get very close to accommodating the levels of development set out in the South East Plan without the need for release of any greenfield land (see **Annex C**). On the basis of allocating land for just an additional 194 dwellings within the built-up areas, there will be no need to identify any greenfield sites for housing development. In consequence, the only housing development that can be justified in the countryside is that necessary to meet locally identified needs, and/or rural diversification. If the figures in the South East Plan as ultimately approved are significantly higher then attention will turn first to the Area of Opportunity at Bushey Wood (see Policy CP16) but it is likely that even in that event it would not be required until towards the end of the LDF timeframe.
- 6.3.12 Due to the scale, nature and location of the main existing housing commitments the rate of development is likely to be self-regulating through market influence. However, the long-established strategy of the Borough Council, as expressed in previous development plans, has sought to husband land where appropriate and to align the delivery of sites with identified needs. In the case of the four strategic sites now with planning permission, their release was supported by the Council in order to address identified affordable housing needs of the Borough in the short to medium-term.
- 6.3.13 Looking to the post-2011 period it will similarly be appropriate to ensure that housing supply remains available to meet both general and affordable housing needs expressed through the emerging South East Plan and the Council's Housing Strategy supported by an up-to-date local housing market assessment. Peters Pit is capable of fulfilling this role on a major scale and will provide confidence about delivery during much of the 2011 to 2021 period.

**POLICY CP15 1. Provision is made for the development of at least 6,375 dwellings (or such other figure as may ultimately be included in the approved South East Plan) in the period 2006-2021.**

**2. Major new housing development will be met at the following strategic sites:**

- (a) Holborough (with permission) – 938 dwellings to be developed between 2006 and 2016;**
- (b) Kings Hill (with permission) –1446 dwellings to be developed between 2006 and 2016;**
- (c) Leybourne Grange (with permission) – 723 dwellings to be developed between 2008 to 2016;**
- (d) Peters Pit (with permission) - 1000 dwellings to be developed mainly in the post 2011 period.**

**3. Elsewhere, housing will be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, on sites which accord with the sustainability principles established in Policy CP1, the settlement hierarchy defined in Policies CP11, 12 and 13 and other Core Policies as appropriate.**

6.3.14 The general location of the strategic sites is shown on the Key Diagram. Their precise extent will be shown for information on the Proposals Map.

### ***East Bank of the Medway***

6.3.15 Because of the strength of constraints applying throughout the rest of the Borough, in particular the Metropolitan Green Belt, the East Bank of the Medway has long been identified as a general location within which the long term development needs of the Borough could be met. The concept has been established since the 1980s and has previously been tested and endorsed at three Structure Plan Examinations in Public and two Local Plan Inquiries.

6.3.16 The East Bank Strategy envisages the creation of two major new communities concentrating on damaged land at Peters Pit, near Wouldham and Bushey Wood, near Eccles In addition, the strategy included some planned expansion of the village of Wouldham, which is now complete. The scale of development at the two larger sites is considered to be sufficient to support the provision of a range of new social, environmental and transport infrastructure improvements which will also benefit the wider community, in particular, the construction of a new bridge across the River Medway which will generally improve the accessibility of the area.

### **Bushey Wood Area of Opportunity**

- 6.3.17 Land at Bushey Wood was identified in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan as a broad Area of Opportunity for future development. Since there is unlikely to be a need for further housing land to meet strategic requirements up to 2021, there is no need to firmly allocate any land for this purpose. It is therefore carried forward as an area safeguarded for long-term development beyond the time horizon of the LDF.
- 6.3.18 Compared to the Local Plan, the safeguarded area has been extended to include the “Island Site” and mineral workings to the west of Bull Lane, Eccles. The benefit of including this area is that it will enable the future of the entire area, including the restoration of the mineral workings and long-term access to the Island Site, to be considered comprehensively, and prevent any prejudicial development in the meantime. It also provides a larger area within which new development can be planned, but this does not necessarily mean that more development will be proposed.
- 6.3.19 The Area of Opportunity is an area of search within which development will eventually take place if and when it is needed. The area is known to be subject to significant constraints, including an important Ancient Monument and sites of nature conservation interest the significance of which will need to be taken into account when development is proposed. Large areas will remain open as recreation, education and general amenity areas within any new development.
- 6.3.20 Although it is unlikely that any development will be justified at Bushey Wood within the current plan period it is important that the principle of development is reaffirmed and the broad area safeguarded for the following reasons:
- to make clear the Borough Council’s longer-term intentions for the area and to provide guidance on the broad extent of the area;
  - to provide a context to resist any proposals made in the short-term which might prejudice the longer-term potential of the area;
  - to provide a context for detailed planning work that will be needed in order for development to commence in the longer-term, in particular, to ensure a viable comprehensive transportation strategy for the whole of the East Bank that has regard to the longer term possibility of development in the area;
  - to indicate a clear direction for longer-term growth in the Borough to protect the Green Belt and other areas of importance for countryside conservation.
- 6.3.21 The following policy continues to safeguard this broad area for future built development:
-

**POLICY CP16 Land at Bushey Wood is identified as an Area of Opportunity containing land with potential for meeting residential needs in the post 2021 period, or earlier if there is any significant shortfall in strategic housing provision. Land will only be released for housing development within the Area of Opportunity through the preparation of an Area Action Plan. In the meantime, development will not be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted within this area which might prejudice its long-term development potential.**

The situation will be reviewed through annual monitoring, but in order to ensure confidence about housing delivery in the long term, the Area Action Plan would need to be in place before the approval of the first review of the South East Plan. The Area Action Plan will indicate the circumstances under which land will be released and the sequence and phasing of development. The general location of Bushey Wood is shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. The detailed boundary is identified on the Proposals Map.

6.3.22 Assessment of the future development potential of this area will need to have regard to:

- the protection and enhancement of any prevailing nature conservation interests which are judged to be of sufficient importance to outweigh the need for development at the time such development is required;
- the need to conserve and enhance the Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- the prior evaluation (by means of a detailed site survey) of the archaeological potential of the area and the protection or recording as appropriate of any areas determined to be of archaeological significance;
- the need to avoid sterilising any viable mineral reserves within the area which have permission for mineral working;
- the need to protect the adjacent Site of Special Scientific Interest from any adverse impact;
- the need to preserve or enhance the setting of the Friars and Aylesford Conservation Area;
- the need to identify and treat any areas of contaminated or unstable land;
- the need to protect the identity and character of Eccles village;
- the need to make adequate education, community, leisure and cultural provision;
- the provision of adequate access to the area from the principal road network and the M20 motorway avoiding the village of Eccles;

- the need to enhance the amount and quality of landscaping within and on the margins of the area, with the aim of mitigating the visual impact of development on both local and distant views;
- the relationship between any development and the Aylesford Wastewater Treatment Works including any need to extend the works; and
- The relationship between any development and the employment uses on the west bank of the river.

### **Affordable Housing**

6.3.23 PPS3 sets out the Government's policy for securing the provision of affordable housing. Policy H4 of the South East Plan requires LDDs to deliver a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing in the region, with an overall target for the region as a whole of 25% of all new housing to be socially rented and 10% other forms of affordable housing.

6.3.24 The Borough Council defines affordable housing as that which is provided at a subsidised cost to enable those whose income does not allow them to secure adequate housing through the open market (because of the relationship between local housing costs and incomes) to be suitably housed. Such housing can comprise a combination of:

- rented housing (where the rents do not exceed Housing Corporation target rent levels);
- shared ownership (where the initial equity purchase is as low as 25% of the market value of a suitable property); and,
- subsidised low-cost home ownership where the level of subsidy enables purchase at least 40% below market value.

Housing for key or essential workers can fall into any one of the above categories, depending on the disposable income of the household. Affordable housing should remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or, if this restriction is lifted, the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

6.3.25 Whilst some affordable housing will continue to be provided directly by Registered Social Landlords, the Housing and Market Needs Assessment has projected a very significant shortfall in the provision of affordable housing across the Borough up to 2016. Even allowing for the substantial affordable housing supply already committed, to satisfy this unmet need in the foreseeable future would require an unprecedented and unrealistic increase to the build programme. However, the provision of affordable housing is critical to the success of communities across the Borough. It is therefore important that further improvement in future supply should be made. In this context, and to reflect the potential delivery issues, the Council has taken the view that the aim should be to provide for 40% of the housing on development sites above prescribed thresholds to be affordable. It is important that

retirement and sheltered housing also addresses affordable housing needs either on-site or through commuted payments for use at an alternative location.

- 6.3.26 This approach will be applied on a site by site basis alongside other planning considerations that affect delivery. It will be the start point for negotiations which will have regard to such matters as:
- the viability of development bearing in mind the need for, and cost of, on and off-site infrastructure, including transport, education and other community facilities and the need for the development to be attractive to the lenders of private finance;
  - the availability of housing grant or other subsidy;
  - the location and character of the site and its general suitability for affordable housing;
  - the type of housing needed and most appropriate to the locality;
  - the availability of affordable housing existing in the locality.
- 6.3.27 On the recommendation of the Housing and Market Needs Assessment the Council has concluded that of the 40% affordable housing 70% should comprise social housing for rent provided by a Registered Social Landlord and 30% intermediate housing. Intermediate housing is either subsidised housing for sale, at a discount of at least 40% below market value, shared-ownership, shared-equity, or sub-market rented accommodation at a discount sufficient to ensure the housing is affordable
- 6.3.28 The following policy applies a different percentage requirement for the urban areas (Tonbridge, Medway Gap and Walderslade) as defined in Policy CP11 and the rural areas because the number of sites within the rural areas above the national threshold set in PPS3 of 15 dwellings is likely to be extremely limited. The rural area is the entire Borough outside the defined urban areas, including the rural settlements referred to in Policies CP12 and CP13.

- POLICY CP17**
- 1. In the Urban Areas, as defined in Core Policy CP11, affordable housing provision will be sought on all sites of 15 dwellings or above, or 0.5ha or above, at a level of 40% of the number of dwellings in any scheme.**
  - 2. In the rural area, affordable housing provision will be sought on all sites of 5 dwellings or above, or 0.16ha or above, at a level of 40% of the number of dwellings in any scheme.**
  - 3. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, 70% of the affordable dwellings provided on each site should be social rented housing with the remainder**

**being intermediate housing (as defined in para 6.3.27).**

**4. In exceptional circumstances, it may be agreed that affordable housing may be provided on another site or by means of a commuted sum.**

**5. If a site allocated or identified in the LDF for housing is sub-divided so as to create two or more separate development schemes one or more of which falls below the relevant threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of affordable housing to reflect the provision that would have been achieved on the site as a whole had it come forward as a single scheme for the allocated or identified site.**

6.3.29 The exceptional circumstances under which off-site provision or a commuted sum may be appropriate would be determined on a site by site basis but could include situations where:

- affordable housing is more effectively secured by bringing existing housing back into use as affordable housing;
- management of affordable housing on the development site cannot be secured effectively (eg. sheltered accommodation);
- providing affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough is more likely to widen housing choice and availability.

6.3.30 Affordable housing provision and the proportion of social rented housing will be monitored and kept under regular review and, if justified, the level to be sought on development sites will be revised downwards through the production of a Supplementary Planning Document. Further advice on the provision of affordable housing will likewise be contained in an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

### ***Rural Affordable Housing Needs***

6.3.31 There is a general need for affordable housing in the rural areas as identified through the Housing and Market Needs Assessment. Some of this need can be met in the nearby urban areas or on the strategic development sites (see Policy CP15). However, the opportunities for affordable housing within the rural settlements are likely to be few. As a result, in the more remote parts of the Borough away from the main urban areas (ie the Malling Rural sub-area of the Housing and Market Needs Assessment) there is predicted to be a need which cannot easily be met because of the lack of sites.

6.3.32 Whilst it would be possible to identify and allocate sufficient greenfield sites adjacent to villages within this general area to meet these needs, this would result in a dispersed pattern of development with new affordable dwellings located in relatively remote locations without easy

access to services and facilities. It is also difficult to be sure of delivery on a series of separate small sites. The Council therefore proposes an alternative, and more sustainable approach, which is to meet a substantial proportion of these needs at the Rural Service Centre of Borough Green. Borough Green has a good range of shops, services and community facilities, reasonable public transport and, importantly, not only a primary school but also a nearby secondary school.

- 6.3.33 However, Borough Green lies in the Green Belt where an exceptional justification is required to support a change to Green Belt boundaries. The opportunities within the built-up area of Borough Green are limited. Much of the periphery of the built-up area is constrained by operational or derelict mineral working or by the need to maintain the separation of settlements. In accordance with Policy CP1, priority should be afforded to the use of derelict and damaged land before looking to greenfield sites.
- 6.3.34 In this context, the Borough Council believes that an exceptional justification exists to support the release of some of the derelict and despoiled land to the south of Borough Green at Isles Quarry West from the Green Belt and its allocation for housing. This will also have the other benefits outlined in para 6.2.6. Cross-subsidy, with sufficient market housing to make the overall development viable and meet other site-specific requirements, will be necessary. It will also be important that the affordable housing element is of the right type and phased over a number of years to ensure that it meets the identified need.

**POLICY CP18 Land to the south of Borough Green at Isles Quarry West is identified as a strategic housing location to meet housing needs in the more remote part of the Malling rural area.**

Detailed requirements in respect of Isles Quarry West will be set out in the Development Land Allocations DPD. It is identified diagrammatically on the Key Diagram as a strategic development location. The precise boundaries of the allocation will be shown on the Proposals Map.

- 6.3.35 In terms of the other larger villages in the Green Belt, there is no case for either West Malling or Hildenborough being treated in the same way as Borough Green because of their proximity to the main urban areas. In the case of Wrotham, it would be expected that any local needs would be met, in the first place, by the proposed development at Isles Quarry West. East Peckham, although like Borough Green, relatively remote from the main urban areas, has very restricted opportunities for development because of the floodplain and the need to maintain the separation of East Peckham from Snoll Hatch and Hale Street. It also does not have the brownfield opportunities that exist at Borough Green. At Hadlow, a small site in Carpenter's Lane is excluded from the Green Belt under the provisions of Policy CP4 (c).

### **Exception Site Policy**

6.3.36 In accordance with PPS3 (Housing) the following Exception Site policy will apply alongside the other affordable housing policies in the rural areas to allow for any specific local needs that have not been met by the general affordable housing provision. One way that such needs may be identified is through a Village Plan prepared by the local community and supported by a detailed local needs survey. Sites released as an exception to policy should be made available exclusively for affordable housing to meet strictly defined local needs in perpetuity. A need for affordable housing may be considered a very special circumstance sufficient to override the normal presumption against development in the Green Belt.

**POLICY CP19 Development to meet a specific identified local need for rural affordable housing may exceptionally be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted in situations where there would normally be a presumption against development. Such development will only be proposed or permitted where all of the following requirements are met:**

- (a) **the Council is satisfied that there is a genuine local need for affordable housing within the Parish or, where appropriate, in adjacent Parishes as defined by the categories of need set out below and verified by means of a comprehensive local appraisal;**
- (b) **the identified local need arises within an area remote from any major urban area and cannot be met by any other means;**
- (c) **the proposal is of a size and type suitable to meet the identified local need and will be available at an appropriate affordable cost commensurate with the results of the appraisal;**
- (d) **the proposed site is considered suitable for such purposes by virtue of its relationship in scale and siting to an existing village and its services, its proximity to public transport, and the absence of overriding countryside, conservation, environmental, or highway impact; and**
- (e) **the initial and subsequent occupancy is controlled through planning conditions and agreements as appropriate to ensure that the accommodation remains available in perpetuity to meet the purposes for which it was permitted.**

- 6.3.37 In assessing local needs, regard will be paid to households otherwise unable to gain access to existing local accommodation suited to their needs at an affordable cost (the onus being on the household to prove they cannot afford to buy locally at current house prices within the limits of the disposable income available to them) and that fall within one or more of the following categories:
- those in the Parish currently in accommodation unsuited to their circumstances for physical, medical, or social reasons and which is incapable of being improved. “Improvement” in this context means any improvement achievable with grant assistance;
  - those who are dependants of households who have been resident in the Parish either for a continuous period of three years or alternatively any five years out of the last ten;
  - those who have been members of households currently living in the Parish and who have recognised local connections, i.e. having family resident in the area for a minimum of ten years;
  - those employed full-time in the Parish on other than a short-term basis or those who will be taking up such employment there, or those who provide an important service requiring them to live locally.

### **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

- 6.3.38 Local authorities should make appropriate provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople having regard to the requirements of the South East Plan. This objective is reflected in Policy CP1.5 of this Core Strategy. A sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, covering the Boroughs of Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone, Ashford and Tunbridge Wells, was undertaken during 2006. The findings of this Assessment have been fed into the South East Plan that will eventually allocate specific plot requirements back to each District. Depending on the outcome of this process the Borough Council may need to prepare a DPD dealing specifically with the provision of a site or sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation in accordance with the following policy.
- 6.3.39 In the meantime, in accordance with the transitional arrangements in Circular 01/06 (Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites), any proposals for additional facilities for gypsies and travellers will be considered on their merits in the light of the findings of the sub-regional assessment and against the criteria in part 2 of the following Policy (which also applies, as appropriate, to Travelling Showpeople).

**POLICY CP20 1. Provision will be made through a specific land allocation Development Plan Document or permission will be granted for the number of caravan site plots specified in the South East Plan on sites which meet the criteria in Part 2 of this**

**Policy. In identifying sites, first consideration will be given to the limited expansion of one or both of the two existing publicly controlled gypsy sites in the Borough.**

**2. Accommodation for gypsies and travellers (as defined in Circular 01/06), suitable for mixed residential and commercial use, and sites for travelling showpeople will be proposed in the LDF or permitted if all of the following requirements are met:**

- (a) there is an identified need that cannot reasonably be met on an existing or planned site;**
- (b) residential or rural amenity is not prejudiced as a result of visual intrusion, excessive noise, lighting, traffic generation or activity at unsocial hours;**
- (c) the site respects the scale of, and does not dominate, the nearest settled community;**
- (d) the site can adequately be accessed by vehicles towing caravans and there is safe pedestrian and cycle access to the site;**
- (e) the site is reasonably accessible to shops, schools and other community facilities on foot, by cycle or public transport; and**
- (f) in the case of travelling showpeople, the site is suitable in all respects for the storage of large items of mobile equipment.**

**There will be a presumption against the development of gypsy and traveller accommodation (including sites for travelling showpeople) in the Green Belt unless there are very special circumstances.**

The location of the two existing gypsy sites to which this policy refers is shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram.

- 6.3.40 Insofar as Travelling Showpeople are concerned, there is an existing site in Constitution Hill, Snodland which will continue to be safeguarded through a Policy in the Development Land Allocations DPD. Studies do not identify a need for an additional site specifically in Tonbridge and Malling Borough. In the view of the Borough Council this is a matter that can only sensibly be addressed at the regional level.

### ***Employment Provision***

- 6.3.41 Policy RE3 of the South East Plan requires a range of sites and premises to be made available for employment purposes in sustainable

locations. Locally, the West Kent Area Investment Framework seeks to sustain and strengthen the local economy. The loss of employment land to other uses is identified as a key local issue. The Employment Land Review concluded that, subject to regular monitoring, the existing supply of land for employment development is sufficient, in quantitative and qualitative terms, to meet the employment needs of the Borough at least until 2016. In accordance with the precautionary approach, employment needs beyond 2016 will be reassessed at a future review of the Development Land Allocations DPD having regard to the results of monitoring.

- 6.3.42 However, the development of existing employment sites needs to be carefully managed. Whilst it may be appropriate for certain poorly located employment sites, or sites that are detrimental to residential amenity, to be redeveloped for other uses, it is essential that the majority of existing employment sites are safeguarded. Policy RE2 of the South East Plan requires the retention of accessible and well-located employment sites where there is a good prospect of employment use.
- 6.3.43 It is the intention that most new employment development will be located within the areas specifically identified for this purpose. However, there will be cases where proposals for new employment uses within the built-up areas come forward for sites outside these areas. Furthermore, some employment development may take place in suitable locations within the countryside in accordance with Policy CP14.

**POLICY CP21 1. New employment provision will be met at Kings Hill and on vacant sites within the main employment areas as well as through the intensification or redevelopment of existing employment sites.**

**2. Employment areas that:**

- (a) are well located to the main road and public transport network; and**
- (b) provide, or are physically and viably capable of providing through redevelopment, good quality modern accommodation attractive to the market; and**
- (c) are capable of meeting a range of employment uses to support the local economy;**

**will be safeguarded for such purposes. Redevelopment of such sites for housing, retail or other non-employment uses will not be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted.**

**3. At the urban areas, defined in Policy CP11 , and the Rural Service Centres listed under Policy CP12, employment development on sites not specifically identified for that purpose will be permitted if there is no significant adverse impact on residential amenity, biodiversity, local character or highway safety.**

6.3.44 The general location of the main employment areas to be safeguarded is shown on the Key Diagram. The precise extent of these and other employment areas will be identified on the Proposals Map pursuant to a policy in the Development Land Allocations DPD.

### ***Retail Development***

6.3.45 Tonbridge & Malling Borough has a wide range of shopping and service facilities. The South East Plan in Policy TC2 identifies Tonbridge together with Tunbridge Wells as a Primary Regional Centre, but does not restrict retail growth solely to such centres. The Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan will look specifically at the potential for accommodating new retail development and other opportunities to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

6.3.46 In the north of the Borough, the main focus for retail development is the South Aylesford Retail Park at Quarry Wood. Quarry Wood contains a mixture of retail outlets for convenience and comparison goods and is considered to be the most suitable location for additional comparison goods retail development if there is an identified need for comparison goods shopping that cannot be met within the Maidstone urban area. There is also a range of urban and rural district centres which offer retail facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of their local communities and a number of other small-scale local shopping facilities throughout the Borough. The aim is to protect the primary retail function of these centres for the benefit of their customers.

6.3.47 The Council's overarching objective is to provide for sustainable development in the Borough. In terms of retailing and services, the key to delivering this will be in maintaining and enhancing the role of the Borough's existing retail centres which act as a focal point for the communities they serve.

**POLICY CP22 1. New retail development will be proposed in the LDF, or otherwise permitted, if it maintains or enhances the vitality and viability of the existing retail centres and properly respects their role in the retail hierarchy in accordance with the following sequence:**

- (a) on sites located within the defined limits of the town, district or local centres;**

- (b) on edge-of-centre sites, but only if there is sufficient capacity and a retail need is demonstrated that cannot be accommodated within a town, district or local centre;
- (c) on out-of-centre sites, but only if there is sufficient capacity and a retail need is demonstrated that cannot be accommodated within or on the edge of a town, district or local centre. Sites that are well related to an existing retail area will be preferred to ones that have no such relationship. In this respect, Quarry Wood, Aylesford, is considered to be a suitable location for additional comparison goods retail development subject to there being no suitable sites within Maidstone urban area.

2. Proposals which might harm the vitality or viability of an existing centre either in terms of retail impact or, in the case of smaller centres, undermining the balance of uses or harming their amenity, will not be permitted.

Note: For the purpose of applying this Policy retail centres are defined as follows:

<b><i>Town Centre</i></b>	<b>Tonbridge</b>
<b><i>District Centres</i></b>	<b>Borough Green Kings Hill Martin Square/Larkfield Snodland West Malling</b>
<b><i>Tonbridge Urban Local Retail Centres</i></b>	<b>Martin Hardie Way York Parade</b>
<b><i>Medway Gap Urban Local Retail Centres</i></b>	<b>Twisden Road, East Malling Premier Parade, Aylesford Woodlands Parade, Ditton Little Market Row, Leybourne</b>
<b><i>Rural Local Retail Centres</i></b>	<b>East Peckham Hadlow Hildenborough</b>
<b><i>New Local Retail Centres</i></b>	<b>Leybourne Grange Peters Pit</b>
<b><i>Out-of-Centre Retail Facilities</i></b>	<b>Lunsford Park Quarry Wood, Aylesford Cannon Lane, Tonbridge</b>
<b><i>Individual local shops</i></b>	<b>within suburban areas and rural settlements</b>

6.3.48 The various categories of retail centres are indicated diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. The extent of the District Centres, Urban Local Retail Centres and Out-of-Centre Retail Facilities will be identified on the Proposals Map through the Development Land Allocations DPD. The character of the rural local retail centres is such that it is not possible to identify their extent on the Proposals Map. Nevertheless, the same policies apply as to any other Local Retail Centre. Policy CP26.3 concerning the retention of local services will also be relevant to these and other local shops in the rural areas. Likewise, it is not appropriate to identify the extent of the New Local Retail Centres to be provided as part of the comprehensive developments at Leybourne Grange and Peters Pit because their precise location will be determined by the detailed planning of these sites. Nevertheless, once built, Policy CP22 will apply to them.

### **Tonbridge Town Centre**

- 6.3.49 Tonbridge is the main town centre in the Borough and a key focus for the southern part of Tonbridge and Malling. It is important for the residents, workers, businesses and visitors to the town that the functioning of the centre remains robust and that it is fostered as a vibrant place for the future. Studies have confirmed that there is a substantial need for additional retail floorspace in Tonbridge. Planning policy for the town centre will set the context for new development and investment to accommodate this and other needs. It is important that the approach is positive whilst at the same time preserving the aspects of the area that are locally valued and provide its heritage.
- 6.3.50 The South East Plan identifies Tonbridge as a regionally important town centre and together with Tunbridge Wells, as a Regional Hub where investment in improving accessibility and economic development is to be promoted.
- 6.3.51 Tonbridge Town Centre is a focus for retail, leisure, business and tourism and offers a range of shops, services and facilities. However, the centre requires consistent investment and management to maintain and enhance its attractions and vitality. The Council has a responsibility to take a pro-active approach to town centre development. Its aim is to ensure that the town reaches its full potential to provide essential services and facilities for its communities in an attractive environment that is easily accessible by all modes of transport. It also aims to create the conditions for appropriate development and investment and will work in partnership with the private sector and public service providers to secure good quality development and improvement to match local aspirations.
- 6.3.52 The Council's vision for Tonbridge Town Centre is a place with:
- a healthy, varied and vibrant shopping environment;
  - a range of cultural pursuits and leisure and tourism facilities;
  - adequate, accessible and safe parking for shoppers and visitors;

- convenient public transport links and facilities;
- an attractive physical environment;
- public spaces making the most of the waterfront;
- safe areas and corridors for pedestrians and cyclists;
- opportunities for a wide range of employment and jobs;
- a variety of housing, close to amenities and public transport;
- a range of shops and other High Street services;
- the integration of new investment with existing businesses;
- continuing appropriate activity and interest throughout the day;
- good access for the disabled and others with restricted mobility;
- good opportunities for training and education.

6.3.53 The Area Action Plan for Tonbridge Central Area will provide a framework to facilitate appropriate, high quality development to meet these objectives and accommodate identified needs for retail and other development. It will be prepared within the following broad context:

**POLICY CP23 The policy for Tonbridge Town Centre is to provide for a sustainable development pattern of retail, employment, housing and leisure uses, and a range of other services to regenerate and enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre by:**

- (a) maximising the use of the waterfront with appropriate mixed-use developments and the provision of environmental enhancements and public spaces;**
- (b) enhancing traffic management and accessibility for all;**
- (c) improving conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in the High Street;**
- (d) enhancing the transport interchange at Tonbridge Station;**
- (e) ensuring an appropriate level of accessible and safe car parking provision;**
- (f) enhancing the public realm, including protecting and enhancing important open spaces and the creation of new ones, reducing the potential for anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime and making design statements at the gateways to the town centre;**
- (g) improving air quality in the Air Quality Management Area at the southern end of the High Street.**

## 6.4 Quality of Life

### *Achieving a High Quality Environment*

- 6.4.1 Good design is a key element of sustainable development, so the Council will promote a high standard of design. A high quality, well designed, development can enhance the sense of place and identity of an area and can bring significant benefits to the local environment and economy. In this way, new development can have a positive impact on the lives of local people and visitors to the Borough. This is of particular significance for any development alongside the River Medway and its tributaries.
- 6.4.2 The Council will further contribute to the conservation and enhancement of built environments within the Borough by :
- ensuring that existing built environments of an historic or high quality will be preserved or enhanced through more detailed policies in the Managing Development and the Environment DPD;
  - grant assisting the repair of Listed Buildings in private ownership in view of the additional costs that the use of traditional materials and skills involve;
  - requiring a Design Statement to accompany proposals for development with accurate illustration of the proposal and its relationship with its surroundings;
  - preparing Design Briefs, Design Codes, Urban Design Strategies or Master Plans for development allocations where this is considered to be necessary;
  - carrying out, in partnership with others, environmental enhancement schemes in the public realm.
- 6.4.3 Assessment of potential impacts from new developments at the earliest possible stage of the design process will assist in identifying problems to be overcome. Applicants are advised to refer to the Government guidance entitled “**By Design**” (the companion to PPS1). Detailed guidance on issues of security and public safety in the public realm can be found in Circular 5/94 – **Planning out Crime** and in **Secured by Design** produced by the Police.
- 6.4.4 In addition the Kent Design Guide, known as “**Kent Design**” presents a comprehensive approach to all aspects of design in Kent from conception to the maintenance of new development. Kent Design has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and saved policies in the adopted Local Plan. It will be the intention that once the Core Strategy is adopted Kent Design will be adopted as being supplementary to the following policy which deals with design in terms of functioning and visual quality. Good quality design also relates to sustainability and should therefore also have regard to Policy CP1.

- POLICY CP24**
- 1. All development must be well designed and of a high quality in terms of detailing and use of appropriate materials, and must through its scale, density, layout, siting, character and appearance be designed to respect the site and its surroundings.**
  - 2. All development should accord with the detailed advice contained in Kent Design, By Design and Secured by Design and other Supplementary Planning Documents such as Village Design Statements and Planning Briefs and, wherever possible, should make a positive contribution towards the enhancement of the appearance and safety of the area.**
  - 3. Development which by virtue of its design would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity or functioning and character of a settlement or the countryside will not be permitted.**
  - 4. The Council will seek to protect, and wherever possible, enhance, existing open spaces, including the provision of public art and ensure that new open space provision is made to meet the future needs of the Borough.**
  - 5. The environment within river corridors, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, will be conserved and enhanced. Where consistent with this intention, provision will be made for increased public access for walking, cycling and water-related recreation. Any new development adjacent to the river should respect its sensitive location and the local character at that particular section of the river and should aim to improve the appearance and biodiversity of the riverside.**

### ***Mitigation of Development Impacts***

- 6.4.5 In some cases, after having evaluated all associated impacts and considered alternatives, a development may be supportable, despite its having an adverse impact. In these circumstances the Council will require mitigation measures to ensure the quality, character and diversity of the Borough's natural and historic environment are not diminished by the development.
- 6.4.6 In the case of the natural environment compensatory measures should be undertaken within or immediately adjoining the development

proposal and should relate to the particular biodiversity interest of the development site. Only where this is not practicable, or not desirable, may mitigation measures take place on other land in the vicinity of the development in the control of the applicant or, by agreement, by another party at an agreed location. In the case of the natural environment and biodiversity, this may include measures which contribute to off-site schemes for the creation and/or restoration of large areas of wildlife habitat or the establishment of robust ecological networks. Developers should consider how ecological enhancement, mitigation and compensation associated with a particular development might be delivered in a coordinated fashion in order to secure maximum environmental benefits.

- 6.4.7 Where existing natural or historic built resources are affected, mitigation measures should be provided on at least a "like-for-like" basis, having regard to the relative quality of the existing habitat and that to be replaced. Wherever possible, the replacement habitat should be comparable to that lost in order to encourage the establishment of a similar suite of wildlife species. The replacement natural, cultural or built resource should normally be provided before the original resource is lost and satisfactory arrangements should be made for its on-going management to ensure its successful future.
- 6.4.8 Development may also have an impact, either in isolation or in combination with other sites, on social, community and transport infrastructure. It is important that developments are planned so that they either make adequate provision for the infrastructure necessary to serve them or are dependent upon the provision of such infrastructure. It is also important that there is no adverse impact on existing services and infrastructure resulting from new development.
- 6.4.9 The Development Land Allocations DPD will indicate the nature of infrastructure requirements in relation to all new planned development and any specific mitigation measures required. There will also be general requirements that will apply to all new developments, such as appropriate highway improvements and, for housing development, education provision. It is important that developers have regard to these likely requirements at the earliest stage of the development process. Windfall developments may also have impacts that need to be addressed. These will have to be determined on a case by case basis. Where a developer considers that the full funding or provision of all necessary infrastructure and facilities is not possible, the Council will require the applicant to provide validated open book accounts, on a confidential basis, to substantiate their case. The following policy provides the context for all development.

**POLICY CP25 1. Development will not be proposed in the LDF or permitted unless the service, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available, or will be made available by the time it is needed. All development proposals must**

**therefore either incorporate the infrastructure required as a result of the scheme, or make provision for financial contributions and/or land to secure such infrastructure or service provision at the time it is needed, by means of conditions or a planning obligation.**

**2. Where development that causes material harm to a natural or historic resource is exceptionally justified, appropriate mitigation measures will be required to minimise or counteract any adverse impacts. Where the implementation of appropriate mitigation is still likely to result in a residual adverse impact then compensatory measures will be required.**

6.4.10 The following are examples of the sort of mitigation measures that may be required for development to be acceptable:

- improvements to transport infrastructure;
- provision of measures and links that encourage the use of public transport, and which facilitate cycling and walking;
- new open spaces, social, health, education, library, leisure, youth cultural and other facilities and support for services such as the police and emergency services that benefit the local community and promote social cohesion;
- enhancement of the character of a Conservation Area or restoration of a Listed Building or it's setting;
- landscaping, bunding and tree planting to screen lighting or visual impacts and reduce noise;
- new wildlife habitats to replace those lost;
- enhancements to existing wildlife habitats, where it can be demonstrated that this will improve the capacity of the habitat to support key wildlife species;
- new links between existing areas of wildlife habitat where such a link will add value to those areas of habitat;
- contributions to off-site schemes for strategic enhancement of biodiversity where such schemes are close to the development site and of similar biodiversity interest;
- new works of art within the development or contributions towards art in the public realm;
- flood alleviation measures;
- provision of recycling facilities;
- pollution control and waste minimisation measures.

6.4.11 It will be for the developer to demonstrate how the requirements set out in Policy CP25 and in the Development Land Allocations DPD are to be met. Details of mitigation measures should therefore support, and form an integral part of, any scheme. Proposals for mitigation and

compensation measures will only be acceptable if it can be shown that there is a commitment, and adequate funding mechanisms, commensurate with the guidance in Circular 05/05, to ensure:

- long term maintenance and management of the mitigation measures;
- monitoring and assessment of the success of the proposed measures; and
- changes or modifications to the proposed measures should monitoring show that they have not achieved the desired aim and are therefore not functioning effectively to mitigate or compensate for the identified negative impacts.

### ***Community Services and Transport Infrastructure***

- 6.4.12 For communities to be sustainable, it is essential for a range of community services to be available. Community services include schools and other education provision, social services, adult education, libraries, community and youth services, health, culture, places of worship, police and emergency services, recreation and amenity space, sport, local shopping, public utilities and transport. The Development Land Allocations DPD will identify specific proposals based upon detailed advice from service providers. The LDF will therefore inform the investment programmes of community infrastructure providers. For a full definition of infrastructure see Figure 2 in the South East Plan Implementation Plan.
- 6.4.13 In addition to new provision, the Council wishes to protect viable community facilities that play an important role in the social infrastructure of the area. The Council will require an assessment of the viability of retaining the existing use in the case of any proposal that might result in its loss. The following policy is intended to include facilities such as shops, petrol filling stations and public houses, particularly where these might be the only such facilities in a village.
- 6.4.14 In order to deliver the strategic development sites identified in policy CP15, accommodate predicted traffic growth, improve road safety, improve air quality and relieve sensitive areas from traffic congestion, new transport infrastructure will be needed. The Department for Transport promotes improvements to the Trunk Road and Motorway network. The County Council is the Transport and Highway Authority for local road schemes. Such transport proposals are identified and promoted through the Local Transport Plan prepared by the County Council. Land necessary for the implementation of approved transport schemes or other privately financed schemes necessary to support the development strategy will be safeguarded from prejudicial development. The general alignment of safeguarded road schemes is shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram. The detailed land-take of such schemes will be included in the Development Land Allocations DPD.

- POLICY CP26**
- 1. The Council will safeguard land required for the provision of services to meet existing and future community needs, as identified by service providers.**
  - 2. Land required for the implementation of transport schemes approved by Government or adopted by Kent County Council as Highway Authority or other schemes that are necessary to support the development strategy will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.**
  - 3. Proposals for development that would result in the loss in whole or part of sites and premises currently or last used for the provision of community services or recreation, leisure or cultural facilities will only be proposed in the LDF or otherwise permitted if:**
    - (a) an alternative facility of equivalent or better quality and scale to meet identified need is either available, or will be satisfactorily provided at an equally accessible location; or**
    - (b) a significant enhancement to the nature and quality of an existing facility will result from the development of part of that facility; or**
    - (c) the applicant has proved, to the satisfaction of the Council, that for the foreseeable future there is likely to be an absence of need or adequate support for the facility.**

### ***Leisure and Culture and Tourism***

- 6.4.15 The Council's general policies relating to culture and leisure are set out in the Borough Leisure Strategy and Local Cultural Strategy. PPG17 requires the Council to prepare an Open Space Strategy. This will identify the types of open spaces and their distribution and size in relation to locally identified needs and locally set standards. The outcome of this study, insofar as it relates to land use, will be incorporated into the Managing Development and the Environment DPD.
- 6.4.16 In addition to the Open Space Strategy the Council will identify and seek to meet local cultural and leisure needs as necessary, particularly in the regeneration of Tonbridge Town Centre. Policies relating to leisure and cultural developments are included in the South East Plan. Matters relating to Leisure and Culture have been integrated generally into the policies contained throughout this Core Strategy.

6.4.17 The Borough contains some significant tourist attractions. These include the AONB, many historic buildings, attractive villages and various visitor attractions. Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy, providing a source of income, employment and activities. The importance of tourism is reflected in the West Kent Area Investment Framework and Local Area Agreement. Policies TSR2, TSR4, TSR5 and TSR6 of the South East Plan apply to tourism development.



## **7. Implementation and Monitoring**

### **7.1 Implementation and Delivery**

#### ***Agencies***

- 7.1.1 The implementation of the Strategy will depend on effective action from a range of different agencies. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is the authority responsible for the preparation and adoption of the Local Development Framework and for the subsequent control of the majority of development proposals. The main responsibility for highways and transportation lies with the County Council, with the Highways Agency being responsible for the Trunk Roads and Motorways that pass through the Borough. The County Council is also the authority responsible for the provision of most schools in the Borough, though some are private and others self-managing. It also provides libraries and social welfare facilities, including old people's homes. Hospitals, some medical centres and other health care facilities are provided by the Strategic Health Authority through Hospital Trusts and Primary Care Trusts. However, doctors' surgeries and some joint practice medical centres are provided by the general practitioners themselves in association with the Primary Care Trusts.
- 7.1.2 Whilst the Borough Council is the local Housing Authority it no longer provides social housing directly. It enables its provision through partnership working with Registered Social Landlords. The Borough Council has shared responsibility with the County Council and Parish Councils for the provision of recreation and leisure facilities, though some facilities are also provided by the private sector. The Borough Council provides and manages most public car parks in the Borough though some are provided by the Parish Councils.
- 7.1.3 The majority of proposals for housing, employment and retail development and some recreation facilities will be provided by the private sector within the context provided by the Local Development Framework. In this respect, the Borough Council has an important facilitating and co-ordinating role in negotiating and bringing forward development and associated infrastructure and services in accordance with its planning policies. In some cases, the Council will seek to progress development in formal or informal partnership with developers and other landowners.

#### ***Resources***

- 7.1.4 Improvements in the quality of the physical environment and developing land costs money. Ultimately these costs will be reflected in the level of taxes or the price of goods, services and housing. Consequently, there are wider economic considerations affecting the implementation of the Strategy. In particular, the condition of the national economy affects the amount of expenditure that is available within both the public and

private sectors. In the public sector there is also competition for the limited available resources between, for example, provision of services and environmental improvements. The implementation of many of the proposals in this document will therefore be influenced by the availability of resources. Continuing limitations on public sector spending mean that only limited resources will be available for the foreseeable future from the public sector to implement the proposals in this document. The aim will therefore be to achieve as much as possible through working in partnership with the private sector, using Council owned land where this is available, for example in Tonbridge Town Centre. Section 106 Agreements will be used to secure funding for public benefit where this can be justified by the development.

## 7.2 Monitoring

7.2.1 The Core Strategy must be able to respond to changing needs and circumstances nationally, regionally and locally. Furthermore, the above-mentioned economic constraints mean that there will inevitably be uncertainty about the rate at which many of the development proposals will be implemented. Under the circumstances, it will be necessary to continually monitor progress and to review the Core Strategy and Development Land Allocations documents as necessary.

7.2.2 The monitoring process will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Reports published at the end of December each year. The aim of monitoring is to establish whether the Strategy is continuing to be appropriate and whether it is still providing an adequate framework for development. It will also be necessary to test the accuracy of the assumptions upon which the Strategy is based and the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the policies it contains. In particular, monitoring will provide the context for reviewing housing delivery against the Housing Trajectory and the impact of the Strategy on a selected range of sustainability indicators. These indicators have been developed to provide a consistent basis for monitoring performance of the Strategy against the spatial objectives. However, it must be recognised that not all of the indicators will be influenced solely by the implementation of the Core Strategy. Other, external factors will often have an influence.

7.2.3 **Annex D** is a schedule which indicates for each policy:

- the aims and objectives that the policy is intended to meet;
- the relevant delivery agencies; and
- the performance indicators.

**Annex E** defines the performance indicators in more detail, categorising them according to themes and classifying them by type. Each theme includes a number of core output, local and contextual indicators. For each indicator the following is identified:

- baseline data (where it exists);
- targets and target dates;
- period for review;
- source and indicator type; and
- the potential source of information for each of the indicators.

The indicators have been derived from the Government's advice in **Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide** (2005), the South East England **Integrated Regional Framework**, the Sustainability Appraisal, Best Value Performance Indicators and Local Performance Indicators.

