

## 5 Core planning policies

**5.2.18** High speed domestic rail services have reduced journey times to central London to 53 minutes from Sittingbourne and 62 minutes from Faversham, which offers easy access to central London employment opportunities via a sustainable mode of transport.

### Swale Transport Modelling

**5.2.19** Multi modal strategic transport modelling for Swale has tested all the elements of this development strategy to assess the likely level of infrastructure investment required and likely levels of congestion.<sup>(5.12)</sup> The proposals for Sittingbourne Town Centre, the wind turbine manufacturing at Sheerness Port and the potential for longer term expansion at Kent Science Park were included in the forecast modelling. Additions to the highway network were tested in the form of the final section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road from the Eurolink industrial estate to the A2 east of Sittingbourne and the addition of a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road linking the A2 to the M2 east of Sittingbourne via a new motorway junction.

### Statement 5

#### The Swale Transport Model

The main findings of the Swale strategic transport modelling forecasts undertaken to date indicate:

- The level of growth anticipated will result in additional pressures on the highway network with traffic growth of some 30% and further investment will be necessary.
- Congestion levels will rise, although this will not be as severe as in many other locations in Kent. The balance between the substantial amount of development anticipated and infrastructure appears broadly acceptable.
- The strategic development locations proposed correspond with where there is currently most capacity in the highway network.
- The level of development tested will require the final section (Bapchild Link) of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to be completed to free up the town centre for regeneration and facilitate further development proposed in the Local Plan.
- Completion of the SNRR is likely to encourage some trips to switch from the M2 to the A2 east of Sittingbourne. However, congestion on this stretch of road is likely to militate against that and traffic is likely to find a balance between alternatives available. Provision of a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road could also assist with relieving this congestion in the longer term.
- Some junction improvements to the A249 are likely to be needed. A modest modal shift to bus transport is predicted, although this is from a low base and more could be done to extend and improve the quality of services to new and existing developments. A small shift to rail transport is indicated although no major changes to services are anticipated.
- Congestion is likely to increase at M2/Junction 5, although earlier morning peak times operate at this junction compared to the rest of the study area, but modelling suggests the junction will not fail given the proposed development strategy.
- Including a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road and M2 Junction 5A to the network close to the south eastern edge of Sittingbourne would provide more highway capacity and help rebalance the system away from M2/Junction 5. It would also assist with congestion on the A2 east of Sittingbourne, but would need more integration with major new development (not currently envisaged as feasible in this plan period) to be a requirement.

**5.2.20** Peak hour congestion at M2/Junction 5 was the subject of earlier modelling work undertaken by the Highways Agency and Kent County Council. This junction is over capacity in peak hour and the Department for Transport has significant concerns about further local development impacting on the junction. Further detailed junction modelling will be carried out prior to submission of the Local Plan. The junction itself is highly constrained by environmental designations and the costs of major reconstruction are prohibitive. Some short term relief to the junction will be provided by construction of an additional length of southbound lane on the A249 in conjunction with nearby development. Longer term solutions to rebalance and expand the network away from M2/Junction 5 are not likely to be deliverable within the short to medium term. The Local Plan therefore, focuses development on those parts of the local network with capacity, and endeavours to balance development in as sustainable a way as possible to manage further increases in pressure on this junction.

### **Investment in the Transport Network**

**5.2.21** The need for development to be well integrated with transport supports the approach taken by the development strategy. Most new development is focused at the main urban areas, making best use of the existing or planned improvements to the transport network, looking to achieve a balance between new employment and housing provision and minimising the need to travel where possible.

**5.2.22** This Local Plan continues to focus on Sittingbourne as the main urban area, with strategic allocations for housing and employment proposed at north west and north east Sittingbourne. This utilises existing capacity on the A249 and the built and planned sections of the SNRR. The Key Street and Grovehurst interchanges with the A249 are nearing capacity and will require improvement to accommodate traffic arising from development proposed in the Local Plan.

**5.2.23** Strategic transport modelling indicates only a small modal shift from car based to bus or rail based public transport and the Local Plan and associated Local Transport Strategy clearly has a role to play in maximising any opportunities to achieve this. This could be encouraged through careful design of key allocation sites (such as North West Sittingbourne and Teynham) to maximise access to rail and bus services and the use of walking and cycling for everyday services. The implementation of the Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration, which is at an advanced stage of planning, will also facilitate major improvements in bus/rail interchange in the town centre.

**5.2.24** Significant town centre regeneration including shopping, leisure, employment and housing development has been permitted in Sittingbourne Town Centre (as part of the implementation of the provisions of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 and supporting SPD). This will fundamentally change the layout and operation of the roads in the town centre. The opening of the Milton Creek section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road has been an important step in removing industrial and freight traffic from the town centre. However, the benefits of the SNRR will be best realised with its extension to the A2 in the Bapchild area.

**5.2.25** The town centre regeneration will change traffic flows within the town, but the net result is not expected to increase the overall volume of traffic travelling into the centre. However, developers will be expected to promote mitigation measures for congestion which may result at key junctions within the town centre. This will include not only traffic based highway infrastructure, but also improvements to the bus, walking and cycling networks. This will need to be incorporated into the design and layout of development proposals and within supporting transport assessments and travel plans, both for the town centre and for other developments proposed around the town.

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As part of the town centre regeneration plans, improvements to the station itself, the station approach and bus interchange will take place. A pedestrian bridge link will also be needed over the railway to link the town centre with new development on the north side of the railway.

**5.2.26** Faversham is well served by rail links westbound and is well placed in respect of M2 Junctions 6 and 7 although these are also nearing capacity. Bus service links to the wider rural areas are patchy. Scales of development proposed at Faversham are not as significant as elsewhere in the Borough, therefore, transportation improvements will concentrate on the quality of the bus, cycle and walking networks.

**5.2.27** The Isle of Sheppey has benefited from the construction of the new Swale Crossing, which has already brought significant investment and regeneration to the western part of the Island. The recently completed Rushenden Link Road capitalises on this and opens up further regeneration land. There is a regular train service between Sittingbourne and Sheppey, although the eastern part of the Island still has a limited road network and public transport services.

**5.2.28** Key transport infrastructure requirements in Sheppey will therefore focus on measures to support regeneration and expansion of the Port; improvement of the quality of the rail services, improved bus stop infrastructure, bus flags and timetables and improved walking and cycling routes.

**5.2.29** Within the Borough's rural areas, access is generally by narrow rural roads and a modest public transport service. Scope to improve the rural highway network is limited, so improved public transport options will be the main means of improving accessibility for residents of rural communities. A number of cycle routes are also planned through rural areas (in addition to the national cycle route already established through Swale), the most extensive of these is on the Isle of Sheppey, where leisure routes will be extended to link communities across the Island.

**5.2.30** The Port of Sheerness has access to deep water berths which makes it a suitable location for wind turbine manufacture and assembly and planning permission already exists for this use. Potential exists for longer term expansion for further berthing facilities, subject to appropriate consideration of designated biodiversity sites. Ridham Dock also offers a smaller but nevertheless useful port facility.

### Summary of Highway Network Improvements

**5.2.31** Working with the Highways Agency, Kent County Council and other partners to achieve improvements and extensions to the highway network including (but not exclusively):

- a. the final (Bapchild) section of Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, the detail of which will be addressed via Policy AS 1 and a supporting development plan document;
- b. A249/Key Street junction improvements;
- c. A249/Grovehurst junction improvements;
- d. Sittingbourne Town Centre road layout, traffic management and calming measures to support the town centre regeneration developments;
- e. provision of an additional southbound lane at M2/Junction 5 (subject to implementation of the permitted residential scheme nearby at Watermark; and
- f. over the longer term, the re-balancing of the highway network and provision of further relief for M2 Junction 5 by bringing forward an A2/M2 link road and a new M2 Junction 5A.

**5.2.32** The Council, working in partnership with Kent County Council, the Highways Agency and the Department of Transport has identified a programme of transport schemes, which will be

needed (over and above sustainable land use and transport policies) to manage the impact of the development strategy on the highway network. This is reflected in the Appendix 2. In addition, there is the longer term objective of the SSRR, which will also need to be recognised in future transport programmes and funding bids. The programme of schemes and their costs will be kept under review so as to ensure cost effective and timely implementation to support new development. A risk assessment has been included within the Implementation and Delivery Plan and a viability assessment has been carried out on the plan as a whole.

**5.2.33** Public funding for transport schemes in the current economic climate is difficult and the Council is exploring alternatives with partners. Bidding will be through the recently established Local Enterprise Partnership for Kent, Essex and East Sussex. The Council is also pursuing preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy schedule, which will enable pooling of developer contributions towards major infrastructure schemes.

## Policy CP 2

### Transport infrastructure

Actions by the public, private and voluntary sector will adopt an integrated approach to the provision of transport infrastructure through making best use of capacity in the network and working together with transport providers to improve and extend the transport network in the most sustainable way. Development proposals will:

1. Locate new development in accordance with Policies ST1-7, Local Plan allocations, approved Neighbourhood Plans and Community Right to Build initiatives, which minimise the need to travel between homes and employment, shopping, community facilities and leisure and recreation facilities and facilitate sustainable transport. This will be demonstrated through the provisions of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans supporting development proposals;
2. Ensure that new development is well located in relation to public transport links and to promote its use through improved access to existing or new services;
3. Ensure provision of improved bus stop infrastructure and expansion of the bus network to serve new developments from the earliest stages of occupation;
4. Facilitate use of buses for commuting, through partnership working with Kent County Council, transport operators and other partners to establish a Quality Bus Partnership;
5. Ensure maximisation of use of rail services for passenger and commercial traffic, through improvement of station forecourts and bus interchange facilities, especially at Sittingbourne, alongside improvements to accessibility and on the Sheerness branch line. This will be achieved through working in partnership with Kent County Council, Network Rail and Network South East (or other rail franchise operators);
6. Ensure development of integrated walking and cycling routes to link existing and new communities with local services and facilities, public transport and the Green Grid network of recreation routes, through working in partnership with Kent County Council and cycling groups;
7. Facilitate greater use of waterways for commercial traffic, where this would not have an unacceptable adverse environmental impact, through working with the Port of Sheerness and other bodies;
8. Facilitate new investments in transport infrastructure by:

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- a. Demonstrating that with new development proposals, the transport network operates at an acceptable level and that any necessary transport infrastructure is in place to support new development through partnership working to deliver the Infrastructure Delivery Plan/Schedule and Strategic Transport Delivery Plan;
- b. Working with partners to progress the design of transport schemes, identify any land requirements (including areas of search for new routes) and take account of them in preparation of development proposals;
- c. Providing appropriate contributions from developments either financially, or in kind, to fund the transport infrastructure required. Off site transport improvements relating directly to an individual development including site access and local junction and road improvements will be required through Section 106 and Section 278 agreements, in addition to any pooled contributions to strategic infrastructure projects. The Council will introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy as a longer term means of funding strategic transport projects;
- d. Partnership working across all sectors to achieve alternative funding measures for any identified shortfall in strategic transport improvements; and
- e. Partnership working across all sectors with Kent County Council to address local road improvements, public transport, walking and cycling initiatives (which are not necessarily related to specific development schemes), through Local Transport Plan funding.

### 5.3 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

**5.3.1** New housing is needed in Swale in order to deliver its housing target of 10,800 homes over the Plan period. This third Core Policy deals with matters relating to different types and tenures of housing and the roles they play in delivering social, economic and environmental benefits.

**5.3.2** The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) states that the Government's objective is to significantly increase the delivery of new homes. Councils should:

- assess the level of need for housing in the housing market area;
- identify key sites and identify a supply of specific and deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements;
- set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances; and
- consider making an allowance for windfall sites.

**5.3.3** The NPPF expects Councils to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. Local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on evidence and need;
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations;
- for affordable housing, set policies for meeting this need on site, other than in certain situations;
- bring back into use empty housing and buildings;
- normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings, provided that there are no strong economic reasons not to do so;
- consider policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens;

- in rural areas, consider use of market housing to facilitate significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs; and
- avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.

#### 5.3.4 [The Kent Housing Strategy](#) (May 2011) identifies 5 priorities:

1. the continued delivery of key infrastructure to support managed growth and housing delivery across the County;
2. the continued regeneration of our disadvantaged neighbourhoods to bring them in line with more affluent parts of the County;
3. the provision of choice and affordability in housing for the citizens of Kent and Medway, including rural communities, which meets their needs and aspirations;
4. the managed improvement and retrofit of existing homes to make them fit for now and the future; and
5. to support vulnerable people in housing need to fulfil their potential and live a high quality life through the provision of excellent housing and support services.

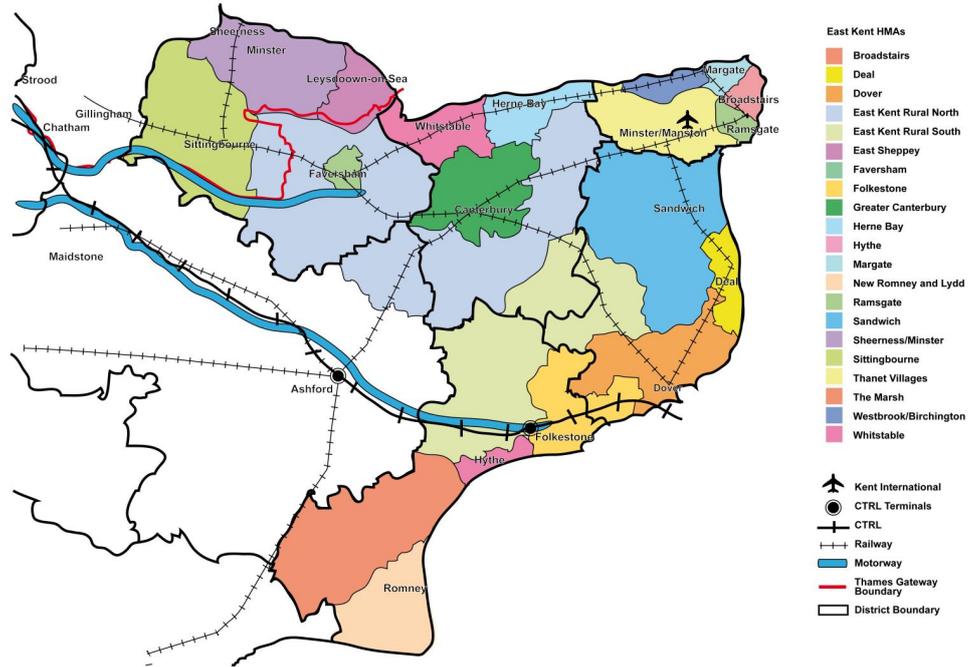
**5.3.5** Providing an overall context to our approach to housing in Swale is our [Housing Strategy](#) (2010). Its vision is for high quality sustainable homes where people choose to live, in new and existing communities. Its anticipated long-term outcomes are that:

1. all homes and neighbourhoods should provide sustainable environments for good quality, life-long living;
2. the housing supply is sufficient and matches needs and aspirations;
3. there is a good choice of housing options that support diverse needs and that everybody has an equal opportunity to live in a home that supports their life choices and maximises their health and wellbeing;
4. adverse impacts to the environment from construction and occupation of housing are minimised; and
5. all parties support and improve the life chances of vulnerable people and narrow the gaps in health and wellbeing.

**5.3.6** A key message of the [East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009](#) (SHMA) is the need for more homes to meet a growing and ageing population, alongside the need for smaller, but also larger family homes. The level of need for affordable homes identified by the SHMA is considerable and its provision is addressed in more detail by Policy DM5.

**5.3.7** The SHMA identified five local housing market areas within the Borough: East Kent Rural North; Faversham; East Sheppey; Sheerness/Minster; and Sittingbourne. These are shown on Map 5.3.1.

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Map 5.3.1 Local Housing Market Areas in Swale and East Kent. Source: East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009

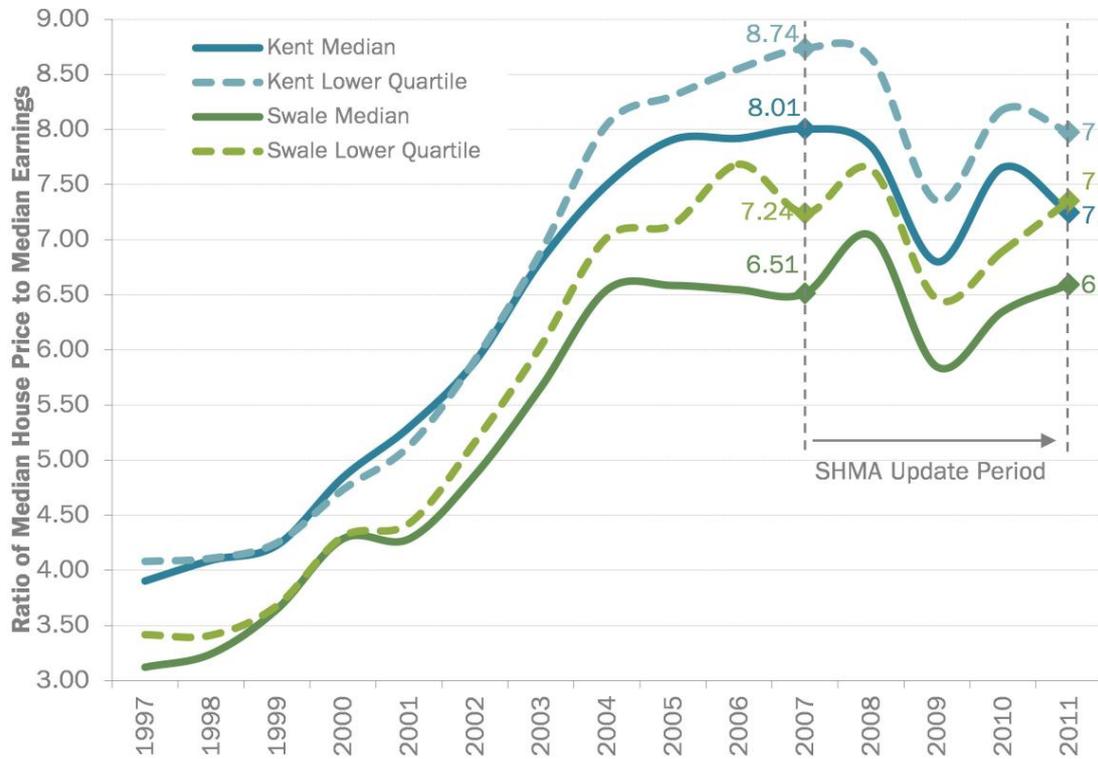


Figure 5.3.1 House prices relative to salaries in Swale.

**5.3.8** As part of its assessment of development targets, the Council commissioned an update to the East Kent SHMA entitled [Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013](#). This found the 2009 document to be broadly correct in its conclusions and made no adjustments to the local housing market areas above, or the policy target for the level of affordable housing to be sought on development sites. It confirmed the strong structural demographic drivers of the housing market, caused by employment growth and in-migration. These have led to a growing population for the Borough which has produced relative in-affordability in the private housing market, although Swale remains more affordable than the rest of Kent. This is illustrated by the differences between earnings and house prices as shown in Figure 5.3.1. The analysis of affordable housing needs therefore continues to support the findings of the East Kent SHMA, although the level of needs per annum has increased to 1,830 affordable dwellings over the forthcoming 5 year period.<sup>(5.13)</sup> These matters are considered further within Policy DM5.

## Type and mix of housing

**5.3.9** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009-13 indicated that across East Kent an ageing population and declining average household were fundamental to the type and mix of housing that will be needed. In terms of the mix needed to meet affordable housing needs, this is addressed specifically by Policy DM8, but is characterised by the majority (80%) of need and demand being for smaller units of 1-2 beds. This is likely to continue in the future, particularly because of the increased need from elderly households. There is also a smaller, but still significant, need for family housing e.g. 3 bed properties, also reflecting the fact that larger family households are set to increase. These findings are supported by the demographic forecasts undertaken for the 2013 SHMA update.<sup>(5.14)</sup>

**5.3.10** The above research indicates a need for similar proportions of market housing, although the actual market demand for different types/sizes of housing highlights some disparity through the actual proportions of the existing stock, the types of dwellings that are being brought forward for development in Swale and actual sales of property.<sup>(5.15)</sup>

**5.3.11** Despite a potential mis-match between need and demand, current difficulties with the viability of developments suggests that planning policies should not be over-prescriptive in terms of the mix of dwellings. However, the 2009 SHMA recommended broad guidelines to inform decision making:<sup>(5.16)</sup>

- 1 bed flats = 10%
- 2 bed flats = 15%
- 2 bed houses = 25%
- 3 bed houses = 40%
- 4+ bed houses = 10%

**5.3.12** The mix of housing will be affected by the overall viability of the scheme. For example, larger homes may be a means to improve viability and this will be taken into account in such circumstances.

## Housing requirements of specific groups

**5.3.13** The Census 2011 shows that the majority of households within Swale are families in couples and a smaller proportion of lone parent families. Older person households comprise over

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20% of all households. Demographic changes, illustrated by Figure 5.3.2 indicate that in future small household types of one person/couple households (younger and older) are set to account for the majority of future household growth.

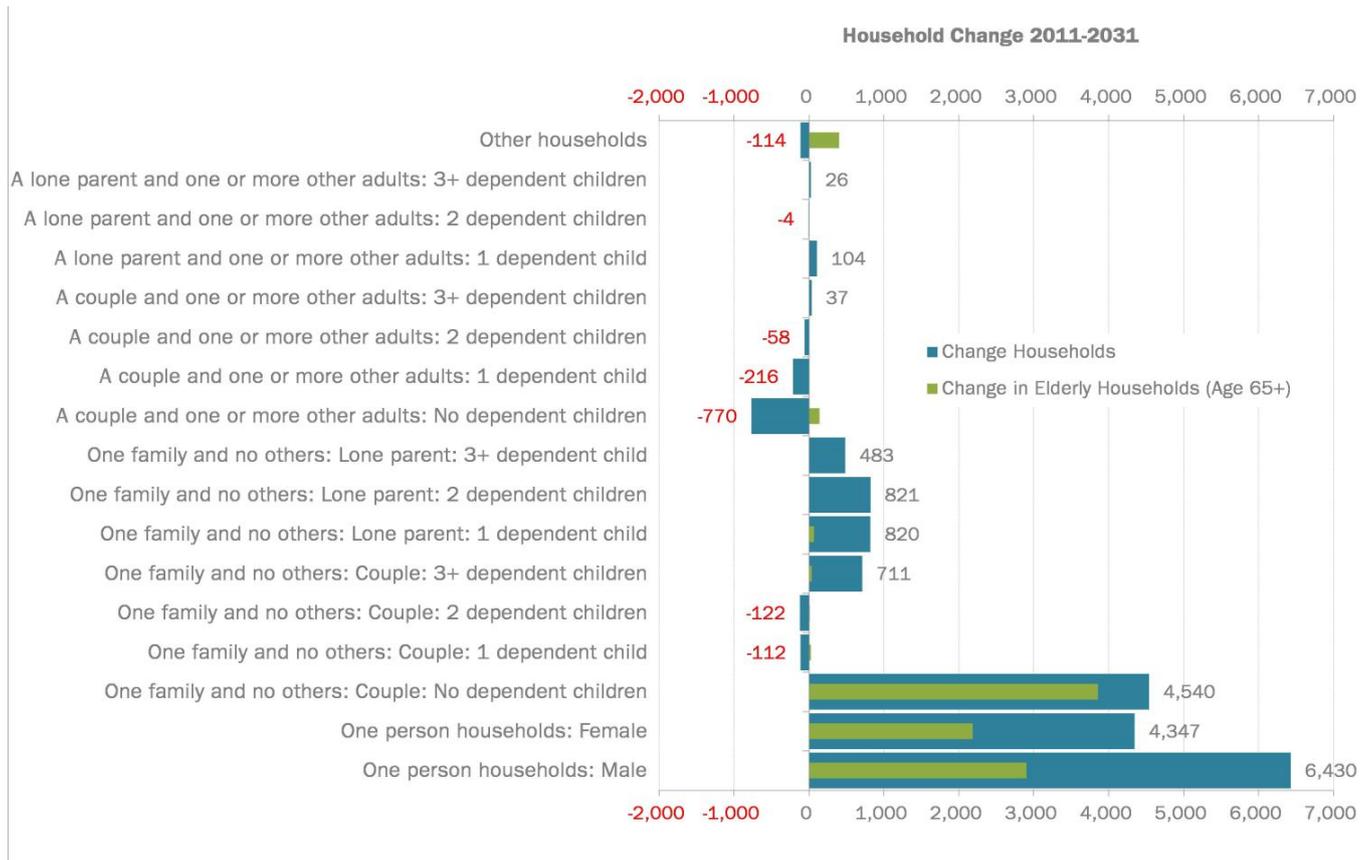


Figure 5.3.2 The projected net change in households (2011 Census)

### Families with children

**5.3.14** The East Kent SHMA 2009 identified the policy implications for housing for families. These included: ensuring an appropriate proportion of development of medium and larger houses; encouraging affordable housing in rural areas to keep families in the locality where they can support schools and local services; and creating environments which are attractive to families.

### Older households (aged 65+)

**5.3.15** With the number of elderly households set to increase by some 5,690 households, this will account for up to 50% of all net household growth (currently 21.4%).<sup>(5.17)</sup> The East Kent SHMA set out the following policy implications: adapting existing stock with targets for lifetime homes standards and providing appropriate opportunities for elderly households to downsize where they may be under-occupying larger homes. Providing good quality alternative accommodation may be one means to do this. Policy CP3 encourages the provision of specialist housing for older people across all tenures in sustainable locations. It actively encourages developers to build new homes to the 'Lifetime Homes' standard so that they can be readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly as well as assisting independent living at home. However, it is unlikely that specific targets could be achieved in the current economic climate. As part of allocations or on 'windfall' sites in sustainable locations, the policy will support proposals for the development of retirement accommodation, residential care homes, close care, extra care and assisted care housing and continuing care retirement communities.

## Young Households (aged 16-24)

**5.3.16** Ineligibility for social housing, lower household incomes and the expense of owner occupation highlights the difficulties for households with non-dependent children who want to access housing. Growth in the number of households aged 15-24 is likely to be modest (370 households).<sup>(5.18)</sup> However, the 2009 East Kent SHMA noted that factors such as a balanced approach to housing in terms of bedroom sizes and property types, along with high standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation will help younger households to access housing.

## Housing need by ethnicity

**5.3.17** The 2013 SHMA update indicated that some ethnicities have demands for new housing including: other white ethnicities (e.g. European white); mixed white and black Caribbean; mixed white and black African; and African.<sup>(5.19)</sup> In the case of other white ethnicities in Swale, this could conceivably comprise white European households, including European migrants often associated with agricultural work or blue collar jobs in logistics or industrial sectors, which are important economic sectors in Swale. Increasingly, ethnic groupings will be evident across all sections of the workforce and housing need.

**5.3.18** The 2011 Census, confirmed by the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2013, estimates that there are at least 498 individuals or 163 Gypsy and Traveller households in Swale. The local population is dominated by Romany Gypsies (88%) with a much smaller number of Irish Travellers (7%). Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are considered by Policies ST2-3 and DM10.

## Disability

**5.3.19** The Census 2011 identified that 18.6% of our population considered that they had a long term health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities to some degree. The 2009 East Kent SHMA suggested a policy response that focuses on: types of dwellings (e.g. bungalow/single floor dwellings); adaptations to existing properties; and application of lifetime home standards.

## Design and Density

**5.3.20** The delivery of quality developments is inherent within the vision, objectives, strategy and policies of this Local Plan. This is supported by the objectives and standards of the following (and successor) publications:

- The [National Code for Sustainable Homes](#). See also Policy DM20.
- The [Manual for Streets](#): - Department for Transport. Emphasises that streets should be places in which people want to live and spend time in, and are not just transport corridors. Aims to reduce the impact of vehicles on residential streets by asking practitioners to plan street design intelligently and pro-actively, and gives a high priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.
- [Kent Design Guide](#) (and appendices). Prepared by the Kent Design Group, it provides the criteria necessary for assessing planning applications. Helps building designers, engineers, planners and developers achieve high standards of design and construction. It is adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document; and
- [Secured by Design](#) A UK Police initiative that focuses on crime prevention of homes and commercial premises and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of

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applications and products. Now supported locally by Design for Crime Prevention, part of the Kent Design Guide.

- Design guidance from Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty unit. Includes its [Landscape Design Handbook](#) and Rural Streets and Lanes Manual.
- Swale Borough Council [Supplementary Guidance and Documents](#). These include guidance on house extensions, shop fronts and advertisements, landscaping, and converting rural buildings, together with a Supplementary Planning Document on Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment and Guidelines 2010 and the 2010 Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study.

**5.3.21** Good quality design and layout is essential for any new development and is the key to creating new neighbourhoods with their own character which reflect:

- the purpose of the development;
- the context of the settlement and/or site;
- the efficient use of land through appropriate use of higher densities;
- achieving higher standards of sustainable construction;
- the need to promote biodiversity within development and habitat connectivity to the surrounding area;
- innovative housing design; and
- attractive layout and landscaping, supporting green infrastructure links.

**5.3.22** The Council will apply national policy in respect of securing high quality design as supplemented by the above design guidance, master-planning and through design and access statements on planning applications which will identify the key characteristics of existing neighbourhoods, and their opportunities or capacity for change. We will also make use of our design panel process for high profile proposals. In line with national policy, we want to create developments that are mixed use, either in terms of the range of uses that can be provided on them, or where this is not possible, ensuring that the mix in the wider neighbourhood itself can be maintained or enhanced.

**5.3.23** There is no longer a national minimum target figure for the density of new housing, but councils are allowed to consider whether local density standards should be set. Prescribing low densities can result in an inefficient use of land and a need to develop more greenfield sites to meet overall housing target numbers. The use of higher densities need not mean blocks of flats or featureless estates with little or no landscaping. For example, modern terraced housing of 2 or 3 storeys can provide excellent internal and external space standards and still achieve medium or high densities.

**5.3.24** The Local Plan's overall approach to density is not to be prescriptive, but to let the purpose of the development, the context of the site and the defining characteristics of the surrounding area lead the process, taking the opportunity to achieve higher density development where it is appropriate. Higher densities will generally be more appropriate to town centre locations, where land economics may also influence the intensity of land use, or on larger sites where there is scope to design a range of environments to create neighbourhoods with variety of character and visual interest.



Picture 5.3.1 New house building in Faversham

**5.3.25** In suburban, village and other sensitive locations, a lower density may be more suitable where the conservation and enhancement of the character of the site, its biodiversity and its local context may be a priority. These considerations frequently arise in respect of proposals for development in the gaps between properties or in their gardens, or as a result of the redevelopment of the entire site. This type of development has been emotively referred to as 'garden-grabbing' and whilst not precluding the appropriate development of such sites, Policy CP 3 highlights the issues of concern needing to be addressed.

### **Windfall sites and use of previously developed land**

**5.3.26** Not all our identified needs for housing will be met from the development of sites allocated by this Local Plan. During the plan period, it is likely, for example that industrial sites will close down, infill plots will be identified and buildings redeveloped or converted. These sources all present opportunities for extra housing, which will generally be encouraged by Policy CP3. In particular, the development of brownfield sites (called previously developed land) is a priority and a means to reduce the amount of greenfield land needing to be developed. Not all brownfield land will be suitable for development, for example, sites in viable and suitable employment use, land at risk from flooding that cannot be made safe, or land that has developed as an important resource for biodiversity, amenity or recreation.

**5.3.27** New housing will normally be supported on appropriate windfall sites, but we will be guided by Policy ST 3 so that the scale and location of proposals are generally in accordance with the role and function of the settlement in question and, where relevant, that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is taken into account. New housing will be supported within deprived neighbourhoods where it would not perpetuate deprivation and is part of the means to restore the housing market and/or environmental conditions in the areas in question.

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### Quality and purpose of housing

**5.3.28** Housing development takes up more space than any other form of building and strongly influences the character of a place, as well as influencing lifestyle, behaviour, health, crime and use of private transport. New housing also has a major influence upon the physical and social perceptions of an area and this can be shaped early on within the design of a scheme and the type of housing proposed. Our Property Market Review November 2011 by consultants CBRE suggested that new housing could be used to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- **create:** extending or re-balancing the housing stock, market offer and appeal. Design playing the leading role to achieve this;
- **reinforce:** not changing an area's housing offer. Design protecting and enhancing existing characteristics of a neighbourhood area; or
- **restore:** improving an area's offer when in decline or stress, to improve overall market appeal and to create confidence in the housing offer. Design to play a leading role and could lead change on an urban renewal basis in some areas.

**5.3.29** To help meet these objectives, Table 5.3.1, informed by independent consultant advice, sets out an indicative and broad brush approach within each of our local housing market areas in so far as they relate to specific post code evidence.<sup>(5.20)</sup> Although this research is high level and the findings subject to change over the plan period, we will look to those promoting planning applications to indicate what the intended purpose of the proposed housing will be within the area in question. This will be expected within their Design and Access Statements. Use of Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans, Development Briefs and other Supplementary Planning Documents will also be relevant vehicles to establish the purpose of the housing proposed. With Table 5.3.1 acting as a guide, we will be flexible, especially in response to more detailed analysis submitted as part of a planning application.

Postal Area	Relevant locations	Main issues, purpose and objectives of housing proposals
<b>Sittingbourne Local Housing Market Area</b>		
ME9	Rural parts of Sittingbourne, Iwade, Upchurch, Newington, Milstead and Teynham.	Has relatively high average prices and reasonable levels of demand and as such the market is reasonably strong. Going forward, the aspiration could be to encourage the development of good quality family housing, for which the greatest local demand exists. <b>Objective: reinforce.</b>
ME10	The town of Sittingbourne including Milton Regis and Kemsley.	Has opportunity to provide a mix of quality housing types and unit sizes. Prices are affordable and there are reasonable levels of demand from a range of consumers. Variations in housing markets between north and south of the A2 with south seen as more prosperous/desirable. Viability is key as local buyers are value driven. <b>Objective: create and locally reinforce within more prosperous areas.</b>
<b>Sheerness/Minster Local Housing Market Area</b>		

Postal Area	Relevant locations	Main issues, purpose and objectives of housing proposals
ME11	Queenborough and Rushenden on the Isle of Sheppey.	Property is very affordable but the market could improve with the provision of better designed and better quality housing, further enhanced by improvements to the local public realm. Future demand is predominantly for 3 bed family housing but also flats. Given that values are at the lower end of the scale, development viability in this area could be marginal. Consider the development of greater levels of private housing to enhance scheme viability and to introduce greater diversity in the stock. <b>Objective: restore.</b>
ME12	Isle of Sheppey including Sheerness, Minster, Leysdown and Warden.	Demand is greatest for family housing. Future development of quality family housing that reflects the character of the area should be encouraged. If opportunities arise, improve design and/or levels of sustainability. However, the East Kent SHMA noted that there were further sub housing markets within this post code, with Minster, Leysdown and Warden functioning separately. <b>Objective: reinforce and create locally within deprived communities.</b>
<b>Faversham and East Swale Rural Local Housing Market Areas</b>		
ME13	Faversham and rural parts of east Swale including Boughton, Oare, Selling and Eastling.	A stronger housing market. The development of family housing in keeping with the character of the existing area should be encouraged. <b>Objective: reinforce and create locally within deprived communities.</b>

Table 5.3.1 The purpose of housing in local housing market areas

## Policy CP 3

### Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Actions by the public, private and voluntary sectors shall work towards the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes that extend opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. The Council will support proposals that:

1. Steer housing to the following locations in accordance with Policies ST2-3:
  - a. Local Plan allocations, Neighbourhood Plans and Community Right to Build initiatives;
  - b. windfall sites, including on previously developed land, except where the character of the site, its local context or environmental value determines otherwise;
  - c. town centres when contributing to their vitality and viability; or
  - d. deprived communities when improving local housing markets.

## 5 Core planning policies

2. Respond to issues present within local housing market areas;
3. Provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8, or in rural areas, homes in accordance with Policy DM9;
4. Provide a mix of housing types, with emphasis toward smaller 1-2 bed properties and 3+ bed homes;
5. Work towards meeting the housing requirements of specific groups, including families, older persons, ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers or disabled and other vulnerable persons;
6. Bring vacant homes back into use and up the Decent Homes standard;
7. Achieve sustainable and high quality design by:
  - a. responding to the defining characteristics of an area through the use of design statements, supplementary planning documents and other best practice design guidance;
  - b. achieving higher standards of sustainable construction in accordance with Policy DM20;
  - c. promoting the greater use of landscaping and habitat creation to promote biodiversity and contribute to the Local Plan Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Strategy in accordance with Policy CP6;
  - d. use of innovative housing design that includes features for ensuring safe and accessible environments that minimise the fear of crime;
  - e. densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area; and
  - f. use of mixed use developments.

### 5.4 Promoting healthy communities

**5.4.1** These fourth and fifth core policies address both health issues specifically and, because it is strongly linked to the well-being of communities, infrastructure.

#### Promoting healthy communities

**5.4.2** Achieving healthier communities is at the heart of the Local Plan vision of an outstanding environment and a place where life is enjoyed.

**5.4.3** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stresses the importance of health and wellbeing and the role that the planning system should play in improving this.<sup>(5.21)</sup> It explains that to achieve sustainable development, the planning system should perform a social role, including supporting strategies to improve health and cultural wellbeing, promoting healthy communities and identify strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.<sup>(5.22)</sup> To be more specific, the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to work with communities to gain a shared vision of the environment and facilities they wish to see and to deliver planning policies that facilitate social interaction and healthy inclusive communities.<sup>(5.23)</sup> Planning for and protecting existing services and open space are important parts of creating healthy communities, as recognised by the NPPF.<sup>(5.24)</sup>

**5.4.4** [The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning](#) (published 1st April 2011), provides evidence on the relationship between planning, the built environment and health inequalities. It explains that despite evidence which shows a clear relationship between planning policy, health