

10.0 Potential New Development Sites

- 10.1 This section assesses the suitability of a number of potential new development sites some of which could be considered as new allocations to meet any future additional employment land requirements determined by Swale Borough Council and informed by this study.
- 10.2 The sites assessed were identified by Swale Borough Council largely based on past development interest or promoted by landowners as part of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment process in October 2008. In total, 49 potential new sites were assessed.³⁶ Potential for expansion of Kent Science Park was considered separately in the previous chapter.
- 10.3 The assessment of each site's suitability for employment use was based on similar criteria to those used for existing sites in Section 5, including strategic road access and local road access; accessibility to labour supply; public transport and services; adjoining sensitive uses; site size and development constraints; and the site's likely attractiveness to the market. In addition, planning factors, the sustainability of the location and conformity with Council aims were taken into account. Individual assessment sheets for each site are contained in Appendix 10 and the site locations are indicated on Plans 10.1-10.3.
- 10.4 The following sections consider these sites grouped by the four main areas - Sittingbourne, Faversham, the Isle of Sheppey, and the rest of the Borough.

Sittingbourne

- 10.5 **Land North East of Sittingbourne** (10.3 ha) is a large low-lying greenfield site on the northern edge of Sittingbourne. It lies adjacent to the recently constructed section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, the Eurolink Four extension site and new housing development at East Hall Farm. The site is being promoted for up to 56,650 m² of mixed employment uses as a further extension area for the Eurolink industrial estate. The site lies within an area of identified flood risk, and close to a special landscape area. The key strength of the site is that it would form a natural extension to the established Eurolink industrial estate, although development of this site would fall outside the effective settlement boundary that has been defined by the construction of the new relief road. This site was rejected for employment uses at the previous Local Plan Inquiry, in part due to concerns about ecological impacts, flooding issues (although mitigation was proposed) and some concerns about the level of development that could be supported by the existing highways network in the absence of the remaining section of the Northern Relief Road being constructed. Collectively, these factors continue to weigh against development of this site, and are likely to require further investigation. Given the existing

³⁶ 10 of the 50 sites were assessed by Swale Borough Council planning officers but reviewed by the consultants

levels of congestion within Eurolink at peak times, completion of the relief road would appear to be an important pre-requisite for further extensions of Eurolink. Overall, this is one of the better potential sites, in a proven employment location where constraints can probably be overcome, but is dependent on improved road access.

- 10.6 **Land South of Kemsley Paper Mill** (3.6 ha) is a sloping former agricultural site immediately adjoining Kemsley Mill, and close to the alignment of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road now under construction. It is being promoted for 18,500 m² of B1/B2/B8 uses, having been rejected for employment uses at the previous Local Plan Inquiry at which some concerns were raised on its potential visual and amenity impacts on nearby properties. The site is also situated close to areas of nature conservation value and the Country Park at Kemsley Marshes. The site's main strengths are its good local road access to the A249, and proximity to existing employment activities at Kemsley Mill and other new employment development taking place at Kemsley Fields. The site would occupy a potentially high profile location on the new Northern Relief Road, if this is constructed. However, this would form a reasonable industrial site but is more sensitive than others in terms of its elevation although still one of the higher performing candidates for a new allocation in this area.
- 10.7 **Land Fronting Milton Creek** (0.4 ha) relates to a narrow strip of land immediately adjacent to Milton Creek, formerly used as a wharf but on the western edge of the Eurolink Industrial Estate. It is currently being promoted for up to 24 live-work units, or 2,000 m² of commercial floorspace. Local road access off Gas Road is reasonable, via a roundabout on Castle Road / Eurolink Way. While currently a low profile location, it is located on the edge of an established and proven employment site, and close to residential areas and services within Sittingbourne. The site's key drawbacks are its small size and narrow shape, which would limit the size or type of development possible, as well as its location in an area of flood risk. Overall, given the constraints that apply in this location, it could accommodate only a limited range of employment uses and would not make a large contribution to the supply of employment space, but would probably be adequate for some small scale workshop units.
- 10.8 **Land at Pheasant Farm East** (10.4 ha) is an undulating greenfield site, which extends from close to the A249 Kemsley junction in the north to Bramblefield Lane in the south. It adjoins an existing residential area to the south-east, but lies outside of the Sittingbourne settlement boundary and within a local strategic gap. The site has no existing road access other than Bramblefield Lane (a small residential cul-de-sac), so improved access would need to be taken off the B2005 Grovehurst Road. While close to the existing employment areas at Kemsley Fields, the position of this site relates more closely to existing residential areas on the edge of Sittingbourne. The site is being promoted for commercial, transport haulage and distribution uses, having been promoted previously for 350 dwellings. Overall, the site scores well against the assessment criteria, and offers potential to accommodate employment uses

subject to new road access and junctions and a buffer to the residential properties being provided.

- 10.9 **Land at Great Grovehurst Farm** (12.4 ha) is also being promoted for commercial, transport haulage and distribution uses. It is a self-contained site adjacent to the A249 junction at Kemsley, bounded by roads and the Sheppey railway line but some existing residential areas adjoin the site to the south. The site occupies a prominent position close to the A249 / Swale Way, and is close to the existing employment allocations at Kemsley Fields, some of which are being built out. It does, however, lie outside of the existing Sittingbourne settlement boundary and within a local strategic gap, although in some ways is a natural infilling of land already with established boundaries. This is a good site in terms of the assessment criteria, and offers potential to accommodate the types of industrial uses being promoted, but subject to new road access and junctions and a buffer to the residential properties being provided.
- 10.10 **Land off Northern Relief Road** (11.8 ha) lies to the north of Great Grovehurst Farm, and is being promoted for 54,000 m² B1/B2/B8 floorspace for which there is reported to be some developer interest. It is a large triangular greenfield site, generally level, and occupying a prominent position adjacent to the junction of Swale Way with the A249. The site lies close to the existing employment allocations at Kemsley Fields, some of which are being built out. It does however lie outside of the existing Sittingbourne settlement boundary, and its development would significantly impact the setting of the strategic gap between Sittingbourne and Iwade village to the north-west, and have the effect of extending development further north along the A249. Overall, this site appears as one of the better employment sites and adequate for industrial uses, but its potential impact on the strategic gap is a significant factor weighing against it.
- 10.11 **Land North of Quinton Road** (61 ha) is a substantial site on the western edge of Sittingbourne between the A249 and Sheppey branch line, occupying an elevated position and sloping to the south. It has previously been promoted, and rejected, for housing development in part due to concerns about development within a strategic gap and visual impacts. It lies outside of the Sittingbourne settlement boundary, but includes a small area identified for community uses. The site has no existing road access other than Bramblefield Lane (a small residential cul-de-sac), and while close to existing residential areas, there are few other services available in the immediate vicinity. Access to strategic routes would involve passing through residential areas. The site does, however, lie close to Kemsley railway station. This part of Sittingbourne is not currently an employment location to any great extent, and sites to the north at Kemsley Fields already appear to be meeting much of the demand for sites close to the A249. However, the site's proximity to the urban area and A249 suggests that it may have some potential to meet future employment needs in the longer-term, probably through mixed-use development. Any development here would require significant upgrading of the local road access to facilitate the scale of development, and would represent a significant

extension beyond the existing settlement boundary into open countryside. Overall, this is one of the poorer potential employment sites in the Sittingbourne area.

10.12

Bobbing Court Farm (4.1 ha) lies at the junction of Quinton Road and Sheppey Way, about 0.5 km north of the junction with the A2 with access passing through Bobbing village. The site is mainly open pasture but also a mix of older farm buildings, some apparently in business use. It is surrounded by open countryside, but close to some residential dwellings and in the village and some limited services. The site provides a reasonably prominent location with no obvious constraints, which is well related to both strategic routes and close to the edge of Sittingbourne. Overall, this site performs reasonably against the assessment criteria and may have potential to accommodate some small-scale employment uses allowing continued use of the existing buildings, although Bobbing village has no formal settlement boundary in the Local Plan to establish development in this location. Any such proposals could be considered through a general LDF policy on rural employment uses without necessarily requiring a specific allocation.

10.13

Land at Bobbing Hill (2.0 ha) is situated south of the A2/A249 junction, west of Sittingbourne. It is agricultural land, level and generally regular in shape and being promoted for 5,250 m² of B1 or B8 development, but lies outside of the Sittingbourne settlement boundary in an open countryside location within a local strategic gap. There are sporadic residential and other developments in the general vicinity of the site, but it is otherwise remote from any local services, and does not relate particularly well to the needs of any existing settlement. It was rejected for employment development at the previous Local Plan Inquiry, largely on local road access and general sustainability grounds. While the site offers some potential to accommodate small-scale employment uses, it is one of the poorer sites for employment development and its location within a strategic gap and sustainability factors also weigh against it.

Ref No	Site	Area (ha)	Score	Suitable for	Quality
S3.6	Land off Northern Relief Road	11.8	23	B1, B2, B8	Good
S3.2	Land South of Kemsley Paper Mill	3.6	23	B1, B2, B8	
S3.5	Land at Great Grovehurst Farm	12.4	23	B1, B2, B8	
S3.3	Land at Pheasant Farm East	10.4	22	B1, B2, B8	
S3.1	Land North East of Sittingbourne	10.3	20	B1, B2, B8	
S3.8	Land Fronting Milton Creek	0.4	19	B1	Average
S3.9	Bobbing Court Farm, Sheppey Way	4.1	18	B1	
S3.4	Land North of Quinton Road	61.0	17	B1, B2, B8	
S3.7	Land at Bobbing Hill	2.0	17	B1, B2, B8	
Total		116.0			

Table 33 Potential Employment Sites in Sittingbourne

10.14

Table 33 summarises the ranking of the nine identified Sittingbourne sites and their suitability for different employment uses. This indicates that there are five sites which are classified as 'good', all of which are located around the A249 junction and close to the existing employment allocations at Kemsley Fields.

Together these five sites could contribute some 48 ha of employment land although they are primarily suited to industrial uses.

Faversham

- 10.15 The **Land at Abbey Park** site (67.5 ha) comprises a very large greenfield area on the north east urban edge of Faversham town. Despite being relatively close to strategic roads, road access to site is via narrow, local and partly residential roads, and significant highway improvements would be needed. Although generally level, part of the site faces flood risk. This site has recently been promoted by its landowners for 95,000 m² of B1-B8 uses and 350 dwellings, although it is understood the site has now been sold and the owner's intentions are now unclear. It has also been promoted in the past for a large business park but this was rejected through the Local Plan and on appeal for various highway and environmental reasons but mainly because no need was seen for such large scale employment development in Faversham, with a strategy of smaller scale organic growth preferred. Overall, despite its large size, the site ranks fairly low largely due to poor road accessibility, environmental factors and remoteness from proven employment locations. It would also provide far too much land relative to what Faversham requires while development of parts of the site may not be able to sustain the necessary infrastructure improvement costs.
- 10.16 **Land at Lady Dane Farm** (27 ha) is a greenfield site on the eastern edge of Faversham, east of Love Lane and south of Graveney Road, currently in agricultural use. This site forms part of a larger greenfield site, referred to here as **Land East of Faversham**, which totals 67.5 ha. Together these sites are being promoted by different landowners for mixed use residential and commercial development, with 8.5 ha indicated for office and industrial uses, or about 95,000 sq.m. This location lies within 1.5 km of town centre services and close to residential areas, but with no services in the immediate vicinity. Although there is no access to the A2 at present, there is scope to provide this, potentially via Love Lane although this would require significant improvement of this junction and narrow residential road. Although potentially a prominent site at a gateway to Faversham, this is not a proven employment location. Potentially these are some of the better located sites around Faversham, with relatively few development constraints. However, the larger site was previously rejected as a Local Plan allocation because no need was seen for such large scale employment development in Faversham, its impact on Junction 7 of the M2, and because its development would extend the Faversham boundary into countryside with adverse visual impact. These factors largely remain valid with this scale of new site unlikely to be required for employment uses. The extent and cost of highway improvements needed may make it difficult to justify developing only a small part of the site for employment uses alone, and therefore some higher value uses such as housing could be required to fund infrastructure. A mixed use development with some element of employment uses could therefore be an option.

- 10.17 **Triangular site, East of Love Lane** (3.0 ha) comprises a triangular greenfield site on the south east edge of Faversham, bounded by the railway line and the A2. A new site access to the busy A2 may be difficult and, while there is potential for new access off Love Lane, this is a relatively narrow road and would need an improved junction to the A2. Proximity to the railway line may detract from its attractiveness for non-industrial uses and the site is not being promoted for development by its owners. Although this appears a reasonably sustainable location on the edge of Faversham, reasonably close to residential areas and the town centre and one of the better potential employment sites in this area, it is relatively small and would need high quality development to preserve the setting of town. It therefore has potential for employment development, particularly well designed, small business units, although this may discourage new development in more central parts of the town.
- 10.18 **Land at Duke of Kent Junction** (14.3 ha) comprises a steeply sloping greenfield site over 2 km from the edge of Faversham and in a rural location with no nearby services or residential areas, and very limited public transport in immediate vicinity. Its main advantages are close proximity to the A299 and M2 junction and no sensitive uses nearby, although local site access is not ideal and there would potential for some visual impact from the A299. This site is being promoted by its landowner for roadside services/lorry park uses. There are existing roadside services on the A299 only a few kilometres away at Waterham although the nearest on the M2 are beside junction 4 at Medway. It is understood that there may some need for park and ride or lorry parking sites in the area. If so, the sloping land does not appear well suited to lorry park use, although it may allow visual impact of this or extensive car parking to be mitigated. Although it performs quite well on the assessment criteria, this site is not sufficiently well related to Faversham to meet general employment needs but, if strong need for parking uses near Faversham exists, this site would have some advantages to accommodate it.
- 10.19 **Bayview Farm, Painters Forstall** (0.3 ha) forms a small rural site, largely comprising old farm buildings on the edge of a small village with poor public transport links. It lies some 5 km from Faversham's labour supply and services and road access is via narrow rural roads. The site is being promoted by its owner for either 9-12 dwellings or 2,000 m² of B1 space. Although one of the poorer potential sites and unsustainable for larger scale employment use, the site would probably function reasonably for very small scale, local office or workshop uses and could contribute to rural employment needs. However, given its small scale and uncertainty of demand for employment uses, such development might be better facilitated by a policy on rural employment uses in the LDF, rather than give the site a specific allocation.
- 10.20 **Queens Court Farm, Ospringe** (2.5 ha) is a medium sized, level site comprising farmland and associated buildings. It lies in a rural location and within a conservation area and contains some listed buildings as well as being within an area of flood risk. Road access to the site is via narrow rural roads. This site is now being promoted for housing and employment uses. An allocation was

previously rejected through the last Local Plan process partly due to the site's unsustainable location and the constraints of listed buildings. While this site would have some potential to provide for small scale, rural employment uses, its access, environmental and heritage constraints make this one of the least preferable locations. With a supportive LDF policy, this would not prevent employment uses coming forward via a planning application if the constraints can be resolved.

- 10.21 The **Applecraft Centre site** (6.7 ha) is large site adjoining the A2 and containing a craft centre, tearooms, a garden centre with extensive car parking, some distribution uses and greenfield land to the rear. It has potential to form a high profile site and lies near an existing employment area. While adjoining the A2, junction access would need to be improved for significant employment development. Again, this site would establish significant development south of the A2 although visual impact from the M2 appears less of an issue. The site already contains significant commercial uses and has no obvious constraints for further development but is not being promoted for new employment uses. Overall, this appears one of the better potential sites provided adequate road access to the A2 can be provided.
- 10.22 **Land East of Ashford Road** (13.6 ha) is a large greenfield site, regular in shape, and gently sloping between the A2 and M2. The site lies reasonably close to Faversham residential areas and services, although separated from them by the busy A2. Although very close to junction 6 of the M2, road access to the A251 is difficult because of residential properties along that frontage. Proximity to these residential uses could also constrain some types of employment development although less so for B1 business uses. However, the site is large relative to Faversham's likely needs for business park type space, and major B1 development here would conflict with the economic strategy for the town, while traffic generation on to the A251/A2 could be problematic. Using only part of the site for employment uses may make it difficult to justify necessary infrastructure improvements. This site would also bring significant new development south of the A2 although visibility impacts should be limited in views from M2 due to the bridge across the motorway and the backdrop of residential uses on Ashford Road. Overall, these factors make this an average quality site with significant disadvantages that make it one of the less suitable for meeting Faversham's future employment needs.
- 10.23 **Perry Court Farm, Ospringe** (7.5 ha) is a large greenfield site close to the southern edge of Faversham, across the A2. It lies reasonably close to Faversham town centre services/public transport and near residential areas but with no services or facilities in the immediate vicinity. Close to the A2 and Junction 6 of the M2, local access via the A251 would need to be improved significantly. The site adjoins a secondary school to the north and with some residential uses nearby. It is being promoted by its owners for 100 dwelling units and 10,000 m² of commercial space. This site offers reasonable potential for some employment uses and is one of the better locations for further consideration. Development would require careful layout to avoid impact on

adjoining uses, with B1 uses closer to the school, but the size of site should allow this.

- 10.24 **Land fronting London Road** (4.8 ha) is a greenfield site in a prominent location at the A2/Western Link junction with a potential gateway role for Faversham. While strategic road access would potentially be good, achieving good access to the site may be difficult so close to the junction. Although it lies within the defined town boundary, development of this site could affect the green setting of Faversham and it would require high quality design. Given its prominent location facing the A2, the site could have some potential as a flagship employment site for the town but it adjoins an employment allocation not taken up after many years. The site was also previously rejected during the Local Plan process partly on the impact of development on the rural aspect of the approach to Faversham. Design factors, the size of the site, need for structural landscaping and nearness to residential on one side point to B1 uses although proximity to the A2 and railway line may lower the site's environment and attractiveness. Overall, this is a reasonably good employment site but with greater constraints than the Western Link allocation nearby and significant drawbacks to be overcome through detailed design.
- 10.25 **The Former Macknade Garden Centre, Selling Road** (0.3 ha) is a small site formerly in garden centre use near the A2 south of Faversham. Within 2 km of junctions 6 or 7 of the M2, strategic road access is potentially good, but this is only reached via Selling Road and a busy junction with the A2. Although within 1.5 km of Faversham town centre facilities, public transport access is very limited. There are no obvious constraints to development, or sensitive adjoining uses, but the site is small and not near any established employment sites. Although these factors do not make it a particularly good site in its own right, it could offer better potential if combined with some adjoining sites being promoted.
- 10.26 Table 34 summarises the ranking of the 12 identified Faversham sites and their suitability for different uses. This indicates that three of the sites, with 74.2 ha in total, offer potentially good quality development sites for certain types of employment uses, although one of these, Lady Dane Farm, has planning drawbacks and is of too large a scale relative to Faversham's likely needs.

Ref No	Site	Area (ha)	Score	Suitable for	Quality
F3.8	Land at Lady Dane Farm and Land East of Faversham	67.5*	21	B1, B2, B8	Good
F3.9	Land at Lady Dane Farm	(27.0)	20	B1, B2, B8	
F3.6	Land at Applecraft Centre	6.7	20	B1 (a)	
F3.3	Land at Perry Court Farm	7.5	19	B1, B2, B8	Average
F3.5	Land fronting London Road	4.8	19	B1, B2, B8	
F3.2	Land at Duke of Kent Junction	14.3	19	Parking uses	
F3.10	Triangular site, east of Love Lane	3.0	18	B1	
F3.12	Former Macknade Garden Centre, Selling road	0.3	18	B1, B2, B8	
F3.4	Land east of Ashford Road	13.6	17	B1, B2, B8	Poor
F3.7	Land at Abbey Park	67.5	16	B1	
F3.11	Queens Court Farm, Ospringe	2.5	14	Small workshops/offices	
F3.1	Bayview Farm, Painters Forstall	0.3	10	Small workshops/offices	
	TOTAL	188.0			

Table 34 Potential Employment Sites in Faversham * Note: includes 27 ha assessed as F3.9 Land at Lady Dane Farm

Isle of Sheppey

10.27

Land West of Whiteway Road (12.5 ha) occupies a prominent site adjacent to the A249 close to the Whiteway Roundabout. The site is not currently being promoted for development. It lies close to existing employment areas, namely the Aesica plant to the south-west, and residential areas and limited local services within Queenborough. The whole site lies within an area of identified flood risk but with existing sea defences, and is part traversed by a drainage canal. The site is divided by Whiteway Road into two parts; the northern section is currently used for open storage of vehicles with an existing access road, and was identified in previous Local Plans as a potential alternative access point to the Port of Sheerness. Consideration at the previous Local Plan inquiry indicated that the Port no longer wished to pursue this option. More intensive employment development may be acceptable if an extension to the existing Aesica plant, which already occupies land to the west of Whiteway Road, is justified at some future point. However, a specific employment allocation is unlikely to be required for this purpose. The southern part of the site is more constrained. It lies outside of the settlement boundary, is subject to a number of nature conservation and landscape designations, and is crossed by a drainage canal. It also sits between two other allocated employment sites which have not yet been developed. Overall, this ranks as one of the better potential employment sites assessed in Sheppey, with good local road access and no sensitive uses nearby. However, while existing allocated sites for employment uses remain available nearby, there is limited rationale for the more constrained and sensitive southern part of this site being developed for employment uses.

- 10.28 **Land at Neats Court / Cowstead Corner** (2.9 ha) refers to an area of previously agricultural land between the A249 close to the Cowstead Corner roundabout, and the existing Neats Court employment allocation. The site is being promoted for 13,000 m² of B1 / B2/ B8 uses. It currently has no local road access, and planning permission was recently refused for a new agricultural access point onto the A249 on highway grounds. On both accessibility and sustainability grounds, it would therefore appear that any future development of the site will be entirely reliant on the adjoining Neats Court allocation being developed. There may be scope to provide new access to this site via the Neats Court development. In some ways, this relatively small site could form a natural extension of the allocated site if required; it is one of the better Sheppey sites assessed and occupies a high profile location on the main approach road to Sheppey. A specific allocation for employment uses would appear premature at this time pending development of Neats Court, but this could be reviewed in future as development of that site progresses.
- 10.29 **Land North of Cowstead Corner** (150 ha) comprises a substantial greenfield site, stretching north of the B2231 to the southern edges of Halfway Houses. The site is not currently being promoted for development, although interest has been expressed previously for housing development. The topography is undulating, and the site is situated outside of any settlement boundaries and falls within a designated local countryside gap. Part of the site consists of higher ground, which is likely to constrain development and may result in adverse visual impacts. The site is well located relative to the major Neats Court employment allocation and Queenborough-Rushenden regeneration area, as well as the A249 / Sheppey Crossing. The size of the site indicates that mixed-use development would be the most likely option, but in terms of employment development, this is not currently a proven location. At the same time, the broad strategy for the Isle of Sheppey is to concentrate significant new employment development at Queenborough-Rushenden, and any substantial employment development on this site could to some extent compete with this, while the site is less well placed to meet more localised needs within Halfway Houses. Overall, while this site has some strengths, it achieves only an average ranking relative to other potential Sheppey sites. It is also very large compared with likely demand in this area and generally appears less suitable than other sites for meeting future employment needs, with landscape and strategic gap issues also weighing against any substantial development here.
- 10.30 **Sheerness Holiday Park, Minster** (12.4 ha) is an existing holiday park located between Sheerness and Halfway Houses. The site is currently being promoted for B2 industrial, commercial and retail uses. To access main routes, traffic generated from the site must pass through the built-up areas of either Sheerness or Halfway Houses, which are both relatively constrained routes. It is not clear how well any employment uses would relate to the site's existing activities as a holiday camp if these were being retained. For example, clear separation and an alternative access point would need to be provided. Overall, this site only achieves an average ranking. It is not an established employment

location (although an existing breaker's yard adjoins the site) and there would appear to be limited need to introduce employment uses to this area. The site also lies outside of any settlement boundaries, adjoins areas of identified nature conservation value and within an area of flood risk. It does not therefore emerge as one of the stronger candidates to meet future employment needs in Sheppey. These factors would also apply if the entirety of the site became available for development.

- 10.31 **Land East of Scocles Road, near Minster** (74 ha) is a large area of undulating open countryside, adjoining but just outside the Minster settlement boundary, close to a major housing allocation being developed. It is not currently being promoted for development. The scale of the site would suggest mixed-use development is the most likely option, although the local road network already appears under pressure from the new housing development occurring nearby. In employment terms, this is not a proven location. Any large scale development could again compete with the intention to focus employment development at Neats Court. The site could contribute to meeting local employment needs in Minster, although is less well placed geographically to meet the fairly small-scale needs of eastern Sheppey more generally. Any significant development on this site is likely to necessitate upgrading of local road infrastructure, in particular the busy Scocles Road / B2231 junction. Overall, this is not one of the better potential sites in Sheppey and a less strong candidate for a specific allocation for employment uses. However, if major development of the site for other uses occurs in future, for example residential, some small-scale provision of employment space aimed at meeting local needs could be incorporated for sustainability reasons.
- 10.32 **Land West of Vanity Farm Holiday Camp, Leysdown-on-Sea** (5.6 ha) is a large area of open agricultural land of the western edge of Leysdown. Generally level and regular in shape, the site has no existing road access and so would require a new junction onto Leysdown Road. It is surrounded by open countryside to the south and west, and the Vanity Farm holiday camp and a residential care home to the east. The site is not currently being promoted for development, but was proposed for housing at the previous Local Plan Inquiry where it was dismissed on grounds of incursion into open countryside and visual impact. These factors continue to weigh against development of this site, which lies outside the built-up area of Leysdown and is the least good potential site assessed in Sheppey. Despite its drawbacks, it may have some potential to meet smaller scale employment needs in Leysdown and eastern Sheppey, although this would probably require public sector intervention. The size of this site is large relative to likely local demand and a smaller part of it with roadside frontage may be adequate if any allocation were made.
- 10.33 **Harts Park Camp, Leysdown-on-Sea** (13 ha) comprises a holiday chalet park on the edge of Leysdown urban area. While a reasonably large, level and regularly shaped site, it suffers from remoteness from major centres and poor access to the main road network and any sizeable labour supply. Adjoining holiday and residential uses may also constrain some B class uses. While unlikely to

attract private sector development, with public sector support, this site could potentially accommodate a small scale workshop/office scheme aimed at very localised needs.

10.34

Table 35 summarises the ranking of the seven identified Isle of Sheppey sites and their suitability for different uses. This indicates that the two sites classified as 'good' are those closest to existing employment areas and the A249 for strategic access; these would provide over 15 ha of employment land. There are, however, some other sites which could contribute to meeting more localised employment needs in other parts of Sheppey if required in future.

Ref No	Site	Area (ha)	Score	Suitable for	Quality
SH3.1	Land West of Whiteway Road, Queenborough	12.5	22	B1, B2, B8	Good
SH3.6	Land at Neats Court/ Cowstead Corner	2.9	20	B1, B2, B8	
SH3.3	Land East of Scocles Road, nr Minster	74.0	18	B1, B2, B8	Average
SH3.5	Sheerness Holiday Park, Minster	12.4	17	B1	
SH3.2	Land North of Cowstead Corner, nr Queenborough	150	17	B1, B2, B8	
SH3.4	Land West of Vanity Farm Holiday Camp, Leysdown-on-Sea	5.6	16	Small workshops/offices	Poor
SH3.7	Harts Park Camp, Leysdown	13.0	13	Small workshops/offices	
	TOTAL	270.4			

Table 35 Potential Employment Sites on the Isle of Sheppey

Rest of the Borough

10.35

Waterham Park, Highstreet Road, Waterham site (6.5 ha) is a greenfield site just off the A299 on the eastern edge of the Borough about 2 km from Whitstable in Canterbury district. It lies between roadside services and a small industrial area. Access from the A299 is reasonable and it is within a few kilometres of an M2 junction. The site is being promoted for 227 dwellings or 2,220 m² of commercial floorspace. It would offer a reasonably high profile location beside a major road and close to established industrial area. However, development on this site was previously rejected by Local Plan Inspector due to its unsustainable location, incursion into attractive countryside and landscape impact. It is also rather distant from the main Swale settlements to meet the Borough's employment needs and would rely entirely on car transport. Its access and other strengths make it an average quality employment site but these do not outweigh its sustainability drawbacks and probably do not justify this scale of expansion of employment uses here to serve the wider needs of the Borough.

10.36

Land adjoining A299, Thanet Way, Waterham (1.5) is a small greenfield site lying between an A299 junction and a transport depot and car retailing uses on the eastern edge of Borough. Road access is very good and the site is being

promoted by the landowner for 4,000 m² of new commercial space. Surrounded by roads, farmland and established industrial/commercial uses, this is also a reasonably high profile location beside the A299. However, like the previous site, it lies in a less sustainable location relatively remote from main Swale settlements and would rely on car based transport. Again, this is potentially an average quality employment site but it is difficult to rank this location highly in terms of being able to effectively meet the Borough's future employment needs.

10.37

Land South of Newington Industrial Estate (0.8 ha) comprises a small parcel of land, formerly an orchard, immediately to the rear of the existing Newington Industrial Estate. It is level and regular in shape, with a line of trees providing some screening from the open countryside to the south. The site is being promoted for 4,000 m² of commercial space, with reported interest from tenants of the existing industrial estate. It has been rejected as an employment allocation at two previous Local Plan inquiries, and was subject to an unsuccessful planning appeal in the early 1990s. The most recent objections related to highway impacts and intrusion into open countryside. This area of land would form a natural extension to the existing industrial estate, which as noted in Chapter 5 of this report, is an established location that appears to perform reasonably well for lower-cost operations that might be bad neighbour uses elsewhere. The existing estate is not allocated, but its proximity and proven market attractiveness give some support for more employment development at this site. The existing estate is not itself an allocated site, and so a specific allocation to facilitate its extension does not appear justified here. The potential extension site performs reasonably well among other possible sites outside the main settlements, sharing the access and other advantages of the established estate, while retention of some tree screening could minimise visual impacts. It would appear to offer a logical extension of the main estate, if further employment space is considered desirable in this area. However, this could be done through the planning application process where any highway and visual impacts could be assessed in detail.

10.38

Land off Church Road, Newington (5.5 ha) is a wooded and undulating greenfield site on the eastern edge of Newington, which it is understood has some biodiversity constraints. The site is being promoted for 200 residential units and 3,000 m² of B1 employment and community uses. The site currently has no dedicated road access and very poor linkages to main routes such as the A2, with existing routes constrained by low railway bridges and passing through residential areas. In sustainability terms, the site benefits from proximity to residential areas, and some limited services and public transport routes. On this basis, the site achieves an average ranking and would probably be adequate for very small scale, local office or workshop uses which do not require large vehicles or generate significant volumes of traffic. This would require a much smaller site area but could contribute to local employment needs particularly if it formed part of any larger housing development in this location.

- 10.39 **Land at Frognal Lane, Teynham** (7.3 ha) is a large level site on the western edge of Teynham, close to the A2. A former brick pit, part of the site is now laid out with sports pitches, and is adjoined by residential properties on most sides. The site is currently being promoted for 32,850 m² of mixed employment uses, with a new access road from the A2 being created on adjoining land to the west of Frognal Lane. The site achieves an average rating as an employment site, its key constraints being proximity to residential dwellings on three sides, and poor local road access. Frognal Lane is a narrow rural route, with a particularly difficult junction where it joins the A2. Proposals for housing/mixed-use development on this site were rejected at the previous Local Plan Inquiry on the grounds that the size of development was disproportionate to the scale and function of Teynham's position within the Swale settlement hierarchy. This site may be suitable to meet some small-scale local employment needs, subject to its constraints of proximity to residential uses and the need to improve local road access.
- 10.40 **Land East of Station Road, Teynham** (4.3 ha) is a former orchard and open greenfield land on the eastern edge of Teynham, regular in shape and generally level. There are no obvious constraints other than a lack of current road access apart from Nobel Close, a small residential cul-de-sac off Station Road. The latter provides reasonable access, although the junction with the A2 is constrained and frequently busy. The site is adjoined by residential uses on three sides, with open land to the east. The site is not currently being promoted for development, but was promoted for housing and some B1 employment space at the Local Plan Inquiry where it was rejected on grounds of scale relative to Teynham's position in the Swale settlement hierarchy. This is one of the better potential employment sites in the area as well as a reasonably sustainable location on the edge of the village, close to some local services, residential areas and public transport routes including a train station. Overall, if further employment allocations are required here, this site offers better potential than other sites to meet some smaller-scale employment activities, for example small business units, although development alongside residential uses would require careful design and layout, while local road access would also require significant improvement.
- 10.41 **Mayfield Teynham** (0.3 ha) is a small, former allotments site on the edge of the village of Teynham and with direct access on to the A2. Local road access is potentially good, and the site lies close to village facilities, although it is 10 km from the M2. Although there are no obvious physical constraints to development, it has residential uses adjoining on two sides. There are some existing employment uses near Teynham but not beside this site. On balance, this is a lower average site that would be unlikely to attract any sizeable B class development but may be suitable for some smaller scale units aimed at more localised needs. It may, however, be difficult to attract private developer interest in this untried location.
- 10.42 **Land off Maidstone Road, East of Junction 5, M2** (3.4 ha) is a vacant agricultural site close to the junction between the M2 and A249. It is currently

being promoted for single B1/B2/B8 employment uses and / or for a lorry park. Strategic and local road access (via Maidstone Road) is good, and the site is potentially a high profile location alongside main routes. The site slopes gently to the north, but is regular in shape. While some residential uses are located close by, this is a remote location in terms of labour and local services in Swale's main settlements. Overall, this site does not rank highly in terms of being able to effectively meet the Borough's future employment needs. In terms of the proposed lorry park use, the site is well placed in terms of strategic access, and its proximity to Junction 5 itself. The proposal would however need to be considered in terms of traffic impacts on the already congested junction, with upgrading of the local road access and significant earthworks required.

10.43 **Danaway Cold Stores, Danaway** (1.7 ha) is located along Maidstone Road, where planning permission was granted in 2006 for conversion of the former cold store unit into a document storage facility and some ancillary offices as part of a farm diversification scheme. The site is now being promoted for 28 dwellings and about 5,000 m² of commercial space. It lies slightly below the level of the road, but is generally level and regular in shape with no obvious constraints. Overall, this site is one of the better potential locations assessed and already has some employment function, if rather low-profile. It would therefore be suited to further employment development that contributed to meeting localised employment needs in this area. However, any such proposals could be considered through a general LDF policy on rural employment uses without necessarily requiring a specific allocation.

10.44 **Hooks Hole, Chestnut Street** (1.8 ha) includes some farm buildings and two modern warehousing units, located just off Maidstone Road. The site has good overall road access, lying approximately 3km north of M2 Junction 5 and 0.5 km south of the A2/A249 junction. It is surrounded by open countryside, but close to other linear development along Maidstone Road. There are, however, few services or other facilities close by. The topography of the site falls away from the road, and the existing access point is narrow. Overall, this site performs reasonably although is rather low-profile. It would therefore be suited to further employment development that contributed to meeting localised employment needs in this area, although Chestnut Street does not have a defined settlement boundary. However, any such proposals could be considered through a general LDF policy on rural employment uses without necessarily requiring a specific allocation.

10.45 **Pond Farm, Borden** (1.8 ha) consists of redundant agricultural buildings and other vacant agricultural land, situated south of the village of Borden. The site is currently being promoted for up to 75 dwellings or 9,000 m² of light industrial floorspace. This would represent a significant scale of employment development in what is otherwise a relatively remote rural location, away from major settlements and accessed only via local roads. While the site may offer potential for some smaller-scale employment uses to meet local needs, any larger scale form of employment development is unlikely to be sustainable in this location, unless specifically designed to complement new housing

development in this area. Overall, this ranked as one of the poorer sites assessed but still has some potential for smaller-scale employment uses to meet rural needs and allow reuse of redundant agricultural buildings. Such proposals could be brought forward through a planning application and assessed against a general LDF policy on rural employment sites.

- 10.46 **Street Farm, Borden** (1.5 ha) comprises a number of farm storage buildings in fairly poor condition and open land on the eastern edge of Borden. This is a relatively remote rural location, away from major settlements and accessed only via local roads. While the site may offer potential for some smaller-scale employment uses to meet local needs, any larger scale form of employment development is unlikely to be sustainable in this location, unless specifically designed to complement new housing development in this area. Overall, this ranked as one of the poorer sites assessed but still has some potential for smaller-scale employment uses to meet rural needs or to allow reuse of the existing buildings. Such proposals could be brought forward through a planning application and assessed against a general LDF policy on rural employment sites.
- 10.47 **Firs Farm, Deans Hills Road, Bredgar** (0.25 ha) forms a small rural site, consisting of redundant farm outbuildings and open yard. It lies close to the village of Bredgar, but is generally remote from local services and is accessed via narrow rural routes. The site is being promoted by its owners for 1,150 m² of commercial uses. It was assessed as one of the poorer potential sites, largely due to its small size, poor road access and general remoteness. Although unsustainable for larger scale employment activities, the site could probably provide for some very small-scale workshop activities, and contribute to meeting rural employment needs in this area. As noted above in relation to other rural sites, this type of development on such a small site could be subject to a general policy on rural employment uses in the LDF.
- 10.48 **Sale Field** (3.5 ha) is a greenfield site located along Ruins Barn Road, located south of Sittingbourne and to the north of Kent Science Park. Road access in this area is generally via constrained local and rural roads, with access to more strategic routes via Sittingbourne town centre. The site is surrounded by open countryside, with some residential properties located to the north east along Ruins Barn Road. This is a relatively peripheral and low profile location, with few services located in the immediate vicinity. These constraints suggest that the site is unlikely to be suitable for any significant scale of employment development, or as a potential overspill site for the Science Park. The site could probably provide for some very small-scale workshop activities, and contribute to meeting rural employment needs in this area; a specific allocation is probably not justified but a development proposal could be supported by a general LDF policy on rural employment uses.
- 10.49 **Oak Tree Farm, Rodmersham Green** (1.4 ha) includes a former chestnut fence manufacturing site, now vacant, located on the southern edge of Highsted village. This is a relatively remote location, with poor road access and limited

local services. Although unsustainable for larger scale employment activities, the site could probably provide for some very small-scale workshop activities for which it has operated in the past, and therefore contribute to meeting rural employment needs in this area. Any such use would need to take account of the constrained local road access and proximity to residential properties immediately to the north of the site. Such proposals could be brought forward through a planning application and assessed against a general LDF policy on rural employment sites.

- 10.50 **Land at Pheasant Farm West, Bobbing** (11 ha) comprises a large area of agricultural land along the old Sheppey Way, close to the villages of Bobbing and Iwade. The site is proposed for commercial / transport depot uses relocating from Sittingbourne. The site has reasonable strategic road access being located about 1.5 km north of the A249 junction, but local road access passes some residential properties. The site adjoins the existing Floplast depot to the south, is bounded by the A249 to the east and with an existing scrapyard to the west. It lies outside any settlement boundaries, and there are no facilities or services in the immediate vicinity, although Iwade village is nearby. Overall, the site achieves an average ranking but offers some potential to meet local employment needs with some small-scale industrial and distribution uses, taking advantage of its relatively good accessibility from strategic routes and lack of other obvious constraints. However, more significant employment development would not be appropriate given the poor sustainability credentials of this location.
- 10.51 **Neptune Orchard, Lower Halstow** (2.4 ha) comprises vacant agricultural land and some equestrian uses on the eastern edge of Lower Halstow village. The site is currently being promoted for up to 60 houses or some light commercial uses, although no floorspace type or amount is indicated. This is a large site relative to the size of the village, outside the existing settlement boundary and within an area of high landscape value. It is also level and appears relatively unconstrained. While there is access to some local services and labour supply, this is a relatively remote rural location away from major routes and accessed via narrow roads passing through the village. While it may offer some potential to meet local employment needs, there does not appear demand for any significant scale of development. Overall, this was assessed as one of the poorer potential sites in this area. Given the uncertainties about the likelihood of any demand for employment uses, as elsewhere, any proposals for development of the site could be assessed against a general LDF policy on rural employment uses rather than making a specific allocation.
- 10.52 **Cambray Works, Stickfast Lane, Bobbing** (2.0 ha) and **Land North of Cambray Works** (3.6 ha) are adjoining sites in the same ownership at this location to the north of Bobbing, approximately 1 km east of Sheppey Way. They are considered here jointly as the same issues apply to both. The existing works site includes former farm buildings converted to provide B1 office space (permission granted in 2007) and open storage for a construction company, and a storage facility used by the Environment Agency. Adjoining the site is a

terrace of three dwellings, known as 'Cambray Cottages'. A further 1,150 m² of commercial floorspace is proposed on this site. The land adjoining to the north comprises a former orchard, and is a relatively large, level site, regular in shape, proposed for 1,850 m² of commercial floorspace.

- 10.53 Both of these sites are in a fairly remote rural location, surrounded by open countryside, away from services and any significant residential areas. Local road access via Stickfast Lane is reasonable, while Sheppey Way provides a good link to the A249. The site already has an employment function, and further development would contribute to ensuring the re-use of these former agricultural buildings. Aside from local road access, no other obvious constraints are apparent. Reflecting these factors, these sites were assessed as among the poorer quality locations for new employment uses. Despite this, they may have some potential to meet localised rural employment needs, but only with a scale of development appropriate to the location and the capacity of local roads, and not adversely affecting the adjoining cottage dwellings. These do not appear strong candidates for a specific allocation, but any proposals for small scale development could be considered against a general LDF policy on rural employment uses.
- 10.54 **Lamberhurst, Dargate** (21.3 ha) comprises a complex of employment uses in former agricultural buildings within a large open area of greenfield land in open countryside. This is a remote location near the eastern edge of the Borough, although within 4 km of the M2 but only limited local road access via the A299 and narrow rural roads. The site is sloping and requires improved access as well as being visually prominent in the landscape. This is not a significant, established employment location and any employment potential would probably be for lower end storage/warehousing uses. Overall, this is a low quality site.
- 10.55 Table 36 summarises the ranking of the 20 identified sites in the rest of the Borough and their suitability for different uses. This indicates that the majority of the more remote rural sites rate as 'poor', but in some cases these sites may have potential to meet more localised rural needs. The better potential sites are those closer to Swale's existing main settlements or with good strategic road access. Only two of these sites are ranked as "good", and offer 8 ha of employment land, but fall just above the average category and are in less sustainable locations to serve the Borough's main settlements.

Ref No	Site	Area (ha)	Score	Suitable for	Quality
R3.20	Land adj A299, Thanet Way, Waterham	1.5	21	B1, B2, B8	Good
R3.19	Waterham Park, Highstreet Rd, Waterham	6.5	20	B1	
R3.2	Danaway Cold Stores site, Danaway	1.7	19	Small scale B1-B8	Average
R3.9	Land South of Newington Industrial Estate	0.8	19	B1, B2, B8	
R3.7	Land at Pheasant Farm West, Bobbing	11.0	19	B1, B2, B8	
R3.1	Land off Maidstone Road	3.4	19	Lorry park	
R3.11	Land at Frogna Lane, Teynham	7.3	18	B1	
R3.17	Mayfield Teynham, London Rd, Teynham	0.3	17	Small B1/B8	
R3.12	Land East of Station Road, Teynham	4.3	17	Small workshops/offices	
R3.13	Hooks Hole, Chestnut Street	1.8	16	Small scale B1-B8	Poor
R3.5	Cambray Works, Stickfast Lane, Bobbing	2.0	16	B1, B2, B8	
R3.6	Land North of Cambray Works, Bobbing	3.6	15	B1, B2, B8	
R3.8	Land off Church Road, Newington	5.5	15	B1	
R3.15	Sale Field, Ruins Barn Rd	3.5	15	Small scale B1-B8	
R3.16	Lamberhurst Farm, Dargate	21.3	15	Open storage or warehousing	
R3.10	Neptune Orchard, Lower Halstow	2.4	14	B1, B2, B8	
R3.18	Oak Tree Farm, Rodmersham Green	1.4	13	Small scale B1-B8	
R3.3	Pond Farm, Borden	1.8	11	Small scale B1-B8	
R3.4	Firs Farm, Deans Hill Rd, Bredgar	0.25	11	B1, B2, B8	
R3.14	Street Farm, Borden	1.5	9	Small scale B1-B8	
	TOTAL	81.9			

Table 36 Potential Employment Sites in the Rest of the Borough

Conclusions

10.56

A total of 48 potential sites were assessed across the Borough to identify better candidates for any future employment land allocations required. Of these, 12 were assessed as offering relatively good potential employment sites, with a total of 146 ha of new employment land. Five of these better quality sites were in the Sittingbourne area, three around Faversham, two in Sheppey and two in the rest of the Borough (Table 37).

10.57

Given the relatively small amounts of additional employment land which the study recommends as needed to meet future needs, these better quality sites should provide a reasonable choice from which future allocations required can be chosen. In some cases, the scale of development site being promoted may be greater than required to meet local needs and the viability of allocating smaller parts of such sites would need to be considered.

Site	Area (ha)	Suitable for	Location
Land at Great Grovehurst Farm	12.4	B1, B2, B8	Sittingbourne (48.5 ha)
Land off Northern Relief Road	11.8	B1, B2, B8	
Land South of Kemsley Mill	3.6	B1, B2, B8	
Land at Pheasant Farm East	10.4	B1, B2, B8	
Land North East of Sittingbourne	10.3	B1, B2, B8	
Land at Lady Dane Farm and Land East of Faversham (2 sites)	67.5	B1, B2, B8	Faversham (74.2 ha)
Land at Applecraft Centre	6.7	B1 (a)	
Land West of Whiteway Road, Queenborough	12.5	B1, B2, B8	Sheppey (15.4 ha)
Land adjacent to Cowstead Corner / Neats Court	2.9	B1, B2, B8	
Land adj A299, Thanet Way, Waterham	1.5	B1, B2, B8	Rural Area (8.0 ha)
Waterham Park, Highstreet Rd, Waterham	6.5	B1	
Total	146.1		

Table 37 Better Quality Potential Employment Sites

10.58

In some cases, there may be benefits in promoting new employment uses in locations where no good quality potential sites were identified. This could be achieved by a suitably worded LDF Policy which encourages new employment development in rural or other specified locations subject to criteria including limitations on scale of development.