

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

24 October 2013 at 7.00 pm

Further to the recent despatch of agenda and papers for the above meeting, please find the following item(s) which were marked as 'to follow':

11. Unlocking Kent's Potential (Pages 1 - 38)

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Director or Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

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UNLOCKING KENT'S POTENTIAL – WEST KENT INPUT

Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013

Report of Chief Officer, Communities & Business

Status: For consideration

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report seeks Members' comments on the draft West Kent input to Unlocking Kent's Potential in advance of wider consultation. A final draft will be brought to Cabinet after consultation.

This report supports the Key Aim of a Dynamic and Sustainable Economy

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Hogarth

Contact Officer(s) Lesley Bowles, ext 7335

Recommendation to Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee:
Members' views are sought

Reason for recommendation: Members' views will be used to inform the final West Kent input to Unlocking Kent's Potential.

Introduction and Background

1. The West Kent Partnership has prepared a statement of shared investment priorities for West Kent in order to inform:
 - The development of Unlocking the Potential, the Kent and Medway growth strategy;
 - The development of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) being prepared by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership; and
 - The case for future investment from other sources as they emerge including future European funding streams.

The draft document includes:

- a brief summary of the current economic opportunities and challenges facing the three West Kent districts, based on the adopted West Kent Investment Strategy 2010-15;

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- the area's key locations for growth (commercial and residential), as outlined in adopted and emerging District Local Plans;
- the key infrastructure requirements, both to bring forward specific schemes and to support wider strategic economic growth in both West Kent and other parts of Kent and East Sussex;
- the need to invest in priorities for business, skills and communities.

Conclusion

Members are asked for their views on the content of the paper and in particular the areas identified in the document within the Sevenoaks District before the document is circulated for wider circulation, including to the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee, town and parish councils and partner organisations.

Key Implications

Financial

No additional financial resources are required to take forward this document. However, it will be used to attempt to access external funding to enhance economic development in the District.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications attached to the consultative document. A full risk assessment will be conducted.

Equality Impacts

An equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

Conclusions

Members' views are sought.

Appendices

Unlocking Kent's Potential – draft West Kent content

Background Papers:

KCC document - Unlocking the Potential

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities & Business

Draft for Management Team

Unlocking the Potential

West Kent Priorities for Growth

OCTOBER 2013



Summary

The West Kent area has traditionally enjoyed a strong track record in attracting inward investment, developing new businesses which grow and prosper and creating new jobs for its residents. The positive economic impact of West Kent extends well beyond its administrative boundaries to other parts of Kent and East Sussex. The high level of environmental constraints in West Kent means that major new site opportunities to accommodate future growth have to be carefully planned and sensitively developed.

West Kent, is however, primed for further growth. We are identifying, through the Local Plan process, sites to enable this growth to happen. We have enjoyed strong levels of market demand for the sites we plan to bring forward although there is now much greater competition across Kent for this investment. Our key locations for future growth are fully documented in this report.

There is, however, a significant threat to the continued economic prosperity of West Kent. Access to the M25, to the capital and markets elsewhere within Kent and beyond are vital issues for many local businesses who have relocated to West Kent or set up business here due to its prime location. However, growing connectivity problems caused for example, by traffic congestion hotspots and a lack of capacity in our strategic road and rail networks is damaging business confidence and the competitive advantage that West Kent businesses have traditionally enjoyed. The need for faster broadband, particularly in our rural areas is a key issue.

Investment to overcome these growing problems is now required. We set out here what infrastructure improvements are now needed to ensure the economy of West Kent stays competitive and continues to deliver economic benefits to the wider area.

In addition to future connectivity issues, we need to invest in our local economy to provide the right support to existing and new businesses to help them prosper and grow, to help our local workforce enhance their skills and employability, provide specific support for the area's rural economy, support our Market Towns to ensure they remain competitive and attractive to shoppers and businesses, and address the needs of those who may be workless and suffer from disadvantage. A range of programmes are in progress to address these issues. We need more investment to prolong that activity to ensure long-lasting positive results and to address gaps in local provision. This paper therefore sets out the case for the need to invest to achieve future business growth, enhanced local skills, and stronger, resilient local communities.

Signature

Cllr Peter Fleming
Leader
Sevenoaks DC

Signature

Cllr Nicolas Heslop
Leader
Tonbridge & Malling BC

Signature

Cllr David Jukes
Leader
Tunbridge Wells BC

1. The Purpose of this Report

The West Kent Partnership has prepared a statement of shared investment priorities for West Kent in order to inform:

- The development of *Unlocking the Potential*, the Kent and Medway growth strategy;
- The development of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) being prepared by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership; and
- The case for future investment from other sources as they emerge including future European funding streams.

This paper therefore sets out:

- a brief summary of the current **economic opportunities and challenges** facing the three West Kent districts, based on the adopted West Kent Investment Strategy 2010-15;
- the area's key **locations for growth** (commercial and residential), as outlined in adopted and emerging District Local Plans;
- the key **infrastructure requirements**, both to bring forward specific schemes and to support wider strategic economic growth in both West Kent and other parts of Kent and East Sussex;
- the need to invest in **priorities for business, skills and communities**.

2. About West Kent

The West Kent Economy

West Kent has a thriving business community. The resident workforce is highly skilled, with a third of the adult population educated to degree level or above. Small and medium sized businesses thrive in West Kent with the vast majority employing less than 100 staff. Entrepreneurship is a strong characteristic of the West Kent economy with 76% of businesses employing fewer than 5 people. West Kent offers immediate access to the leading international financial centre of London – as well as significant savings on overheads including low operating costs and a skilled, competitively priced workforce compared to the City and other parts of London and the South East. An example of a sector that has already taken advantage of this is the cultural & creative business sector. An example of a sector that has already taken advantage of this is the cultural and creative business sector.

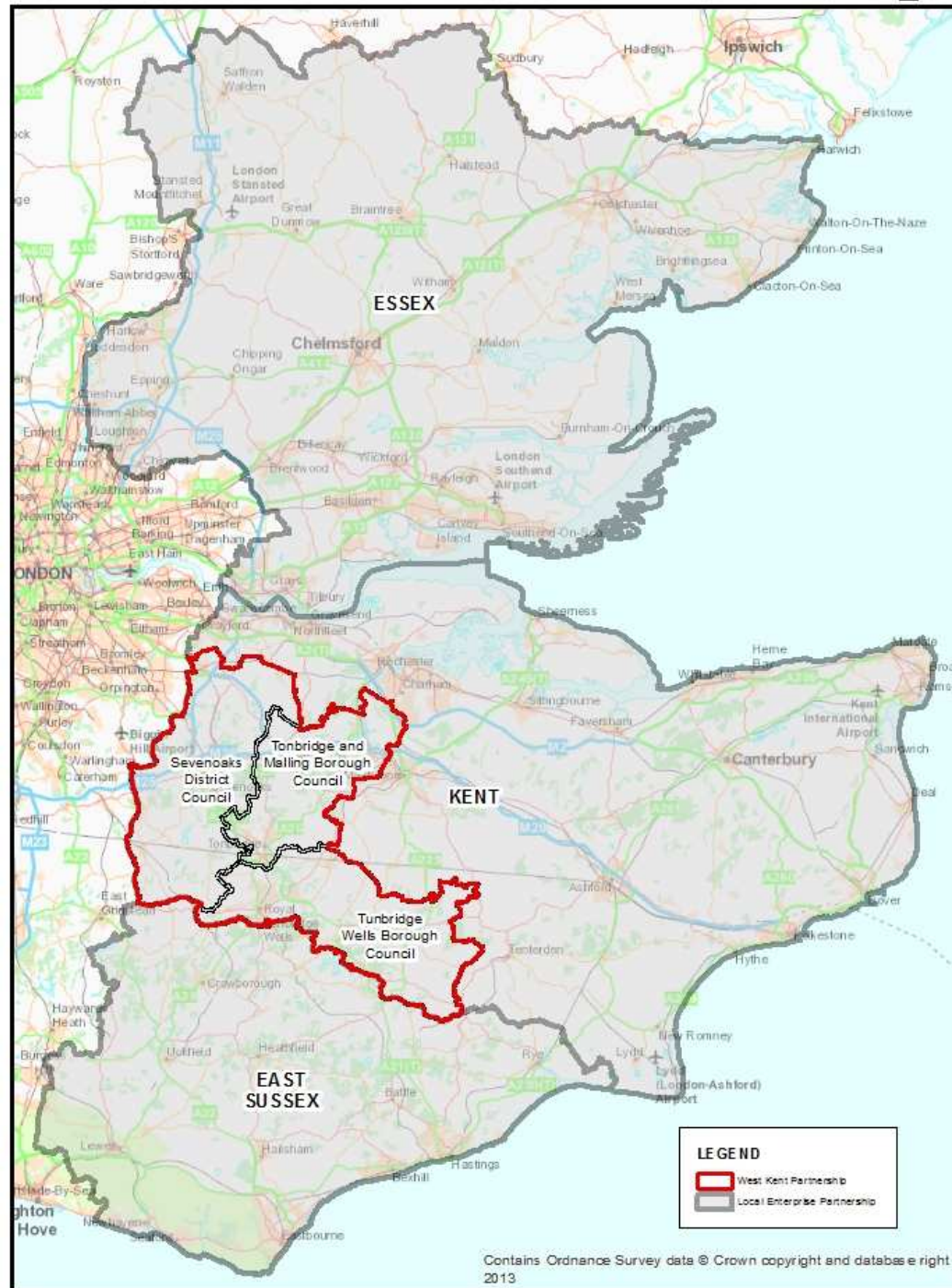
The West Kent Partnership

The West Kent Partnership is an economic and strategic partnership operating across Sevenoaks District and the boroughs of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling and is jointly funded by the 3 authorities. The Partnership promotes West Kent, champions key economic issues, engages with industry and business and pursues external funding to develop and deliver initiatives to support our local economy.

West Kent Investment Strategy 2010-2015

The Partnership's Investment Strategy seeks to highlight economic issues and outlines actions to ensure future competitiveness and growth is maintained. The Strategy provides a comprehensive picture of the local economy, sets a clear agenda for action and seeks to remove misconceptions about West Kent ensuring that it wins recognition of its particular economic needs.

WEST KENT PARTNERSHIP BOUNDARY WITHIN THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP



Scale 1:638,500

Map Dated:18/09/2013

3. Economic Opportunities and Challenges

The West Kent economy has performed strongly in recent years and has been resilient in the face of increasing economic austerity and a fall in public and private sector funding. It has traditionally been regarded as the 'powerhouse' economy in Kent. However, to continue competing and growing, it is vital that we build on these areas of strength and face up to growing challenges which could impede economic prosperity and well-being.

Over the past 10 years, the West Kent economy has benefitted from the following key advantages:

- high levels of **inward investment** such as King's Hill (Tonbridge), North Farm Industrial Estate (Tunbridge Wells) and Blighs (Sevenoaks) with scope to attract high value businesses relocating from London and elsewhere
- a number of **key sectors** including software and media, science and engineering, higher value horticulture and land-based industries and the knowledge economies with strong growth potential
- a strong base of **very high skilled and motivated workers**. Over 38% of workers in the area have qualifications at NVQ4 and higher level. This is far above the UK and South East average
- **consistently low levels of unemployment** while targeting unemployment hotspots, including the very successful 100 in 100 apprenticeship scheme
- a strong and resilient **SME sector** which represents the backbone of the West Kent economy with 84% of employees in firms of 10 or less. This sector is of higher value locally; more small firms survive for longer and grow here than in other parts of Kent and there is scope for higher value home-based businesses to be created due to the number of local higher skilled residents
- a number of big employers that are both **award winning and innovative**
- **accessibility** to London and wider markets in Surrey, Sussex and North and Mid-Kent
- delivery of **high quality housing** meeting local needs
- a new **PFI Hospital** at Pembury and a number of new **Academies**
- excellent **cultural and leisure facilities** with local attractions for both residents and visitors
- a good local **quality of life**, striking an appropriate balance between **accommodating growth** in a sustainable way whilst recognising and continuing to protect the area's high quality and sensitive local environment.

However, recent economic research has revealed that the West Kent economy continues to underperform in comparison to the South East region. In 2008, West Kent GVA per capita was only 74% of the South East region average. To continue to achieve these objectives in the future, **further targeted investment to support the West Kent economy is now needed**. Without such investment, there is a genuine risk that local economic growth will decline and the local and wider economic benefit that West Kent brings to Kent and beyond will be significantly reduced.

The West Kent Investment Strategy (WKIS) 2010-15, which is based on a comprehensive analysis of the local economy, indicates that, without appropriate intervention and investment, the local economy is in danger of decline due to the following identified challenges:

- unemployment has been traditionally low however local businesses are **facing recruitment problems and a lack of skills** within the labour force exacerbated by high local house prices which are driving younger employees to jobs in other areas where home ownership is more affordable
- West Kent is an area of some affluence but this masks **pockets of deprivation** where there are higher levels of worklessness and low levels of educational attainment
- a significant proportion of the local workforce has high level skills (NVQ 4 and 5). A substantial minority (20%) **don't possess basic qualifications** (NVQ level 1) and **lack basic work readiness skills** which is a barrier to growth
- Many young people from West Kent move into Higher Education but **do not return to local jobs after graduation** because of high local house prices. In addition, higher level skilled staff are being lost to London due to high rates of **out-commuting**, leaving local business without a pool of new graduates and the skills they have to offer
- an **ageing population** which is growing more rapidly than in the wider South East and UK with little prospect of an increasing workforce in the next 20 years and potential additional skills shortages
- a high quality local environment which is attractive to business but a **relative shortage of good quality and adequately serviced sites and premises** which potentially constrains West Kent's capacity to promote start-ups and existing local businesses
- an attractive range of local market towns but some are **struggling to maintain an attractive retail offer** with a growing number of empty properties and a lack of private sector investment.
- rural and local home-based businesses suffering from **sub-standard broadband services** which affects their business competitiveness.

A key issue both for West Kent businesses and for new companies being created or who are considering a relocation to the area is **maintaining and improving local connectivity**. One of the major risks to the future health of the local economy is that of road and rail capacity. Despite proximity to major motorways, the **growing instances of local delays and congestion** adversely affect both employees who need to commute to and from work and those businesses relying on quick delivery and/or response times. Recovery from the recent recession will be challenging in itself as business confidence needs to grow and improve. Poor local transport networks along with delays and increased journey times could significantly hold back improvements in local business confidence and adversely affect future economic growth. West Kent businesses need to see that problems of congestion are being effectively tackled.

The key transport challenges in West Kent are:

- poor transport connectivity, particularly, north-south links and transport congestion at peak times on local routes such as the **M20, A21, A26, A228 and access to M25/M26** which could increasingly impact on both West Kent and the coastal area to the south of West Kent.
- increasingly **poor local rail services** into London relative to those now provided by the HS1 service from North Kent, Ashford and East Kent and reduced commuter journey times that are now available. In addition, London City rail services have also recently been withdrawn from the Maidstone line.

Additional investment in such infrastructure to relieve local bottle necks, address congestion and capacity issues and improve local rail services into London is now needed to prevent these matters becoming a major barrier to local economic growth.

4. Action Achieved to Date

Despite the impact of the recession, the West Kent economy has proved to be resilient. Between 2010 and 2011, some 280 new businesses have been created locally, an increase of nearly 17%. Survival rates of those businesses are some of the highest in the County.

The traditional strength of the West Kent economy has had significant positive impacts on those areas that adjoin West Kent. There is a high level of inward commuting to West Kent (over 17,000 people commute daily into the area from Swale and the Medway Towns, for example) and good road/rail connections between West Kent, the south coast, Surrey and Greater London has enabled wider supply chains by local businesses to be developed which supports job creation both within and well beyond West Kent.

The West Kent Partnership is working to continue to improve, expand and support its local economy to the benefit of West Kent residents and existing businesses. It is also seeking to ensure that its positive economic influence on those living or operating businesses in adjoining areas, particularly those parts of Kent which face more economic challenges, can continue to be supported. The Partnership has been working with relevant organisations to deliver actions in the West Kent Investment Strategy since its adoption in late 2010. Significant progress has been made in the following areas:

- a successful campaign delivering the Planning Inquiry and securing funding for the dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury
- a successful bid made to the Regional Growth Fund for the Escalate programme in partnership with KCC and East Sussex which will bring £5.5M of loan funding for small businesses with growth potential
- investment of £1.25M into the rural economy via the Leader programme generating overall investment of £3.4M.
- commissioning of a new range of business support initiatives delivered consistently across West Kent to promote business growth, energy efficiency, entrepreneurship and to address worklessness
- ongoing activity to secure broadband improvements across the area via the BDUK and other rural initiatives
- successful completion of a 100 in 100 campaign to encourage 100 local businesses to offer 100 apprenticeships to local young people.

The West Kent Partnership continues to monitor implementation of the West Kent Investment Strategy and to plan for emerging issues.

The attraction of further external funding to the area will be the crucial driver through which additional, targeted interventions can be achieved. Unlike other parts of Kent,

where there is a need to address market failure to unlock the development of major development sites, a significant economic return in West Kent can be delivered without the same level and volume of major financial investment. The need for further infrastructure and business investment in the West Kent area is driven by considerations of proportionality and value for money. Unlocking West Kent's potential is therefore different to unlocking potential in other parts of Kent.

Smaller scale, targeted investment, focused on tackling congestion hotspots and promoting business growth opportunities that are designed to generate the maximum local economic benefit, will enable the West Kent economy to continue to grow and develop. This will also enable that benefit to have maximum economic 'spread' to other areas. Addressing the key challenges, as outlined above, will be the essential key to unlock West Kent's future economic potential.

5. Key Locations for Growth

The high level of environmental quality that West Kent benefits from including the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, also limits the number of major development opportunities that can be brought forward without compromising that quality. It is therefore vital that where such sites can be accommodated without undue environmental impact via local planning processes, they need to be supported by the necessary infrastructure both in relation to specific sites and across the wider West Kent area so that they fully realise their potential and generate maximum local economic benefit.

In general terms, employment sites in West Kent have been delivered. The market has been able to support investment in West Kent due to stable land and property prices and consistent levels of demand for property due to its high quality environment and proximity to the London catchment. Only in some circumstances has investment been required to bring these opportunities forward and the amount of investment required has not usually been significant.

What is now more important to the future health of the West Kent economy are the key infrastructure constraints related to key motorway and primary road junctions, poor public transport services and connectivity, flood alleviation and communications including local broadband services, which, together, can create an image of congestion, lack of mobility and access for businesses, and unacceptable delays. For example, the benefit of investing in local infrastructure has recently been demonstrated by a survey undertaken by the Federation of Small Businesses in relation to the announcement that the A21 dualling at Tonbridge is to proceed. Three quarters of those surveyed indicated that an improved A21 would have a beneficial impact on their business. One business reported that better connectivity to the southern section of the M25 would enable them to win additional contracts.

Maintaining growth planned across West Kent will bring major benefit to the wider Kent and East Sussex economies. However, that benefit will only be realised if the planned levels of growth to be accommodated locally is supported by:

- Investment in key infrastructure improvements across the West Kent area to maintain mobility, relieve congestion and delays, which impact on business confidence and growth, and to facilitate the new development needed to provide sufficient opportunities to meet business and residential needs
- Continued investment to support the West Kent economy to retain and increase local employment provision, support local business growth and provide help for those wishing to enter into the local employment market.

A summary of the key locations for future growth across the West Kent area follows below. The details of each location, and any potential infrastructure constraints which affect delivery, are included in Annex A.

Tonbridge and Malling:

Kings Hill (TM1) - The Kings Hill development near West Malling is a major mixed use redevelopment of a former aerodrome. The redevelopment began in 1999 and to date nearly 2,500 houses and nearly 86,000sqm of employment floor space have been built along with community facilities, schools and a small retail centre. A further 417 residential units with planning permission are expected to be completed up to 2015/16. There are also permissions for a further 100,000sqm of employment floor space in place, but unimplemented. In May 2013 an outline application for a further 975 houses, with a new primary school, linear park and petrol filling station was submitted. If granted permission this would leave approximately 8.5 hectares of employment land or 24,000sqm of employment floor space. The site generates significant traffic movements at Junction 4 of the M20.

Peters Village, Wouldham (TM2) - Outline planning approval for the construction of a new village of 1,000 residential units and a new rail/river bridge to access the development from the A228. The net area of development is approximately 35.05 hectares (86.61 acres) of which 11.1 hectares (27.3 acres) is set aside as public open space. The new village will also include a new primary school, a local centre next to the river including: community centre, police post, medical centre, ambulance post, shop, public house and employment units, new areas of open space and playing fields, a new riverside walk and protection and management of the Peters Pit nature reserve. The site will generate additional traffic movements on the A228 and at junction 4 of the M20.

Isles Quarry, Borough Green (TM3) - Erection of 171 dwellings, creation of 6.82 ha of public open space including local area of equipped play (leap), new vehicular access onto Haul Road. Provision of access roads, footpaths, landscaping and all associated infrastructure, removal of bridge deck to Isles Quarry East.

Preston Hall (TM4) - Redevelopment of Preston Hall a grade II listed building and former hospital and adjacent land in the ownership of the NHS and the Royal British Legion for approximately 245 dwellings with associated improvements to the local road network and internal road layout.

Tonbridge Town Centre regeneration project (TM5) - including key transport and environmental improvements and site development pump priming and community investment projects.

East Malling Research TM6) – investment to create a state of the art horticultural research laboratory 'M9' building on the organisation's international role in horticultural innovation.

Sevenoaks:

Fort Halstead (S1) – A former MOD site which currently employs over 1,000 people. A major use is due to relocate from the site which would provide a major redevelopment opportunity and scope to increase the employment and housing potential of the site. There are potential traffic impacts on the M25 and A224.

Broom Hill (S2) – A key employment development site located close to the M25/M20 junction which has the potential to support the economic regeneration of Swanley, an area of high unemployment and deprivation. Any development would need to address local traffic impacts and congestion issues.

Swanley Town Centre (S3) – scope for a mixed use redevelopment to provide a combination of additional retail, offices, residential and community facilities.

New Ash Green Village Centre (S4) – regeneration of the 1960s town centre to provide additional employment opportunities, residential development and an enhanced retail offer.

Vestry Estate, Sevenoaks (S5) – an existing business estate close to the M25 with scope for redevelopment including provision for medium and small businesses and start-up facilities. Access via the A225 would need upgrading.

Edenbridge, Station Road (S6) – an existing employment site with scope for new development including small and medium sized businesses and start-up facilities. Currently constrained by the low level rail bridge which inhibits access for larger vehicles.

Tunbridge Wells:

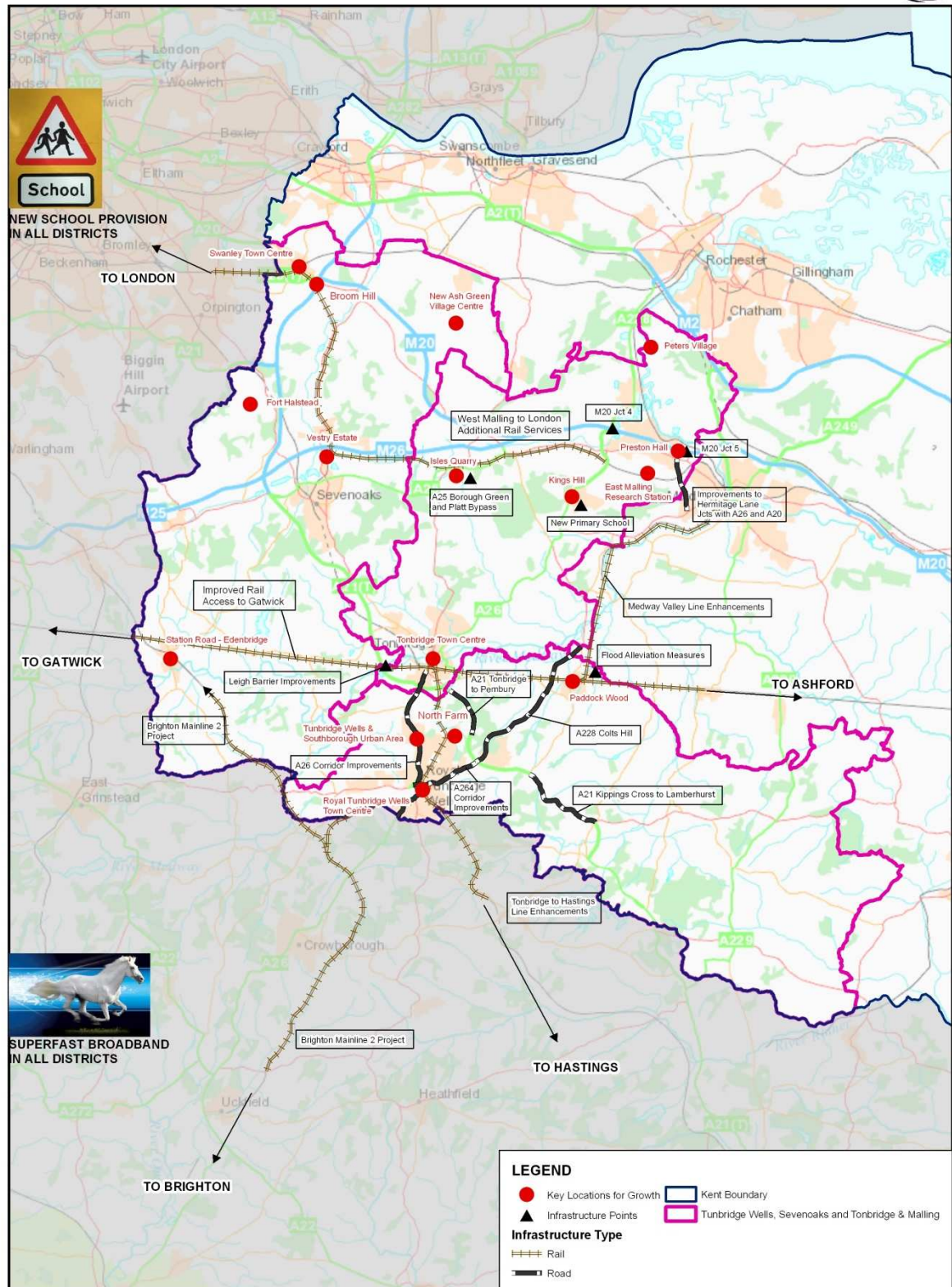
Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre (TW1) - a range of housing employment and mixed use sites being brought forward via the Local Plan some of which will need capital investment to unlock local infrastructure constraints. Potential to deliver 2445 new homes and a further retail provision of 24,000 sqm to 2021 and a further 21,000 sqm to 2026.

North Farm (TW2) – new land allocation for employment purposes adjacent to the North Farm/Longfield Road Key Employment Area which may also include business hub/incubator provision.

Paddock Wood (TW3) – identified in the Core Strategy as a key location for growth including 650 additional homes and additional employment provision. Capital investment required to address flood alleviation/surface water flooding.

Tunbridge Wells Urban Area/Southborough (TW4) - delivering employment, residential and mixed use sites which are allocated within the draft Site Allocations DPD. Some key sites have specific infrastructure challenges which will impact upon the viability of delivering the proposed land uses, whilst also satisfying a full requirement of planning obligations. The Council will seek appropriate opportunities to secure additional capital funding to unlock sites as required.

KEY LOCATIONS FOR GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS IN WEST KENT



Scale: 1:198,735

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Map Dated: 18/09/2013

6. Key Infrastructure Requirements

The key infrastructure requirements identified to address constraints across West Kent are detailed below. Further development and growth across West Kent are likely to exacerbate existing problems particularly where the area's Key Locations for Growth (Section 4) have a direct traffic generating impact on these roads.

- **A21** - Delivery of Tonbridge to Pembury A21 dualling. Funding has now been identified in the CSR (£92m). However, the funding does not currently match the DfT estimate from Dec 2012 (up to £118m), so this remains a priority until there is full clarification of how the funding allocated will deliver the scheme and the Planning Inspector and Secretary of State approve the scheme.
- **A228 Colts Hill Strategic Link**, significant constraints on north-south traffic flows between the M2/M20 and the A21
- **M20 Junction 4** – lack of capacity resulting in congestion and delays and acting as a serious constraint to local housing and employment development
- **M20 Junction 5** – peak hour congestion which will constrain development proposals at Preston Hall and Hermitage Lane (Maidstone BC)
- **Lower Thames Crossing** – Option C and Variant would have significant impacts on A227/A228/A229 corridors. If the Government is minded to adopt this route improvements along those corridors would be a priority.
- **Addressing access constraints to the national road network in West Kent:** a cause of significant congestion in a number of locations which limits mobility and hinders employment and growth. Further assessment to be undertaken of the potential benefits and impacts of improvements to the local motorway network.
- **A21 corridor** – dualling of the section between Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst to promote better north-south access between West Kent, East Sussex and Hastings
- **Longfield Road, North Farm Estate** – increase in road capacity required to relieve existing congestion and support future development of this Key Employment Area
- **A26 and A264 corridor improvements** – including the introduction of Park & Ride services and a package of improvement measures to alleviate congestion and air quality issues
- **Improvements to Hermitage Lane and junctions with A26/A20** subject to the inclusion of an enhanced housing development in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan

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- **A227 (A25) Borough Green and Platt bypass** – to relieve access constraints to the motorway network and address air quality issues along the A25 corridor
- **Alleviate congestion in Swanley** - Develop a traffic management control system and introduce intelligent transport systems that cover the high volume road network in Swanley.
-
- **Rail Infrastructure improvements**
 - Improving rail access to hubs/economic centres, including Tunbridge Wells, and Maidstone
 - Additional services from West Malling to London/City
 - Reinstatement of the Tonbridge – Gatwick rail service
 - Enhancements to the Tonbridge to Hastings line to reduce journey times and improve capacity and reliability; Replacement of the single road tunnel bridge at High Brooms (phase 3 of KCC master plan for North Farm highway improvements)
 - Enhancements to the Medway Valley line services, including improved frequency between Maidstone and Tonbridge, and development of the High Speed services.
 - Enhancements across the network to improve access and connectivity to the rail network
 - Consideration of the Brighton Main Line 2 proposals
 - Improvements to Swanley Rail Station
 - Including Swanley Rail Services in Zone 6
- **Flood mitigation**
 - Surface water flood alleviation for Paddock Wood
 - East Peckham – additional protection works required to protect the village from future river flooding.
 - Half life rebuild of the Leigh Flood Barrier to ensure continued flood protection beyond 2030.

- **Other**

- Delivery of superfast Broadband services across the rural parishes in West Kent to enable business growth building on the BDUK initiative
- New school provision as set out in the KCC Education Commissioning Plan 2012-17, including a further Primary School for Kings Hill.
- Studio School – Fort Halstead (14-18 Science and Engineering)

7. The Need for Investment – Business Growth, Skills and Communities

In addition to improvements in road and rail infrastructure, the future health of the West Kent economy, including its businesses, the skills of the local workforce and the health of its retail and business centres and local communities, depends on additional investment being made to address the economic challenges set out in Section 3 of this report and building on the wide ranging initiatives now being progressed as described under Section 4. The West Kent Investment Strategy has identified a number of future actions to address the identified economic issues facing West Kent and a review of the WKIS Action Plan will be undertaken to reflect the suggested priorities set out below. In addition to national and regional initiatives and programmes, the Investment Strategy seeks to meet local gaps in support considered critical to ensuring continued business growth and shared economic benefits.

Promoting Entrepreneurship

More needs to be done locally to encourage people to start their own business and to help small businesses survive and expand. A uniform range of Business Support Services have now been jointly commissioned across West Kent funded by Kent County Council and districts to provide:

- additional 1-2-1 advice services in locations close to those who need them;
- a range of business support workshops focusing on topics that businesses say are required; and
- targeted support for those without jobs who might be considering self-employment as an option.

The above services have been commissioned for an initial pilot of 12 months to test viability and take up. Future provision of such services will be dependent upon further external funding being made available of some £50K per annum.

Supporting Business Growth

Indigenous business growth will be a key economic driver for West Kent. Supporting and retaining existing businesses and providing space for them to expand and grow is a key future objective. There are also significant number of businesses based at home in the area that need specialist support. Work is already underway across West Kent to provide support to two key sectors of the West Kent economy:

- specialist advice and support for rural businesses and land-based businesses including forestry and farming; and,
- support to meet the specific needs of micro-businesses based at home.

The need to support and nurture businesses with high growth potential is also a major priority for West Kent. Having successfully bid for £5.5M of loan funding aimed at this sector from the Government's Regional Growth Fund, the Escalate Programme will be formally launched later this year. Further support for this sector to build on that programme and encourage more local firms to 'go for growth' with the right help and support to achieve this will be needed.

Whilst some provision of supported business premises exists in West Kent, there is considerable scope for further provision to be made to assist young businesses wishing to expand and take up accommodation for the first time. Business incubator provision will require joint working with private sector partners with support from public sector funding sources to ensure any proposed scheme is viable and deliverable.

The provision of supported business accommodation and other economic initiatives could best be focused on key sectors important to the wider West Kent economy. These include creative industries (Tunbridge Wells), science and engineering (Sevenoaks) and high value land-based/horticulture (Tonbridge and Malling).

Developing Skills

The West Kent Investment Strategy seeks to strengthen the area's skills base by addressing issues of work readiness and employability skills, increasing the numbers of those with a Level 2 qualification and above, strengthening local HE provision to increase skills at Levels 4 and 5 and helping to retain local graduates and assist them into local employment opportunities.

Whilst some progress has been made towards achieving these aims, considerable work still needs to be done to provide a consistent programme of support for skills development across the West Kent area. Specifically, a range of targeted local initiatives developed with the support of local delivery partners, are required to:

- encourage employers to offer local apprenticeships across a range of sectors and support young people to take up those opportunities
- focus on the specific needs of those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- address the need for better employability skills and work readiness
- promote youth entrepreneurship
- provide stronger links between the needs of business and education provision/work experience
- support local graduates entering the local employment market
- support specific skills initiatives to further development of West Kent's key economic sectors.

It is proposed that these needs are addressed through joint working led by a partnership of local learning providers, the private sector, and relevant support agencies. There is a need to overcome problems of fragmentation in the sector and the lack of any overall focus to the delivery of skills improvement across the West Kent area. Public sector investment will be required to fund the delivery of the Action Plan and help co-ordinate the initiative across partners.

Supporting the Rural Economy

The rural economy of West Kent, including businesses located in rural communities, and those based from home as well as the land-based sector, presents a unique set of challenges. Rural employment needs to be supported and at the same time, positive management of rural landscapes of West Kent needs to be promoted. The West Kent LEADER programme has been instrumental in bringing much needed grant support to this diverse sector. A new LEADER programme for 2015-2020 is therefore a priority and, in addition, we need to build on and develop the support and advice services available to rural businesses, which have recently been commissioned

Addressing Pockets of Deprivation

There is a common misconception that all of West Kent is a highly affluent area. Whilst this is true for the majority of the area, high levels of affluence masks the fact that a number of communities across West Kent are more deprived. Whilst the geographical extent of that deprivation may be less when compared, for example, to coastal parts of Kent, the families and individuals in our more deprived communities suffer exactly the same range of inter-related problems and circumstances that are suffered by those living in the most deprived parts of Kent. In these areas of need, there are high levels of worklessness and general economic disadvantage. Our approach in West Kent is a highly targeted one focused on those localities most in need. Parts of the following West Kent communities are the most deprived: Snodland, East Malling, Trench (Tonbridge), Swanley, Edenbridge, Sherwood, and Broadwater. In these locations, further investment is required to build engagement with those families most in need and to strengthen community pride and resilience.

Market Towns

The West Kent area is home to a large number of attractive market towns including the more major towns at Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, and Royal Tunbridge Wells and the smaller towns of Cranbrook, West Malling, Borough Green, Westerham, Paddock Wood and Edenbridge. Further investment will be required in these centres to ensure their viability is maintained enhanced. This will require working with local chambers of commerce, town teams and local trader associations to identify a range of local projects for each centre which recognises both their potential and their individual identity. A market town support programme, providing funding for small scale capital and revenue investments, and which reflect local needs and priorities will be required.

ANNEX A – Proformas Supporting Key Locations for Growth**KEY GROWTH LOCATION: KINGS HILL - TM1**

Scheme description
<p>The Kings Hill development near West Malling is a major mixed use redevelopment of a former aerodrome. The redevelopment began in 1999 and to date nearly 2,500 houses and nearly 86,000 sq.m of employment floor space have been built along with community facilities, schools and a small retail centre.</p> <p>A further 417 residential units with planning permission are expected to be completed up to 2015/16. There are also permissions for a further 100,000 sq.m of employment floor space in place, but unimplemented (comprised within Phase 2 approved in 2004/2005).</p> <p>In May 2013 an outline application for a further 975 houses, (in lieu of land allocated for B1 use) with a new primary school, linear park and petrol filling station was submitted. The application site includes the site of the Kent County Council County Supplies Depot and some of the allocated employment land. If granted permission this would leave approximately 8.5 hectares of employment land or 24,000 sq.m of employment floor space. (Phase 3)</p> <p>The Phase 3 application has not yet been determined..</p>
Employment outputs
<p>If all of the employment floor space with planning permission were to be developed and taken up this would generate an estimated 10,000 additional jobs. However, current occupancy rates are approximately 78% and there are a number of leases coming to an end in the next year or so that may increase the vacancy rate, so there are no plans currently to create further employment development.</p> <p>If the current planning permission for change of use is approved the retained employment floor space would generate approximately 2,200 jobs.</p> <p>There would also be short term employment opportunities arising from construction.</p>
Housing outputs
417 additional units from the existing permissions with up to a possible extra 975 subject to planning permission being granted for Phase 3.
Planning policy status
The outline planning permission for additional residential uses on land allocated for employment uses is contrary to the development plan.
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None for the remaining 417 new homes with planning permission, subject to S106 agreements being implemented. Infrastructure requirements associated with the new outline planning application are yet to be decided and will need to be assessed in the knowledge that the Phase 2 permission include infrastructure improvements to serve the land currently allocated/permitted for B1 use which is proposed, in the Phase 3 application, to be used for housing.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Unknown
Additional delivery constraints
Unknown.
Delivery timetable
To 2015/16 for remaining housing with pp.
975 additional homes would take approximately 10 years to develop.

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: PETER'S VILLAGE WOULDHAM - TM2

Scheme description
<p>The submission of the planning applications for the village and the bridge followed a long period of study of the site and surrounding area. The study looked at environmental issues such as ecology, landscape, transport and land contamination. Outline planning approval for the construction of a new village of 1,000 residential units was granted by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. Detailed planning permission was required for the new bridge, and it was granted jointly by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Medway Council in May 2006, as the new bridge crosses the boundaries of the two local authorities.</p> <p>The net area of development is approximately 35.05 hectares (86.61 acres) of which 11.1 hectares (27.3 acres) is set aside as public open space. The new village will include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regrading of the site with four development areas: one alongside the river (old Peters Works site), and three within the former quarry. Acceptable gradients will be created and the site will be protected from flooding. • 1,000 homes of varying sizes and tenures, including affordable housing for local people. • New primary school • Local centre next to the river including: community centre, police post, medical centre, ambulance post, shop, public house and employment units. • New areas of open space and playing fields. • A new riverside walk • Protection and management of the Peters Pit nature reserve.
Employment outputs
From construction and arising from employment opportunities at the community facilities planned.
Housing outputs
1,000 new dwellings. 25% affordable.
Planning policy status
The site has been identified since the mid 1990's as suitable for residential development. It is allocated as such within Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's Local Plan. It is also identified for residential development within Kent County Council's Structure Plan.
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The housing development is limited pending the completion of the new bridge over the Medway.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project includes infrastructure provision for a new bridge crossing of the River Medway, enhanced transport infrastructure on the road network on the east bank for the Medway and enhancements to J4/M20 (as part of a project co-funded with development at Halling (Medway Council) and funds from an earlier approval at New Hythe. The Peters Pit project is the subject of a shortlisted but as yet undecided bid to the Local Infrastructure Fund (HCA) to enable the required infrastructure to be forward-funded.
Additional delivery constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolution of requirements for new social infrastructure – e.g. primary school provision. To be finalised with KCC Education.
Delivery timetable
Dependent on bridge, but first housing completions expected by 2015/16. Completion of the 1,000 dwellings expected to extend beyond the current plan period (2021).

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: ISLES QUARRY, BOROUGH GREEN - TM3

Scheme description
Erection of 171 dwellings, creation of 6.82 ha of public open space including local area of equipped play (leap), new vehicular access onto Haul Road. Provision of access roads, footpaths, landscaping and all associated infrastructure, removal of bridge deck to Isles Quarry East
Employment outputs
None
Housing outputs
171 units
Planning policy status
Allocated for housing including affordable housing
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road construction, works to existing “haul-road” to standards suitable for adoption and waste water disposal facilities – required/secured by S106 and SWS Agreement. Noise attenuation works to ensure appropriate noise climate for the new dwellings so created.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None as far is known
Additional delivery constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex land shaping required for part of site, so implementation is effectively phased by virtue of that work.
Delivery timetable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First phases, affordable units, intended to be on site by November 2013

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KEY GROWTH LOCATION: PRESTON HALL, AYLESFORD - TM4

Scheme description
Redevelopment of Preston Hall a grade II listed building and former hospital and adjacent land in the ownership of the NHS and the Royal British Legion for approximately 245 dwellings with associated improvements to the local road network and internal road layout.
Employment outputs
No employment floor space included in the current applications although policy considers site appropriate for mixed use.
Housing outputs
36 units on RBL land and 208 units on NHS land including approx 36 units in the grade II listed building – 2 separate outline applications – permissions granted. It is believed that the larger NHS site is being marketed..
Planning policy status
Three applications comprise the masterplan for the redevelopment of the site. Two for residential and one for the roads. Outline permission granted August 2012.
Policy H3 in the adopted LDF Development Land Allocations DPD (April 2008) refers.
Unlocking infrastructure required
Very limited in view of the fact that the housing content of the larger of the schemes merely substitutes housing for historic, high traffic movement, office/hospital facilities.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
None expected
Additional delivery constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No details submitted for the conversion of the listed building. This will be the subject of a detailed matters application in due course. Air quality and noise constraints due to proximity to A20/M20 (site is within an AQMA) – reflected in the terms of the planning permission. Possible contaminated land requiring remediation. reflected in the terms of the planning permission
Delivery timetable
Unclear

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE - TM5

Scheme description
<p>Tonbridge is the largest settlement and retail centre in the borough with access to good transportation links, schools and countryside. The Tonbridge Industrial Estate is also a major source of employment and is safeguarded by policy E1 in the adopted Development Land Allocations DPD (April 2008).</p> <p>There are proposals for a major redevelopment of the Botany site currently occupied by a Sainsbury supermarket, a department store and leisure centre, by Sainsbury to create a larger supermarket, non-food retail outlets and a multi screen cinema. A new leisure centre will be built on another town centre site as part of the scheme.</p> <p>In addition, there are a number of major housing proposals in the town, some underway and others identified as allocations.</p> <p>The 2013 Comprehensive Spending Review has identified £92m of funding for dualling the A21 between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells subject to the outcome of the ongoing Inquiry into the proposals.</p>
Employment outputs
<p>There is the potential for increases in employment opportunities arising from the Botany redevelopment, the construction of the housing sites and from new business uses attracted to the town by the inward investments described above.</p>
Housing outputs
<p>There are 248 units with planning permission and a further 255 on allocated sites making a total of 503 units.</p>
Planning policy status
<p>There are numerous sites identified in the Tonbridge Central Area, which are addressed by the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan (adopted April 2008)</p>
Unlocking infrastructure required
<p>Many of the sites in the Central Tonbridge Area lie within the floodplain. Improvements to and maintenance of the Leigh Flood Barrier will be an important infrastructural requirement for further growth.</p> <p>Associated improvements to the local highway network.</p> <p>Improvements to rail services from Tonbridge, for example, to Gatwick.</p>
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
<p>To be determined</p>
Additional delivery constraints
<p>n/a</p>
Delivery timetable
<p>Ongoing. Identified Housing sites and allocations to 2018/19.</p>

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: EAST MALLING RESEARCH - TM6

Scheme description
<p>East Malling Research (EMR) is a subsidiary of the East Malling Trust an independent provider of top-class research, development and consultancy serving the food chain and other sectors of the land-based industry. EMR's portfolio encompasses projects that vary in size and scope. Customers include: DEFRA, commercial companies, EU, retailers, growers, levy bodies and Research Councils.</p> <p>There is potential for the site to attract further agricultural research and development investment enhancing the facility and generating new employment opportunities.</p> <p>A specific proposal at this site is the proposed new 'M9' research facility for horticultural research. This aimed to provide a world class facility which builds on the Trust's considerable expertise in horticultural research and new product development. The projected cost of the 3,200 sqm building is £15M</p>
Employment outputs
Too early to say, but potentially significant.
Housing outputs
None.
Planning policy status
<p>The East Malling Research Station is a safeguarded employment site in the Adopted Development Land Allocations DPD (April 2008) covered by Policy E1(s). It is identified as being suitable for offices, research and development and light industrial manufacturing including conference, education and training and any other uses that can be demonstrated to be related to or support the operation of the research station.</p>
Unlocking infrastructure required
Possibly improvements to local highway network.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Capital investment to secure the construction of the M9 laboratory is required.
Additional delivery constraints
n/a
Delivery timetable
Within the next Local Plan period (to 2031)

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: FORT HALSTEAD - S1

Scheme description
<p>Fort Halstead is a previously developed site situated in the Green Belt and the Kent Downs AONB that was originally a Ministry of Defence research establishment and is still occupied by defence related industries. It is currently the largest employment site in the District.</p> <p>Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, DSTL, the largest employer, has announced its intention to withdraw from the site by 2016. The Council is working with DSTL, QinetiQ and the site owners to develop redevelopment proposals for the future. In line with our policy (Fort Halstead is identified as a Major Employment Site in the Green Belt) we expect future development to be employment led.</p> <p>Adopted Core Strategy Policy SP8 currently restricts this site to employment use in the long term: <i>Sites used for business purposes will be retained in business use unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for business purposes during the Core Strategy period.</i></p> <p>Policy EMP3 in the draft Allocation and Development Management Plan (ADMP) stipulates that <i>“redevelopment proposals will be expected to achieve a range of employment uses such as serviced offices, workshops or land based employment, and generate at least the number of jobs that the site accommodated immediately prior to the announced withdrawal of DSTL from the site.”</i> The reasoned justification to the policy confirms this at approximately 1200 jobs. This policy is yet to be confirmed and adopted and so currently the Core Strategy policy has greatest weight.</p>
Employment outputs
<p>The site currently holds over 1000+ jobs, the majority of which are very high skill. Any redevelopment of the site should provide at least as many jobs that the site accommodated prior to the announced withdrawal of DSTL from the site.</p>
Housing outputs
<p>At this stage any potential housing outputs are unknown. The Core Strategy does not encourage housing development. This will be a business led development with any residential enablement needing to be justified.</p>
Planning policy status
<p>Fort Halstead is considered a ‘Major Developed Site’ in the Green Belt. Fort Halstead forms a significant part of the District’s employment land supply and there retention and development as employment sites will be subject to the provisions of Policy SP8</p>
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site may deliver remediation measures and on site upgrades to the road hierarchy • <i>The site will already have a high traffic generation and any redevelopment will have to review projected traffic generation and whether mitigation measures are necessary. Sustainable transport connections are sought in this remote location.</i>
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Additional delivery constraints
Delivery timetable
<p>Aim of delivery by 2017/2018</p>

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KEY GROWTH LOCATION: BROOM HILL, SEVENOAKS - S2

Scheme description
The Broom Hill site is a longstanding employment land allocation. Redevelopment of the site has the potential to support the economic regeneration of Swanley. The business area is located closely to the M20/M25 junction in Swanley and thus could be attractive for distribution uses.
Employment outputs
The employment land market assessment identified a potential market for warehouses with good trunk road access in the northern part of the District. Swanley is an area of high unemployment and deprivation. The regeneration of this site coupled with the regeneration of Swanley Town Centre would have very positive impacts for the community and other surrounding areas with similar employment needs.
Housing outputs
The business area is exposed to noise and air pollution which the Council considers limits the use of the business area for residential purposes. The Council considers that the allocated site and land in the Green Belt to the north provides opportunities for improved open space provision on the site. The owner of the western part of the site considers that some housing could be accommodated on the site and is appealing the Council's decision to refuse planning permission.
Planning policy status
The Broom Hill development site, adjacent to the M25 in Swanley, is a longstanding employment land allocation. The Core Strategy proposes that it should be carried forward in the Allocations and Development Management Plan, subject to further consideration of the traffic impacts and the impact on on-site biodiversity.
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Highways Agency has previously identified a need for the impact of any development on the site on M25 j3 to be mitigated.</i> • <i>The site currently has poor public transport access.</i> • <i>There are currently congestion issues in Swanley. Any redevelopment would have to mitigate additional traffic disruption.</i>
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Additional delivery constraints
Delivery timetable
Not known at this time

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: SWANLEY TOWN CENTRE - S3

Scheme description
<p>Swanley is the second largest town in the District. It is located adjacent to Junction 3 of the M25 but has a limited range of services in comparison with Sevenoaks town. Swanley currently suffers from high levels of poverty, worklessness and crime. The effective regeneration of Swanley Town Centre is a key strategic priority for the Council.</p> <p>Swanley Town Centre itself contains a pedestrianised shopping centre which includes a large food superstore, together with a civic centre and other facilities. There is significant scope for development within the area of the centre to achieve regeneration objectives. The Retail Study Update 2009 shows that the town is only capturing a low proportion of available expenditure, particularly for non-food goods, and suggests that the attractiveness of the town centre needs to be increased if local shoppers are to be brought back into the town.</p> <p>The regeneration of the town centre would help to retain expenditure, boost economic expenditure and strengthen the social function of the centre as the meeting place of the town and enhance the environment and image of the place.</p>
Employment outputs
Any redevelopment would generate significant amounts of new employment in an area of high unemployment, economic inactivity and deprivation.
Housing outputs
Any redevelopment would be likely to provide a combination of retail, offices, residential and community facilities.
Planning policy status
<p>Policy LO5 in the Core Strategy (adopted February 2011) stipulates that:</p> <p><i>Swanley Town Centre will be regenerated so that it better meets the needs of the population it serves. The regeneration scheme will contain a mix of uses including retail, offices, residential and community facilities (including replacement of existing medical facilities) and will bring about a substantial improvement in the environment of the town centre. The provision of a hotel will be supported. Links between the town centre and the station will be improved.</i></p>
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A dedicated pedestrian-cycle way link between the Railway station and Town Centre is proposed to be delivered as part of the redevelopment</i>
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Additional delivery constraints
Delivery timetable
Not known at this time

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: NEW ASH GREEN VILLAGE CENTRE – S4

Scheme description
<p>New Ash Green was developed as a new community in 1960s with its own village centre. The centre has proved to be far less successful than other aspects of the development and continues to suffer from a high amount of vacant units and environmental issues.</p> <p>The Council is attempting to work with landowners and the local community to develop proposals for its regeneration so that it better meets the needs of the local community, while retaining a scale appropriate to the size of the community it is intended to serve and a form that respects the distinctive character of the settlement. An element of residential development could be included as part of the regeneration scheme. The final form of development will follow local consultation. No significant scope for development exists elsewhere in the village outside the centre.</p>
Employment outputs
Regeneration of the town centre would provide new long term employment for the area and provide a vibrant town centre designed to serve local people.
Housing outputs
There could be an element of residential development included as part of any regeneration scheme.
Planning policy status
Core Strategy Policy LO7 states that New Ash Green village centre will be regenerated so that it better meets the needs of the local community whilst respecting the distinctive character of the settlement.
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major gaps in the current bus network between New Ash Green and Sevenoaks, which result in poor accessibility to railway stations, such as Longfield and Ebbsfleet.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Additional delivery constraints
Delivery timetable
Not known at this time

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: VESTRY ESTATE, SEVENOAKS - S5

Scheme description
The Vestry Estate is located on the edge of Sevenoaks Town with access to the motorway network via Junction 5 of the M25. The estate comprises a mix of industrial, warehouse and workshop units covering a range of sizes. Some of the B1 and B8 properties located on this site are old and need redevelopment. This site has been identified as an area appropriate for new business development within these areas, including the provision of sites for small and medium sized businesses and start up facilities.
Employment outputs
Appropriate new development at this site could encourage new businesses
Housing outputs
This is a large existing employment site. Any redevelopment would not have any housing element.
Planning policy status
In accordance with Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy will be retained, intensified and regenerated for B1 - B8 uses. Appropriate new development within these areas, including the provision of sites for small and medium size businesses and "start-up" facilities, will be supported.
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to the A225 Off-slip to prevent congestion at the entrance to the Vestry Estate.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Additional delivery constraints
Delivery timetable
Not known at this time

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: EDENBRIDGE, STATION ROAD – S6

Scheme description
Station Road currently has a large proportion of mixed industrial units. This site has been identified as an area appropriate for new development within these areas, including the provision of sites for small and medium sized businesses and start up facilities.
Employment outputs
Appropriate new development at this site could encourage new businesses to locate in Edenbridge
Housing outputs
This is a large existing employment site. Any redevelopment would not have any housing element.
Planning policy status
In accordance with Policy SP8 of the Core Strategy will be retained, intensified and regenerated for B1 - B8 uses. Appropriate new development within these areas, including the provision of sites for small and medium size businesses and "start-up" facilities, will be supported.
Unlocking infrastructure required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major inhibitor for larger companies being able to locate in this area is the low hanging bridge to the north of Station Road. This prevents large haulage vehicles being able to enter Edenbridge, thus prohibiting large scale employers from using the site.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
Costs not known at this stage.
Additional delivery constraints
Delivery timetable
No current delivery timetable

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN CENTRE – TW1

Scheme description
Royal Tunbridge Wells is a prominent service centre. The Borough Council aspires to enhance and develop the town as an economic, retail, cultural and creative centre, as identified in the TWBC Core Strategy and Cultural and Creative Industries Framework. The town is well-placed to have a high growth and sustainable cultural industries sector, based around the arts, digital media, marketing and PR professions. There is however, a need to evolve the creative sector through diversifying the economic and business base. This can be achieved by establishing visible and high profile hubs for sector specific activity, which encourage collaboration, trade and innovation. Furthermore through providing opportunities for inward investment and redevelopment of key brownfield sites.
Employment outputs
The Town Centre benefits from employment generating uses including office and retail development. It also boasts facilities including the Trinity Arts Theatre, Assembly Hall and Royal Victoria Place. The Council's current policy aspiration is to retain and enhance the employment provision where opportunities arise. The Core Strategy sets out a requirement for retail space of 24,000m ² net comparison floorspace to 2021 and a further 21,000m ² to 2026. Locations for growth and redevelopment are identified in the Council's Draft Site Allocations DPD, which includes identified Key Areas of Change.
Housing outputs
TWBC is seeking to deliver 2445 new homes within the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. Enhancing the economic and cultural strength of the town will support the desirability of the town as a place to live.
Planning policy status
<p>The Town Centre is designated as a Key Employment Area within the adopted Core Strategy. The Draft Site Allocations document sets out Key Areas of Change including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crescent Road/Church Road Area of Change – Policy AL/RTW2, including for former cinema site • Vale Avenue Area of Change – Policy AL/RTW3 • Eridge Road Area of Change – Policy AL/RTW4 <p>A masterplan SPD will be prepared for each of the 3 areas. The Council is seeking a comprehensive redevelopment and refurbishment of buildings within these areas for a mix of uses including, civic functions, retail & leisure, office and residential.</p>
Unlocking infrastructure required
<p>The Council's Draft Transport Strategy identifies that interventions will be required to support the growth and development of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Interventions primarily concern road and parking projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park & Ride Scheme for A26 London Road and A264 Pembury Road - subject to feasibility study • Junction improvements on the A26 and A264 - subject to transport modelling assessment • Town centre public realm improvements – delivered through a Public Realm Framework • Additional parking at the southern end of the town centre – part of Eridge Road Area of Change
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
No funding has been secured for the transport interventions identified.
Additional delivery constraints
Market conditions – private sector partners required for delivery. Planning related constraints.
Delivery timetable
Development site delivery is subject to private sector support and co-ordination. The draft Transport Strategy identifies that the road infrastructure and parking interventions should be delivered during the first 5-10 years of the strategy period 2012-2026.

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KEY GROWTH LOCATION: NORTH FARM – TW2

Scheme description
<p>The proposed scheme is located within North Farm, a major out of town retail and employment area, situated around two miles from Royal Tunbridge Wells. The approved first phase of the scheme aims to improve existing highway capacity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening Longfield Road between Dowding Way roundabout and the A21 roundabout • Introducing a new roundabout at Kingstanding Way/Longfield Road junction • Introducing a new roundabout to replace T-junction at Knights Park /Longfield Road junction, and • Providing a gyratory style junction at Great Lodge/Longfield Road junction. <p>Later phases of the scheme (as yet unfunded), include: Longfield Road, Lamberts Road, Dowding Way one-way system - Connect North Farm Lane to Kingstanding Way – and modification of the existing single track railway bridge at High Brooms.</p>
Employment outputs
<p>The approved DfT Pinch Point funding bid identifies that the proposed scheme will generate £53.9m of traditional economic benefits, safeguard existing jobs and deliver £25.2m per year of wider economic benefits. Due to the constraint of the existing road network, KCC has adopted the interim position of refusing support for any development or re-development proposal which will result in an increased highway impact (higher trip rate). The improvements are therefore necessary to unlock the redevelopment of several major employment sites which are currently vacant.</p>
Housing outputs
<p>The provision of infrastructure improvements will unlock the delivery of a major residential development site at Knights Park, which is accessed via Longfield Road. The site is allocated within the Draft Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations DPD for 550 dwellings (Policy AL/GB1).</p>
Planning policy status
<p>North Farm is designated as a Key Employment Areas within the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy. Knights Park is allocated for residential development in the Draft Site Allocations DPD. The highway improvements are a priority project for KCC, who are actively working with all parties to deliver the scheme.</p>
Unlocking infrastructure required
None.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
<p>£3.5m funding is secured for the first phase, from the DfT Pinch Point Fund, with a further £1.5m provided by local authority partners. It is currently estimated that the one-way system will cost £250.000 to implement; connecting North Farm Lane to Kingstanding Way will cost £50.000 and modifying the railway bridge will cost between £5-£10m depending upon the preferred solution.</p>
Additional delivery constraints
<p>Due to the physical constraints of existing retail development along Longfield Road, it is necessary that landowners transfer land at nominal value to KCC, to enable sufficient highway width to be secured for the delivery of the road widening element. KCC also require retailers to surrender their rights to claim compensation for loss of earnings during the construction period. No public sector finance is available to mitigate these impacts. The cooperation of landowners and retailers is critical to the successful delivery of the improvements.</p>
Delivery timetable
<p>The funded improvements (phase 1 of highway improvement masterplan), has to be delivered by 2015 to meet requirements of DfT Pinch Point funding.</p>

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: PADDOCK WOOD – TW3

Scheme description
Paddock Wood is a rural town, which is identified for further residential and employment growth. TWBC has identified provisional social and physical infrastructure requirements to support this growth in its draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan. These requirements include: affordable housing, enhanced transport connectivity, green infrastructure and community facilities. Flood alleviation measures are also necessary to overcome existing fluvial flooding problems and unlock future development sites.
Employment outputs
Paddock Wood includes two defined Key Employment Areas known of Eldon Way and Transfesa Road. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's draft Site Allocations DPD supports additional employment at the Key Employment Areas, which are subject to flood risk from the functional flood plain.
Housing outputs
The adopted Tunbridge Wells Site Allocations DPD allocates 650 new homes and anew primary school to Paddock Wood over the plan period from 2006-2026. Related planning policies require the preparation of site-specific flood risk assessments and the provision of mitigation measures.
Planning policy status
The TWBC Core Strategy identifies Paddock Wood as a location for growth; strategic residential sites are to be confirmed in the Site Allocations DPD. Paddock Wood lies within an area of flood risk, with the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) covering the area north of the railway line and extending south and to the west of the settlement. Parts of the settlement are in Flood Zone 2. These designations constrain the development potential of related sites. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has prepared a Surface Water Management Plan which includes an action plan identifying interventions.
Unlocking infrastructure required
Flood alleviation measures in Paddock Wood are necessary to address surface water flooding, as identified in the Surface Water Management Plan. A broad range of measures are proposed including, maintenance of drainage systems and capital works which include retro fit sustainable urban drainage measures, flood storage and defence schemes, land management and the provision of a new culvert under the London to Dover mainline.
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
All capital flood interventions are subject to detailed feasibility studies. Costs can therefore not be determined at present. It is expected that development funding will contribute towards interventions which relate to individual development sites. The Council is however, concerned that the associated capital costs could constrain the viability of residential developments to deliver the full range of identified infrastructure requirements, therefore additional funding is required. Additional funding is also required to implement flood mitigation measures which relate to established residential areas to the west of the settlement.
Additional delivery constraints
Market conditions – private sector funding required to support infrastructure delivery.
Delivery timetable
Dependent upon the progress of strategic development sites and the wider availability of funding.

KEY GROWTH LOCATION: TUNBRIDGE WELLS URBAN AREA/SOUTHBOROUGH – TW4

Scheme description
<p>Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is committed to delivering employment, residential and mixed use sites which are allocated within its draft Site Allocations DPD. The Council is however, aware that some sites have specific infrastructure challenges which will impact upon the viability of delivering the proposed land uses, whilst also satisfying a full requirement of planning obligations. The Council will seek appropriate opportunities to secure additional capital funding to unlock sites as required. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southborough Hub (brownfield development including 25 residential dwellings, 1000sq/m community, 1000sq/m retail and 1500sq/m leisure and approximately 66 parking spaces) • Land at North Farm Lane (brownfield development to include 4000sq/m B class floorspace)
Employment outputs
<p>Land at North Farm Lane has been allocated for employment development. Core Strategy Policy 7 seeks to encourage new floorspace within the Key Employment Areas. This site lies adjacent to the North Farm / Longfield Road Key Employment Area and its development for employment purposes would provide an opportunity to extend this KEA, encourage business growth and increase employment opportunities within the Borough. The Borough Council is wishing to acquire the site for the development of incubator/business start-up units.</p>
Housing outputs
<p>Additional residential units at Southborough.</p>
Planning policy status
<p>The sites identified are allocated for development within the draft Site Allocations DPD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southborough Hub – Policy AL/SO2 – The Borough Council and Southborough Town Council are currently progressing a masterplan options study for the site, which will inform the preparation of a related Supplementary Planning Document. • Land at North Farm Lane – Policy AL/RTW28
Unlocking infrastructure required
<p>None. Land at North Farm Lane will benefit from the delivery of related highway improvements at North Farm.</p>
Indicative infrastructure funding gap (based on requirements above)
<p>Funding requirements are not known at this stage (subject to viability appraisal). The Council will be seeking capital funding support to bring forward the Southborough Hub and North Farm Lane sites. These are public sector led schemes which are being progressed to deliver social and economic benefits for the community.</p>
Additional delivery constraints
<p>None.</p>
Delivery timetable
<p>Unknown, however, both sites are being actively promoted for development and should be delivered within the current plan period.</p>