

**Images of the District**

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**Foreword from Cllr Piper, (Portfolio Holder for Planning). (photo)**

I am delighted to be able to introduce the first public consultation document for the emerging Sevenoaks District Local Plan. It represents the first stepping stone in a process that we hope will lead to a new plan being examined and adopted during 2019. This will replace the existing Core Strategy adopted in 2011. It is also the first of several public consultations that we anticipate being undertaken between now and 2019 so there will be plenty of opportunity to make your views known and help frame what we intend to be an ambitious and appropriate plan for the district over the next 15 to 20 years; running to 2035.

As we all know Sevenoaks District represents one of the most attractive areas of the country. Its Kent Downs and High Weald ‘Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ landscapes are recognised as being of national importance and make up over 60% of the District. Green Belt land forming a buffer to the outward growth of London represents 93% of the district, one of the highest percentages of any district in the country. It is important to protect our best countryside. Yet the district also lies within the most densely populated region of the country and pressures to meet housing and employment needs remain relentless. Clearly these distinct characteristics represent very significant challenges for us all, **but it is important to state early on that the Council only intends to consider the Green Belt in exceptional circumstances with a focus on the sustainable reuse of brownfield sites.**

This Sevenoaks District Local Plan Issues and Options document is based on one of the most comprehensive and up to date evidence bases ever assembled for any plan in Sevenoaks District. It takes as its starting point the current state of the district and suggests a vision for the future that aims to protect and enhance the existing qualities of places whilst creating new settings to help meet future needs. The plan will also help identify the provision of new and improved infrastructure to make places function better, albeit recognising that in most cases funding will be dependant on the Government, their agencies or other infrastructure providers. ‘Place making’ is a central theme being put forward in the new plan and, in particular, place making that responds to differences in localities around the District; for instance the qualities of Edenbridge are very different to those of settlements in the Darent Valley and will remain so going forward.

Please be aware that the Council will particularly welcome contributions that help to achieve a genuinely shared and visionary plan with a focus on meeting the needs of all who live and work in the district.

Over to you.

## Executive Summary

The Local Plan is clear that the Green Belt will continue to be protected. In order to do so, new housing will need to be accommodated, at higher densities, within existing settlement boundaries (or under the existing rural exceptions sites policy) other than in the following cases:

- Where the development will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land in the Green Belt (use of the term brownfield for Local Plan purposes goes wider than the NPPF definition and is set out in the glossary to the Local Plan).
- Where a convincing ‘exceptional circumstances’ case can be made. The Government does not define exceptional circumstances, but this may occur, for example, where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.

Evidence for potential supply of housing land estimates that about 5,000 new homes can be built in existing settlement boundaries (or under the existing rural exceptions sites policy) and 1,500 new homes built on brownfield land in the Green Belt.

Current potential exceptional circumstance cases undergoing separate consultation processes are at Sevenoaks Northern, as part of the Sevenoaks (Town) Neighbourhood Plan (area regeneration, brownfield land in the Green Belt and approximately 800 new homes (within the plan period)) and at Westerham as part of the privately led Which Way Westerham initiative (a new relief road and approximately 600 new homes). Sevenoaks District Council currently remains neutral on this initiative. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to endorsement through examination and local referendum.

At Edenbridge, whilst there is also a Neighbourhood Plan process ongoing it is not currently promoting an exceptional circumstance case for Green Belt release for housing. Provision of new health and secondary education are likely to be important if any case were to be made. At Swanley, the potential for a new garden village has been fully explored as a potential option via extensive Master Vision public consultation and Cabinet have agreed this option will not form part of Swanley’s regeneration. Work on the Hextable Neighbourhood Plan is now continuing again and the Local Plan will consider any exceptional circumstance cases arising through this work. The Ash Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing any exceptional circumstances to justify Green Belt land release.

The objectively assessed housing need for the District is 12,400. Evidence of potential supply identifies sites for 6,500 new homes (this excludes any emerging exceptional circumstances where cases still need to be made and/or finalised numbers confirmed). Providing for 6,500 new homes over 20 years would represent a doubling of existing required delivery in the adopted Core Strategy but still well short of meeting identified need.

Alongside continuing engagement with emerging potential ‘exceptional circumstances’ cases cooperation with other local planning authorities will continue in order to explore capacity options in other less constrained areas of the sub-region.

Choices for housing are strongly influenced by the new housing strategy. Priorities include measures for balancing the housing market via more 1-2 bedroom affordable houses, particularly for young people and first time buyers, more 2-3 bedroom market units, more options for older people including opportunities to right-size, extra care housing and allowing more opportunities for other forms of low cost housing such as custom and self build. Differences emerge for place-making areas. Provision to meet identified need for Gypsies and Travellers can be identified on existing sites or via small extensions without the need for new sites. The report for the Housing Strategy elaborates further on housing choice.

Economic priorities from the emerging economic development strategy have been represented in the Local Plan. Of high importance are ensuring that new development is 'technology ready' and that lobbying of Government and relevant infrastructure providers leads to substantial improvement in high speed broadband coverage. The rural and visitor economies are highlighted as key areas of focus for the future ensuring that the District's tourism assets are promoted and new visitor accommodation is provided.

Options for finding additional employment land include intensifying uses and small expansions of existing employment areas. In total about 11ha of new employment land needs be identified, 7ha of which is to be for offices. New land and premises will need to be attractive to both inward investment and cater for the growth and expansion plans of local businesses. Ensuring new premises actually get built on allocated employment land and that they remain in employment use is a particular issue.

Evidence identifies over 30,000m<sup>2</sup> of new retail provision being needed during the plan period in order to ensure the District's High Streets remain competitive with other nearby centres, particularly Bluewater and Tunbridge Wells. The location of new provision is likely to be particularly influenced by progress with the regeneration of Swanley town centre.

Further work will be required to ensure that the requirements for housing, employment and retail are in balance when the final plan is being drafted.

Having sufficient infrastructure is identified as one of the most important issues for the new Local Plan. The plan is accompanied by an infrastructure plan (previously reviewed by planning advisory committee) which identifies the items that are either desirable or more importantly critical to delivery of the Local Plan. Key items relate to transport, education and health. Whilst Council officers continue to meet with partners responsible for different items of infrastructure (particularly Kent County Council, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups) the Local Plan and infrastructure Plan will themselves provide important evidence for Members when lobbying Government and relevant infrastructure providers for the funding needed by the District.

The Issues and Options document sets out the District Council's preferred options for addressing needs and issues, but in order to ensure all reasonable options are considered, representations on alternatives will be invited as part of the public consultation and these will be assessed prior to drawing up a draft Local Plan.

Table x provides a summary of key issues arising set out under the six objectives being proposed for the new plan.

**Table x Summary of key issues**

<b>Objective 1. Promote housing choice for all</b>	
What are the main issues and challenges?	The pressing need for new housing Affordability of homes in both urban and rural areas Providing the right homes for all accommodation needs, including for older people Housing density Highly constrained District with 93% Green Belt and 60% AONB
Which areas are affected?	Urban areas – these areas are under significant pressure to deliver high density housing development. Rural areas – with virtually all rural areas subject to Green Belt designation, delivering new and much needed affordable housing and homes suitable for older people is a key challenge.
Cross-boundary issues?	Future housing pressures from London Housing pressures from elsewhere in the South East
<b>Objective 2: Promote well designed, safe places and safeguard and enhance the District’s distinctive high quality natural and built environments</b>	
What are the main issues and challenges?	Protecting the Green Belt Protecting the distinctive landscape character of the District Protecting biodiversity to ensure no net loss Encourage high quality design Conserve and enhance the District’s heritage assets
Which areas are affected?	All areas
Cross-boundary issues?	Metropolitan Green Belt extends across neighbouring authorities Ashdown Forest – impact of development on European designated site Environmental and biodiversity issues do not follow administrative boundaries
<b>Objective 3: Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural</b>	
What are the main issues and challenges?	Provision of new employment land and premises Protection or improvement of existing employment land Strengthening the rural/visitor economy including accommodation Encouraging innovation and technology, including broadband
Which areas are affected?	All areas, both urban and rural Large employment sites Smaller employment sites especially in rural area
Cross-boundary issues?	Pressures and competition from adjoining areas and London
<b>Objective 4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure</b>	

What are the main issues and challenges?	<p>Ensuring vibrant town centres</p> <p>Regeneration of Swanley and New Ash Green</p> <p>Retention of small scale local services and facilities</p> <p>Pressures on major routes, particularly the M25</p> <p>Pressures on railways, capacity issues, no west/east routes</p> <p>Encouraging opportunities to deliver sustainable modes of transport</p> <p>Ensuring sufficient infrastructure to meet both existing and future growth needs particularly for Health and Education</p> <p>Working with infrastructure providers to deliver capacity improvements including for communication/digital infrastructure</p>
Which areas are affected?	<p>Local town and local service centres (Sevenoaks/Swanley/Edenbridge/New Ash Green/Otford/Westerham).</p> <p>Facilities and services available for rural communities</p> <p>M25, M26, M20, A21, A20, A25 routes</p> <p>Rural connectivity with surrounding centres</p> <p>Secondary education provision in towns</p>
Cross-boundary issues?	<p>Impact of Bluewater and potential expansion</p> <p>Other out-of-District centres</p> <p>Future Rail Services (mainline &amp; metro)</p> <p>Lower Thames Crossing</p> <p>Possible Gatwick Airport and Biggin Hill Airport expansion</p> <p>County wide Health and Education provision</p>
<b>Objective 5. Promote healthy living opportunities</b>	
What are the main issues and challenges?	<p>Community Wellbeing and reducing social exclusion</p> <p>Ageing Population</p> <p>Leisure provision for growing population</p> <p>Safeguarding of existing open space and provision of new space to meet District-wide deficits</p> <p>Improving air quality</p>
Which areas are affected?	<p>Areas with high levels of deprivation</p> <p>Rural areas can be affected with health inequalities due to a lack of health provision.</p>
Cross-boundary issues?	<p>Health is a cross boundary issue</p> <p>Lack of collaborative working between the two NHS authorities operating within the District.</p>
<b>Objective 6. Promote a greener future</b>	
What are the main issues and challenges?	<p>Climate change mitigation and adaptation</p> <p>Ensure new development avoids or mitigates against fluvial and surface water flood risk</p>
Which areas are affected?	All areas
Cross-boundary issues?	<p>Connections across boundary for recreational opportunities including walking and cycling</p> <p>Habitat connections</p> <p>Landscape designations including AONBs</p>

**Contents / How to respond – to be added**

**Why Produce a New Local Plan?**

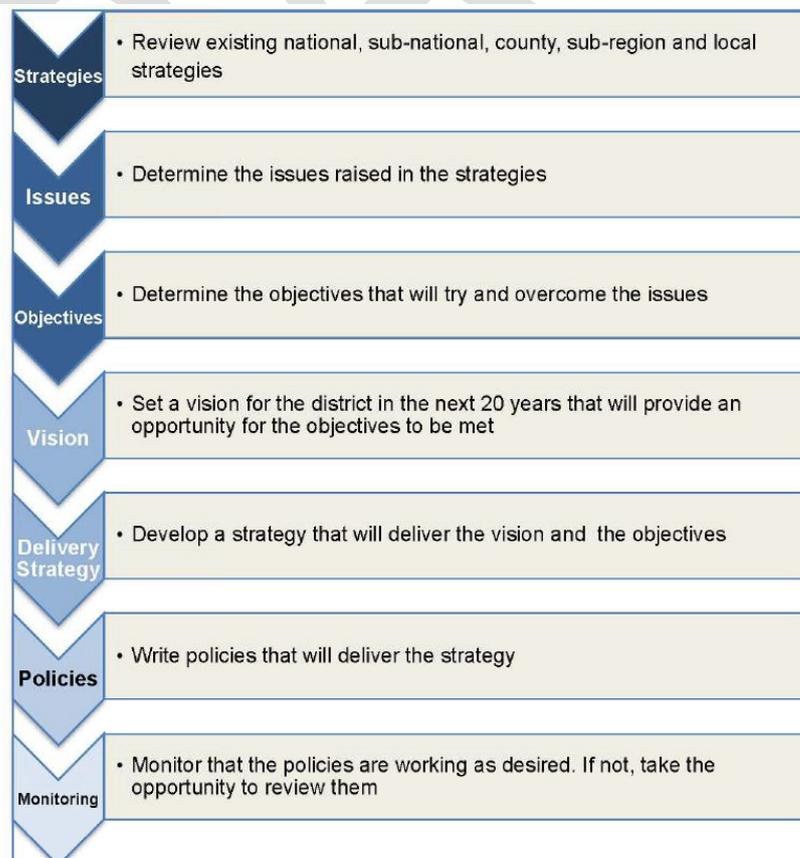
The Council’s Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and the associated Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) was adopted in 2015. However, because the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in 2012, and amongst other alterations, changed the way housing need was calculated, there is a requirement to update our Plan. Many of the policies contained in these existing documents remain relevant and it is the intention to carry these over into the new Local Plan, particularly in relation to Development Management policies and site allocations which have not yet been implemented. Over the past ten years, 2,509 homes have been completed (or 250 homes per year) against a target of 165 homes per year and last year 115 affordable homes were completed (against a target of 66 pa). In addition, the Council’s planning department is the busiest in Kent, with 2,101 planning applications received in 2016.

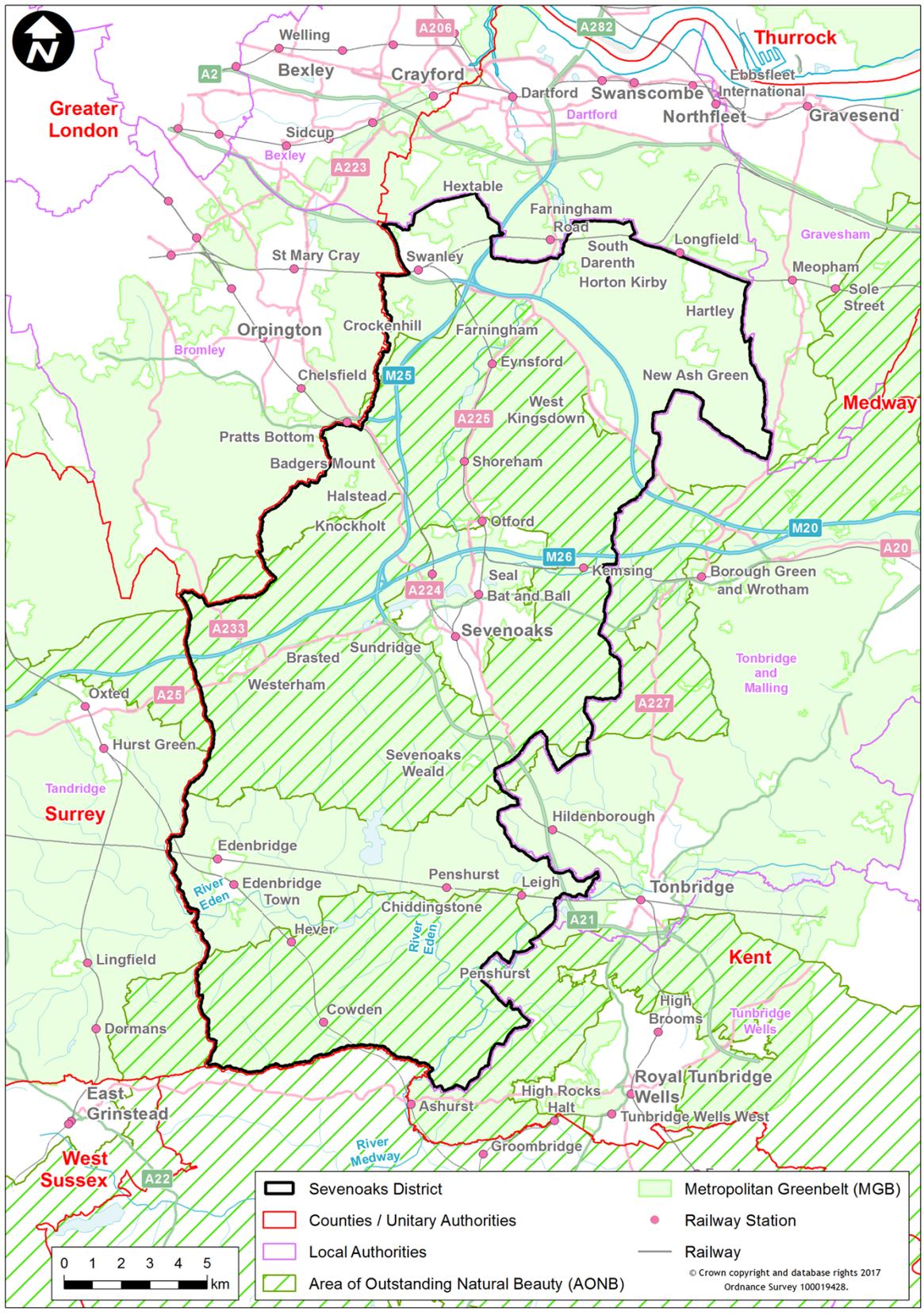
**Process and Timetable**



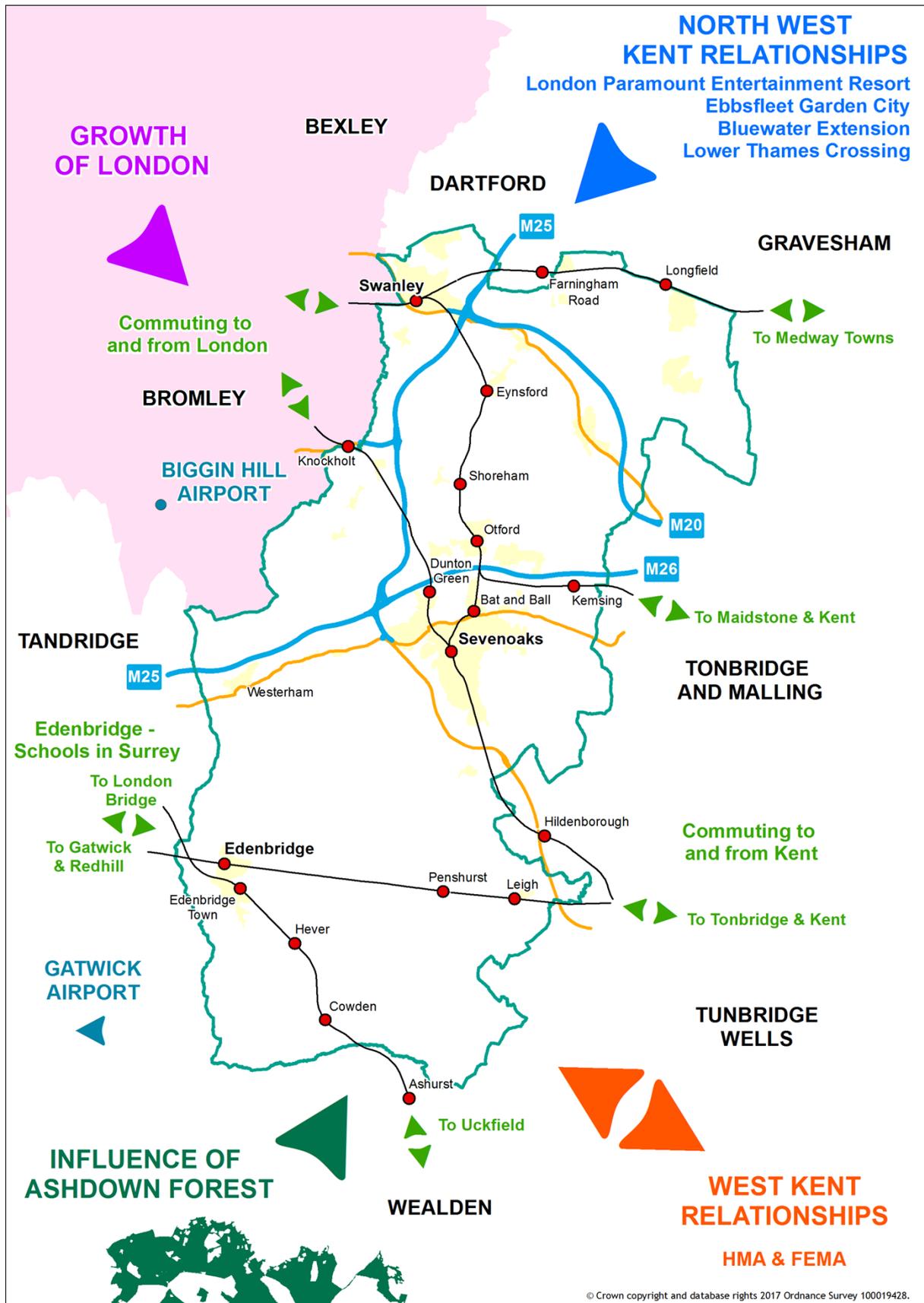
\*Reg.18,19,22 & 24 are defined by the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

**Key Modules of a Local Plan**





**Sevenoaks District's Position within the Metropolitan Green Belt**



Sevenoaks District's Sub-regional Setting and Relationships

# Your District...

Population **118,400**

**93%** Green Belt

**60%** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

**11%** covered in ancient woodland



**1 in 5 people over 65**

Average Household Income in the District

**£48,000**

Home Ownership is **10% higher** than the England average



The **highest** average house prices in Kent

2 wards in **20% most deprived** in England

Annual average unemployment rate:

Sevenoaks: **0.7%**

Kent: **1.6%**

Great Britain: **1.8%**

(Calculated as proportion of those aged 16-64)

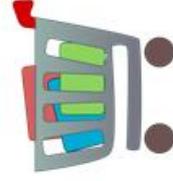
## What the District needs up to 2035...



A housing need of **12,400 units** (**620 units per year**)



A need for up to **11.6ha** of employment land



A need for up to **32,000m<sup>2</sup>** of retail space

## **What is the District Like?**

Sevenoaks District is located in West Kent, with the edge of Greater London to the north-west, Surrey to the west and East Sussex to the south. The District covers almost 143 square miles and 93% is designated Green Belt. The towns are Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham, where a significant proportion of the 118,409 residents (2015 mid-year population estimates, ONS) in the District live. There are over 30 villages and smaller settlements of which the largest is New Ash Green.

The District has a high quality landscape with a mostly rural character. 60% of the District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are many areas of woodland much of which is designated as Ancient Woodland, two Country Parks and a large network of public rights of way. Parts of the District afford impressive views over Kent and the South East particularly from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. The District also is rich in biodiversity with many Wildlife Reserves, designated areas as well the River Darent and Eden.

There are many historic settlements in the District as reflected in the high number of conservation areas and listed buildings. The District also boasts many nationally recognised heritage assets including the historic estates of Knole, Chartwell, Hever Castle, Penshurst Place and Lullingstone Castle. Other places of interest include the National Trust village at Chiddingstone, Eynsford Castle ruin, Lullingstone Roman Villa, Otford Palace and Toys Hill (the birthplace of the National Trust). There are many tourist opportunities within the District and it is particularly popular with day visitors. The settlements contain well used village greens, sports pitches, play facilities for children and young people and parks and gardens.

The population of the District is expected to grow by more the 20,000 people over the plan period 2015-35 (ONS). This is in line with other authorities in Kent and the South East and reflects people living longer, an increasing birth rate and internal migration patterns (largely people moving out of London into Sevenoaks). 20% of the District's population are currently aged 65 or over and this figure is expected to grow to 25% over the plan period. This growing population and changing age structure presents a key challenge for the District. There are areas of affluence in the district as well as pockets of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. The IMD uses information about income, employment, health, education, crime and living environment to rank every small area in England from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 (least deprived). According to the IMD the District is the second least deprived local authority in Kent, although there are areas which are within the 20% most deprived in the country.

The District has generally high house prices. The average house prices in the District are around £175,000 higher than in Kent making it very difficult for first time buyers and young families to remain in the District. The Local Plan evidence identifies a need for 12,400 new homes over the plan period to meet the needs of the growing population. This includes a high proportion of affordable homes and specialist accommodation for older people.

The District is a popular place to live, partly because of its proximity to London and the continent. Major transport links are provided by the M25, M26, M20, A21, A20 and A25. Stations throughout the District provide rail access to London in under an hour. The District is also well located for Gatwick and Heathrow airports as well as the Channel Ports, Ashford and Ebbsfleet International stations.

The Council seeks to ensure the District is a safe place for all to live, work and travel, while encouraging healthy lifestyles and providing people with access to good quality healthcare. There are two minor injury hospitals; Sevenoaks Hospital and Edenbridge & District War Memorial Hospital. There is no major medical facility within the District for residents. Residents have to travel out of the District to Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Queen Mary's Hospital (Sidcup), Darent Valley Hospital (Dartford) and London hospitals.

It is important to ensure everyone has access to community services and facilities to reduce social isolation, social exclusion and to improve wellbeing. The District has a good coverage of leisure provision primarily through sports centres and community halls however there is some need to improve the overall quality.

Education provision within the District is varied with a mixture of state and private, primary and secondary provision. While there are 42 primary schools, there are only 3 secondary schools within the District with many children being sent outside the District for their secondary education. An annex for the Weald of Kent Grammar School is expected to be opened in Sevenoaks Town in September 2017.

The District has the lowest level of unemployment in Kent. The residents of the District are generally well qualified with only 8% of the population having no qualifications. There are a number of employment areas within the District. The majority of residents work in the West Kent area with more than 40% working within Greater London. The District also has a strong rural economy, but issues of connectivity and broadband are common.

The District has vibrant town centres with many independent shops and a good retail offering. There is strong competition from nearby areas including Bluewater and Tunbridge Wells. Some areas are in need of regeneration including Swanley Town Centre and New Ash Green Village Centre. Areas outside towns are served by local facilities within villages. These services are of great value to local communities and contribute to the District's rural economy.

## **Vision of Sevenoaks District in 2035**

**Sevenoaks District will strive to meet housing and employment needs without compromising the built and natural environment that is cherished by people who live, work and relax in the area.**

The Council will have worked with partners to ensure that growth has been accompanied by a wide range of supporting infrastructure, particularly for education, health, transport and open space. Sevenoaks District will continue to thrive as a desirable place where people choose to build their lives.

### **People and Housing**

The District will continue to be made up of distinct communities with strong local character. People will be safe and healthy and proud of the area in which they live and work. There will be a choice of accommodation to meet the needs of the residents of the District, including affordable housing and homes for older people.

The District will have helped the delivery of new homes in a sustainable way, by making effective use of urban land within existing settlements and other brownfield land, thereby continuing to protect the Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries will only have been altered if 'exceptional circumstances' have been found to apply.

### **Jobs and the Economy**

The potential of the District's accessible location along major transport routes will have been maximised to ensure a dynamic local economy, both urban and rural. The range of employment opportunities available in the District will have been maintained and strengthened, and town centres will be the focus for retail and leisure opportunities. Broadband connectivity will be widely established, particularly to support rural communities and the visitor economy will be thriving. The District will have benefitted from the delivery of new employment opportunities, especially in offices. Retail and leisure activity in the town centres will be thriving. Challenges associated with the M25 and infrastructure provision (particularly medical and education facilities) are recognised and the Council will work with partners to facilitate improvements in these areas.

### **Nature and the Environment**

All of the District's landscapes, habitats, historic and heritage assets, including the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, will continue to be conserved and enhanced in a way which protects local identity and distinctiveness. New development will be of high quality sustainable design responding to local character.

## Objectives for the Local Plan

The six objectives set out a way of achieving the Vision. They help to focus priorities for future work but also provide structure and easily understood headings against which progress can be monitored each year.

The objectives for the Local Plan come from the key issues which have been derived from evidence gathering and other plans and strategies. These include the Council’s Corporate Plan, the Community Plan, the current adopted Core Strategy the Sustainability Objectives that will accompany the new Local Plan together with the Council’s newly emerging strategies and priorities for housing, economic development and leisure.

The objectives are also mindful of changing Government priorities around areas such as health, economic development, technology and infrastructure.

The following chart explains how the rest of this section is structured, covering topics related to the six key objectives:

Objective	Addressed within the following sections:
<b>1. Promote housing choice for all</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing need</li> <li>• Housing supply</li> <li>• Affordable Housing, incl. older people</li> <li>• Housing mix, size, type, and density</li> <li>• Gypsies and travellers</li> </ul>
<b>2. Promote well designed, safe places and safeguard and enhance the District’s distinctive high quality natural and built environments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Belt</li> <li>• Natural environment and Landscape</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Ecology</li> <li>• Design, Heritage and Conservation</li> </ul>
<b>3. Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs by use class</li> <li>• Employment land supply</li> <li>• Measures to support skills improvement</li> <li>• Rural and visitor economy</li> </ul>
<b>4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure priorities, particularly transport, health, education &amp; broadband</li> <li>• Retail provision</li> <li>• Town centre leisure</li> </ul>
<b>5. Promote healthy living opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Air quality</li> <li>• Leisure</li> <li>• Open Space and Recreation</li> </ul>
<b>6. Promote a greener future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change mitigation and adaptation</li> <li>• Water usage and Flood risk</li> <li>• Technological advancements</li> </ul>

## Strategic Approach

To be effective the Local Plan will need a strategy developed from options that explore how best to meet identified development needs. The key issues for Sevenoaks District have been identified above. **The headline needs are: 12,400 houses, 11.6ha employment land, 32,000m<sup>2</sup> retail floorspace.** A change in the level of provision in any of these will impact on the level of other needs. In broad terms less housing is likely to mean less need for employment or retail.

In Sevenoaks District options are heavily constrained by Green Belt and environmental constraints. 'Protect the Green Belt' is a corporate priority of the Council and it reflects both an expression of local concern and is a position that continues to be upheld by Government through the NPPF. Green Belt boundaries can only be amended in exceptional circumstances. Meeting housing or wider development needs does not in its own right constitute exceptional circumstances; the overriding requirement is to ensure that development is sustainable. A 2016 study assessing the District's Green Belt finds that all areas continue to perform against at least one of the five purposes of Green Belt making its continued designation appropriate unless exceptional circumstances are clearly identified.

It is the meeting of housing needs that provides the greatest challenge in terms of finding suitable land. The unconstrained annual requirement of 620 houses per annum is nearly four times as high as the current target of 165 houses per annum in the Core Strategy (which was established at a regional level and sought to limit development in more constrained areas).

Sevenoaks District Council seeks to maximise supply for meeting identified housing needs without encroaching into the Green Belt. This initial starting point has the potential to provide for about 5,000 new homes over 20 years and is advanced as the essential building blocks for new Local Plan strategy. A dual approach is then recommended for exploring how remaining housing need might be met. Firstly options are identified for within Sevenoaks District and this is detailed later in this document. The District Council's preferred option is to only consider further potential for the sustainable development of 'brownfield' sites in the Green Belt (see glossary for definition being used) and the potential inclusion of larger scale examples of exceptional circumstances which offer convincing cases of substantial community benefit alongside well-developed place-making opportunity. Secondly discussions already taking place under the Duty to Co-operate will be continued and escalated. Clearly there will be a balance between how much can be achieved from options within Sevenoaks District and what might be achieved elsewhere through the Duty to Cooperate.

Meeting development needs, particularly housing needs, within a constrained environment will be one defining factor in the ultimate strategy finally agreed for the District. Just as importantly, in the view of the District Council, is the need to place a high value on the varied and distinctive places and communities that make up Sevenoaks District. With this in mind, the District has been divided into six 'place-making areas' each containing Parishes with similar characteristics and geography. These have been used in gaining local representative views as part of emerging work through consultation and workshop events. Grouping Parishes in this way will help allow for local differences in character to be reflected in policy as the Local Plan progresses.

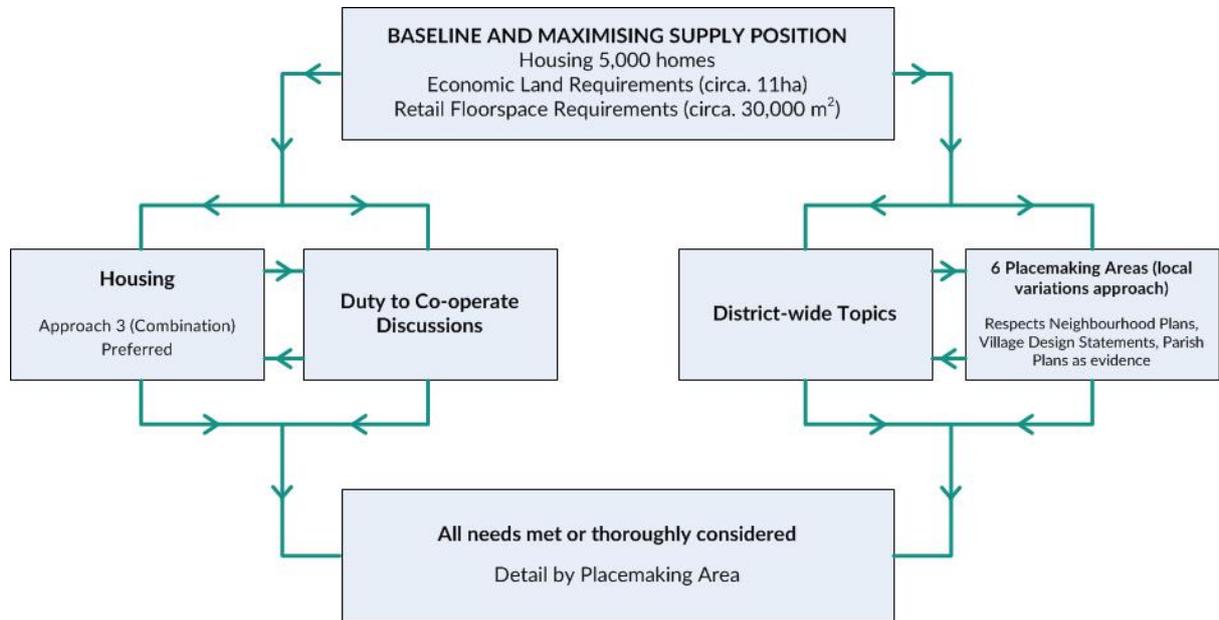
## Local Plan Strategic Approach

Quantitative aspects:

Qualitative aspects:

Needs, land supply and allocations

Distinctive places and development quality



Note: Housing supply includes Baseline and Maximising Supply (5000) plus approach 3 - Brownfield Land in the Green Belt (1500) and Exceptional Circumstances cases (TBC)

## **Objective 1. Promote housing choice for all**

### **The Need for New Housing**

The provision of new housing, both market and affordable, is a key priority and pressure for the District. Demand for new housing is rising as statistics show that the population is projected to increase by 17% over the plan period 2015-35, equating to a 20% rise in households as household sizes become smaller. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies that 12,400 new homes are required over the plan period (620 per year) in order to meet the housing needs of the District during the plan period.

The Council is required by Government to investigate all reasonable alternatives to identify land for new homes to meet the identified need. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2017 identifies a number of sites that are suitable and available for development in the Local Plan period and which could contribute towards meeting the District's housing need.

Historically the Council has relied on developing the existing built up areas of Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge, with smaller scale development in some of the smaller settlements. However given the increased demand for housing, it is not possible to accommodate all need on these sites.

Recent consultation with community representatives via place-making workshops showed strong support for the protection of the Green Belt and a preference to develop brownfield land. Whilst it is unlikely that the identified housing need will be met within existing settlements and on brownfield sites alone, the Council continues to explore all brownfield options.

The Local Plan must be positive in planning for new homes to increase supply and some difficult choices will need to be made in seeking the right balance between providing new homes, protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting the urban and rural economies. It is vital that new development makes the most efficient use of land in sustainable locations whilst ensuring that new development is designed to the highest quality.

### **Development Choices for Housing**

The Council has identified five different approaches to try and accommodate the identified housing need. It should be noted that not all of these approaches deliver the required level of housing, but they are incremental as different elements are layered up. The current baseline situation and maximising

the supply in existing settlements are unlikely to be a realistic approach for future delivery in themselves, but they provide the building blocks upon which the delivery strategy can be based. The settlement hierarchy, which assesses settlements based on their population, facilities and services has informed these options.

In summary:

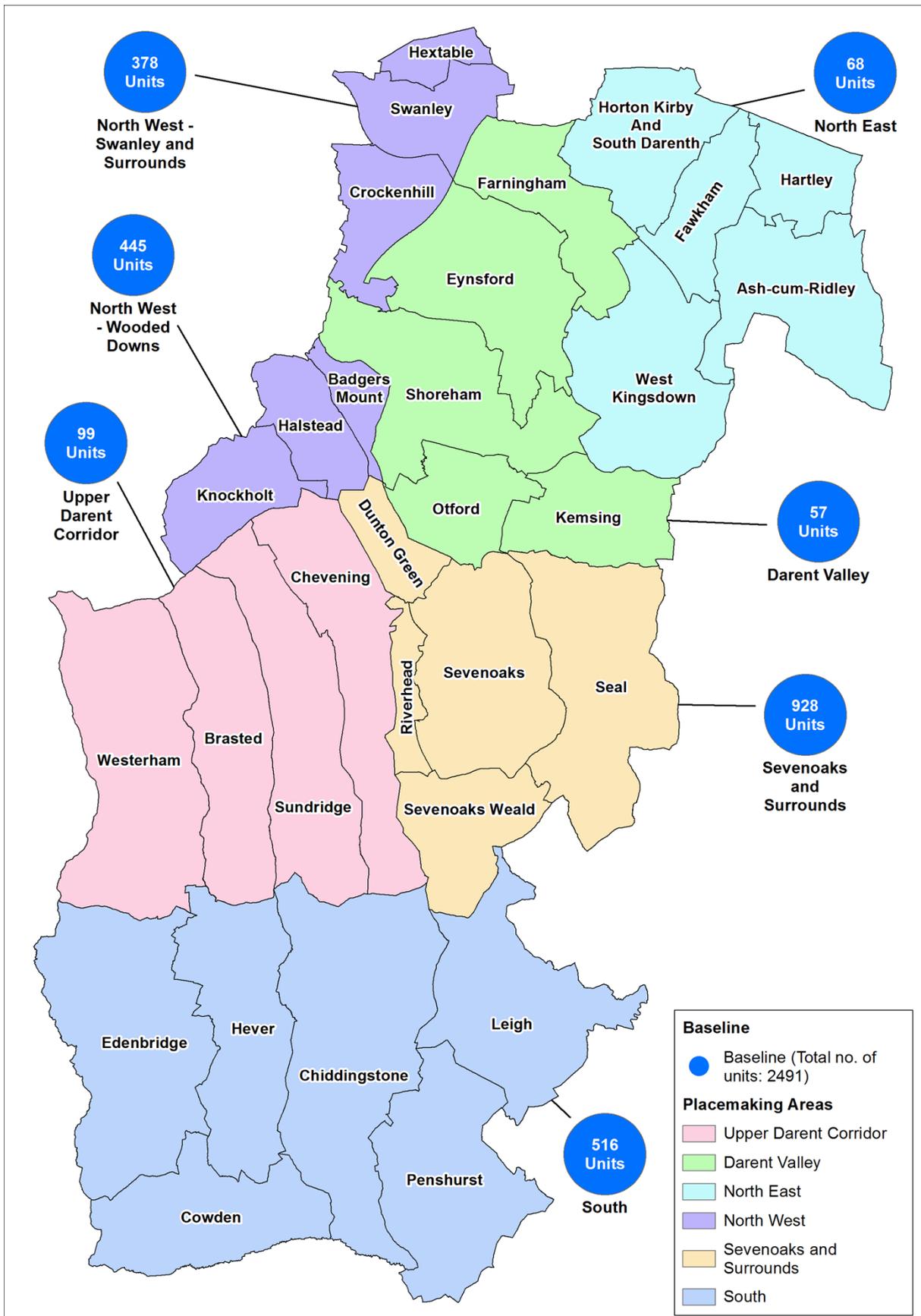
<b>Baseline</b>	considers the baseline commitments e.g. homes built 2015-17 and permissions issued
<b>Maximising Supply</b>	considers maximising the supply in existing built areas and from rural exceptions sites
<b>Approach 1</b>	considers the contribution from 'Brownfield' land in the Green Belt
<b>Approach 2</b>	considers the contribution of Green Belt land adjacent to higher-tier settlements, where 'Exceptional Circumstances' exist
<b>Approach 3</b>	considers a Combination of Brownfield land in the Green Belt and land where 'Exceptional Circumstances' exist
<b>Approach 4</b>	considers a large urban extension or new settlement
<b>Approach 5</b>	considers Green Belt close to transport hubs

**The Council's preferred option is Approach 3 (i.e. maximising growth in existing settlements and then considering a combination of brownfield land in the Green Belt and land where 'exceptional circumstances' cases can be substantiated) and believes this to be the most suitable option to deliver housing to meet the needs of the district.**

Based on evidence gathered to date the number of units currently estimated as being available to each of the approaches is summarised below:

Approach Number	Description	Approximate Units
<b>'Baseline'</b>	All 'committed' development since 2015: a) Built schemes (2015-17) b) Schemes with permission at 31-3-2017 c) Windfall estimate (46pa x15/ <i>not mapped</i> )	726 1765 690 <b>= 3,181</b>
<b>'Maximising supply'</b>	Baseline + Maximising Supply in existing built up areas: - Suitable urban sites submitted through call for sites - Sites allocated in the ADMP - Increasing densities on existing ADMP allocations - Sevenoaks Station airspace development - Regeneration of Swanley town - Rural exceptions sites ( <i>not mapped</i> )	3,181  344 415 117 100 650* 200 <b>= 5,007</b>
<b>1 'Brownfield'</b>	Baseline + Max Supply + delivering growth on suitable 'brownfield' land in the Green Belt (using 1,500 ensures some built in flexibility)	=1,661 <b>(1,500)</b>
<b>2 'Exceptional Circumstances' (see page 35)</b>	Baseline + Max Supply + delivering growth initiatives on Green Belt land where exceptional circumstances may exist: - Sevenoaks Town (Northern Masterplan) - Westerham (Relief Road) - Edenbridge (Health and Education Hub) - Swanley/Hextable	TBC TBC TBC TBC
<b>3 'Combination'</b>	<b>Baseline + Max Supply</b> <b>+ 1 'brownfield' approach</b> <b>+ 2 'exceptional circumstances' approach</b>	<b>5,000</b> <b>1,500</b> <b>TBC</b> <b>= 6,500 + TBC</b>
<b>4 'New Settlement'</b>	A large urban extension or new settlement	TBC
<b>5 'Transport Hubs'</b>	Green Belt close to 'Transport Hubs'	TBC

(\* The figure for regeneration of Swanley town is a provisional figure dependant on further studies in connection with the Swanley Master-vision)



## Maximising Supply

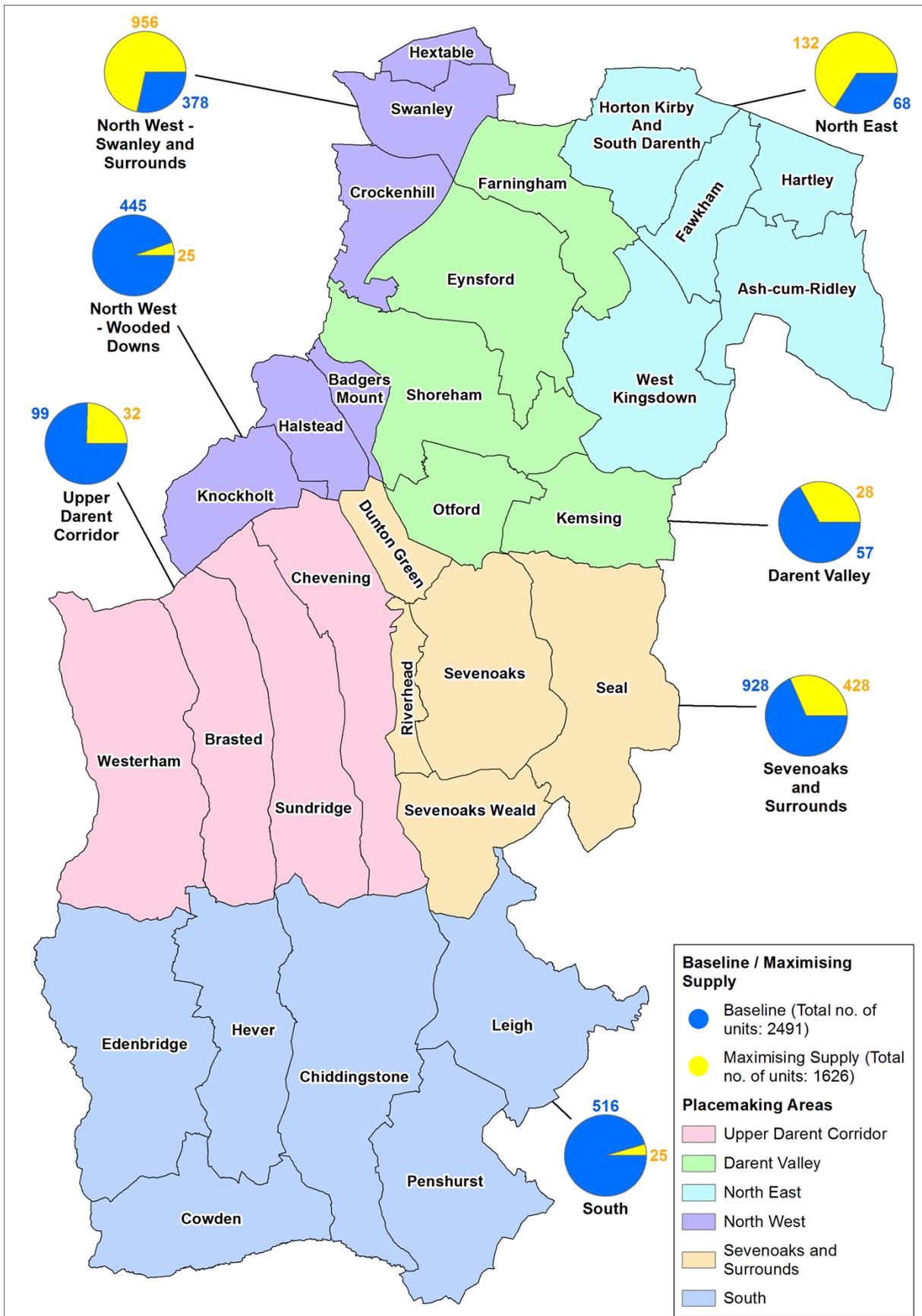
Description of Approach: Baseline plus maximising the supply within existing settlements within the District, including through increased density and urban regeneration. This approach also considers the contribution from rural housing exceptions sites, which form part of existing policy. The components of this approach are:

Components of Supply	No. of Homes
Baseline	3,181 (see above)
Suitable sites within identified settlement (submitted through the call for sites) which form Category One of the SHELAA <a href="http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s31158/09%20Appendix%20a%20-%20Category%201%20sites%20combined.pdf">http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/documents/s31158/09%20Appendix%20a%20-%20Category%201%20sites%20combined.pdf</a>	344
Site allocations in ADMP (which have not yet been implemented)	415
Increased densities on existing ADMP allocations (not yet implemented)	117
Sevenoaks Station airspace development, building above existing station land	100
Regeneration of Swanley town (provisional figure dependant on further studies in connection with the Swanley Master-vision)	650
Rural exceptions sites	200
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,007</b>

### **Total for Maximising Supply: approx. 5,000 homes**

The aim of this approach is to focus development in and maximise the potential of existing built areas, which will help to protect wider Green Belt land within the District. This includes suitable land submitted via the call for sites that falls within existing settlements, increased densities on existing sites allocated for housing, building above the area around Sevenoaks train station and focusing on the potential of land within the settlement of Swanley, particularly around the town centre.

In addition, this approach considers small-scale development on the edge of lower-tier settlements and villages to support the rural economy. This would be predominantly to provide affordable housing and homes suitable for older people, for those with a local connection who are currently unable to find suitable housing (e.g. rural housing exceptions sites). There is also a recognition that small-scale development will help support rural businesses and services, such as village shops, pubs and schools. This approach would provide a small number of homes in areas where supply might otherwise be limited. There are 25 eligible parishes and rural exceptions sites usually consist of about 10 units; therefore it is estimated that this approach could yield approximately 200 units.



## Approach 1 – ‘Brownfield’

Description of Approach: (Baseline plus Maximising Supply) plus delivering growth on suitable ‘brownfield’ Green Belt land. This approach considers the contribution of brownfield land in the District, in accordance with existing national policy.

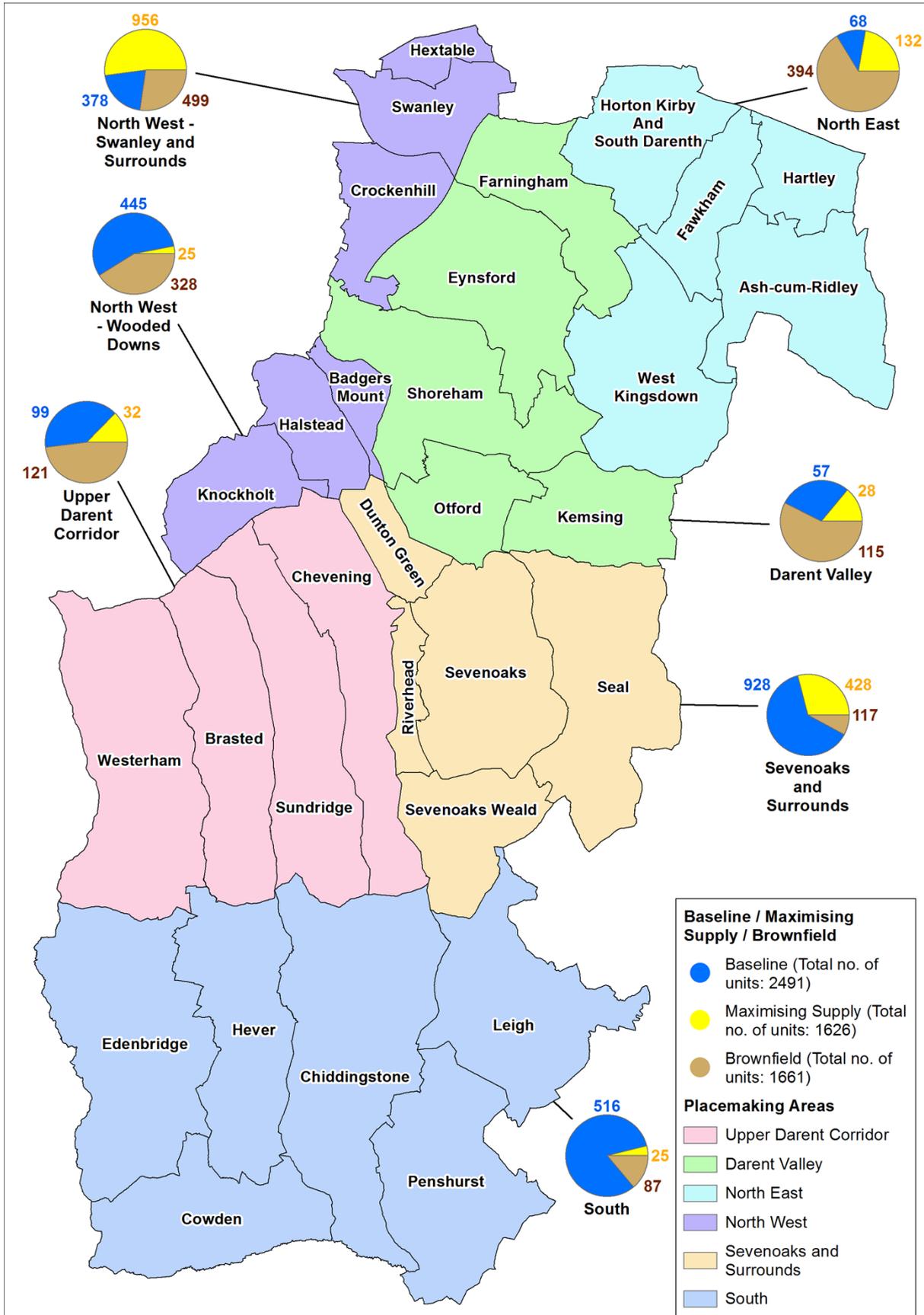
Brownfield Land by Place-making area	No. of Homes
Baseline & Maximising Supply	5,000 (see above)
South (incl. Edenbridge)	87
Upper Darent Corridor (incl. Westerham)	121
Sevenoaks and surrounds	117
Darent Valley	115
North West	
- Swanley and Surrounds	499
- Wooded Downs	328
North East	394
Total:	5000+1661 = 6661

**Total for ‘Brownfield’: approx. 6,500 homes**

In addition to the call for sites process, where landowners across the District were asked to submit land that might be suitable for development, the Council has contacted every Town and Parish Council to understand if there are other brownfield sites in their areas which may be suitable. This combined process has yielded sites which could accommodate approximately 1500 units on suitable brownfield land in the Green Belt (see SHELAA report Category 2 and 3 sites <http://cds.sevenoaks.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=8418#mgDocuments>). In addition, to assist in the further identification and consideration of brownfield land, the Council is establishing a brownfield land register later in 2017.

Brownfield or ‘Previously Developed Land’ (PDL) is defined in national policy (NPPF) as land ‘*which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure*’. The NPPF then lists a number of exclusions such as land that has been used for agriculture and forestry, minerals and waste workings. However, for the purposes of the identification of potential land in this consultation, ‘brownfield’ has been defined in the widest sense i.e. land that has been previously developed (is no longer a green field), without considering the exclusions outlined in the NPPF. Once the Local Plan is further developed, consideration will be given as to whether the exclusions set out in the NPPF are relevant for the development of the strategy.

A recent judgement (Dartford BC v Secretary of State) has considered whether private residential gardens are previously developed land. It is clear (from the NPPF and the judgement) that garden ‘land in built up areas’ is not previously developed land, but outside built up areas, garden-land may be considered previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land. The term ‘built up area’ is not specifically defined, but this could relate to settlement boundaries. The Council will carefully monitor this potential area of supply.



## Approach 2 – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

Description of Approach: (Baseline plus Maximising Supply) plus contribution of Green Belt land adjacent to higher-tier settlements, where ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ cases may exist.

Components of Supply	No. of Homes
Baseline & Maximising Supply	5000 (see above)
North of Sevenoaks Town (Quarry)	TBC
North of Westerham (Relief-Road)	TBC
Edenbridge (Health and Education Hub)	TBC
Swanley and Hextable	TBC
Total:	

**Total for ‘Exceptional Circumstances’: TBC**

Officers are monitoring a number of different initiatives in relation to the top tier settlements within the District which may eventually have the potential to provide exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release. Although the NPPF does not define exceptional circumstances, this Local Plan will seek to interpret national policy in order to provide clearer guidance. For example exceptional circumstances may occur where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt. The current initiatives are:

**Sevenoaks (town) Northern Masterplan** – led by Sevenoaks Town Council, this masterplan has been subject to recent public consultation in May/June 2017. It focuses on community infrastructure and facilities at Bat and Ball in addition to housing and employment and could provide approximately 800 new homes on and around the quarry site to the north of Sevenoaks within the Local Plan period. The masterplan will feed into the Neighbourhood Development Plan and could be appropriately reflected in the emerging Local Plan.

**Westerham** – ‘Which Way Westerham’ proposals are being progressed by the Squerryes estate, which include a relief road to the north-west of the settlement, approximately 600 new homes and environmental improvements. The Squerryes team have recently undertaken local community engagement in May 2017 and submitted supporting information to the District Council which will be made available during the consultation.

**Edenbridge** –there is a Neighbourhood Plan process ongoing although it is not currently considering an exceptional circumstance case. Provision of new health and post-11 education hub is likely to be important if any case were to be made.

**Swanley and Hextable** – Following the February 2017 Cabinet decision to no longer investigate potential for a garden village to the east of Swanley, the focus is now on maximising the supply within the existing settlement boundary, including a consideration of increased density on accessible town-centre sites and potential for regeneration of residential estates. Work on the Hextable Neighbourhood Plan is now continuing and the Local Plan will consider any exceptional circumstance cases arising through this work.

## Approach 3 – ‘Combination’

Description of Approach: (Baseline plus Maximising Supply) plus combination of both ‘brownfield’ land and cases where ‘exceptional circumstances’ may exist

Components of Supply	No. of Homes
Baseline & Maximising Supply	5000 (see above)
‘Brownfield’ land in the Green Belt	1500 (see above)
‘Exceptional circumstances’ cases	TBC
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5000+1500= 6500</b>

**Total for ‘combination’: 6,500 homes**

**The combination approach represents the District Council’s preferred approach to meeting housing need as part of the wider Local Plan strategy.**

This approach is formed of a combination of all of the above approaches.

#### **Approach 4 - ‘New Settlement’**

Description of Approach: (Combination) plus a large urban extension or new settlement.

Focussing growth on one (or more) area may enable supporting infrastructure to be provided. During 2016 the District Council consulted on the option of a Swanley Garden Village for 3,000 new homes as part of the Swanley Master Vision. After giving fair consideration to consultation responses received, the District Council has resolved not to promote a garden village as part of the regeneration options for Swanley and will instead focus on options that do not entail Green Belt release. More recently, substantial areas of land that could accommodate new settlements or larger scale development have been submitted to the District Council under the call for sites process. These sites do not form part of the District Council’s preferred strategy, as they are in the Green Belt but they will be assessed in the same way as other sites received under the call for sites process. They will form part of an updated SHELAA in 2018.

#### **Approach 5 - ‘Transport Hubs’**

Description of Approach: (Combination) plus Green Belt land close to ‘Transport Hubs’.

Further clarification is sought from Government on this emerging requirement in relation to the Housing White Paper (2017) consultation, which suggests that ‘when carrying out Green Belt review, local planning authorities should look first at using any Green Belt land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs’. It is suggested that this is a reference to public transport hubs, but this approach will be looked at in more detail once the Government provides additional clarification as to what they consider constitutes ‘transport hubs’ and also as further local evidence is gathered.

### **The Need for Affordable Homes**

#### **Definitions:**

<p><b>Social rented housing</b></p>	<p>Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register).</p> <p>Rents are set through the national rent regime but are generally around 50-60% of market rents.</p>
<p><b>Affordable rented housing</b></p>	<p>Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register).</p> <p>Rents and service charges can be set at up to 80% of market rents, but tend to be capped at a lower level to ensure housing benefit can cover all eligible costs.</p>
<p><b>Intermediate housing</b></p>	<p>Owned by a housing association which is sold or rented to eligible households at a cost above social rent levels but below market levels. Applicants must be registered under Help to Buy and can have a household income of up to £80,000 per year. Priority is given to military personnel and, for a limited period, to those with a local connection to the District. Intermediate housing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared equity housing – purchasers typically buy a 75-80% share of the property with no rent payable to the housing association on the remainder.</li> <li>• Shared ownership housing – purchasers buy a 25-75% share of the property and pay a subsidised rent to the housing association on the remainder.</li> <li>• Intermediate rented housing – generally let on Assured Shorthold tenancies, the rent plus service charge is no more than 80% of the market rent.</li> </ul>

Affordability is a key issue in Sevenoaks District given the high house prices relative to incomes. In 2016 the median house price in the District was £392,500, the highest in Kent, and house prices were 13 times annual earnings, compared with 6.5 times across England. This means that many people are unable to afford their own home in the District on the open market and therefore require assistance. High housing costs have led to an increase in the number of households privately renting and the out-migration of younger and economically-active groups in search of cheaper housing elsewhere, including essential workers.

For as long as house prices continue to increase, more of the District’s housing stock becomes unaffordable to an increasing number of people. Building new affordable homes will help ensure that those requiring assistance receive it, and the increase in the supply of affordable housing will help to slow down the rise in housing costs, allowing those who aspire to own their own home the ability to get onto the housing ladder.

The evidence set out in the SHMA identifies a net annual need of 422 households that require financial support to meet their housing needs, and recommends that 35% affordable housing should be delivered on market-led housing schemes. Current Core Strategy policy requires 40% affordable

housing to be delivered on schemes of 15 or more units, so this would constitute an adjustment to current policy. Of the 35% affordable housing, it is recommended that 76% should be social/affordable rented and 24% intermediate, in order to meet the affordable housing needs of the District. The Local Housing Needs Study 2017 also identifies that many people aspire to own their own homes, and given this local evidence the Local Plan could take a flexible approach in setting requirements for the split of affordable housing provision. The recommendations in relation to affordable housing, by place-making area, are set out below:

**Recommendations from Local Housing Needs Study:**

	Affordable Housing % by area	AH 1-2 bed	AH 3+ bed	AH Older persons
<b>Sevenoaks and surrounds</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>North East</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>South</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Upper Darent Corridor</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Darent Valley</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>

The Local Plan will need to adopt a flexible approach, allowing for off-site contributions where on-site provision is not viable, or where more can be achieved elsewhere.

There is a high proportion of small sites in the District, particularly within the rural areas. A recent change to Government policy now prevents the Council from seeking affordable housing on developments of 10 units or less which means that it is more difficult to provide affordable housing in rural areas. However where local evidence for delivery on smaller sites is sufficiently strong there may be scope through the Local Plan to develop a case for a locally specific policy that enables contributions from smaller development sites. The Local Housing Needs Study 2017 looks specifically at affordable housing needs by place-making area and will help to identify where rural exception schemes may be required.

Recent consultation with community representatives showed serious concern about the affordability of homes in the District. There was general consensus that more affordable homes need to be provided, but also that there needs to be a greater choice of product in order to meet the wide-ranging needs of the community.

The Council is keen to expand its affordable housing offer to include innovative solutions to help solve the housing crisis in the District. The Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy 2017 explores the various types and tenures of affordable housing that could be delivered in the District, including but not limited to:

- Modular housing
- Micro-homes
- Starter homes
- Making better use of amenity land
- Leasehold model for older people – a model that allows qualifying buyers to purchase homes at around 80% open market value with the remaining share retained by another organisation/public body, which would allow the homes to remain affordable in perpetuity
- Delivering small schemes in rural gardens (as per the Dartford judgement).

The Local Plan can include specific requirements for these types of affordable homes providing there is evidence to support demand.

## Affordable Housing in Rural Areas

Opportunities to provide affordable housing and homes suitable for older people in rural areas of the District are much more limited than in the urban areas because of the Green Belt. However, rural exception housing provides affordable homes to meet local housing needs in rural areas as an exception to other Local Plan policies. Given the extensive network of rural settlements in the District, rural exception housing is a really important part of the affordable housing stock. The recently completed Local Housing Needs Study 2017 is showing an increased level of demand for affordable housing in rural areas.

In order to be eligible for rural exception housing households must have a local connection to the parish through living in that area, having family or working there. Once built, rural exception housing remains part of the affordable stock in perpetuity (125 years). However, with the planned extension of the Government's 'right to buy' to housing owned by housing associations, there are concerns that this may not be the case in the future. The Council will continue to work with its housing providers in order to identify a way forward.

The Council has a programme of rural housing needs surveys across the District, in partnership with Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK). Where surveys show evidence of need the Council will work with the parish council, local community and housing providers to identify and assist in delivering suitable sites.

Recent consultation with community representatives showed concern about the often difficult and contentious process of finding suitable sites which can delay the deliverability of much needed local needs affordable housing. Landowners can sometimes be unwilling to release land due to hope value for market housing or due to concerns within the local community.

## Providing the Right Mix of Homes

It is important that the Local Plan considers a mix of homes of different sizes and types to meet the needs of the current and future population to help create inclusive mixed communities. In particular the Local Plan is required to consider homes for families, older people, people with a range of disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes.

### Housing size

Three, four and five bedroom homes make up nearly 70% of the District's housing stock so it is important that the Local Plan makes provision for smaller units, particularly given the growing older population who may wish to downsize in the future. Additional smaller units should also increase the proportion of lower cost housing available to buy so that first time buyers have greater choice in the market.

Based on the existing housing stock and taking into account how the population is expected to grow and change over the plan period, the below table sets out the identified need for different sizes of homes for both market and affordable housing. There is a strong focus towards the provision of new starter family housing and housing for those wishing to downsize, particularly 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Market	5-10%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%
Affordable	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%
All dwellings	15-20%	25-30%	35-40%	15-20%

### Housing type

## Older people and people with disabilities

20% of the District's population is aged over 65 and this number is expected to grow substantially, to 25%, over the plan period. Particularly strong growth is expected in those aged over 75 driven by improving life expectancy.

A growing older population and increasing longevity is expected to result in a substantial growth in people with dementia and mobility problems, and some of these households will require adaptations to properties to meet their changing needs whilst others may require more specialist accommodation or support, including lifetime and wheelchair-accessible homes. There is a clear need for a higher proportion of homes which are capable of accommodating people's changing needs.

The Council is keen to provide choices for older people who may be thinking of moving, or who may need to move, as their current home no longer supports their needs. Options to consider include, but are not limited to:

- Extra care and specialist dementia care housing
- Downsizing / rightsizing
- Lifetime homes
- Wheelchair-accessible homes
- Granny pods
- Co-location of the elderly and young

In finding suitable sites for housing for older people, they must be in a sustainable location close to services and facilities, and to transport links.

## People wishing to build their own homes

The Government is keen to encourage people to build their own homes as a mainstream housing option and whilst it is currently a small sector of the housing market, it does have potential to grow. In order to identify the demand for custom and self build the Council has set up a 'Self Build Register'. To date 31 individuals have registered.

Government guidance on how custom and self build should be provided is not yet clear, but it is expected that plots could be provided on both small and large sites. There is also an opportunity for a number of custom and self build plots to be provided as affordable housing.

## **Housing Density**

Housing density describes the number of homes developed within a particular site area and it is calculated by the number of dwellings per hectare (DPH). Increasing the density of development in sustainable locations can help to ensure that land is used in the most efficient way, and ultimately that less land overall is used for development. In Sevenoaks District, where the Green Belt covers 93% of the area, **maximising densities in the main towns and villages will help to ensure that the Green Belt continues to be protected.**

Recent consultation with community representatives showed strong support for the protection of the Green Belt and a preference to develop within existing settlement boundaries and on brownfield land at increased densities. High density developments are sometimes associated with large tower blocks. However, through careful and high quality design, to be required through the Local Plan, this is not the case. Higher densities will not be appropriate in all locations, and judgements will need to be made in order to achieve the right balance between providing new homes and respecting and enhancing the character of the area.

Historically the Local Plan has required development to achieve a density of between 30 DPH at the edge of settlements and 75 DPH in town centres. Given the increased need for housing it is considered that densities could be increased to ensure that land is used in the most efficient way. Therefore a number of assumptions have been made in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in order to calculate the amount of land that is available and suitable for new housing in the District. It has been assumed that densities could increase as follows:

- Within and near to town centres and transport hubs – higher densities.
- Within settlements but outside of town centres – high densities.
- Edge of settlements and elsewhere – increased densities.

It is considered that these increases could be realistically achieved without negatively impacting on the character of an area. This approach is supported by the Government's direction of travel towards higher densities in the recently published Housing White Paper.

### **Homes for Gypsies and Travellers**

The Council must plan for the housing needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the District in the same way as for the settled community. There are currently three public sites within the District at Barnfield Park, Ash; Hever Road, Edenbridge and Polhill, Dunton Green. In addition there are also 41 pitches on private sites with permanent permission and a further 6 pitches with temporary permission (as at 28/4/2017). The recently completed Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identifies a need for an additional 51 permanent pitches over the plan period 2015-35. There is no need identified for Travelling Show People or transit sites. This evidence document was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in April 2017 as the basis for the Council's Gypsy and Traveller policy. The Local Plan needs to identify suitable places for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet the future need. In place-making workshops participants expressed the need to ensure that all aspects of the local community are integrated including Gypsy and Travellers. In order to make a robust and thorough assessment of all available land to meet the need for new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches, the Council is interested in any land which could be used for this purpose. Submissions can be made through the "Call for Sites" process and will be considered alongside those submitted previously.

### **Objective 2. Promote well designed, safe places and safeguard and enhance the District's distinctive high quality natural and built environments**

#### **Green Belt**

Sevenoaks lies on the edge of Greater London and 93% of the District is classified as Metropolitan Green Belt. It is a cherished resource that has a wide-range of benefits for health and recreation, the natural environment and agriculture. It serves a number of purposes, including stopping settlements merging and protecting the countryside and providing the setting to historic towns. The only areas that are not within the Green Belt are the towns and larger villages within the District. The Council has undertaken a comprehensive District-wide review of the performance of the Green Belt against the five purposes of Green Belt (as set out at para. 80 of the NPPF). The evidence base report outlines that all the Green Belt in the District is performing against at least one of the five purposes to a greater or lesser extent, and the vast majority of the Green Belt is performing strongly. It identifies 31 areas where it is considered that the Green Belt is performing weakly and could be suitable for further investigation, if required. However, the Council has taken the view that these areas are still meeting Green Belt purposes and the emphasis should therefore still remain on their protection unless exceptional circumstances become apparent.

Green Belt policy is largely defined at the national level (within Chapter 9 of the NPPF). The Council's existing policy, within the ADMP, outlines a number of development management policies

largely related to extensions/conversions and replacements of buildings in the countryside. The Council has also adopted an SPD on the Green Belt. These policies will be reviewed to ensure that they are working as intended. The NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should only be amended in 'exceptional circumstances' and the recent Housing White Paper attempts to clarify what this means in practice; Councils should have examined fully all other reasonable options, including brownfield land, estate regeneration, underused and public sector land, optimising density and exploring whether other authorities can assist. Land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs should be considered first and this should be offset by compensatory improvements to the environmental quality/ accessibility of remaining Green Belt.

All the place-making workshop groups discussed the need to protect the Green Belt. A number of the groups discussed the potential to expand smaller hamlets in the Green Belt and that Green Belt could be considered 'a gift as well as an obstacle'.

### **Natural Environment and Landscape**

Sevenoaks District is an attractive place to live and work. The diverse landscape and strong historic features have contributed to the special and distinctive character of the District. 61% of the District lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 11% of the District is covered in irreplaceable Ancient Woodland (compared with the UK average of 2%).

The Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2016 provides a detailed review of the entire District including the AONBs. A key issue for the new Local Plan will be ensuring that development conserves and enhances landscape character through high quality design and layout.

Green infrastructure and natural environment features should be incorporated into new development schemes at the early stages of design in order to make the most of any existing opportunities and providing new provision where possible. This can include suitable landscaping and planting as well as more innovative solutions such as living walls and roofs, bird bricks and permeable paving. Trees, woodlands and hedgerows within both the urban and rural areas form an important part of the District's character and the setting of buildings and settlements. They are an integral part of the local character of an area and play an important role in cleaning the air we breathe.

Green infrastructure also has an important role to play in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Plants and trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen. They also act as a carbon sink, storing it in the soil and vegetation. They also have a key role to play in adapting to a changing climate, helping to prevent localised flooding by reducing surface water run off and providing floodwater reservoirs. Deciduous trees can help manage high temperatures by providing shading in the summer but still allowing heat and sunlight through in the winter.

Participants at place-making workshops stressed how greatly the green nature of District is valued amongst its residents. They expressed the importance of incorporating appropriate and natural landscaping into new developments as part of maintaining the local character and quality of the natural environment. Many stated that important views and woodland should be protected and were also keen to preserve "green corridors" between villages.

### **Rivers and Areas of Open Water**

The District has two major rivers and a number of bodies of open water. The River Darent flows from Westerham towards Otford and then north through the picturesque Darent Valley before entering

Dartford. The river can suffer from low flows but is also prone to flooding. The River Eden travels through the south of the District passing through Edenbridge, Hever, Chiddingstone and joins the River Medway near Penshurst and has also had flood events. The District also has a number of areas of open water, notably at Bough Beech Reservoir.

The rivers and areas of open water within the District are an important aspect of its character. They provide important habitats and provide recreational, educational and community opportunities. The Council work with the River Darent and Eden Catchment improvement groups to deliver projects which bring improvements to the Rivers and wider catchment in accordance with the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans.

### **Public Rights of Way and Walking Routes**

The District has a large network of Public Rights of Way (PROW). There are also four waymarked long distance walking routes crossing the District: The North Downs, the Darent Valley Path, the Greensands Way and the Eden Valley Path. Kent County Council manages the network of public rights of way and the Explore Kent website collates the many circular walks within the District. It will be important to maintain and improve the pedestrian links in all parts of the District to allow safe movement of the residents to services and facilities. New developments will provide an opportunity to add additional links with and to the existing PROW network. The maintenance, signposting and safety of existing routes can also be improved to encourage residents to walk rather than use the car following Sport England active design principles.

Participants in the place-making workshops stated that they wished to see improvements to pedestrian links to include enhanced footpath signage, better links to railway stations and more accessible paths. There was also the desire to see new walking routes established such as a route along the River Darent between Westerham and Brasted as an extension to the Darent Valley Path.

### **Biodiversity and Ecology**

Sevenoaks District is rich in biodiversity and wildlife due to its range of different habitats and protected areas. There are 17 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) of national importance for their biological or geological interest, 61 Local Wildlife Sites important for the conservation of wildlife and the District's extensive ancient woodland is a particularly rich source of biodiversity. There are also a number of Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves and Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves.

There are no International or European designated sites present wholly or partly within the District. However, there are four such sites within 10km of the boundary of the District, the most significant of which is Ashdown Forest which lies approximately 6km south of the District boundary. The District's nearest settlement to Ashdown Forest is Edenbridge, which is approximately 12km from the site and a recent survey has found that less than 1% of visitors to the Forest are from within Sevenoaks District. The Local Plan will be accompanied by a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA) to ascertain whether there is an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site(s), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The Council will continue to work proactively with Natural England, neighbouring authorities and any other relevant bodies to understand the impact of the Local Plan on the Ashdown Forest and, if necessary, develop policies for mitigation.

Biodiversity is not confined to designated and protected areas but is found throughout rural and urban areas. It is important to conserve existing biodiversity and seek increases through creation of habitats, either large scale such as wildflower meadows and flood prevention schemes, or through small scale solutions, such as new planting or bat and bird boxes. It is also crucial to provide means by which wildlife can move and thrive. Interconnected habitats allow wildlife to move freely in accordance with natural patterns and changing climates. The Kent Biodiversity Strategy includes the designation of “Biodiversity Opportunity Areas” across Kent approved by the Kent Nature Partnership. There are 4 such areas within Sevenoaks District. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) indicate where the greatest gains can be made from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation.

Access to the natural environment and areas of high biodiversity value can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and can help reduce social and health inequalities. The Council is supportive of projects such as community led habitat management, health walks and wildlife/nature experiences.

A key issue will be to ensure new development does not lead to a net loss in biodiversity but instead enhances biodiversity value through improvements of existing habitats and creation of new ones, as appropriate to the scheme. It is likely that additional evidence will need to be produced in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Kent Nature Partnership, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust in order to further explore the biodiversity and natural capital value of the District.

The participants at the place-making workshops considered it important to protect existing biodiversity areas and habitats including woodlands, hedgerows, wildlife reserves and designated areas.

## **Design**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the benefits of good design and considers that it is a key aspect of sustainable development. Development should contribute to making better and more attractive places for people. The Council already has a number of adopted policies which encourage proposals to have a high quality design and that development responds to the scale, height and materials of the surrounding environment, as well as the topography and character of a site and also to protect amenity.

There is however a need to re-consider our policies and make it clear what aspects the developer should address when designing a scheme and to encourage design to be considered at an early stages. The Council intends to include a new policy in the Local Plan requiring applicants to set out how the following have been considered in every scheme:

- Character (inc. materials, site specific characteristics, density, layout etc.)
- Connections – (inc. public transport, pedestrian links and facilities)
- Working with site and context – (inc. views, existing features, surrounding areas)
- Landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage
- Well defined streets and spaces (inc. car parking, secure by design, active design)
- Public and private spaces
- External storage, utilities and green technologies (e.g. broadband, cycle storage, renewables)
- Relevant design or character supplementary planning documents

A Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to assist applicants in meeting the requirements of the policy based on the Building for Life 12 design assessments.

There also needs to be greater flexibility in some policies, particularly around density and height of development. This is because the NPPF allows for higher densities and taller buildings subject to good design. Higher density development within urban areas is considered to be preferable to developing in Green Belt locations.

In addition, to national and local planning policies there are also a number of design documents in place to assist in assessing the design of development:

- Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment (SPD) (April 2012)
- Landscape Character Assessment (January 2017)
- Residential Extensions SPD (May 2009)
- Kent Design Guide (Dec 2005)
- Village Design Statements and Parish Plans (various dates)
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019 and associated guidance
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019 and associated guidance
- Building for Life 12 (Jan 2015)

Some of these documents are quite general in the guidance they give and district coverage is patchy. There is therefore an opportunity both for more specific documents and for more documents where design guidance is currently absent. The Council work closely with Design South East and are considering the introduction of a Design Panel, whereby an independent panel of experts review proposed designs, to encourage higher quality design in the larger and more sensitive developments.

The role of design in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures is increasingly important whether providing for renewable energies, incorporating passive solar design or through green infrastructure.

60% of the District is covered by the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the north and in the south by the High Weald AONB. These are nationally designated landscapes and the AONB management plans clearly lay out design guidelines and principles to ensure that any new development conserves, enhances and reflects the quality and character of these landscapes.

### **Heritage and Conservation**

Sevenoaks District has an abundance of heritage assets including 2,112 Listed Buildings, 42 designated Conservation Areas, 17 designated Historic Parks and Gardens and 23 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The District also has a number of properties which have been recognised as non designated heritage assets through the Local List Supplementary Planning Document and also identified by officers through individual planning applications.

In addition to the built environment, the District also contains significant areas of ancient woodland, important trees and identified fieldscapes and patterns which are all considered as elements which contribute to the design and heritage of the District. Therefore clear policies need to be laid out for the protection and enhancement of all these assets.

Further heritage evidence is currently in preparation, in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. This will provide a review of the current evidence base for the historic environment of the district and identify key heritage themes to be addressed. The review will also identify any areas of additional research that will be required.

Place-making groups considered it important to protect heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas, historic estates and locally listed buildings. There was a keenness to encourage development that is compatible with its context and reflects the character of the area. Protection of the AONBs, key views, gaps between settlements, village greens, parkland, woodland and other natural features were all considered important.

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### Objective 3. Support a vibrant local economy both urban and rural

#### Economic Land and the Rural Economy

Sevenoaks District has a vibrant and varied economy with a high level of employment, an economically active population and a skilled workforce. The majority of the District's residents work and live in the West Kent area (Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling Local Authorities) and many work from home. In addition more than 40% of the District's resident workforce work within the Greater London Local Authorities areas.

The District has 30 large employment sites (over 0.2ha) which provide 89.1ha land for office accommodation, warehousing and industrial uses. A further 4.1ha is allocated for employment use at Broom Hill in Swanley. These employment sites are currently allocated and protected for employment use and are all performing well. There are also many smaller employment sites, both urban and rural, which have minimum protection.

The Council is developing a new Economic Development Strategy which will focus on five key priorities – enterprise, the visitor economy, growth and investment, infrastructure and skills. Certain elements of this strategy will have spatial implications which will be reflected in the new Local Plan. For example, support for the rural economy has already been highlighted in the Council's Economic Needs Study evidence base document as well as by the representatives from the local communities; both stated that rural based employment development should continue to be encouraged through the support of suitable projects (including through the West Kent Leader programme), protection of existing uses and improvements to supporting infrastructure such as broadband. The District has a varied broadband provision, some areas have excellent connections and speeds and others are more challenging. The Council continues to work with partners and providers to ensure an increase in both the provision and speed of broadband.

The rural economy is a vital aspect of the wider economy, as many jobs are provided in rural areas often on smaller sites. There is an opportunity to support the rural economy through increased flexibility. The Council will be looking to support the re-use and redevelopment of existing buildings and farm complexes which provide an economic benefit, subject to other planning considerations.

**Table X Needs across relevant use classes identified by the Economic Needs Study 2016.**

	Total Need	Offices B1a/b need	Industrial B1c/B2	Warehousing and Storage B8
Land needed up to 2035	11.6ha*	7.2ha	1.1ha	3.3ha
* does not include land already allocated. 11.6ha is approximately equivalent to the allocated land at the Vestry Estate in Sevenoaks, see allocation EMP1(a) in the ADMP.				

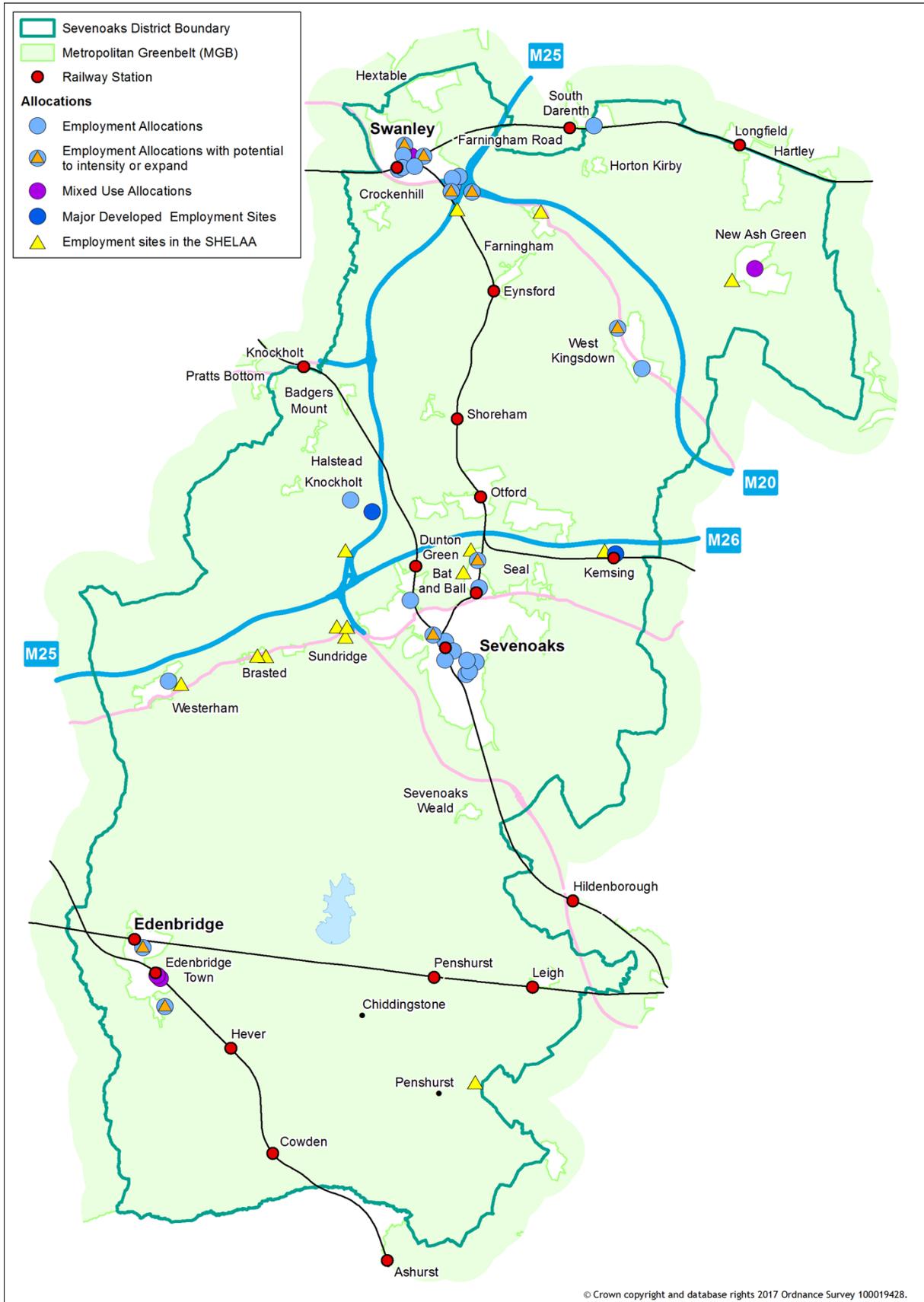


Figure X: Allocated land for employment use and land submitted for employment use

The District's economy is expected to grow over the next 20 years and new land and floorspace for employment uses will need to be identified to ensure that Sevenoaks District remains economically competitive and continues to meet the needs of the residents and workforce. Table X sets out needs across relevant use classes identified by the Economic Needs Study 2016. This need is in addition to any land currently used for employment or allocated for employment within the ADMP.

In 2013 the government first introduced a change to the permitted development rights for office accommodation to allow change of use and conversion to residential without the need for planning permission. Although this has yielded 185 new homes it has led to a substantial loss in office floorspace within the District. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, the District has lost approximately 17,000 m<sup>2</sup> of office floorspace within 12 buildings in this way. A further 4900 m<sup>2</sup> could be lost from schemes yet to be implemented. This loss in office accommodation is reflected in the high proportion of office need identified by the Economic Needs Study (see table X). The Council can protect office provision from future conversion in this way by removing the permitted development rights through an Article 4 direction.

Existing employment allocations are protected from redevelopment through Core Strategy policy SP8. The policy states that sites 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 up to 2026. The Allocations and Development Management Plan gives further details as to what the Council will expect to be demonstrated. It has been suggested that the Council include a "redevelopment hierarchy" for allocated employment sites outlining the order in which the redevelopment of existing employment sites should be considered subject to marketing and suitable evidence with B use classes to be considered first. It will be up to applicants to demonstrate how the site is unsuitable for all non-residential uses which may provide jobs and employment opportunities before a wholly residential scheme will be considered.

Some existing employment sites are older and may no longer be fit for purpose in the longer term as business practices change. The Council will need to consider the replacement and redevelopment of existing sites where the quantity of employment provision is retained and or additional provision can be accommodated. This will include the replacement of older poorer quality units with modern premises.

The ADMP requires any redevelopment of non-allocated employment land for residential development to be subject to a minimum of 6 months marketing for business use not restricted to the existing use. Notwithstanding points made in the above paragraph, the Council are considering increasing this minimum period to 12 months to better reflect the importance of the smaller non-allocated sites in providing jobs for the local community. The District's economy relies on smaller businesses with approximately 91% of them having less than 10 employees. The increased time will also make the marketing more robust as it will take account of seasonal fluctuations in the employment market.

The Local Plan also has aspirations to regenerate some areas of the District which would benefit from improved housing, employment and services and facilities, details of these are included in the relevant placemaking area section. The redevelopment and regeneration of Swanley Town Centre and the Sevenoaks Northern area could create real economic benefits for the local area as well as the wider District.

It is also important to maximise the economic opportunities arising from the major developments across Kent. These include Ebbsfleet garden city to the north of the District, a potential Paramount theme park on the Swanscombe peninsula, the expansion of services at Bluewater and the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. The Economic Needs Study undertook a review of these emerging projects and determined that they were at too early a stage to accurately predict the impact they will have on the District's economy. However, as the Local Plan progresses account should be taken of these major projects and should identify opportunities in order to achieve an economic benefit.

The economic land need can be met through the identification of new sites for employment use in suitable locations, intensification of existing land to provide additional floorspace or through the extension of existing sites. It is likely that a combination of all these approaches will be used.

Participants at the place-making workshops all expressed the importance of a strong and vibrant economy. It was noted that the District has a number of small scale employment sites in rural areas such as old farmyards, converted buildings and former horticultural nurseries. It was also felt that the Local Plan should support rural businesses and jobs and support the improvement of broadband infrastructure.

### **The Visitor Economy**

The District is already a popular tourism destination due to the attractive environment, historic towns and villages, and nationally recognised historic estates. There are a number of key heritage assets in the District such as Knole House, Chartwell, Hever Castle, Penshurst Place, other national trust properties and parks and gardens which make tourists attracted to this area.

Tourism has the potential to have a significant impact on the economy and character of the District. The main issues are therefore the need to protect the existing tourism uses and accommodation, to encourage, where appropriate an increase in the amount and quality of tourist accommodation and facilities, as well as balancing this need against the priority to protect the rural district and its heritage and landscape.

National Planning Policy Framework supports building a strong and competitive economy, including the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in urban and rural areas. It also encourages sustainable tourism which benefits businesses and protects the countryside.

A Visitor Accommodation Study was carried out for the Council in September 2015. This reviews the type of supply of visitor accommodation in the District, trends in the markets and considers a number of opportunities for growth in such accommodation. In particular the study highlights that:

- The District is well placed to capitalise on the projected domestic short break and overseas tourist market.
- The projected population growth will drive a growth in weddings businesses and visits to friends and family.
- There is a growing demand for budget hotel accommodation.

Some key opportunities identified in the District include:

- The upgrading, development and expansion of existing hotels, spas, resorts and bed and breakfast accommodation.
- New hotel opportunities in Sevenoaks Town, Swanley, Fort Halstead and on golf courses.
- Encouragement of high quality pub accommodation and restaurants with rooms
- Country house wedding venues

- High quality holiday cottages and small holiday lodge complexes
- New touring caravans and camping sites and fishing lodges around fishing lakes
- Children's activity holiday centres.

Participants at place-making workshops supported encouragement of tourism as local rural areas want to promote their distinctive heritage and history and protect their cultural centres and pubs. There was recognition that improvements were needed in the following areas:

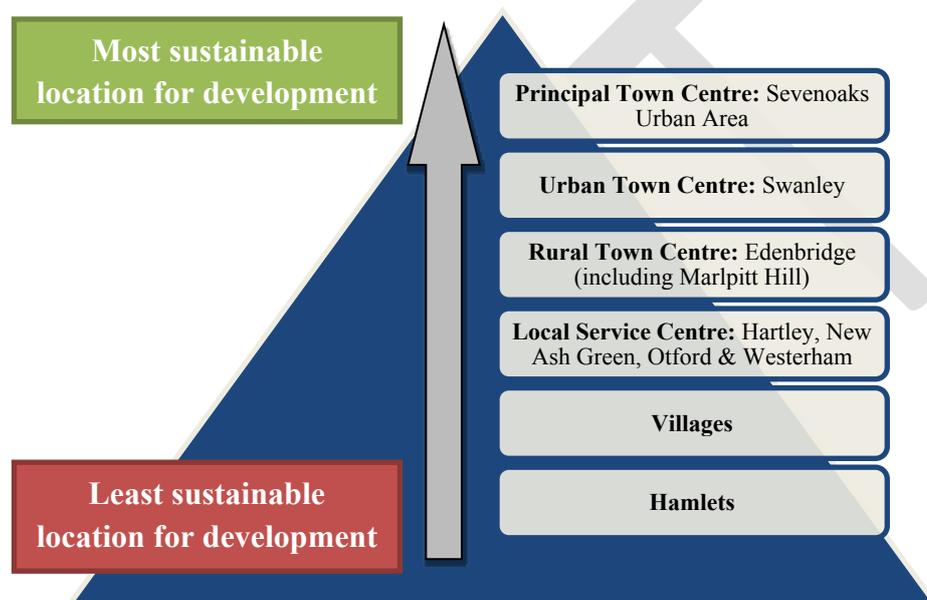
- Footpaths, river walks and create better signage.
- More bed spaces via new hotels and bed and breakfasts
- The need to protect and make heritage assets more attractive
- Better management of parking

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## Objective 4. Support lively communities with well performing town and village centres which provide a range of services, facilities and infrastructure

### Town Centres and Shopping

Sevenoaks District is a dynamic and diverse area with a range of settlements offering a mix of services and facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of the community. The District Settlement Hierarchy considers the sustainability of the District's settlements by documenting their provision of, for instance, shops, transport links, schools, GP practices, community facilities and other services and facilities. The Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy 2017 provides the details on each settlement classification.



There is perhaps a perception that town centres are currently in decline due to the strong growth of internet/"click & collect" shopping over recent years. Whilst this is a trend nationally, the 2016 Retail Study for Sevenoaks District found that district's town and village centres were performing well despite this trend. The district also faces competition from a number of established out-of-district shopping areas including Bluewater, Orpington, Oxted, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone. By increasing competition, these centres can pose a challenge to Sevenoaks District's towns and local neighbourhood centres.

The Retail Study has considered where residents shop, both in and out of the District, as well as forecasting the potential requirements for new retail floorspace to meet the needs over the new plan period. The evidence gathered through the study shows that the District would require **21,700m<sup>2</sup>** of additional comparison goods (non-food) floorspace up to 2035, with a further **10,400m<sup>2</sup>** additional convenience (food) floorspace across the District over the same period. This totals an additional 32,100 m<sup>2</sup> of retail space. To put this into perspective, the average retail unit in the UK is approximately 273m<sup>2</sup> (Estates Gazette 2012). By way of example, the additional floorspace over the Plan period is equivalent to:

- An additional **80 retail units** (based on the UK average); and
- An additional **6 Waitrose/Co-op stores** (based on the Waitrose/Co-op building in Edenbridge which is 1,820m<sup>2</sup>).

These figures seem surprisingly high but it must be remembered that they are linked to the growth forecasts for housing and employment and provided in the context of other nearby strong and expanding retail offers. The Council will keep the figures under review as the growth targets for the Local Plan become finalised.

The Retail Study is clear that the required amount of floorspace during the plan period is accurate up to 2030, from where the numbers are indicative. The evidence suggests that the Council should continue to review the requirements for retail floorspace, to account for a change in retail trends and other external factors during the course of the plan period. However, this should not prevent the Council from exploring all options to fully addressing the need.

		2020	2025	2030	2035
<b>District-wide Requirements</b>	<b>Comparison Goods</b> (Non-food)	3,900m <sup>2</sup>	9,100m <sup>2</sup>	15,300m <sup>2</sup> (indicative)	21,700m <sup>2</sup> (indicative)
	<b>Convenience Goods</b> (Food)	8,200m <sup>2</sup>	9,100m <sup>2</sup>	9,800m <sup>2</sup> (indicative)	10,400m <sup>2</sup> (indicative)

It is important to note that it may be possible to deliver retail floorspace across a number of storeys, rather than just ground level and the Local Plan will look to ensure that additional floorspace is facilitated in appropriate locations based predominantly on a town centre first approach. Key considerations will be the regeneration of the town centres at Swanley and New Ash Green and this is likely to influence the distribution of retail provision.

It is important to also understand that town centres are increasingly becoming a leisure destination, broadening their appeal from just retail. For Sevenoaks town this is likely to mean improving on an already well established base given the current wide-ranging food and drink offer as well as theatre and cinema. Swanley town centre's future leisure offer will undoubtedly form part of its regeneration ambitions whilst Edenbridge's centre may well benefit from an enhanced visitor economy.

The Retail Study sets out a series of recommendations that the Council should consider as part of the emerging Local Plan. There are District-wide recommendations, as well as considerations that should focus on the District's top-tier settlements.

Area	Study Recommendation
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting a local threshold for retail impact assessments, to assess the impact of retail developments outside of existing town and local centres (500 sq. m. net);</li> <li>Resist allocating retail floorspace within out-of-town developments;</li> <li>Support the development of the rural economy.</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks Town</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for the town to support up to 7,200 sq.m net additional comparison goods floorspace by 2025 / 17,100 sq.m net by 2035;</li> <li>Sub-division of existing retail units within the primary shopping frontage should be resisted.</li> </ul>
<b>Swanley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support and facilitate appropriate growth on sites in Swanley town centre to support and enhance its function as the Secondary Town centre in the District, and further develop and enhance the attractiveness of the retail and commercial leisure offer in the centre;</li> <li>Develop robust frontage policies to ensure active shopping frontages, while</li> </ul>

	developing other town centre uses in secondary areas (i.e. leisure).
<b>Edenbridge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at providing more convenience floorspace into the town to accommodate growth in the town;</li> <li>• Continue to produce robust frontage policies to enhance the town centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Service Centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In New Ash Green, in the short to medium term the Council should consider development of a centre-wide public realm strategy to improve the appearance of the centre and its attractiveness as a destination to meet local needs.</li> <li>• Applications which seek to enhance existing provision, or provide new retail floorspace appropriate in scale to the role and function of the centre should be supported in principle.</li> </ul>

The full list of recommendations, including those for Local Service Centres (including New Ash Green, Otford and Westerham) can be found in Chapter 9 of the Retail Study 2017.

The Council believes it is important to have clear guidance and policy to maintain and improve vibrancy of existing District towns and villages. Measures that can help do this could include seeking to reduce the number of empty units in town centres, maintaining active shopping frontages and supporting a varied mix of town centre uses. The Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16 shows that within the top three main town centres (Sevenoaks town, Swanley and Edenbridge), the proportion of primary frontage (in A1 use) was consistent with monitoring targets for the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP):

- Sevenoaks Town primary frontage (2015/16) – **69%** (ADMP target 70%)
- Swanley Town primary frontage (2015/16) – **80%** (ADMP target 70%)
- Edenbridge Town primary frontage (2015/16) – **51%** (ADMP target 40%)

To ensure the vitality of the District's towns and local centres, the Retail Study makes a recommendation that the Council looks at the use of Article 4 Directions within the main town centres and local service centres. This is in response to greater flexibility being available for units to change from one use class to another, without the requirement for planning permission. An Article 4 Direction is a tool that the Council could use to restrict the permitted development rights; for instance removing the permitted development rights for converting A1 retail units into C3 residential units.

The importance of pubs and meeting places to local communities, especially the rural communities is a locally specific issue for Sevenoaks District. The Settlement Hierarchy, in its methodology, places emphasis on whether there are pubs within the settlement, as they are seen as a key community asset. During the placemaking workshops, a number of parish representatives expressed a strong desire to protect community facilities that benefit residents, such as village/community halls, pubs and community sport facilities as they provide key focal points for a settlement. A number of examples of lost community facilities were given, including pubs which were lost to other uses, mainly residential uses.

The Council could look at ways of protecting pubs and other community assets by defining clear criteria to demonstrate sufficient assessment has been carried out to retain the asset before a change in use occurs (e.g. residential use). The Council's current policy (ADMP Policy CF2) looks to protect community facilities in the urban areas of the three main settlements in the District. An option is to expand the policy to cover town and local centres (as defined by the Settlement Hierarchy) or even the whole District, including rural areas. Planning policy may also be able to offer support to the identification of assets of community value.

## Transport Infrastructure

Sevenoaks District is in a unique position when looking at existing strategic transport connections. Three motorways (M20, M25 and M26) run through the District, offering vital connections to London, the Kent Coast, Gatwick and the Dartford Crossing. The District also benefits from a number of rail services to London as well as the Kent Coast. There is scope to access important transport hubs (e.g. Gatwick Airport and Ashford International) in order to travel internationally; this is mainly through rail services from Sevenoaks and Edenbridge (via Redhill and Tonbridge). Public transport is predominantly confined to the District's urban centres with comparatively limited access for rural areas.

There are a number of important strategic transport issues to consider across the District as well as the Kent region as a whole. Ensuring sufficient capacity on the transport network is an important aspect of bringing forward sustainable development. The Department for Transport, Highways England and Kent County Council continue to monitor the capacity of all transport provision and considering the strategic implications of transport improvements usually involves cross-boundary working. The Council will therefore continue to work collaboratively with partners on transport issues to facilitate local improvements. It is important that the Local Plan recognises its strategic context and the influence that significant nearby projects might have:

Lower Thames Crossing	Further future expansion at Gatwick Airport	Pressure on rail services across the District
<p>In April 2017, Highways England announced its preferred option for a new crossing over the River Thames. The preferred Option C will consist of a bored tunnel east of Gravesend in Kent and Tilbury in Essex. It is anticipated that the new crossing will relieve some pressure from the existing crossing at Dartford. This will have implications for Junctions 2 and 3 of the M25 (Dartford and Swanley respectively) as well as the entire north area of the District due to better connectivity with the strategic and local road network.</p>	<p>As the closest airport to the District, Gatwick Airport is a vital asset to the South East economy. Despite the Government announcing its preferred option to expand Heathrow with a third runway in Autumn 2016, there is the possibility that the airport could still expand over the course of the new Plan period adding pressure on existing transport links, as well as an increase in arrival flights to the airport overflying the southern portion of the District.</p>	<p>The Metro services that operate in South East London terminate at Sevenoaks. Swanley has been included within the Transport for London (TfL) travel zone and has been designated at Zone 8. There are plans for Oyster technology to be brought to Sevenoaks station. The Southeastern railway franchise is due to end in 2018. The Thameslink programme is due to be completed in 2018, as well as providing additional capacity on Maidstone to Cambridge services via Swanley. Connections to Gatwick (via Edenbridge and Tonbridge) will also need to be considered.</p>

More locally Parish representatives from the place-making workshops have identified a number of considerations that the Council should think about when looking at transport delivery. This includes reducing traffic congestion, seeking to protect public transport services and enhancing future opportunities for sustainable transport solutions by connecting developments to services, facilities and other points of interest within communities. There are also area specific opportunities to address transport issues through master-planning exercises or Neighbourhood Plans by looking at specific

areas. Examples of this include the Swanley & Hextable Master Vision and the Northern Sevenoaks Masterplan.

The Council recognises that improving transport is intrinsically linked to other aspects of the Local Plan, such as improving public health and encouraging healthy, active lifestyles which can offer an alternative experience to heavily reliance on private vehicles. The Sevenoaks District Cycling Strategy and KCC Active Travel Strategy look to improve existing walking and cycling infrastructure across the District as well as actively encouraging better integration of walking and cycling as part of the design process for future developments.

## **Other Key Infrastructure**

### **Utilities**

There are a number of water and wastewater suppliers that operate in the District including Thames Water, South East Water, Mid Kent Water and SES Water. The increase in future development over the course of the new Local Plan period will increase the demands of water within the District, so it is important that utility companies account for the change in growth. This also includes electricity and gas providers where appropriate to account for the increase growth in the District. Consultation as the plan develops will help ensure this occurs.

### **Health and Medical**

Sevenoaks District has 15 GP medical practices and 2 hospitals which deal with minor injuries (Sevenoaks Hospital, and Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital). Medical services are overseen by two NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs); the West Kent CCG and the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley CCG. While there is no dedicated hospital facility in the north of the District, residents are in close proximity to the Darent Valley Hospital and Queen Mary's Hospital Sidcup. Further hospital provision is provided out-of-District at Pembury Hospital (Tunbridge Wells).

Population projections anticipate a rise in the elderly demographic, which in turn will create increased pressure on medical and health facilities. Increase in demand will be mitigated by ensuring that there is enough provision of services as well as designing homes which are fit for purpose. The Council is committed to delivering healthy communities through its Community Plan and District Health Deal, and will continue to work with partners.

### **Education**

Currently, there are 42 primary schools and 3 secondary schools that operate within the District under Kent County Council as the Local Education Authority (LEA). There are also a number of independent (fee-paying) schools across the District that caters for primary and secondary education. In October 2015, the Government approved plans for a single-sex grammar "annex" which will be run by Weald of Kent Grammar Academy Trust. At the time of writing, construction of the annex is almost complete and the Weald of Kent is expecting its first intake of secondary schoolchildren in September 2017. There are currently no colleges or "higher learning" facilities available in the District. Consultation with Kent County Council will continue as the plan progresses.

More generally the Local Plan will need to balance education provision within the District against the eventual scale of growth identified via the Local Plan. The KCC Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2017-2021 outlines the requirements for new school places. Equally, there needs to be consideration of how this development pressure could affect schools outside the District

boundaries, in particular secondary education places. Due to an increase number of children travelling to and from school, this may also have a knock-on impact on public transport highway capacity.

### **Delivery of Infrastructure in the District**

Improvements in infrastructure are delivered by the relevant authority which includes (but is not limited to) Kent County Council, Highways England, Network Rail, the Environment Agency and NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Council will continue to work with partners throughout the course of preparing the new Local Plan. The plan will be accompanied by a new District Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Council will continue to levy contributions against developments where infrastructure and transport improvements are required. This will be achieved through the continued use of Section 106 legal agreements, as well as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Council recognises that infrastructure and transport requirements will change over time over the course of the new Local Plan period. Through the Council's partnership working, Local Plan preparation work will help to inform any proposals and plans of partners such as KCC's Kent Growth and Infrastructure Framework and the Local Transport Plan 4. It is also recognised that a number of infrastructure providers work on different plans with different timescales that may not fit neatly with the plan period, as they operate within 5, 10 or 50 year timescales. The Council will continue its discussions with partners and identify where there are opportunities to input into these strategies and plans.

## **Objective 5. Promote healthy living opportunities**

### **Health**

National planning policy encourages local authorities to plan proactively for healthy, sustainable communities. This is likely to be achieved through plan-making as well as working with health and medical partners. The scope of what makes a sustainable community is wide ranging and might include encouraging sustainable transport links, better design and enhancing developments with meaningful provisions of public space for residents to enjoy.

Sevenoaks District is overall one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. Despite having low levels of deprivation on average across the District, there are some pockets of deprivation mainly in the north and rural areas. Data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015) shows that some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the District are located in the wards of Swanley White Oak and Swanley St. Mary's which amounts to approximately 10% of the total District population. Other wards with relative deprivation also include in Swanley Christchurch & Swanley Village, Edenbridge North & East and Fawkham & West Kingsdown.

The District's main health consideration is the age profile of the District. Current population data shows that 21% (24,700) of the District's population is aged 65 and over. This trend shows that the District has an ageing population and will require the Local Plan to plan positively to meet any future requirements needed for older people. This includes providing appropriate accommodation (private housing and care home beds) as well as the necessary medical infrastructure to care for older people.

In addition, the Local Plan will have to consider the health impacts of traffic congestion and air quality. The District currently has 11 defined Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) which are

predominantly located along the District's strategic road network to include the M25, M20 and A25. There is a high dependency on private vehicles to make journeys to key locations within the District (e.g. stations, shops and community facilities). The Council will look at the priorities set out in the Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2016-19 and the Sevenoaks District Health Deal (2015) to develop appropriate local planning policies. Further corporate documents such as the Air Quality Action Plan will also be considered as part of the Local Plan.

## **Leisure**

The District is generally well served by leisure provision with a good number of indoor sports facilities affording residents a range of potential activities.

The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study 2017 undertook an audit of existing indoor sports provision and identified current and future needs for the District. It found that much of the District's provision is within local authority owned formal sports centres, informal village halls or within educational establishments. Many of the educational establishments allow community use of facilities without formal community use agreements in place. This means that the services can be withdrawn at any time. There are also existing facilities which are not available for "pay and play" community use and where better use could be made of facilities.

The study found that there is an undersupply of fitness stations across the District and noted that there were no national fitness chains present. Much of the District's provision is in ageing premises and of not particularly high quality. The White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley is in need of improvement in the short term and the Edenbridge Centre in the medium to longer term. The quality across the District should be improved where possible to ensure the needs of residents are met.

Although there are many facilities for indoor leisure the study also noted that many facilities were only safely accessible by car, especially those in rural locations. The study recommended improvements in infrastructure to develop safe walking and cycling routes to existing facilities and where possible open up other informal, multipurpose spaces where people can be active.

## **Open Space and Recreation**

Open spaces are spaces of value for sport, recreation and visual amenity. They include sports pitches, open areas within development, linear corridors and country parks and are not just restricted to publically accessible land. They can include areas of woodland and scrubland as well as formal parks and gardens. Open spaces are an important part of the landscape, local character and the setting of built development. They can provide health, well-being and social benefits acting as locations for community and social events. Open spaces can also provide the "green lungs" for settlements and can contribute to the reduction in atmospheric carbon dioxide and improved air quality particularly in areas including trees, woodland and hedges.

The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study included a quantity and quality audit of the existing open spaces within the District. The study found that although the District has an adequate supply of most types of open space the quality of the spaces could be improved. The Council will work with partners to identify opportunities to redevelop areas which are currently not fit for purpose or where improvements can be made.

The District has a significant undersupply of Children and Young People's play space. There is an opportunity to include provision for Children and Young People within new housing developments.

New provision can also be provided as part of the redevelopment of poor quality open spaces and the Council will work with partners to identify such opportunities and consider use of developer contributions for additional provision.

The Allocations and Development Management Plan protects specific open spaces within urban confines which are more than 0.2ha in size (unless they have been previously allocated). The Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study audited all known areas of open space and views were sought from Town and Parish Councils on the spaces as part of the study. The Local Plan could remove the protection for some spaces or add spaces to the list of protected sites.

The National Planning Policy Framework gives Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans the ability to designate areas of open space of particular value to a local community as a “Local Green Space”. These spaces must meet criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the NPPF and consideration should be given to other designations and protection already afforded to the land. The Council’s preferred approach is for such sites to be identified by local communities and designated in neighbourhood plans.

A playing pitch strategy is being undertaken to assess the current level of sports pitch provision across the District. An additional piece of evidence to evaluate the quality and quantity of the District’s non-pitch sport and physical activity provision including golf courses will also be undertaken. The findings of both pieces of evidence will also be incorporated into the Local Plan.

The participants at the place-making workshops expressed a desire to retain and protect existing areas of open space of value to the local community, including recreation grounds, children’s play areas and village greens. There was also a desire to see new spaces developed such as orchards

## Objective 6. Promote a greener future

### Sustainability and Climate Change

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to “adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change”. Climate change is addressed throughout the Local Plan by delivering development in a sustainable way.

Energy efficiency measures are now required through building regulations and are no longer included in Local Plan policy. National Policy states that the Local Plan should investigate the scope for new renewable energy installations.

In 2012 Kent County Council undertook a study to evaluate the opportunities for renewable energy generation across Kent, for Sevenoaks the study found the District was most suited to the production of biofuels and forest management for biomass energy production. Some areas may be suitable for small or medium scale wind installations or solar farms but the study noted that landscape designations may cause restrictions and consideration was not given to the extent of the green belt within the District.

Combined Heat and Power and District Heating is most efficient in areas where there is a high heat demand such as highly populated areas and large scale infrastructure such as hospitals. However, areas with a high concentration of a number of facilities requiring high levels of heat are the most appropriate locations. The KCC study showed that the District has relatively low heat demand and that there are no real opportunities for a retrofitted district heating network. In the future, large scale development schemes should consider if a decentralised energy and heating scheme would be a viable and feasible solution.

Therefore, given the highly constrained nature of the District is unlikely that any renewable energy developments of significant size will be suitable within the District.

The majority of the District is suitable for microgeneration technologies including heat pumps, solar thermal and photovoltaics. Such technologies should be integrated into new developments where appropriate.

Core Strategy Policy SP2 stated that the Council will support appropriate small scale community led renewable energy schemes this is an approach which can be taken into the new Local Plan.

Climate Change **mitigation** measures within the Local Plan could include:

- Supporting the inclusion of small scale renewable and low carbon technologies where appropriate
- Reducing the need to travel by sustainably locating new housing and supporting the level of services and facilities.
- Promoting sustainable design measures for new developments including passive solar design
- Investigating opportunities for decentralised energy and heating where appropriate
- Protecting existing green spaces, trees and vegetation to absorb carbon dioxide

In 2009 the Government released the UK Climate Projections which sets out the likely effects of climate change across the country up to the end of the century based on simulations from climate models. Within the South East the changing climate is expected to cause an increase in the average summer temperatures leading to potential overheating, associated health issues and an increased need

for cooling. It is also expected to cause an overall decrease in rainfall which will reduce the availability of water in an already water stressed area of the country.

Beside these average changes in rainfall and temperature the South East is also likely to experience more frequent extreme weather events including short periods of heavy rainfall, which will put pressure on the built and natural environment and will lead to an increase in surface water flooding and rapid fluvial flooding, potential damage to buildings and infrastructure and have a negative impact on water quality. These changing weather conditions will also have an effect on the biodiversity within the District and are likely to lead to habitat disruption and species migration.

Climate Change **adaptation** measures within the Local Plan could include:

- Protecting and enhancing existing green spaces, trees and vegetation to provide new habitat and connections for wildlife.
- Inclusion of deciduous trees and other landscaping to provide cooling in the summer.
- Investigate water harvesting in new developments either through rainfall or wastewater.
- Incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments with suitable management arrangements.
- Provision of green infrastructure in new developments including the use of green and porous surfaces to reduce surface water run off and living roofs and walls.
- Design new developments to include buildings to withstand extreme weather effects and layouts to avoid areas likely to flood or overheat

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

There is already significant national and local guidance in place for flood risk, in the form of the NPPF and Practice Note. There is also local guidance provided by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) carried out in 2016 for the District has identified current sources of flooding and also takes into account the impact of climate change. The main source of flooding, in Sevenoaks is identified as fluvial flooding, the main sources being the River Darent and River Eden, with other smaller contributors.

The report also identifies that the District has experienced a number of historic surface water/drainage related flood events which can be attributed to a range of sources including surface water run off. There are five reservoirs in the District which can also be a source of flooding. Ground water flood events have occurred in the District mainly due to high water table levels. The SFRA also identifies the Flood Zones that land falls under across the District.

There are a few cross boundary and sub-regional issues regarding flooding and drainage. Firstly there is the potential to increase the height of the flood barrier at Leigh, which will have the potential to increase the amount of flood storage required within the southern part of the District. This will be considered further through Duty to Co-operate meetings. The Environment Agency has also confirmed that they are currently in the process of updating their modelling for the Darent which is likely to update understanding of Flood Risk and Flood Zones for this area.

In looking at the flooding and drainage evidence, guidance and legislation, the main issues identified for Sevenoaks District, in addition to existing policy and guidance includes:

- The need to reduce surface water run-off from development.

- The need to create space for flooding, including integrating green infrastructure in mitigation for surface water and allocating Flood Zones 2 and 3 as open space.
- Looking at opportunities to work with natural processes to reduce flood risk. For example this will include considering the construction of up stream storage schemes to protect urban areas down stream. This will involve partnership working with neighbouring authorities, organisations and water management bodies.
- The need to reduce flood risk by naturalising the banks of development in particular for brownfield development, adjacent to water courses as much as possible.
- SuDs should be seen as an opportunity to promote and protect Green Infrastructure and also enhance ecological and amenity value as they mimic the natural process of green field surface water drainage and help reduce surface water run off.
- SuDs need to be considered at the early stages of development to reduce the risk of flooding particularly to third party land and to ensure they are intrinsic to site design.

A few of the place-making workshops identified the need to increase local 'Flood committees' to work through objectives to reduce flooding in local areas. Local issues include; Crockham Hill identified flood control as an issue, Leigh identified issues with drainage and also highlighted that there is the Eden Catchment Group (which is a local responsible body which looks at ways to support the objectives of the Water Framework Directive).

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## Place-Making Areas:

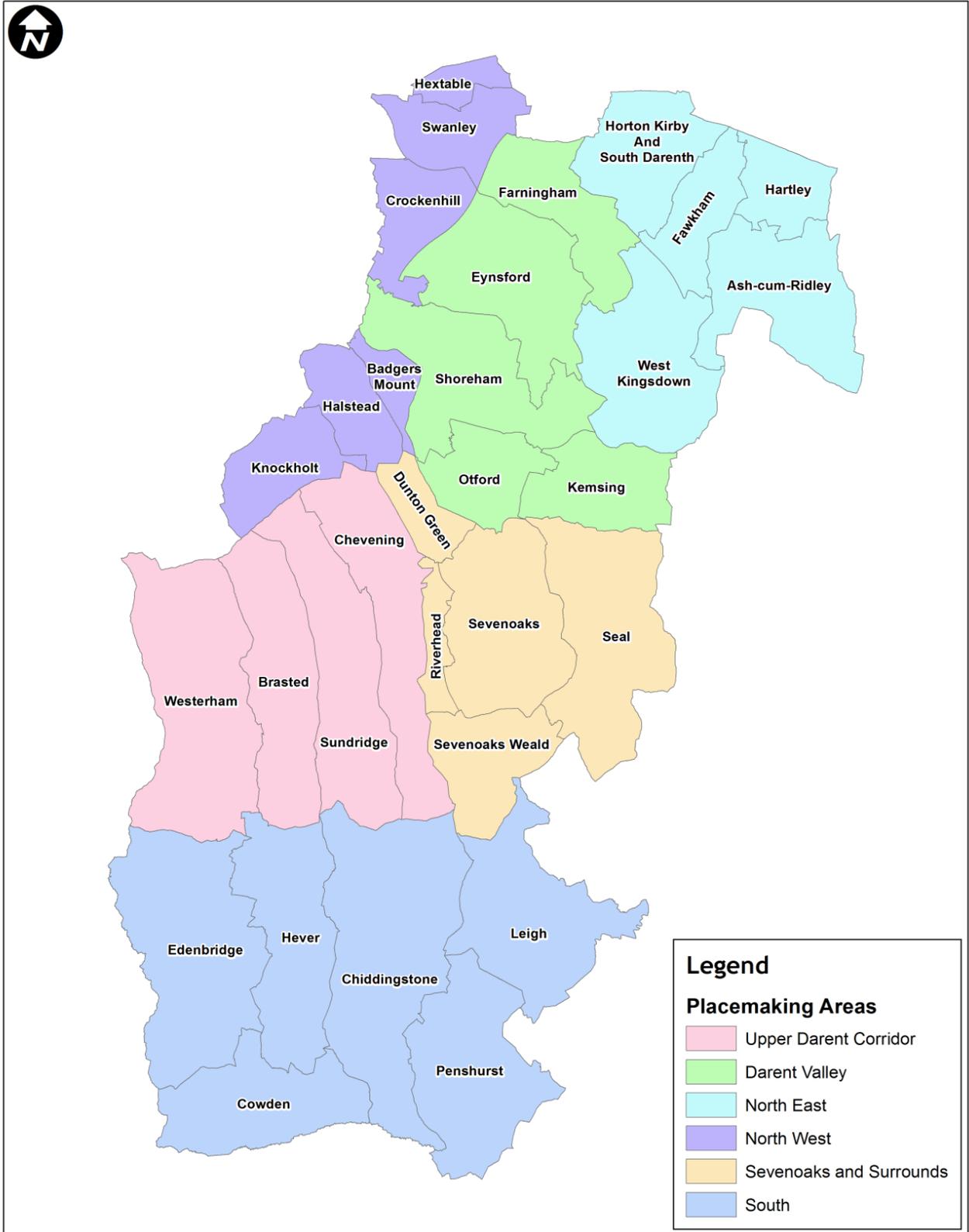
The District has been divided into six place-making areas, grouping together places with similar characteristics and natural environment, which function together in terms of shared services and transport routes. The six place-making areas are outlined below and comprise between 4-6 parishes.

South	Upper Darent Corridor	Sevenoaks and surrounds	Darent Valley	North West (A and B)	North East
Edenbridge Cowden Hever Chiddingstone Leigh Penshurst	Westerham Brasted Sundridge Chevening	Sevenoaks Riverhead Dunton Green Sevenoaks Weald Seal	Farningham Eynsford Shoreham Otford Kemsing	<b>A</b> Swanley and surrounds: Swanley Hextable Crockenhill <b>B</b> Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs (incl. Badgers Mount)	Horton Kirby and South Darent Fawkham Hartley Ash-cum-Ridley West Kingsdown

Each place-making area is made up of parishes/towns with one or more of the following

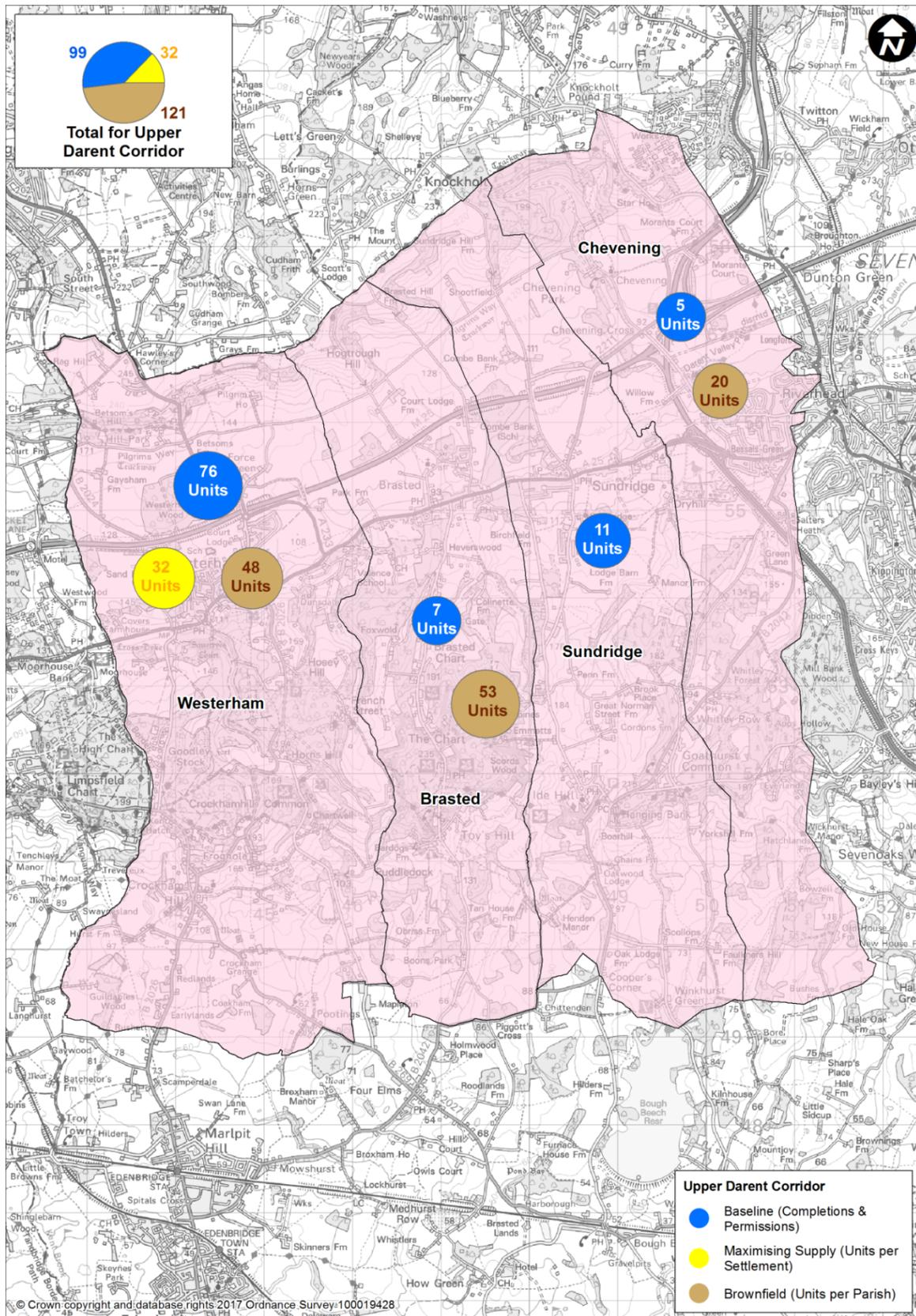
- A shared sense of character and place, either due to shared characteristics, heritage or landscape designations
- The majority of residents within each place-making area are likely to use the same infrastructure, services and facilities, e.g. local train lines, shopping centres/high streets, medical centres, leisure facilities etc.
- The parishes and towns share local issues such as proximity to London, major road networks/junctions or shared demographics.

In developing this Plan, we have met with local community representatives from these place-making areas. Workshops were held in 2016 with local representatives, made up of Town and Parish Councillors and Ward Councillors for each place-making area. Participants were asked what they liked about their areas, what contributed to the local character and what should be conserved and protected. They were also asked about potential opportunities for the future and what changes could be made to improve the area. Finally, the participants were asked to share what they felt were the challenges, issues which are currently causing difficulty or which have the potential to cause difficulty in the next 20 years. These community views have fed into this consultation, together with the findings of the evidence studies, to try and develop a Plan that responds to local views and aspirations.



The following sections consider locally specific issues, District wide issues are covered in the topic area sections.

## Upper Darent Corridor (Westerham, Brasted, Chevening and Sundridge)



Proposed housing – approx. 250 units –provision split fairly evenly between brownfield land and existing commitments

## Upper Darent Corridor...

(Brasted, Chevening, Sundridge & Westerham)

Population **6,580**



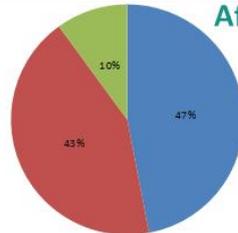
22% aged 65+ years

**4,570** Households...

...**72.7%** owner occupation

...**15.2%** privately rented

...**12.1%** affordable homes



**Affordable Housing (AH) Need**

■ AH 1-2 Bed  
■ AH 3+ Bed  
■ AH Older Persons

No train station

Good road connections

Limited bus routes

**Transport Links**

### Other Area Characteristics:

Liabile to **flood** in areas

Located in the **Kent Downs AONB**

**Tourism - Nationally recognised heritage assets, parks & gardens**

Source of the **River Darent** in the Greensands Hills

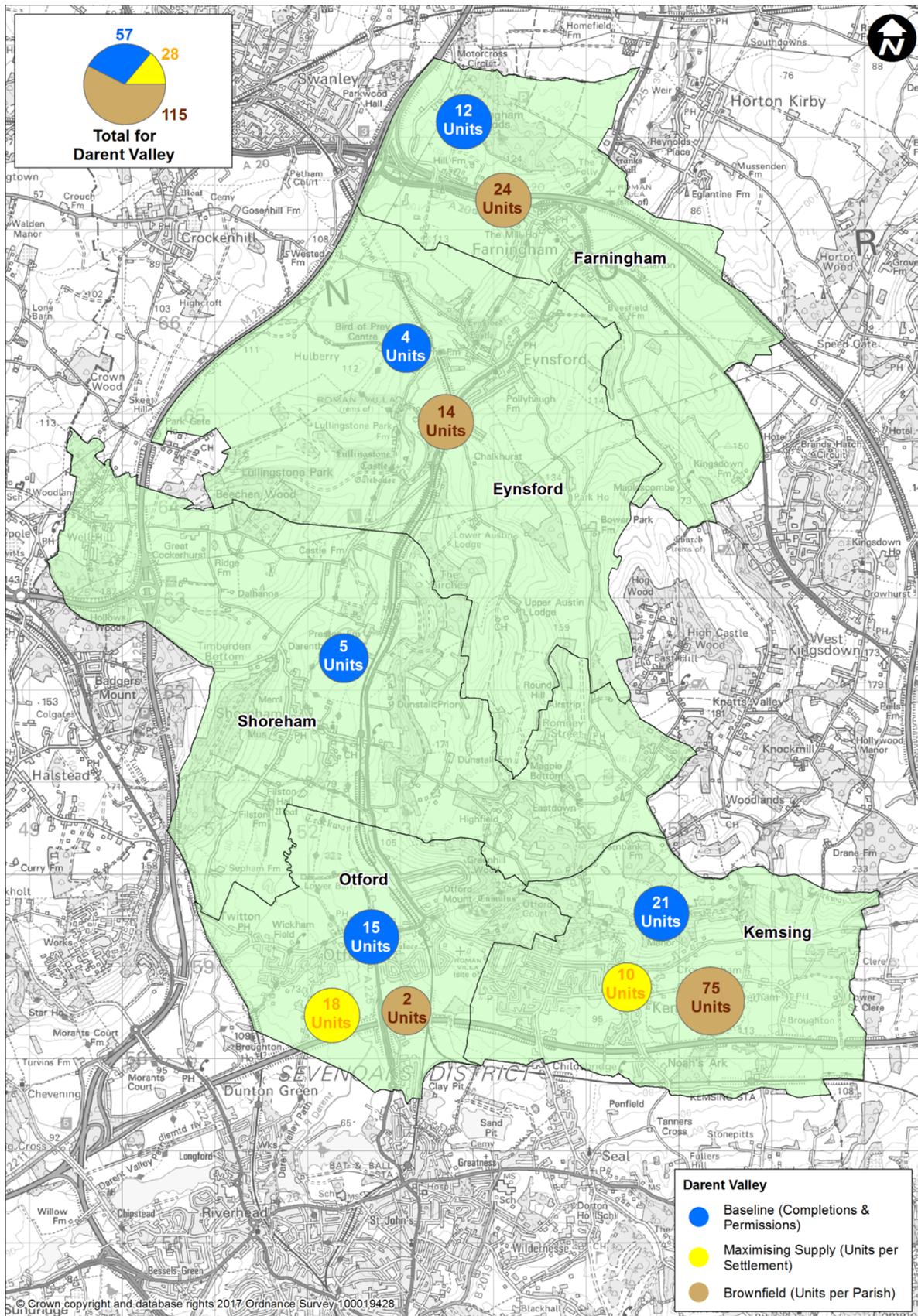
**A25** connecting with the **A21** and **M25**

**No secondary school** in the area

*Potential priority issues for this place-making area:*

- *Increasing opportunities to develop the rural economy, including tourism*
- *Consideration of the potential direction of growth of Westerham and a possible new relief road*
- *Mitigating air quality impacts associated with the M25/A25 corridor*
- *Endeavour to maintain or reduce traffic volumes along the A25*
- *Mitigating the impact of flooding from the River Darent on new development*

# Darent Valley



Proposed housing – approx. 200 units –provision focused (1/2) on brownfield land with the remaining units largely from existing commitments

# Darent Valley

(Eynsford, Farningham, Kemsing, Otford & Shoreham)

Population **18,910**



21% aged 65+ years

**5,250 Households...**

- ...80% owner occupation
- ...9% privately rented
- ...11% affordable homes

**Affordable Housing (AH) Need**

Category	Percentage
AH 1-2 Bed	93%
AH 3+ Bed	7%
AH Older Persons	0%

**Transport Links**

- 4 train stations
- Good road connections
- Limited bus routes

## Other Area Characteristics:

River Darent and the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme

No secondary school in the area

Lies in the Kent Downs AONB

Chaucer Business Park is the largest employment site

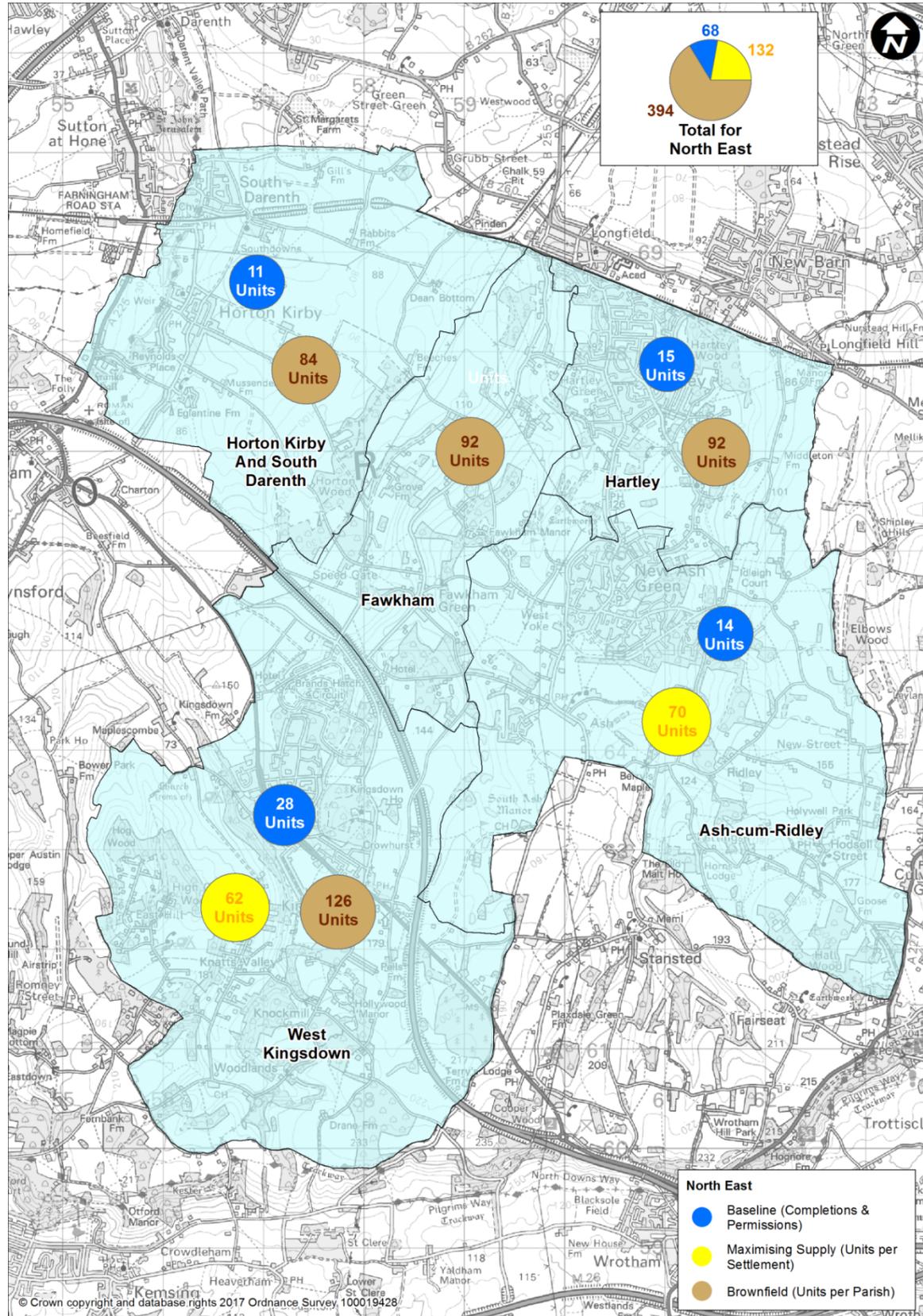
Liable to flood in areas

Tourism - nationally recognised heritage assets, parks and gardens

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- Strengthening the rural economy through improving local employment areas and visitor economy
- Impact of increased visitors on local infrastructure
- Mitigating the impact of flooding from the River Darent on new development

## North East (New Ash Green and Hartley)



Proposed housing – approx. 600 units – proposed housing provision focused (2/3rds) on brownfield land with the remaining units forming existing commitments /sites within existing settlements

## North East

(Ash-cum-Ridley, Fawkham, Hartley, Horton Kirby and South Darenth & West Kingsdown)

Population **13,500**



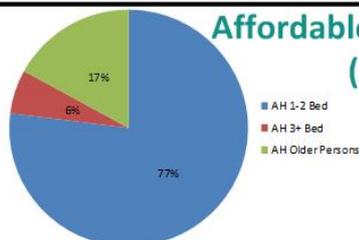
20% aged 65+ years

**9,134** Households...

...**81.4%** owner occupation

...**8.3%** privately rented

...**10.3%** affordable homes



### Affordable Housing (AH) Need

Access to rail services (outside of the District)

Good road connections

Good bus services

### Transport Links

### Other Area Characteristics:

**Brands Hatch Circuit** – a centre of sport and leisure

Potential to regenerate **New Ash Green Village Centre**

Close to **Bluewater & Gravesend** for retail

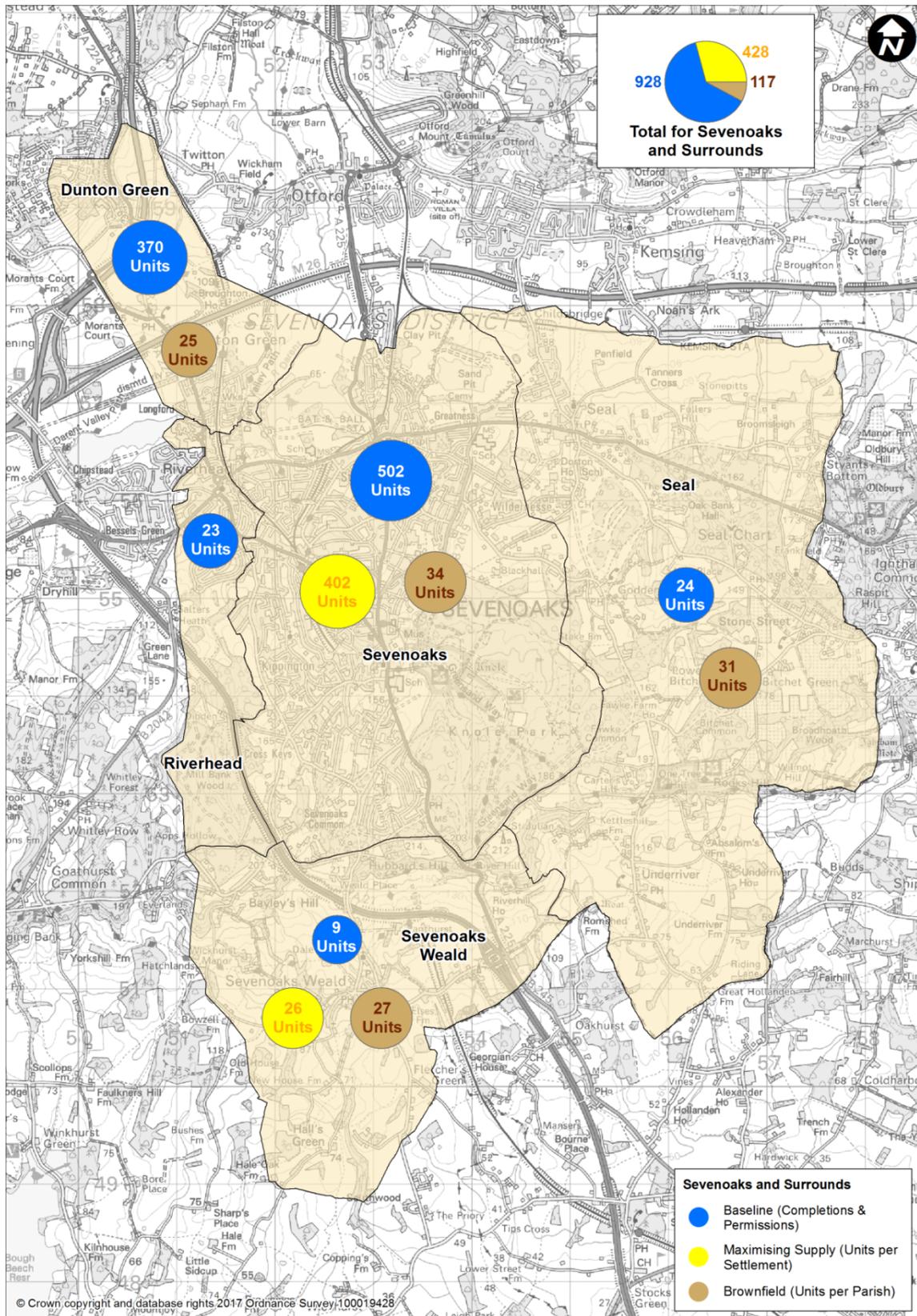
**Upcoming Ash Neighbourhood Plan**

Potential impacts from planned growth and infrastructure in **North Kent (Ebbsfleet, Lower Thames Crossing, Paramount)**

Potential priority issues for this place-making area:

- *New Ash Green –regenerating the village centre: it has a high vacancy rate and ageing buildings.*
- *Brands Hatch – important centre for sport and leisure activities based on the motor racing circuit but concerns regarding noise levels affecting adjoining residential properties*
- *Proposed Lower Thames Crossing may have an impact on the road network, and potential traffic/infrastructure implications of Thames Corridor developments*

## Sevenoaks Urban Area and Surrounds



Proposed housing – approx. 1500 units - provision focused (2/3rds) on existing commitments, with the remaining provision focused on development in Sevenoaks town including around the train station.

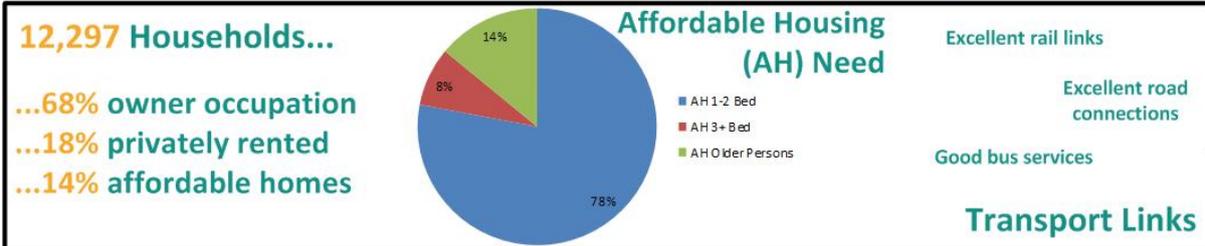
# Sevenoaks & Surrounds

(Dunton Green, Riverhead, Seal, Sevenoaks & Sevenoaks Weald)

Population **25,360**



23% aged 65+ years



## Other Area Characteristics:

**Nationally recognised heritage assets, parks and gardens**

**Upcoming Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan**

**High number of Conservation Areas**

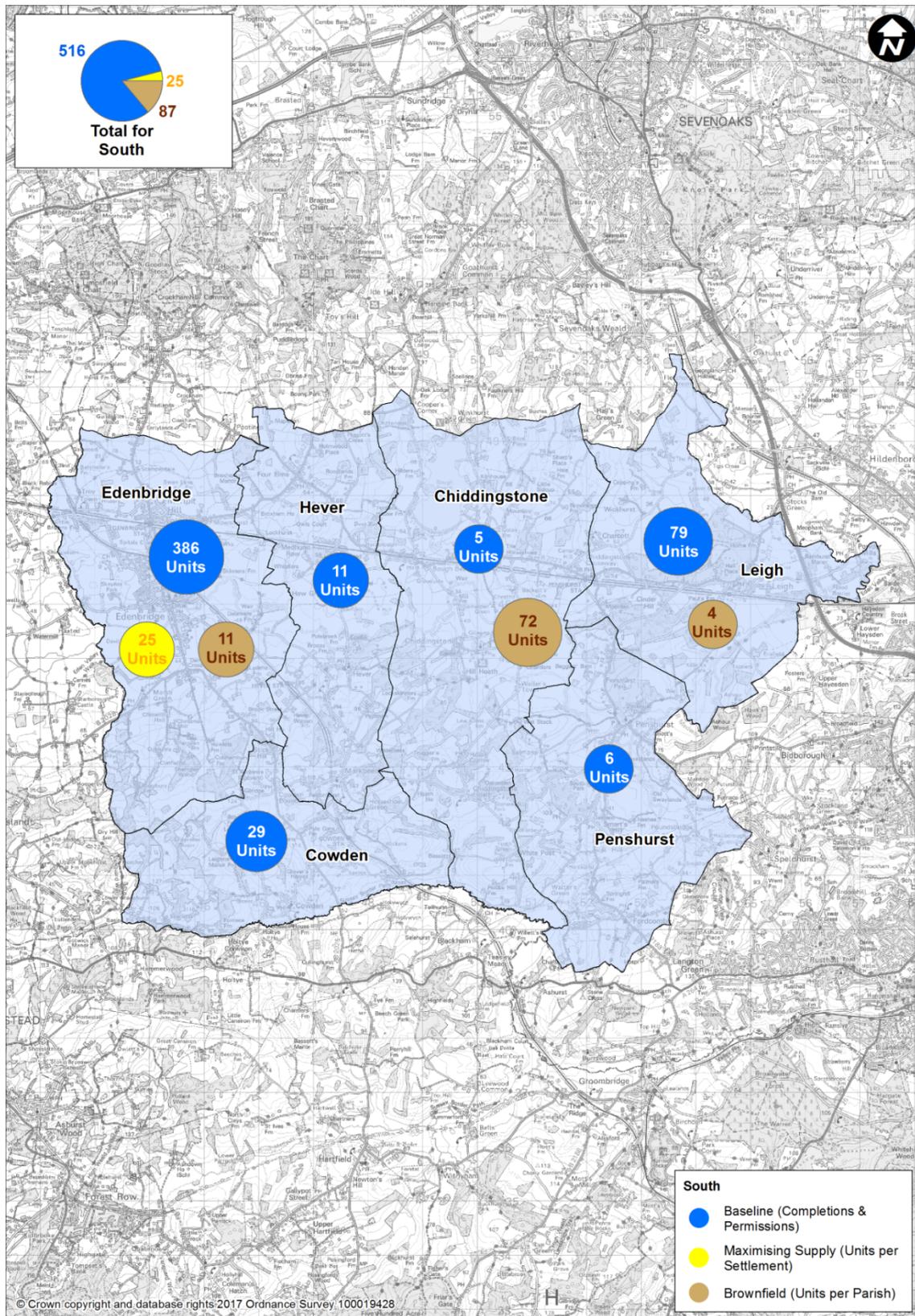
**High loss of office provision**

**Partial Kent Downs AONB**

*Potential priority issues for this place-making area:*

- *Regeneration of the Sevenoaks Northern Area including the redevelopment of the quarry for a mixture of housing and other uses subject to Green Belt considerations.*
- *Consideration of a policy to restrict changes of use (of shops) within Sevenoaks Town Centre to ensure its economic competitiveness?*
- *Remove permitted development rights from offices to prevent conversion to residential without the need for planning permission? In particular, the areas currently exempt.*

## South Area



Proposed housing – approx. 600 units – proposed housing provision largely focused on existing commitments

## South

(Chiddingstone, Cowden, Edenbridge, Hever, Leigh & Penshurst)

Population **27,210**



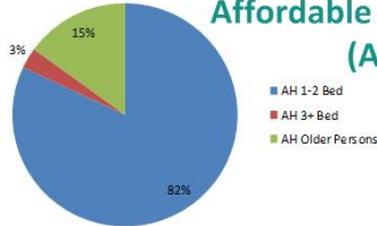
20% aged 65+ years

**6,691** Households

...68% owner occupation

...14% privately rented

...18% affordable homes



### Affordable Housing (AH) Need

Rail connections to Gatwick & Tonbridge

Adequate road connections

Limited bus routes

### Transport Links

### Other Area Characteristics:

Remote area with some **High Weald AONB**

**The River Eden and the Eden Valley**

**Upcoming Edenbridge Neighbourhood Plan**

**No secondary school in the area**

**Liabie to flooding – effected by the River Eden & Leigh Flood Barrier**

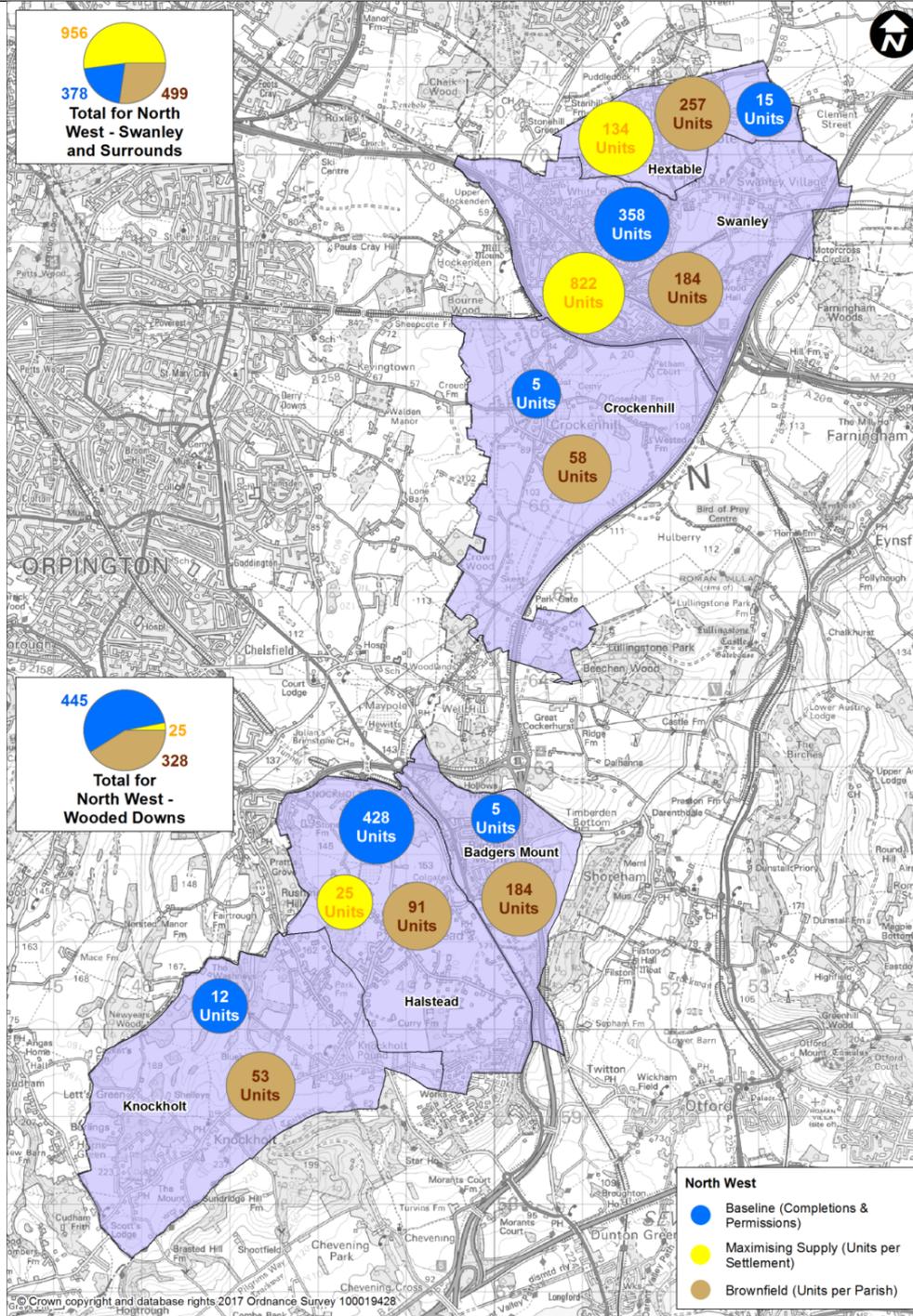
**Nationally recognised heritage assets, parks and gardens**

*Potential priority issues for this place-making area:*

- Consider the need and potential provision of a new health and post-11 education hub in Edenbridge
- Protect shops, services, community facilities and employment in Edenbridge and the local villages
- Address flood risk and SuDs, including consideration of the Leigh Flood Barrier
- Consider the impact of development on Ashdown Forest (a European Site)

North-West: the six parishes are split into two areas:

Swanley and surrounds	North-West wooded downs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swanley</li> <li>• Hextable</li> <li>• Crockenhill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Badgers Mount</li> <li>• Halstead</li> <li>• Knockholt</li> </ul>



Swanley and surrounds – approx. 1800 units – provision focused (1/2) on building within existing settlements, with remaining units forming brownfield land and existing commitments.

North-West wooded downs – approx. 800 units – provision split equally between existing commitments and brownfield land

# North West - Swanley & Surrounds

(Crockenhill, Hextable & Swanley)

Population **22,580**



20% aged 65+ years

**10,928** North West Households

- ...69.9% owner occupation
- ...8.9% privately rented
- ...21.2% affordable homes

**Affordable Housing (AH) Need**

- AH 1-2 Bed
- AH 3+ Bed
- AH Older Persons

Excellent rail links

Good road connections

Good bus connections

**Transport Links**

## Other Area Characteristics:

Key connections on the **M25 & A20**

A **Master Vision** for Swanley & Hextable

**2 wards** in the 20% most deprived wards in England

Swanley Station **Oyster** (London Travel Zone 8)

Historic for its horticulture & nurseries

# North West - Wooded Downs

(Badgers Mount, Halstead & Knockholt)

Population **4,920**



18% aged 65+ years

**10,928** North West Households

- ...69.9% owner occupation
- ...8.9% privately rented
- ...21.2% affordable homes

**Affordable Housing (AH) Need**

- AH 1-2 Bed
- AH 3+ Bed
- AH Older Persons

Knockholt Station (TfL Zone 6)

Good road connections

Limited bus routes

**Transport Links**

## Other Area Characteristics:

Redevelopment of **Fort Halstead**

**North Downs Business Park** (key employment site)

Good London connections

Ancient woodland

Some **Kent Downs AONB**

*Potential priority issues for this place-making area:*

- *Regeneration of Swanley town centre which could, along with Sevenoaks, be a focus for new non-food retail outlets.*
- *Fort Halstead has an existing permission for employment-led, mixed-use redevelopment including 450 new homes. The site is largely brownfield land and may have the potential to accommodate a greater level of employment and/or housing, which would help protect other less-developed areas of Green Belt from potential release.*
- *Employment land – there are a number of existing employment sites which could be redeveloped and expanded to work more efficiently*
- *Mitigating air quality impacts associated with the M25 corridor*

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## Glossary

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply:

<b>Glossary and Abbreviations</b>	
<b>Affordable rented housing</b>	Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register). Rents and service charges can be set at up to 80% of market rents, but tend to be capped at a lower level to ensure housing benefit can cover all eligible costs.
<b>Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)</b>	The NPPF defines AQMAs as “Areas designated by Local Authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines”. The Environment Act 1995 requires local councils to regularly assess the air quality in their area to see if any of the key pollutants in the National Air Quality Strategy are likely to exceed the targets currently set. In locations where this is likely to happen and where the public are exposed to pollution, the Council is required to designate an “Air Quality Management Area”.
<b>Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)</b>	The Allocations and Development Management Plan was adopted in 2015. It is a document that sets out the planning policies which manages development across the District, as well as setting out site allocations for housing, employment and mixed-use developments. This document sits alongside the Core Strategy and covers the plan period up to 2026. The new Local Plan will replace this document and the Core Strategy.
<b>Ancient Woodland</b>	An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.
<b>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</b>	An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Together with National Parks, AONB represent the nation’s finest landscapes. AONB are designated by Natural England.
<b>Best and most versatile agricultural land</b>	Lands in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.
<b>Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)</b>	Regional priority areas of opportunity for restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) habitats areas of greatest of greatest potential for restoration and creation. They are areas of opportunity, not constraint. The BOAs are designated by the South East England Biodiversity Forum.
<b>Brownfield (locally defined)</b>	For the purposes of the identification of potential land in this consultation, ‘brownfield’ has been defined in the widest sense i.e. land that has been previously developed (is no longer a green field), without considering the exclusions outlined in the NPPF. Once the Local Plan is further developed, consideration will be given as to whether the exclusions set out in the NPPF are relevant for the development of the strategy.

<b>Brownfield land</b>	See “Previously developed land”
<b>Building for Life</b>	Building for Life 12 (BfL 12) is the industry standard for the design of new housing developments and has been produced by the Design Council. Developments are assessed against 12 questions using a traffic light system. A well designed scheme should perform well against all 12 of the new questions – the top score being 12 Greens.
<b>Climate Change</b>	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20 <sup>th</sup> century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels. <a href="https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/climate_change">https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/climate_change</a>
<b>Climate change adaption</b>	Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory, autonomous and planned adaption.
<b>Climate change mitigation</b>	Involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, either by reducing sources of these gases (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) or enhancing the “sinks” that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil). <a href="https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/">https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/</a>
<b>Combined Heat and Power</b>	Combined heat and power (CHP) is the use of a heat engine or power station to generate electricity and useful heat at the same time.
<b>Community Infrastructure Ley (CIL)</b>	A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in the area. A local authority is allowed to set its own rates (£. per m <sup>2</sup> ) on particular qualifying developments. Contributions raised on qualifying developments are then used for infrastructure delivery within the local authority area.
<b>Comparison retail</b>	Retail goods that are typically non-food (e.g. clothing, electrical goods), and bought less frequently.
<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Areas of special architectural or historical interest, where development should preserve and enhance their special character and qualities. These areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which gives them statutory recognition and protection.
<b>Convenience retail</b>	Everyday essential shopping goods, which typically relate to food.
<b>Core Strategy</b>	The Core Strategy is a long term, strategic document which forms part of the District’s spatial strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011 and covers the current plan period up to 2026. The new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management Plan.
<b>Design Panel</b>	A panel of independent experts and practitioners who review the design of

	schemes put forward to the panel. They provide advice and comments in regard to the design of the scheme and suggest improvements where necessary.
<b>Design South East</b>	Design South East is a regional trust which provides impartial design advice and assistance to support Local Authorities, developers and communities. It is an non profit and independent organisation.
<b>Development Plan Document (DPD)</b>	The documents that a local planning authority must prepare (to make up its Local Plan) and which have to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination. It should contain the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A spatial strategy for the District;</li> <li>• Site specific allocations of land and development management policies; and</li> <li>• Policies map (with insets, where necessary)</li> </ul>
<b>District Heating</b>	a heating system in which centrally generated heat is distributed via ducts and pipes to multiple buildings or locations.
<b>Economic Development</b>	Development for employment use, including those within the B Use Classes as well as other employment generating uses (but excluding housing development).
<b>Economic Needs Study (ENS)</b>	A study which is an important component of the evidence base for the development of the Council's new Local Plans by providing an objective assessment of the need for employment land over the emerging plan period to 2033/35. This reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and builds upon previous evidence base studies including the 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
<b>Exceptional circumstances (local)</b>	The Government does not define exceptional circumstances, but as part of the new Local Plan it is suggested that this may occur, for example, where new housing development achieves the sustainable reuse of brownfield land; ensures the delivery of new and needed key infrastructure; is needed to achieve regeneration and helps achieve significant compensatory improvements in the Green Belt.
<b>Fitness Station</b>	Individual apparatus for fitness usually found in a fitness gym but can also include outdoor resistance apparatus.
<b>Flood Zone</b>	Flood zones refer to the probability of river and sea flooding over areas of land. There are varying levels of flood risk which are set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance.
<b>Fluvial flooding</b>	Flooding resulting from water levels exceeding the bank level of a main river.
<b>Green Belt</b>	A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims o keep this land permanently open or largely undeveloped.

<p><b>Green Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>Green infrastructure goes beyond traditional site-based landscaping. It requires an assessment of both natural/semi-natural features and biodiversity within the site, and furthers its links with the natural environment of its surroundings and, where appropriate, the wider character of the area. The provision of Green Infrastructure can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporating “living roofs”;</li> <li>• Connecting with existing PROW network;</li> <li>• Using plants and trees which extend existing native habitats around site boundaries; and</li> <li>• The provision of formal and informal recreational spaces (including the provision for children and young people where appropriate).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Green Lung</b></p>	<p>An area of open space within a settlement which contributes to a healthy environment.</p>
<p><b>Gypsies and Travellers</b></p>	<p>Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependents’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.</p>
<p><b>Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)</b></p>	<p>Evidence base document to support the Local Plan outlining the District’s objectively assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Habitat Regulation Assessment</b></p>	<p>Is a recognised step by step process which helps determine likely significant effect of development on a habitat and where appropriate they can be used to assess the adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site. An assessment will examine alternative solutions and provide justification for imperative reasons of over riding public interest for the development (IROPI).</p>
<p><b>Heritage asset</b></p>	<p><b>Heritage Asset</b> – A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage Asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including Local Listing)</p> <p><b>Designated Heritage Asset</b> – A World heritage Site, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.</p>
<p><b>Historic Parks and Gardens</b></p>	<p>A park or garden of special historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II. All designations are made by Historic England.</p>
<p><b>Housing White Paper</b></p>	<p>At the time of this document’s publication (August 2017), the Housing White Paper was a consultation paper on the Government’s proposed housing and</p>

	<p>planning reforms. This was consulted upon between March and May 2017. Whilst it is not Government policy at the moment, it is important that the Council recognises its significance and potential challenges that the White Paper poses whilst producing a new Local Plan.</p>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<p>Basic services necessary for development to take place (e.g. roads, electricity, water and sewerage, education and health facilities).</p>
<b>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)</b>	<p>A document which shows the amount of infrastructure required to facilitate development</p>
<b>Intermediate housing</b>	<p>Owned by a housing association which is sold or rented to eligible households at a cost above social rent levels but below market levels. Applicants must be registered under Help to Buy and can have a household income of up to £80,000 per year. Priority is given to military personnel and, for a limited period, to those with a local connection to the District. Intermediate housing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shared equity housing</b> – purchasers typically buy a 75-80% share of the property with no rent payable to the housing association on the remainder.</li> <li>• <b>Shared ownership housing</b> – purchasers buy a 25-75% share of the property and pay a subsidised rent to the housing association on the remainder.</li> <li>• <b>Intermediate rented housing</b> – generally let on Assured Shorthold tenancies, the rent plus service charge is no more than 80% of the market rent.</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Nature Partnership</b>	<p>The Kent Nature Partnership was awarded Local Nature Partnership (LNP) status by the government in July 2012 to drive positive change in the local natural environment. The Partnership takes a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved in managing the natural environment as a system benefiting biodiversity, people and the local economy.</p>
<b>Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves</b>	<p>Nature reserves managed by Kent Wildlife Trust.</p>
<b>Lead Local Flood Authority</b>	<p>Unitary authorities or County Councils that are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas and for maintaining a register of flood risk assets. They also have lead responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.</p>
<b>Listed Building</b>	<p>A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings of permanent structures (e.g. wells with its curtilage). Designations are made by Historic England.</p>
<b>Living roofs and</b>	<p>Roofs and walls that are partial or completely covered with vegetation and a</p>

<b>walls</b>	growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane. It may also include additional layers such as a root barrier and drainage and irrigation system.
<b>Local List</b>	A range of buildings and structures that together make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the District. The Local List does not provide any additional planning controls but buildings on the list have the status of heritage assets and their conservation is an objective of the NPPF. The inclusion of a building or structure on the list will be a material consideration the Council will take into account when considering planning applications.
<b>Local Nature Reserves</b>	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.
<b>Local Plan</b>	The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
<b>Local Wildlife Site</b>	Local wildlife sites, previously known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), are sites which are important to nature conservation interests in a local context. They are designated by the Kent Wildlife Trust.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>	The document that sets out national planning policies from Government for England and how they are to be applied during the planning process. The NPPF must be taken into account when preparing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. It must also be used as a material consideration when determining planning applications. Further guidance on particular topics is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and is updated regularly to reflect the application of national planning policies ( <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance</a> ).
<b>Neighbourhood Plans</b>	A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
<b>Non-designated heritage assets</b>	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified by the Local Planning Authority as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It can include assets identified by the Local Planning Authority (including Local listing) but does not include any asset formally designated under the relevant legislation i.e. Conservation area, Listed Building or scheduled ancient monument.
<b>Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)</b>	An unconstrained figure based on the latest Government population and household projections, but is not considered as the District's housing target. This evidence is used against other evidence bases gathered to determine the District's housing target.

<b>Pitch for Gypsy and Traveller</b>	There is no set definition of what should be contained within a pitch but it is generally accepted that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating a large trailer and touring caravan, an amenity building, parking space and a small garden area.
<b>Playing Pitch Strategy</b>	A document outlining the needs and supply of playing pitches within a local authority area. The document is prepared in partnership with Sport National Governing Bodies and endorsed by Sport England.
<b>Previously Developed Land (PDL)</b>	Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
<b>Public Right of Way</b>	An adopted right of way available for public use defined on the Definitive Map.
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	A park or garden of special historic interest. They are graded I (highest quality), II* or II. All designations are made by Historic England.
<b>Retail Study</b>	An up-to-date evidence base on the existing and future roles and performance of the District's Town, and Service Centres and assess future demand for retail floorspace in the District over the period to 2035. The study has full regard to the expected levels of growth in Sevenoaks and neighbouring authorities, as well as recent and emerging changes in consumer behaviour.
<b>River Basin Management Plan (RBMPs)</b>	These Management Plans set out how organisations, stakeholders and communities will work together to protect and improve the quality of our water environment. These plans were updated in 2015 and set out how the minimum of 680 (14%) of waters will improve over the next 6 years from around £3 billion investment.
<b>Roadside Nature Reserves</b>	Areas adjacent to road which have been identified, protected and managed by the Kent and Medway Road Verge Project. These areas provide vital wildlife corridors for many species and include a number of scarce and threatened habitats.
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monument</b>	Section 61(12) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 defines an ancient monument as “any scheduled monument” and “ <i>any other monument which in the opinion of the Secretary of State is of the public interest by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching to it</i> ”.
<b>Secured by Design</b>	Secured by Design (SBD) is a police initiative to guide and encourage those engaged within the specification, design and building of new homes to adopt crime prevention measures in the design of their schemes.
<b>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b>	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reasons of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features (e.g. plants, animals, and natural features relating to the Earth's structures).

<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</b>	A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features (e.g. plants, animals and natural features relating to the Earth’s structure).
<b>Social rented housing</b>	Owned by a housing association and let to eligible households in housing need (applicants have been accepted onto the Sevenoaks District Housing Register). Rents are set through the national rent regime but are generally around 50-60% of market rents.
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)</b>	This assessment provides an overview of the methodology, assumptions, uncertainties, tasks undertaken and the links to the wider sustainability appraisal process. It provides policy recommendations and guidance for the application of the Sequential Test, the preparation of flood risk assessments and the use of sustainable drainage systems, within the Council’s administrative boundary.
<b>Strategic Housing &amp; Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)</b>	<p>A Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify sites and broad locations with potential for development;</li> <li>• assess their development potential; and</li> <li>• assess their suitability for development, and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability).</li> </ul> <p>This approach ensures that all land is assessed together as part of plan preparation to identify which sites or broad locations are the most suitable and deliverable for a particular use. The assessment is an important evidence base to inform plan making. However it does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. This is because not all sites considered in the assessment will be suitable for development (e.g. because of policy constraints or if they are unviable). It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet need, but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those needs.</p>
<b>Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)</b>	<p>A Strategic Housing Market Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimate housing need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing.</li> <li>• Determine how the distribution of need and demand varies across the plan area, for example, as between the urban and rural areas.</li> <li>• Consider the future demographic trends and identify the accommodation requirements of specific groups such as homeless households, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, first time buyers, disabled groups, older people, Gypsies and Travellers, and occupational groups such as key workers, student and operational defence personnel.</li> </ul>
<b>Supplementary</b>	SPDs provide further guidance regarding how Local Plan policies should be

<b>Planning Document (SPD)</b>	implemented.
<b>Surface water flooding</b>	Flooding as a result of surface water runoff because of high intensity rainfall when water is ponding or flowing over the ground surface before it enters the underground drainage network or watercourse, or cannot enter it because the network is full to capacity, thus causing what is known as pluvial flooding.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal</b>	Assessment of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the policies and proposals contained with the new Local Plan including how the plan meets the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
<b>Sustainable development</b>	<p>There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;</li> <li>• Moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;</li> <li>• Replacing poor design with better design;</li> <li>• Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and widening the choice of high quality homes.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)</b>	An alternative approach from the traditional ways to manage runoff from buildings and hardstanding. They can reduce the total amount, flow and rate of surface water that runs directly to rivers through stormwater systems.
<b>TBC</b>	To be confirmed
<b>Transport hub</b>	A place where passengers and cargo are exchanged between vehicles or between transport modes. Public transport hubs include train stations, buses and airports.
<b>West Kent Leader Programme</b>	A source of funding available to farmers, growers, foresters, rural businesses and communities to help secure a sustainable future for rural West Kent.