Maidstone Local Development Framework

Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004

Core Strategy

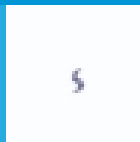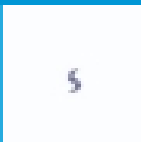# Development Plan Document

Preferred Options

January 2007

MAIDSTONE
Borough Council

Contents

Contents

Introduction

1.1   The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new type of development plan. Local Development Frameworks (LDF) will gradually replace Local Plans and together with regional guidance (in Maidstone's case the South East Plan) will shape and guide future development within the Borough.

1.2   At the moment, the South East Plan is being prepared and until it is adopted, planning application decisions must also conform to the Kent and Medway Structure Plan which was adopted in July 2006.

1.3   The Maidstone Community Strategy was adopted in 2003. The Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives in this Core Strategy take into account the objectives and aims of the Community Strategy. A review of the Community Strategy is currently underway and its development will be closely linked with work on the Core Strategy.

1.4   The LDF will comprise of a number of documents which will be produced over time. This document is the Core Strategy. It will set out in general terms, how, where and when development will take place in Maidstone Borough over the next 20 years (2006-2026). The Core Strategy sets out:

- A spatial vision for the Borough of Maidstone
- Strategic Objectives which follow from the vision. Many of these are aspirational and may not wholly depend on the Council or the planning system to be delivered. However, that is part of being a "spatial" document and is one of the important changes in the new development plan system.
- Spatial policies which will deliver the vision and objectives and apply to the whole of Maidstone Borough. The Core Strategy must not set out policies or allocations for specific sites as these will be included in other documents to be prepared later in the process.
- Key Diagram, showing broad locations for strategic development, major constraints and main patterns of movement

1.5   All other documents that comprise the LDF must be in conformity with the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will look further ahead to 2026 which is the time horizon of the South East Plan.

Timetable for preparation:

Stage	Timescale
Gather evidence and conduct initial public consultation on the Issues and Options facing the future of Maidstone Borough	Various events in 2005 to scope the issues and options Series of Café Conversation events in Feb / March 2006
(i)Preferred Options identified and consulted upon	Jan 2007 8 week consultation Jan – Mar 2007
Submission to Secretary of State of a full draft of the Core Strategy	Sept 2007 6 week consultation
Independent Examination into the draft Core Strategy	April 2008
Receipt of Inspectors Report and Adoption of Core Strategy	Sept-Oct 2008

Table 1.1 Timetable for Preparation

1.6 This is a critical stage in the production of the Core Strategy. Work to date has enabled the Council to consider the various issues facing the future of the Borough and the possible options to achieve the Council's aims.

1.7 This Preferred Options report contains:

- A draft Vision statement and key themes
- Draft Strategic Objectives
- Outline of the preferred content of 19 Strategic Policies

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i   Current stage - Preferred Options

**1.8** A summary of each Strategic Policy is set out on a standardised table, an example is shown below:

Policy Issue	CSX – Issue X
Policy Aims	*Will set out the broad aims of the policy*
Conformity:	*How the Policy conforms with:*
National	*Government guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and any other relevant legislation*
Regional	*Regional Spatial Strategy – particularly the emerging South East Plan, but could include other regional strategies*
Local	• Kent and Medway Structure Plan policies • Maidstone Local Plan policies where they are to be "saved" and are relevant to how the Core Strategy policies will be implemented • Maidstone Community Strategy – Key Themes • Strategic Plan 2006-2009 - Key Objectives • Other Core Strategy policies which are closely related

Preferred Approach

This will set out the Council's preferred approach on dealing with the policy issue. It does not set out exact wording of the policy, but includes the broad content of the policy

Policy Issue	CSX – Issue X
Alternative Options considered and reasons for rejection	*It is important to set out the alternative options which the Council considered in formulating its preferred approach and the reasons why these alternatives were rejected.* *This explanation can include justification from the Initial Sustainability Appraisal, the Café Conversation consultation responses and other policy drivers from the conformity documents.*
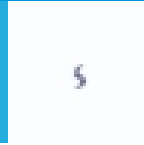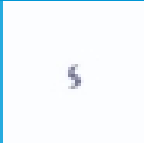
Policy Issue	*CSX – Issue X*
Indicators	*This needs to set out how the Policy will be monitored to ensure that it is meeting the aims and objectives. It can include targets from local, regional or national documents.*

1.9 There are many Background Documents published alongside this Core Strategy, which detail the alternative options appraised in preparing the Core Strategy, the consultation and public engagement so far and the role of the Sustainability Appraisal.The Background Documents are available to view on the website or by arrangement at the Council office.

How to respond:

This is a vital stage of public consultation. This document contains an explanation of the types of policy the Council want to include, but we are keen to hear your views before we finalise the issues and final wording of the policies.
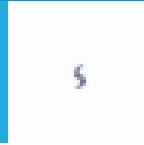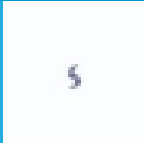
Please respond by 23rd March 2007.

Spatial Portrait

2.1 The Borough of Maidstone covers 40,000 hectares located at the heart of Kent. It includes a large urban area and a variety of rural settlements. Its countryside, set within 'the Garden of England', is of a high landscape quality and includes the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.2 With a population of 138,948 living in 56,454 households, the Borough is home to 8.8 per cent of the Kent and Medway population (2001 Census) and borders Swale, Ashford, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling Boroughs and Medway Unitary Authority. Although the population of Kent has increased as a whole, Maidstone's population has remained relatively static over the past ten years. However the structure is changing with a growing number of elderly and a reducing number of people of working age, in line with national trends.

2.3 Regional strategies recognise Maidstone town as an important hub on the transport networks, strategically situated between London and the channel ports and serviced by two trans-European motorway networks - the M20 and M2 - and rail connections to central London. We have one of the best public transport usage rates within the County (including popular Park and Ride schemes). However, the road system is severely constrained (particularly through the town centre) causing congestion and pollution. The rail services to London are comparatively slow and the future of the railway services to the Medway towns is under threat. Public transport choice in the rural areas is extremely limited.

2.4 The town centre is a major retail and leisure destination by both day and night and it successfully competes with other regional shopping centres. The River Medway, accentuated by the Millennium River Park, runs through the centre of town. The river is one of a number of green corridors which link across the Borough and permeate within the town to bring open space from the countryside into the built up areas. Our rural towns and villages support many agricultural and rural businesses and are important communities in their own right.

2.5 In recent years the majority of new homes have been built on brownfield sites instead of greenfield exceeding Government targets. However this trend cannot continue because the supply of brownfield sites is reducing. Although 78% of Maidstone's population live in owner-occupied households many people cannot afford to buy or rent housing on the open market. There is a need to find and deliver enough affordable homes to meet this growing need. These homes

need to be well designed and sustainably constructed and delivered alongside the necessary community facilities that growing neighbourhoods require. We need to ensure that appropriate sites are found for this future house building yet balance this with the environmental effects of development.

2.6 The Borough is home to a number of industries, both old and new. This includes paper, packaging and technology companies and a flourishing media industry. The main employment sectors within the Borough of Maidstone are service industry based, public administration or financial based. Many areas of Maidstone are relatively affluent and our population is comparatively highly skilled however, a lot of our residents commute outside the Borough for better paid jobs and we also have pockets of deprivation, such as Park Wood, Coombe Farm and High Street Ward. We want to tackle these issues so that Maidstone can develop as a thriving, sustainable and vibrant borough with plenty to do and opportunities for all its residents to enjoy.

Vision

3.1   The Council has agreed a statement which summarises it's vision for the future of Maidstone.

Spatial Vision

"To increase the economic, social and environmental well being of Maidstone Borough through spatial planning policies and allocations of land for development, which will:

- **create a prosperous Borough**
- **provide an adequate number, range and mix of housing**
- **provide a full range of social, leisure and retail facilities**

This will be done in a manner that enhances and protects the environment and locates development in a sustainable pattern and gives a choice of travel mode in order to minimise congestion and pollution.

This is dependent on the

- **timely provision of the proper strategic and local infrastructure**
- **raising standards of service delivery and environmental management and managing development to achieve balanced economic and housing growth**

This will enable Maidstone to have a distinct identity as the 21st Century County Town at the centre of Kent"

3.2   Themes for sustainable spatial planning

3.3   When considering the **location and characteristics of new development and the movements it will generate** we will seek to achieve objectives which follow four themes:
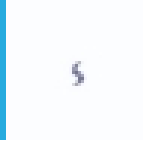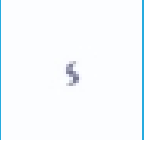
1. **Creating Prosperity**

2. **Making Quality Places**

3. **Enhancing the Environment**

4. **Increasing Social Well being**

3.4 Policies CS1 and CS2 cover all four themes but all other strategic policies relate to one of these themes and this is indicated by the colour of the policy heading.

Spatial Objectives

4.1   These will provide the clear basis for the formulation of policies including spatial policies which will identify land in the most appropriate sustainable locations :

Spatial Objective 1

To attract new high quality and skilled employment uses, to protect and develop the existing and indigenous employment base, to raise the skills level of the existing workforce and improve life-long learning opportunities, within Maidstone Borough.

Spatial Objective 2

To ensure that growth in new employment, technology & knowledge clusters and learning opportunities are at least in balance with population change, in order to reduce the need for commuting out of the Borough for well paid work. As part of new employment opportunities, promote and encourage rural economic diversification.

Spatial Objective 3

To improve the quality of retail, business, cultural, leisure and tourism "offer" of the town centre as Maidstone is a Primary Regional Centre and will be one of the top retail destinations in the South East.

Spatial Objective 4

To respect and enhance the character and extent of green spaces within and around built areas and the linkages between those green spaces while ensuring that new urban development and urban extensions are sustainably located.
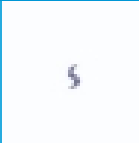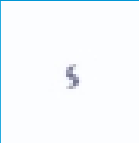
Spatial Objective 5

To strive for suitably located development, creating a high quality, well designed, inclusive, safe and healthy environment, which includes the protection of the quality built environment and achieving innovative and sustainably constructed new development.

Spatial Objective 6

To plan for and carefully manage on a frequent and regular cycle the phased delivery of sufficient brownfield and greenfield sites together with necessary new strategic and local scale infrastructure, to meet the development requirements set out in the South East Plan and to meet plan objectives.[ii]

Spatial Objective 7

To promote a choice of transport modes in Maidstone which is a regional hub and to reduce the need to travel by car and at peak times. We will support this through the integrated transport strategy with related spatial planning policies, travel planning and site allocations for development.

Spatial Objective 8

To protect and manage the landscape and countryside as a resource and to improve and enhance the natural environment. To minimise, mitigate and compensate for the effects of development on the natural and built environment. To respect national and local designations.

Spatial Objective 9

To reduce the contribution to, and adapt to climate change by minimising energy and water consumption and the production of waste from all new building. To encourage efficiency measures in existing development and

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ii   (as modified by New Growth Point bid)

to encourage renewable energy sources. To promote landscape-scale conservation and linked green corridors. To minimise and mitigate the effects of pollution and improve air quality in the Borough.

Spatial Objective 10

To support the sustainability of communities by providing for their needs for affordable housing, education, well paid jobs, recreation, health and other neighbourhood facilities (including those arising from population change) in both rural and urban areas, in a timely manner.

Spatial Objective 11

To identify and drive the regeneration (including redevelopment) where needed for social, economic and physical reasons within the Borough.

Spatial Objective 12

To strive for a high quality development process, including early public and stakeholder engagement in decision making and where development is approved, enforcement of planning policies, development control decisions and related legislation, and smoothing the process of construction.

Sustainable Development - Policy CS1

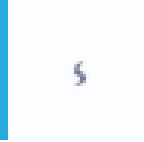| Policy Issue	CS1 Sustainable Development
Aims of Policy	A principal policy of the Plan shall be to achieve and maintain sustainable development in Maidstone and to promote measures and behaviour to minimise, mitigate and adapt to forecast climate change. The polices of the plan and the identification of locations will follow a sequential approach to ensure all development is located in the most sustainable location. As local planning authority and through other mechanisms, the Council will promote and require, the use of sustainable construction techniques.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1:** Delivering Sustainable Development
Regional	**South East Plan - submission draft March 2006** Policy CC1 - the principal objective of the Plan is to achieve and maintain sustainable development , defined by: • promoting a sustainable economy • promoting good governance • using science responsibly • living within environmental limits • ensuring a strong, healthy and just society (This definition of sustainable development reflects a spatial planning approach) CC2 aims to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through new behaviours and new patterns of development CC3 resource use by stabilising and then reducing the ecological footprint of the South East CC4 all new development and conversions will be expected to adopt sustainable construction techniques, including:

Policy Issue	CS1 Sustainable Development
	• use of best practice and exceeding current building regulation requirements on the use of water and energy, • designing for increased use of natural heat, light and ventilation and a % of renewable energy • reduction of water use and increased recycling • design flexible use of buildings, and adaption to changing lifestyles and the principle of "whole life costing" CC5 the scale of pace of development to be dependant on the capacity of infrastructure
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy SP1 seeks to conserve and enhance the environment and ensure sustainable pattern of development by: • protection of the countryside • reducing reliance on greenfield land • conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment • encouraging high quality and innovative design • reducing the need to travel • promoting transport choice • fostering access to jobs and services • balanced and timely provision of housing, employment and infrastructure • fostering prosperous economy at sustainable locations • responding to the implications of climate change **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** - Many of the Sustainability parts of the policies are largely out of date with current concepts **MBC Community Strategy** - all key themes are relevant to Sustainable Development but particularly themes on housing, employment, environment and land use and planning **MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009**

Policy Issue	CS1 Sustainable Development
	Many of the key objectives within the Key Themes of Prosperity, Quality Living, Quality, Decent Homes and Sustainable Communities are relevant

Other local strategies:

Addressing Climate Change - Environment and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny report 2003/2004

MBC Climate Change Plan and Climate Change Action Plan 2005-2010 (July 2005)

Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS2, CS19, CS13, CS9 and Statement of Community Involvement |

Preferred Option. Policy CS 1

- Adopt a spatial planning approach to implementing sustainable development (as defined above), focusing on a series of guiding principles for all new development and the processes of planning as well as land use outputs. (CS19 refers).
- Define "sustainable locations" - linking with need to provide / locate near infrastructure and facilities to reduce dependence on the private car (Policy CS2 refers).
- The policy will recognise the distinctive environment and landscape constraints facing Maidstone Borough and include distinctive Sustainable Development policies that respond to Maidstone's situation (including Sustainable Construction techniques - link with Policy CS13)

Policy Issue	CS1 Sustainable Development
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	Sustainable development must be pursued as a matter of national and regional policy. The alternative options lay in:
- the degree of prescription and willingness to refuse schemes failing to meet or exceed minimum standards
- to prioritise certain aspects of sustainability eg. sustainable building methods and energy conservation

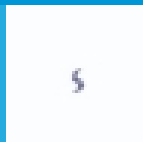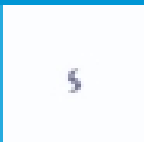| Policy Issue	CS1 Sustainable Development
	over say, economic and social objectives for say affordable housing • to give incentives for the embracing of best practice. eg. the requirement for the scale of planning obligations for say, affordable housing, might be reduced in lieu of minimising the ecological footprint of a development
Indicators	Compliance with BREEAM and Very Good or Excellent Eco homes standards or similar over and above current building regulation standards Number of cases where developers of major developments undertake pre-application consultation with the LPA and the local community in response to the SCI

Spatial form of development - Policy CS2

Policy Issue	CS2 Spatial form of development
Aims of policy	In conjunction with the key diagram, to provide a clear spatial framework which manages the delivery of sustainabe development in the Borough through: • identifying a preferred hierarchy of suitable locations for development and indicating the appropriate scale of development at each • guiding the phasing of development • maintaining and improving urban quality and achieving an urban renaissance, including the regeneration of outworn urban previously developed land sites • creating, protecting and enhancing important urban open spaces and multi-functional green corridors and wedges to contribute, maintain and enhance the quality of environment and biodiversity and achieve adaptability to climate change • maximising the use of brownfield sites • providing the basis for Local Development Documents which identify important localised urban and suburban areas of character to be safeguarded and set density standards that achieve effective use of land whilst respecting local characteristics; define strategic anti-coalescence belts to maintain separation between settlements, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the best of the Borough's special landscape character, areas for environmental protection and enhancement (including watercourses their corridors and waterside areas) and settlement boundaries • defining a role for Village Plans and Village Design Statements
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1 -** dealing with the general principles of sustainable development **PPS3 -** proposes sustainable locations for new housing **PPS6 -** applies a sequential test towards the location of development appropriate to town centres

Policy Issue	CS2 Spatial form of development
	PPS7 - sustainable countryside policy
	PPG13 - reduce the need to travel through well located development
	PPG17 - protection of open space
Regional	**South East Plan - submission Draft March 2006** Policy CC2 aims to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through new behaviours and new patterns of development. Policies CC8a require the prime focus of development to be the urban area whilst ensuring urban renaissance and regeneration. A particular aim is to capture the benefits of concentrating and integrating uses to improve accessibility and enhance quality of life. The policy also seeks a minimum of 60% of all new development on previously developed land and through conversions across the region in the Plan period 2006-2026. The urban focus is constrained by RSS Policies CC12 and BE1 which seek to maintain and enhance urban quality by achieving urban and suburban renaissance. BE2, 3 and 4 require sensitivity in to how urban and suburban intensification is achieved, how suburban renewal is undertaken, and the urban rural fringe managed. Policies CC8b and CC8b give specific advice on the role of Regional Hubs and specifically for the Regional Hub of Maidstone. Policy KTG11 seeks to ensure that the impacts of the Thames Gateway Growth Area on the surrounding towns and countryside are minimised mitigated. Development requirements for the Growth Areas should not spill over onto surrounding areas. This is reinforced by Policy CC10b protecting this strategic gap. Policy KTG11 states thatretail, leisure and service uses will be concentrated at the hub of Maidstone as a major town centre.

Policy Issue	CS2 Spatial form of development
	Policy BE5 seeks to support and reinforce the role of small rural towns as local hubs for employment, retailing and community facilities and services. In relation to the location of housing and employment, Policies H3 and RE2 emphasise the use of the urban area where facilities are available or could be provided and the need to be well served by a choice of transport modes. The Policies also encourage mixed use areas. Policy H1 sets out the level of housing provision for the Borough.
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Within the Borough, Policy SS1 seeks to concentrate new development at the Major Urban Area of Maidstone and, within the rural area, at Rural Service Centres including Headcorn and Staplehurst. Policy SS7 allows small scale development in other smaller rural settlements if they have good road and public transport access and an existing core of employment and community services. Development in the countryside is constrained by Policy SS8 and numerous policies protecting the environment in general and the landscape in particular. **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** Development is focussed at Maidstone urban area with smaller scale development in rural settlements. A range of environment policies protect key open spaces within the built up area and restrict development in the countryside. The supply of housing land means that the release of the Local Plan housing allocations is currently not required. **MBC Community Strategy -** Theme 4 – Leisure, Culture, Sport and Entertainment; Theme 5 - Housing; Theme 6 – Employment; Theme 8 – Transport; Theme 9 – Environment and Theme 10 – Land Use Planning. **MBC Strategic Plan 2006 -2009** -

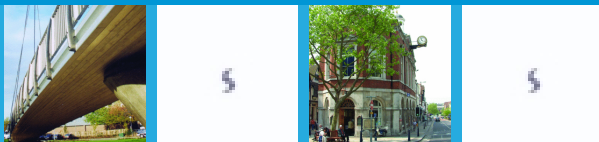| Policy Issue	CS2 Spatial form of development
	Priority Themes – KO1 (Attract new business and deliver new high quality employment development); KO2 (Review and develop retail offer); KO3 (Deliver and support regeneration); KO16 (Implement Green Space Action Plan); KO21 (Enable delivery of new affordable homes); KO24(Ensure an appropriate allocation of land for housing). **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies** - CS1, CS3, CS5, CS6, CS8, CS13; CS14, CS15, CS17, CS18

Preferred Option. Policy CS 2

One of the principal aims of the Core Strategy is to set out clearly proposals for the spatial distribution of development within the Borough based on the Vision and Objectives outlined. The preferred approach is to bring together under one Core Strategy policy, together with the key diagram, the strategic distribution of development across the Borough and more specifically at Maidstone town.

The Government has named Maidstone as a 'New Growth Point'. This will result in a total number of 10,080 homes proposed in the Borough over the next 20 years. This level of growth will ultimately need to be confirmed in the regional South East Plan. In order to balance housing growth with employment opportunities and to increase economic prosperity, it is likely that provision will also need to be made for at least a further 10,000 jobs in a range of sectors and locations.

Whilst it is assumed for the purposes of the Core Strategy that a total of 10,080 new dwellings and a corresponding level of employment will be required in the Borough over the next 20 years, the precise level of new housing will be approved through the South East Plan and the LDF process and is not confirmed at this stage. In order to allow flexibility should the requirement for housing change, Table 1 below illustrates the broad distribution of new housing and employment development across the Borough in the next 20 years as rounded percentages. The table excludes approximately **29% of the** required housing development which has planning permission (2000 units) and is predicted to come forward during the Plan period.

		Housing (dwellings)[iii]	Employment (Jobs)
Maidstone Urban Area	Within built up area	10%	95%
	New mixed use sustainable settlement at eastern/ south eastern edge	50%	
	Minor extensions to built up area		
5 Rural Service Centres	Within built up area	1%	5%
	Minor extensions	5%	
21 larger rural settlements	Minor development	5%	

Table 5.1 Distribution of Development - Maidstone Borough 2006-2026

MaidstoneTown

Priority in the first part of the Plan period (2006 – 2016) will be given to development at Maidstone town and the Rural Service Centres. In particular, as set out in Policy Issue CS15, emphasis will be given to improving and regenerating the town centre and outworn areas to achieve a high quality of urban living which helps reinforce the role of County Town and close the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest.

As a Primary Regional Centre, the town centre will be the prime focus for new retail, leisure and service uses whilst the regeneration of town centre employment sites into higher density office and mixed use developments will also be pursued as set out in Policy Issues CS3.

The policy will aim to protect and enhance open spaces within the town as stated in Policy Issue CS15 and the green wedges which penetrate the town from the countryside in order to provide an adequate distribution of open space, retain the distinctive form of the town and help prevent the coalescence of distinctive neighbourhoods.

Not all development can reasonably be accommodated within the existing built up area of the Borough's towns and villages and during the second phase of the plan period (2016 – 2026) it will be necessary to bring

iii   Table excludes 29% of the total Borough housing requirement (2900 units) which has planning permissions or are brownfield local plan allocations
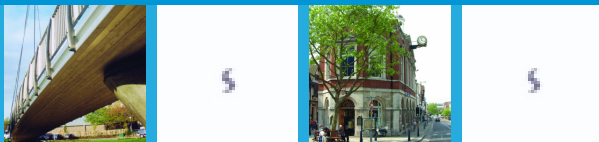
forward development on greenfield sites. The preferred approach is to create an attractive and cohesive new mixed use sustainable community to the south-east/ east of Maidstone town with a strong sense of place around a range of local services and sustainable transport provision. In order to best meet sustainability objectives, it will be important to establish a minimum 'critical mass' of development of some 5000 dwellings with employment opportunities, a range of community facilities and good public transport links to the town centre and other key services. This approach is set out in Policy Issue CS7. Specific allocations for this new development will be made in the Land Allocations DPD. More detailed matters will be brought forward in an Area Action Plan or Supplementary Planning Document. The appropriate type of document will depend on Government direction in relation to the Planning Gain Supplement.

Other smaller scale housing proposals (up to some 100 dwellings) at the edge of the town will be tested for their sustainability and their impact on the sustainability of the proposed new neighbourhood. If acceptable, such locations will be proposed through the Land Allocations DPD.

New employment opportunities to attract high quality jobs will not only be within the town centre, regeneration areas and new neighbourhood but also in locations at the northern edge of Maidstone urban area close to the strategic highway network where the impact on locally important landscape will need to be carefully managed and public transport options must also be provided to ensure links to the town centre.

Such greenfield developments will be carefully phased in order both to encourage the best use of previously developed land and to ensure the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure and community facilities to serve the new neighbourhood.

Key infrastructure projects including the South East Maidstone Strategic Link other transport improvements, utility infrastructure, education and health provision, community and recreation facilities and green links will need to be brought forward at the same time as the new development that they will serve as set out in Policy Issue CS16.

Rural Service Centres

Vital and viable service centres which also serve the surrounding villages and countryside should be sustained in the large Rural Service Centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst.

As well as 'windfall' developments on previously developed land, a total of some500 homes located as small scale edge of settlement housing/mixed use developments (which total up to some 100 dwellings in each settlement), as set out in Policy Issue CS5, together with associated employment provision will be tested for their sustainability and the impact on sustaining and enhancing their role as a rural service centre. The allocation of specific sites for development will be made through the Land Allocations DPD.

New retail and leisure provision in rural areas should be located within the identified Rural Service Centres and be of a scale appropriate to the functions of the centres as set out in Policy Issue CS4.

Larger rural settlements

As the rural service centres present the most sustainable option for the clustering of facilities to serve the rural area, only small scale developmentwill be acceptable in the 21 other larger rural settlements of the Borough which have a range of basic facilities. Previous trends indicate that this is likely to bring forward some 500 additional dwellings over 20 years. Larger villages are defined as:

Boughton Monchelsea	Langley Heath
Boughton Quarries	Leeds (Upper and Lower Street)
Bredhurst	Loose
Chart Sutton	Nettlestead
Coxheath	Platt's Heath
Detling	Stockbury
Farleigh Green	Sutton Valance
Grafty Green	Teston
Hollingbourne (Eyhorne Street)	Ulcombe
Kingswood	Yalding
Laddingford	

The Countryside

New built development in the countryside (including small settlements and hamlets) away from Rural Service Centres and larger villages, and outside areas allocated for development, will be strictly controlled as set out in Policy Issue CS12.

The countryside will be managed and protected as an important resource and its distinctive character and appearance will be conserved.

In particular, the distinctive identity of towns and villages will be protected by maintaining separation between settlements. This will be particularly important to the south-east/east of Maidstone town where the proposed new neighbourhood will be required to be of high quality design and to maintain a separation from existing settlements.

The preferred spatial approach to development in the Borough is considered to be the most sustainable in terms of the distribution of growth. Focussing development at Maidstone town enables regeneration with an emphasis on developing the town centre provided the release of greenfield sites are carefully phased. This approach does not rely on unachievable and unacceptable development sites and densities and would result in 45% - 50% of housing development on brownfield land.. The majority of the associated infrastructure and community facilities would be concentrated at Maidstone. Sustainable transport options can be achieved to serve most of the new development with shorter journey distances and affordable housing is concentrated where there is greatest need.

This approach is outlined on the key diagram that will illustrate the broad location of development and form part of the Core Strategy which in turn will provide the basis for the allocation of sites in the Land Allocation DPD and form the basis for determining planning applications.

Policy Issue	CS2 Spatial form of development
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	Two broad alternative options for the spatial distribution of development were considered: • An urban-led approach shown on Alternative Option Key Diagram 1 with over 70% new housing development focused in the existing built-up areas; Maidstone town, the 5 Rural Service Centres (RSCs) and 21 villages with detailed boundaries.
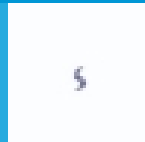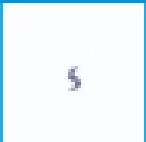
- A significantly expanded Rural Service Centre approach shown on Alternative Option Key Diagram 2 with some 50 – 70% of new housing development (some 5000 dwellings) located at the edge of one or more of the 5 Rural Service Centres or alternatively as a completely new settlement. Only two of the Rural Service Centres (Harrietsham and Lenham) are located on a direct rail link to Maidstone. The other 3 centres would rely on the less frequent rural bus service to travel on public transport to Maidstone. Consequently the most likely location for significantly expanded /new rural settlement would be in the vicinity of Harrietsham and Lenham.

Alternative Key Diagrams have been produced to explain the above alternatives and these are contained in the Preferred Location for Development Background Document.

Each option, including the preferred option, was tested against a wide range of criteria which reflect the Core Strategy vision and objectives, national and regional planning policy and local priorities as identified in the Community Strategy. More details can be found in the Preferred Location for Development Background Document.

The urban led approach was rejected as it would rely on building housing in the town and all the RSCs at well beyond the "accepted" levels of urban potential for new development identified in the 2006 Urban Capacity Study, including sites identified as un-developable because of current operational use, poor access or other constraint, including for policy reasons. Developing at such high densities in suburban and rural areas would be likely to have severe adverse consequences for the distinctive characteristics of the borough. Reliance on smaller brownfield sites is also likely to mean that the yield of affordable housing is not optimised. This approach would also require double the current annual rates of infill development within the 21 larger villages with defined boundaries and major greenfield releases to provide new employment sites on the edge of Maidstone town. Despite this, additional greenfield land for housing would also be required to meet targets and objectives, as well as for new employment uses.
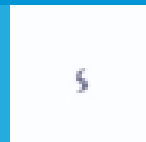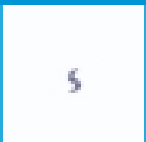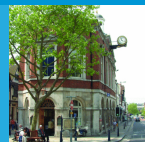
The significantly expanded or new free-standing Rural Service Centre approach was also rejected as a less sustainable solution. In this option the additional development is directed away from the existing built up areas and maximises the potential for the creation of substantially expanded settlements or a new settlement in the rural area, of a scale where new infrastructure is required to enable development.This option is likely to require longer journeys by private car to higher order services such as comparison shopping, leisure and cultural pursuits, higher and further education and wider employment opportunities. In addition, Maidstone town centre may not be the beneficiary of remote growth in the RSCs with demand for facilities potentially migrating to other competitive centres. The RSCs themselves would undergo radical changes in character as new housing and employment was developed on the adjoining countryside, some of which is of national or local importance. At the level of housing growth proposed, 45% -50% of housing development would be likely to be located on brownfield land. This option would also result in affordable housing being provided at locations which do not correspond with the greatest need.

In undertaking these comparisons, a range of levels of housing development were tested to ensure that the preferred approach had sufficient flexibility to accommodate additional growth should this prove necessary in the future. Clearly, as the amount of housing is increased, there is a need for further employment opportunities together with community facilities and infrastructure provision to serve the new population. With capacity in the urban area limited, this in turn requires additional greenfield sites, with the consequential impact on the countryside and a poor performance in the use of previously developed land.

A number of criteria were used to identify the most appropriate locations for a new sustainable community at the edge of Maidstone town. In particular, some options were rejected because of the potential adverse impact on the landscape character, green wedges (which penetrate into the town between development from the countryside), ancient woodland, nature conservation interests and agricultural land quality. For example, the landscape quality of land to the north of the M20 is of national importance

	and forms part of a strategic gap with the Medway towns. To the west, a major extension would result in coalescence with the Medway Gap urban area and require development on land outside the Borough. To the south west lies land of the highest grade agricultural land. To the south of the town a long-standing protection exists against the coalescence of settlements and to protect their character and distinctiveness. The relationship to the strategic highway network and in particular the M20 is less good from the south of the town. Further details can be found in the Preferred Location for Development Background Document.
Indicators	AMR Indicator 2b and BVPI - percentage of new dwellings on previously developed land Loss of protected open space / AONB . Number of dwellings / amount of economic development floorspace completed in each settlement Number of character assessments conducted in a period Additions to categories of protected open space.
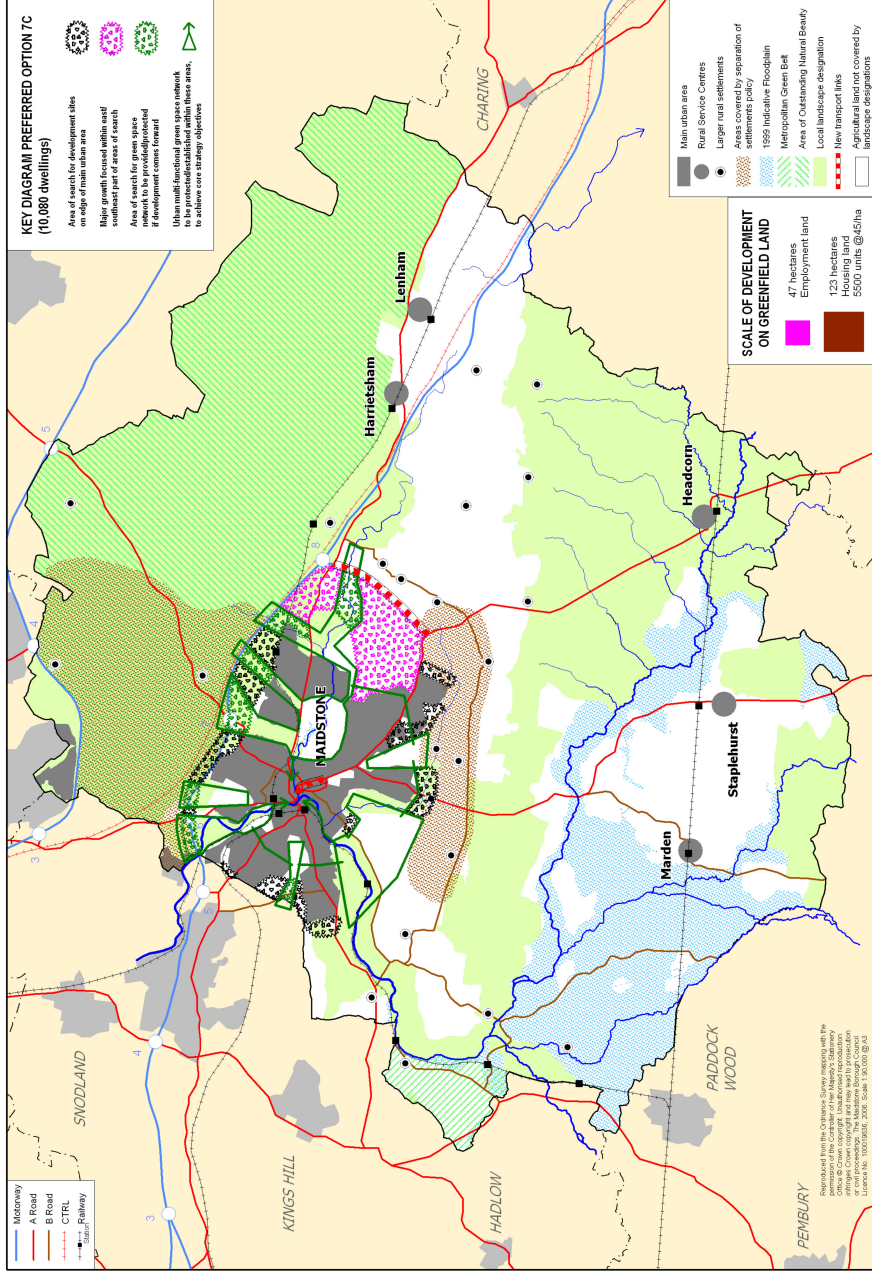
Map 5.1 Key Diagram

Key Diagram

Employment Land Requirements - Policy CS3

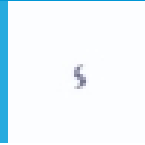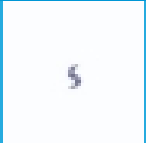| Policy Issue	CS3 - Employment land requirements
Aims of policy	Identify sufficient land in suitable locations to ensure a balanced employment supply, initially taking the lead from the Kent and Medway Structure Plan guidelines, and create employment opportunities that meet the forecast growth in working age population. To Identify appropriate locations as set out in Policy CS2 for high quality employment to reduce the need for Maidstone residents to commute long distances for skilled, well paid work. Together with Core Strategy Policy CS2 - provide this land as mixed use developments where possible (particularly in regeneration areas). Review and assess existing employment areas and allocations (within business use class) as "fit for purpose" and protect those which provide good quality business space in sustainable locations. Evaluate alternative uses for those areas which are no longer considered suitable for employment use (this may result in an additional requirement for new locations in substitution). Promote and develop important local and sub-regional businesses in knowledge driven growth sectors such as Media and the Creative Industries. Encourage rural economic diversification and support agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries, and non-land based business proposals where they are appropriate in terms of scale and location.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1:** Delivering Sustainable Development **PPS7:** Sustainable Development in Rural Areas **PPG4:** Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms **PPS3:** Housing

Policy Issue	CS3 - Employment land requirements
Regional	**South East Plan Submission Draft March 2006** - confirms the broad scale of new business and related development already identified:- Policy RE1: Supporting regional important sectors and clusters Policy RE2: Employment and Land Provision Policy RE3: Human resource development Policy RE4: Information Communications Technology (ICT) and changing working practices Policy EP1: Land, Workforce, Education and Skills Policy EP2: Employment Land Provision Policy CC8a: Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance Policy CC8b: The role of Regional Hubs Policy CC8c: Specific advice for the Regional Hubs of Maidstone and Tonbridge -Tunbridge Wells Policy KTG 11: Implications of the Kent Thames Gateway growth area for the surrounding area.
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy EP2 - sets Maidstone provision for new additional floorspace of 129,000sqm Policy MA1: Maidstone Policy EP3: Location of New or Replacement Employment Land (Policy EP5: Land for Technology and Knowledge Clusters, does not conform to this policy which conflicts with Regional policy) Policy EP7: Development of Employment uses in Rural Areas Policy EP8: Farm Diversification

Policy Issue	CS3 - Employment land requirements
	Extant Local Plan Policy - Maidstone Borough Local Plan - all Economic Development policies **MBC Community Strategy** Priorities: • Work to boost the rural economy • Nurture Maidstone's thriving tourism industry • Ensure that the appearance of the Borough encourages business confidence and investment • Support partnerships between schools and colleges and employers • Encourage more childcare provision • Support employment of disabled people and carers • Encourage business start ups and provide ongoing management advice and support for new companies • Sustaining and developing the voluntary and community sector **MBC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2009** - Priority Theme Prosperity (KO1) **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies** CS2, CS3, CS18

Preferred Option. Policy CS 3

• New employment locations will be identified to meet the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (KMSP) requirement (36ha minimum) in the Land Allocations DPD. These will include high quality, mixed use business park environments, aimed at attracting companies in the technology and knowledge driven sectors which offer highly skilled, high wage employment.
• A higher requirement than the KMSP guidelines may need to be explored in order to balance job growth with population growth (possibly up to 47ha)
• Link with Policy CS15 to investigate ways to regenerate town centre employment areas
• Identification of new locations which are accessible to existing labour supply and well-integrated with new housing development for future labour supply in compliance with Policy CS2

- New locations and the redevelopment of existing sites should be as part of mixed use developments, which are accessible by public transport (or links which can be improved), of a high quality design and layout including strategic landscaping. Any impact on the environment should be mitigated and where appropriate improved, incorporating energy and efficiency measures.
- Existing employment areas which are accessible and well located will be protected for employment use and retained, unless it can be shown that the site is no longer suitable for employment use or mixed redevelopment, incorporating an element of employment use
- Support for rural economic diversification and wider economic development in rural service centres and larger rural villages, as long as there is no harmful effect on the vitality and viability, impact on landscape and bio diversity, and no negative impact on the highway network

Maidstone's proposals are driven by the need to increase prosperity for all citizens of the Borough, to provide both additional and better quality job prospects, with balanced housing provision, reduce out commuting as far as practical, and improve the skills of the local community.The relationship between Further and Higher Education, Training and Workforce Skills is key to this approach and makes the case for a stronger Further Education representation in Maidstone. (see also CS policies 4 and 17).

The overall strategy is to release land for high value / high quality businesses which has good access to the strategic road / rail network, in line with the strategy set out in Policy CS2. Developments should be capable of being provided with good quality multi-modal transport links to the town centre. New university and medical institutions, and sport arenas form part of this vision.

There is also a need to look at regeneration of existing brownfield locations; whether within the urban areas (such as town centre) or in the rural areas (former industrial land at the end of their life).

The Borough Council is also pursuing enhanced access from the south of the town and the regeneration of the area immediately to the south of the town centre, including the historical area around All Saints (Archbishop's Palace/ Carriage Museum area) (see Town Centre Regeneration policy) and the lower Sittingbourne Road area amongst others. The Borough Council would particularly wish to see access to the south of the town centre enhanced and better access to the existing
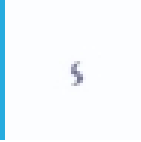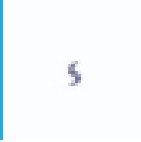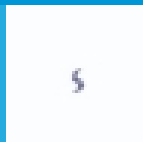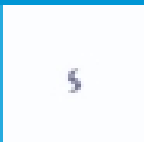
industrial areas to the southeast of the town. In this aspect, the South East Maidstone Strategic Link which currently sits in the Local Transport Plan but is unfunded, is particularly important.

Policy Issue	CS3 - Employment land requirements
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	**Follow existing trends** There is a need to address a number of factors which are at present harmful to the growth of the local economy and the prosperity of the Borough. By continuing on the existing trend, it will not be possible to address the following factors: i. Growth in employment is much less than the regional and national averages. The explanation for this according to the Inward Investment Agency "Locate in Kent" is the paucity of quality employment development locations available in Maidstone during that period. ii. Wage levels - the Council has identified a "two speed" economy operational in the Borough between the wages of residents who *live* in Maidstone Borough (which are high) and the earnings of people who *work* in Maidstone Borough (which are low). Accordingly, whilst unemployment rates are generally low in Maidstone Borough (1.5%) levels of prosperity within the community are markedly varied. This of course has wider implications for access to services, and for the availability of disposable income to spend in the local economy such as retailing. this also effects the affordability of local houses. iii. Low skills levels, qualification levels - The proportion of Maidstone's working age population achieving higher qualifications; although close to the national average, is much less than the regional South East average – a position which is inconsistent with a prosperous county town. iv. Areas of disadvantage - Maidstone has areas of multiple deprivation amongst the worst 20% in the nation. Such concentrations are largely, but not uniquely, consistent with social housing estates where issues of education and aspiration need to be tackled. v. Competitive advantage - Maidstone Borough is located between two Government supported growth areas at Kent Thames Gateway and at Ashford. Such is the scale

Policy Issue	CS3 - Employment land requirements
	of the planned growth and investment at these locations that there is a danger that Maidstone's competitive advantage will be damaged if nothing is done to improve Maidstone's attractiveness to new business and provide space for local businesses to expand. vi. Loss of employment land to residential - over the last 5 years, there have been a number of large employment sites which have been lost and the land has not been retained for employment use (the majority re-developed for housing). This has resulted in a new overall loss in employment land supply. Therefore, although at present we are able to protect existing industrial and business land which is identified under Local Plan Policy ED2 this would not result in providing a great deal of growth against the Structure Plan guidelines (recent performance has actually shown a net loss of land). This approach would also not allow a comprehensive review and appraisal of the total employment stock and the protection of **all** (valuable) employment space. **Large Scale Employment Growth Options -** It is not the intention of the Borough Council to compete on the same scale with the recognised growth areas of Ashford and Thames Gateway. Large scale releases of the new land for employment purposes would conflict with national, regional and county planning guidance. However Maidstone Borough Council considers that it can play a fuller role in the economic prosperity of the region and complement the objectives of the growth areas. This will require the release of additional (greenfield) land for employment uses. **Direct employment growth to urban area only and not release additional greenfield land at all** - this would frustrate employment growth, as past trends have shown that new investors require bigger, modern premises, with good access to the trunk road network, and these locations are not available within the town centre or on existing greenfield allocations. Market research for the Urban Capacity Study has shown that there is a strong market for new Grade A office buildings within the town - although refurbishment of older stock is generally considered unviable. Therefore it may be necessary to pursue the

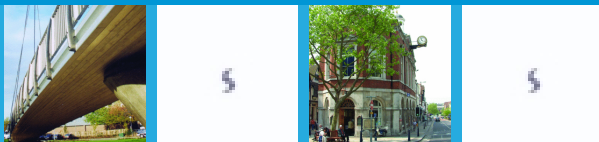| Policy Issue	CS3 - Employment land requirements
	redevelopment of these older office sites for mixed use development (including employment). It is important however to retain employment use within the town and protect the locations which are most likely to meet the requirements of existing firms wishing to expand but stay within the town. **Develop only on previously developed land** - regenerate former employment sites which are located within the rural area. Although the Council recognises the need to consider how these redundant sites should be used in the future, many of these are not in sustainable locations for large scale employment uses and would not be considered as suitable (in terms of location, accessibility to labour supply or highway network) if choosing greenfield locations.
Indicators	AMR Core Indicators 1a, 1b 1c - Amount of floorpsace by type and on previously developed land AMR Core Indicator 1d - Employment Land Supply AMR Core Indicator 1e & 1f - Loss of employment land (total and amount lost to residential) % increase of businesses and employees in the knowledge driven sectors Reduction in the gap between SE and Kent in the average weekly wages for Maidstone's workforce Number of business start up premises Reduction in unemployment rate Lower score on the indices of multiple deprivation Business density Supporting Independence Programme Data (SIP) (KCC)

Qualitative employment issues - Policy CS4

Policy Issue	CS4 Qualitative employment issues
Aims of policy	To support, foster and develop Maidstone Borough's knowledge and technology sectors and clusters including media, arts and culture, building on the presence of Maidstone Studios, Media Tree and Art at the Centre projects. In connection with Core Strategy Policy CS18, encourage the expansion of the University College for Creative Arts (formerly KIAD). Stimulate the development of other high growth, knowledge driven sectors that have a founding within the existing economy of the Borough, such as healthcare services and technologies and eco-enterprises. Support and promote advances in ICT and changing working practices by positively promoting the development of quality, high skilled ICT-enabled sites, premises and facilities suitable to support changing and flexible working practices and home based businesses.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1** - Delivering Sustainable Development (requires high quality design which could include art as part of that design) **PPG4** - Industrial, Commercial and Small businesses (support for small businesses which can include many cluster industries, support for changing working practices such as working from home)
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy RE1 (support for regionally important clusters) and RE3 (to improve skills levels), KTG11 (develop economic strategy for Maidstone Borough in response to Growth Areas) Regional Economic Strategy - support for growth of creative industries, home-based working, innovation and enterprise, local education and raising skills levels.
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006**

Policy Issue	CS4 Qualitative employment issues
	Policy QL13 (Cultural activities and art), EP1 (education and skills), EP5 (Technology clusters)
	Extant Local Plan Policy - Maidstone Borough Local Plan
	Policy CF13 (Art and cultural facilities)
	MBC Community Strategy - Key Theme Leisure, Culture Sport and Entertainment
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009 - Key Theme Prosperity (KO1 and KO3), Quality Living (KO11)
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS3 on employment land requirements, CS18 in relation to education and CS15 in relation to the regeneration of the town centre

Preferred Option. Policy CS 4

- Support schemes which diversify the cultural facilities, particularly opportunities for the arts, in the Borough. New facilities should be easily accessible for all sectors of the community
- Encourage proposals which support growth in local media companies and help promote the area as a centre of excellence for broadcast and creative businesses
- Encourage the provision of public art as part of new developments, particularly in the town centre and along the riverside (link with Core Strategy on Development Contributions Policy CS16)
- Support proposals which increase the level of flexible working and home-working, where it would not impact on the provision of housing and would reduce congestion
- Encourage businesses which develop environmental technologies / social responsibility / innovation
- Where new development is proposed it should incorporate a high quality architectural and landscape design and complement its surroundings

Encouraging the development of technology clusters is necessary to identify Maidstone Borough's economic distinctiveness and support the growth of the existing media cluster
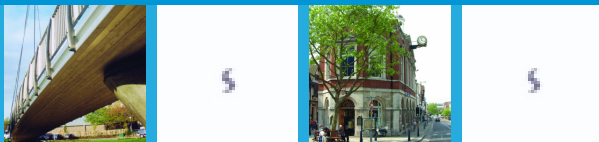
Flexible working practices will improve employment opportunities and home working / live-work schemes can positively impact on congestion.

Cultural and community schemes will aid regeneration

Increasing the provision of public art will improve the local environment, build on civic pride, and bring communities together

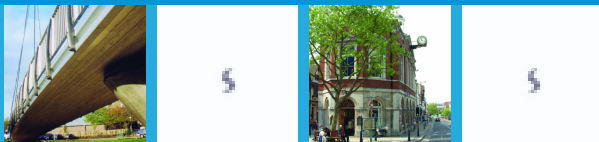| Policy Issue	CS4 Qualitative employment issues
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	**Alternative - not to have a separate policy.** Part of the policy will be to encourage and support activities rather than providing a basis for planning permission but it is considered important to build on this local distinctiveness. By encouraging businesses that have a link with cluster industries (such as the media) will help Maidstone Borough to have a unique identity which will help inward investment and boost the local economy. By separating this policy from the Employment Land Requirements policy, means that a separate emphasis can be placed on these more "spatial" issues which deal with employment outside of the traditional business use classes. Recent studies have shown that a high proportion of the Borough's jobs are in non-business use classes (such as retail, hotel and leisure services) and it is therefore acceptable for the Core Strategy to highlight these issues.
Indicators	Number of new public art pieces to be provided as part of new developments (Public Art Policy targets?) Number of VAT registered business starts in cluster industries Number of new media-based industries (business start ups)

Retail Hierachy and future retail/leisure provision - Policy CS5

Policy Issue	CS5 - Retail Hierarchy and future retail / leisure provision
Aims of policy	To maintain and improve the comparison goods shopping in Maidstone town centre which in association with Policy CS2 ensures that Maidstone remains one of the top in-town retail destinations in the South east
	To protect the vitality and viability of Maidstone town centre, through a hierarchy of shopping areas in the town (Core, Secondary and Tertiary), providing for a mix of town centre uses
	To ensure that Maidstone town centre is able to physically accommodate necessary growth in retailing, cultural, leisure and services.
	To promote a 24-hour economy in the town centre and manage the impact of cultural and leisure uses on the local amenity and retail function
	To meet the needs of other retail sectors (including convenience goods and bulky goods) without harm to the town centre
	To promote and support rural diversification and local produce through local farm shops
	To meet the local retail needs of the community through a hierarchy of retail destinations, including the rural area by directing retail investment to rural service centres
Conformity:	
National	**PPS6** "Planning for town centres) - manage the role and function of existing retail centres (including the relationship and hierarchy between them) apply sequential test to locations for new development.
Regional	**South East Plan** - **Submission Draft March 2006**: Policy CC8c - identifies Maidstone as Regional Hub

Policy Issue	CS5 - Retail Hierarchy and future retail / leisure provision
	Policies TC1, TC3, TC4 - town centres to be focal point for development, new development should be directed to town centres, out of centre development resisted Policy TC2 - identifies Maidstone as a Primary Regional Centre in network of centres Policy S8 - support for community infrastructure linked to development
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006**: Policy EP14 - identifies Maidstone as sub-regional centre Policy EP15 - sequential approach for new retail and leisure development Policy EP16 - Maidstone to be focus for new comparison goods Policy EP17 - large food store development Policy EP18 - rural service centres (to be identified in LDF) **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** - Policies R1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15 (retail policies) Policy CF14 - Nightclubs, and entertainment uses **MBC Community Strategy** - Theme 2 - Access to Services and Inclusion and Theme 4 - Leisure Culture, Sport and Entertainment **MBC Strategic Plan** - Key Objective KO2 to Review and Develop the Retail Offer **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies -** CS2

Preferred Option. Policy CS 5

Maidstone town is defined as a Primary Regional Centre and is the County Town of Kent. The Policy needs to support the retail function of the town centre and build on the relationship between the main retail areas. This will look at ways of particularly strengthening the link between the Fremlin Walk and the Chequers Mall and the north end of Week Street. To assist this, Maidstone East remains an essential location to improve the retail offer of the town, as part of a mixed use scheme.

Proposals for new retail and leisure provision should be sequentially located, looking at urban areas first and following the strategy set out in Policy CS2. There is unlikely to be an overall quantitative shortfall in the first part of the plan period, however there is a need to improve the range and quality of retail and shopping offer available.

Leisure and evening economy uses will be directed to the Tertiary shopping areas of the town centre to protect the shopping core. Certain uses such as restaurants and bars will be permitted within the Secondary shopping area, where they improve the range and quality of uses. However, a mix of uses will be encouraged to avoid the harmful effect of clustering similar non-retail uses which may harm the main retail function of the area and give rise to amenity and/or safety concerns.

The relocation out of the urban centre of uses which are not compatible with the location will be encouraged to help regenerate town centre sites.

New retail and leisure provision in rural areas should be located within the identified rural service centres of Staplehurst, Headcorn, Marden and Lenham/Harrietsham and be of a scale appropriate to the functions of the rural service centres and in compliance with Policy CS2.

Local retail provision should be provided, in connection with new residential developments where required, at a scale suitable to the location

Policy Issue	CS5 - Retail Hierarchy and future retail / leisure provision
Alternative options considered	Cafe Conversation consultation showed support for Maidstone town centre and concentrating new shopping development in the centre. Other issues raised included a demand for

Policy Issue	CS5 - Retail Hierarchy and future retail / leisure provision
and reasons for rejection	convenience good provision (supermarket) in Staplehurst area, support for local farm shops and farmers markets, and a need to protect village / rural shopping provision. Sustainability Appraisal initial assessment did not specifically consider options for new retail development, however, this policy would meet SA Framework objectives 4, 7 and 8. Government policy directs retail and leisure development to town centre locations, using a sequential approach and therefore there are limited alternative options. Develop District Centres in the urban area and the main village centres - considered and rejected on physical and environmental grounds.
Indicators	AMR Core Indicator 4a & 4b - Amount of new retail, leisure floorspace and location provided (total and within Maidstone town centre) Footfall, land use surveys - vitality and viability of town centre

Housing Land Requirements - Policy CS6

Policy Issue	CS6 - Housing Land Requirements
Aims of policy	To provide sufficient land in sustainable locations to meet the dwelling requirements set out in the South East Plan (as modified by the Growth Point Bid). In conjunction with Core Strategy policies CS2 & CS3 (Spatial form of development and Employment Land Requirements), the broad locations for the majority of the land required will be set out although the specific site allocations will be made in the Land Allocations DPD. This will set out at least five years supply of land for development, with appropriate phasing. Significant new development must be part of mixed use schemes
Conformity:	
National	**PPS3** - PPS 3 stresses the importance of delivering new housing targets which will be set in the South East Plan for each district. Within the total number of new homes a wide choice of high quality homes is envisaged. The LDF is to set out the location of new housing with a preference given to brownfield sites.
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy H1 - sets out the housing requirements for Maidstone Borough 2006-2026 Policy CC5 - Infrastructure and Implementation Policy CC8 - identifies Maidstone as Regional Hub Policy H3 - Location of housing and use of urban land
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy HP1 - sets out requirements for Maidstone as 6,500 over the period 2001-2016 (an annual rate of 433) Policy SS1 - sets out spatial priorities for development and identifies Maidstone as Major Urban Area for concentration of new development, and Staplehurst and Headcorn as Rural Service centre

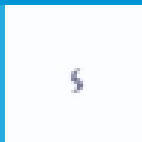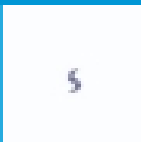| Policy Issue	CS6 - Housing Land Requirements
	Policy MA1 - Area policy for Maidstone. Of particular importance is the part which states that no further greenfield land should be allocated, beyond an equivalent amount to the previously identified Local Plan sites **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan -** To replace Policy H1 **MBC Community Strategy** - key theme - Housing and Land Use Planning **MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009 -** Priority Theme - Prosperity (KO4), Quality Living (KO13), Healthy Environment (KO15), Quality Decent Homes (KO21, KO24) **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies -** CS2 - Spatial form of development

Preferred Option. Policy CS 6

The final dwelling requirement for Maidstone between 2006-2026 will be determined through the South East Plan. However, it is likely to range between 8,200 – 10,080 (or 410pa – 504pa). The KMSP requirement is 6,500 between 2001-2016 (or 415pa)

Taking into account the supply from existing planning permissions (which are anticipated to come forward) and the likely capacity for brownfield sites in built up areas (taken from Urban Capacity Study 2006) we will have enough land and sites to meet crude numerical need until at least 2011 (working on highest requirement) if all sites come forward for development. See Policy CS2 for approach to phasing and Greenfield / brownfield split.

This leaves a need to find new sites for approximately 5,500 dwellings in the Land Allocations DPD. (This assumes that all "frozen" Greenfield allocations from the 2000 Local Plan are treated on a equal basis and re-assessed along with all other newly available sites).

Identification of the general locations for new housing development are set out in Policy CS2.
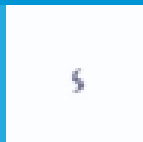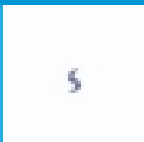
All locations for major residential development will be part of mixed use development including employment, community facilities, retail, leisure and open space and education provision.

Policy Issue	CS6 - Housing Land Requirements
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	At the Issues and Options stage the background information to the Cafe Conversations consultation topic B (Your home / your children's home) set out the broad range of dwelling requirements which the consultation draft of the South East Plan set as 8,200 - 9,200.

The naming of Maidstone as a New Growth Point necessitates achieving residential growth at 20% above RPG at Jan 2003, which equates to 10,080. However, it is the Council's view that this is highly dependent on the necessary infrastructure being made available alongside the new development.

In considering the results of the consultation, the initial Sustainability Appraisal considered four possible options: Higher house building target, Lowest possible target, At or above the SEP figure but concentrating on mix, and seek a maximum 60% of development on brownfield land. The general conclusions from the SA analysis and the consideration of the consultation responses indicated that it was not necessarily the number of dwellings which the Borough should accommodate which was the main issue, but the way in which this was provided (mix of types and adequate affordable housing, in line with necessary infrastructure etc).

Although Option 2 (lowest possible target) performed best against the sustainability criteria, this will not meet other wider objectives of meeting housing need etc.

Therefore, the Council's preferred option for new housing growth is to pursue the higher target of 10,080 over the 20 year period 2006-2026. This is however, conditional on the necessary new strategic infrastructure being provided alongside new development. |

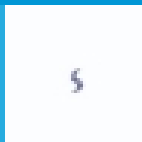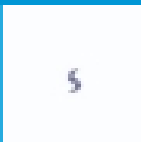|	
	Land supply is crucial to the provision of housing. Having sufficient land available will also have a bearing on social housing delivery - (the viability of such sites often relies on the land being available at a discount.) It is important that the release of new greenfield housing allocations is carefully phased and managed to ensure that pressure is still maintained on brownfield urban sites (the capacity of which was identified in UCS 2006). It is also important to ensure a steady provision of land to meet regional requirements and to avoid pent up demand in the market. Link with Core strategy policies CS2
Indicators	AMR Core Indicator 2a - Net additional dwellings AMR Core Indicator 2b - Percentage of new and converted dwellings on PDL (link to Policy CS5) AMR Core Indicator 2c - Percentage of new dwellings completed at less than 30 dph, between 30-50 dph, and above 50 dph. Housing Strategy Action Plan

Strategic infrastructure - Policy CS7

Policy Issue	CS7 Strategic infrastructure (including new transport links) to enable new development
Aims of Policy	To ensure that the scale and pace of new development is dependant on the provision of new infrastructure to meet the needs that it generates. These matters will require periodic review and phased implementation over the Plan period 2006-26. New strategic infrastructure (and transport links) necessary to enable development to meet Plan objectives must be provided in a timely manner. Conversely, major new developments should not proceed in the absence of the necessary strategic infrastructure. To provide for the South East Maidstone Strategic Link (SEMSL) in order to regenerate and open up development locations (which should be built to high environmental standards) in and around the outer SE quadrant of urban Maidstone. To provide for strategic highway road improvements in the Upper and Lower Stone Street and All Saints areas, to improve accessibility and the quality of the urban environment, and to enable environmental improvement (including air quality) and redevelopment potential in the Principal town of Maidstone. To support multi-modal strategic transport improvements identified: • within and around the urban area of Maidstone, • and on the the route corridors of the M20 corridor, the corridor between Maidstone and Medway (particularly improvements to the Medway Valley line), and Maidstone and Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells. To lobby for recognition of these important transport "spokes" in the South East Plan.

Policy Issue	CS7 Strategic infrastructure (including new transport links) to enable new development
	To identify with partners the nature of other strategic scale infrastructure requirements including health services, utility, educational and cultural/leisure.
Conformity:	
National	**PPG13** s106 and Circular 05/2005
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy CC5 states "the scale and pace of new development will be dependant on there being sufficient capacity in existing infrastructure to meet the areas current needs and the provision of new infrastructure to meet the needs of new development" Policy promotes an urban focus for development generally, supporting urban regeneration and rennaisance. Policy CC8a defines Maidstone as one of 21 Regional Hubs; Hubs should be the main focus for development. Policy TC2 identifies Maidstone as one of 23 Primary Regional Centres which should be the focus of major developments for retail, employment, tourism/ leisure and mixed use, of 10ha or more (10,000m2). Policy CC8b states LDDs and LTP should include policies and proposals to support and develop the role of regional hubs. This includes: giving priority to measures to increase accessibility by public transport, walking, cycling and interchange facilities between all modes. RSS Policy T1 prioritises investment in developing the network of regional hubs and spokes (including alleviating of pinch points). Policy T3 requires LDDs to support and develop the role of regional spokes. **Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)** established that the regional hubs (with the best potential for multi-modal transport services) should be the focus of development and activity, an that they should be the focus for development and investment that increases accessibility .

Policy Issue	CS7 Strategic infrastructure (including new transport links) to enable new development
Local	**Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy TP7 - safeguarding land for future strategic transport schemes including Southern Maidstone Strategic Link, A228 Colts Hill Strategic link. Policy TP15, promotes local transport strategies with priority to regional hubs and interchanges identifies in the RTS Policy TP8 interchange improvements and Maidstone East and West stations, , **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** - Policy T1: Development may be phased so that necessary works and other facilities are put in place at the appropriate time. The Local Transport Plan refers to the above, identifying the SMSL for period 2011-16. **MBC Community Strategy -** Transport services need to be improved, along with infrastructure **Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy** - Stronger co-ordination of developments through the planning process, potential for developer contributions. **MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009** - Strategic Priority: Working with partners to improve access across the Borough through better roads and public transport. **Other local strategies:** A Country Mile; A blueprint for safety and sustainability on Maidstone Borough's Rural Road Network - Environment and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny report 2005/2006 **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS2, CS8, CS16**

Preferred Option. Policy CS 7

Accommodating new development targets in Maidstone Borough and particularly in the urban area will be dependant on establishing a strategy for more sustainable travel to serve the best located locations for new development.

Policy CS2 sets out the preferred location for new development based in part on ensuring it can be served by the most sustainable transport options. The Core Strategy will play a key part in determining the appropriate allocations in the Land Allocations DPD (proposals map) and in prioritising and bidding for resources for transport infrastructure and service improvements. It will also assist in providing a framework for identifying the nature of travel plans and developer contributions to meet the needs generated by new development. Developers will be expected to contribute to the costs of such transport modelling.

Appropriate transport packages that best accommodate each development will need to be determined, including;

- Mitigation measures i.e. travel plans, public transport services
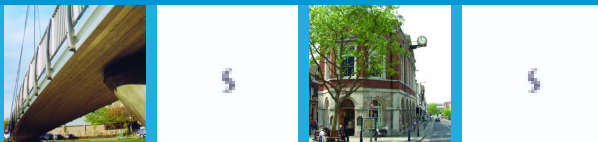- New infrastructure and improvements - where absolutely necessary

Subsequent to the initial stages, a system that identifies, acquires and pools the necessary developer contributions will also need to be established. An underlying principle will be that where infrastructure work is identified as necessary, no development will occur until the relevant infrastructure has been phased or provided.

The Policy will provide a basis for identifying the key elements of necessary new strategic infrastructure associated with major locations (and in compliance with Policy CS2) and a policy basis for ensuring new strategic infrastructure is put in place in a timely manner with appropriate support from the related developments.

This will include:

- multi-modal transport infrastructure necessary for the regeneration of the Park Wood estate and the opening up of new locations developed through urban extension in the E/SE quadrant of urban Maidstone (see Policy CS2)

- Integrated transport access improvements in and around the urban area, including the approach routes to the south of the town centre to enable town centre renaissance and regeneration of opportunity locations and at new development locations .

- multi-modal transport improvements on the regionally identified strategic spokes of the M20 corridor, northwards from Maidstone to Medway (particularly improvements to the Medway Valley line) and southwards to Tonbridge-Tunbridge Wells.

- New or improved utility infrastructure to meet the identified needs of the community
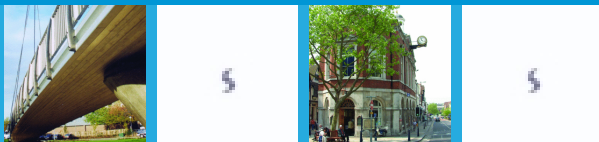
To conduct appropriate appraisals which will identify the needs / effect of new development on existing infrastructure (eg. GP surgeries etc).

Policy Issue	CS7 Strategic infrastructure (including new transport links) to enable new development
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	Cafe Conversation and other public and stakeholder participation has shown strong support for new development to meet plan objectives, however this is strongly conditional on the necessary infrastructure being in place to support the development and to avoid overstretching existing capacity. This common sense view is completely consistent with the stated objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Kent and Medway Structure Plan. It is not considered that there is a realistic alternative to this option which would meet planning and other spatial objectives. Transport improvement will contribute to achievement of Sustainability Appraisal Objective 11- to reduce road congestion and pollution levels - and SA Objective 18 - to sustain economic growth and competitiveness. The preferred approach to the spatial form of new development requires key strategic investments.
Indicators	Delivery of key projects to timescale

Choice of transport modes - Policy CS8

Policy Issue	CS8 Choice of Transport modes
Aims of policy	To work with the highways authorities and partners to enable transport modal choice to be maximised where practical.
	To promote additional strategically located quality Park & Ride (P&R) locations, which promote Best Practice and sustainability, have increased capacity and service levels together with a restriction on non-residential parking on town centre locations to influence modal choice in favour of alternative modes.
	To encourage the adoption of bus lanes and other dedicated links where it is proven they can be of benefit to the transport network and promote improvement to transport services and interchange facilities as part of a programme to make public transport an attractive and beneficial alternative to the car.
	To develop upon the County wide parking standards to produce new appropriate standards that support Maidstone's aspirations for modal shift balanced with wider plan objectives. Parking standards to reflect accessibility to service levels on the public transport network routes.
	Promote inter-modal interchanges with complimentary feeder services, including at Maidstone East and Staplehurst railway stations and other options such as post buses etc.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1** - Sustainable Development. **PPG13** - Transport. New developments should be well located in relation to the transport network. Base level parking standrds with scope for localisation.
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy T8 - Travel plans to be compulsory for major travel generating developments by 2011, LDF and LTP to identify categories of development that require travel plans.

Policy Issue	CS8 Choice of Transport modes
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy TP1: Integrated Transport Strategy; Policy TP3: Transport and Location of Development. **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** - Policy T1: General Aims and Objectives; Policies T2 & T3: Public Transport. **MBC Community Strategy** - The Council will actively promote better road and rail services and will look to increase accessibility to the public transport network. **MBC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2009** - Strategic Priority: Working with partners to improve access across the Borough through better roads and public transport. **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies -** CS7, CS16

Preferred Option. Policy CS 8

To work with the highways authorities and partners to promote transport modal choice where practical.

To promote additional strategically located quality Park & Ride (P&R) locations, which promotes Best Practice and sustainability and has increased capacity and service levels together with a restriction on non-residential parking on town centre locations to influence modal choice in favour of alternative modes.

To encourage the adoption of bus lanes and other dedicated links where it is proven they can be of benefit to the transport network and promote improvement to transport services and interchange facilities as part of a programme to make public transport an attractive and beneficial alternative to the car.
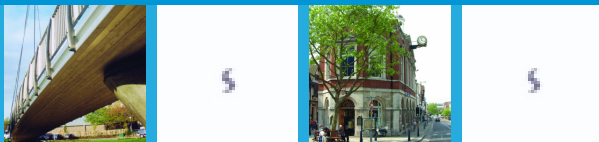
To develop upon the County wide parking standards to produce new appropriate standards that support Maidstone's aspirations for modal shift balanced with wider plan objectives. Parking standards to reflect accessibility to service levels on the public transport network routes.

Promote inter-modal interchanges with complimentary feeder services, including at Maidstone East and Staplehurst railway stations and other options such as post buses etc.

Pooled Section 106 agreements to contribute to green travel initiatives - relating to Policy CS7.

Policy Issue	CS8 Choice of Transport modes
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	National and regional policy provides clear direction on policy objectives. Alternatives surround: • levels of increase in the number of Park & Ride locations and their capacity and service levels • town centre parking strategy • level of restraint in local parking standards applied to Private Non-Residential parking over and above that applied in competing centres in Kent • financial and other support offered to improved inter-modal interchange facilities, public transport and dedication of road space to buses and cycles • realism of proposals to promote other than recreational cycling within the physical characteristics of Maidstone • financial and other support for "soft measures" including staggered working hours, car sharing, school transport initiatives
Indicators	Number of Green Travel Plans adopted Travel to work/school data. Bus and rail patronage information (identify any trends)

Design Quality - Policy CS9

Policy Issue	CS9 - Design Quality
Aims of policy	Seek high quality design and accessible layout of new development including open space and landscaping. Set out broad design guidelines for new development to ensure that it should respect its surroundings, and makes a positive contribution to character of area. This is applicable to new development but also conversions and extensions. (link with Policy CS13 for design and sustainable construction).
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1:** Delivering Sustainable Development - new development to be of a high quality, inclusive design, promote and encourage new development to incorporate renewable energy techniques, more efficient use of resources.
Regional	**South East Plan - submission draft March 2006:** Policies BE1 - support for Urban Renaissance Policy EN1 (sustainable construction) and (design) Policy CC12 - character of environment and quality of life
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policies and QL1, QL2 (design) **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan:** Strategic Objective 1, Policies ENV2, 3, 4 Maidstone Landscape and Character Assessment - identifies character areas **MBC Community Strategy** - Key Theme Environment which includes safeguarding natural resources and addressing climate change and Key Theme Land Use and Planning

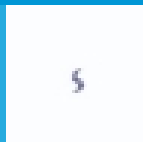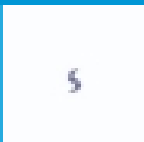| Policy Issue	CS9 - Design Quality
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2009 - Key Objectives KO10, KO13, KO23, KO15 and KO18 **Strongly associated Core Strategy policies -** CS2

Preferred Option. Policy CS 9

Policy on Design Quality will set out :

- The need for high quality design in all developments.
- Proposals will need to demonstrate that consideration has been given to design, layout, landscaping and the ways in which the proposal relates to its surroundings.
- Submission of design statements will be encouraged or required for all planning applications and will need to include an assessment of crime prevention and address amenity issues such as noise and light. The inclusion of renewable energy technologies in the design will also be encouraged (See Policy CS13).
- The Council will apply the principles of the Kent Design Guide (adopted as SPG to the Kent & Medway Structure Plan under the old plan making system) when determining planning applications
- To provide a basis for adopting Supplementary Planning Document(s) where necessary to provide detailed guidance (which could include character assessments).
- Improve design through good quality pre-application advice, publicity of best practice examples and information in publications/web pages. Consider engagement in design awards schemes.
- Area character appraisals introduced, facilitate Village Design Statements and Parish Plans, and Conservation Area appraisals and Management Plans.

Policy Issue	CS9 - Design Quality
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	PPS1 sets out that design is a material consideration and therefore is a necessary part of planning process. Therefore, the policy expands upon national guidance and sets a basis for applying the provisions of strategic guidance (Kent Design Guide). Without a policy framework, it would be difficult to implement the

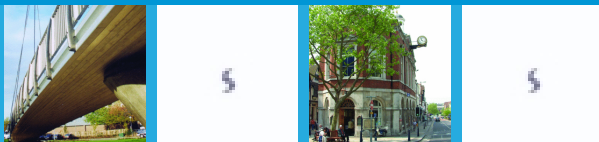| Policy Issue	CS9 - Design Quality
	Supplementary Planning Document. The only realistic alternative for this policy would be the different means by which it is implemented.
Indicators	Number of planning applications refused on design grounds

Number of design statements submitted with planning applications

Number of Conservation Area appraisals and management plans produced each year

Examples of support given to Village Design Statements and Parish Plans with design advice. |

Heritage and local distinctiveness - Policy CS10

Policy Issue	CS10 - Heritage and local distinctiveness
Aims	To protect and enhance the historic environment, buildings and heritage areas To identify important distinctive characteristics of urban, suburban and rural settlements and develop guidance to protect and enhance them (link with CS9).
Conformity:	
National	**PPG15** – Planning and the Historic Environment. Covers policies for Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy BE1 – Management for an Urban Renaissance Policy BE7 – Management of the Historic Environment
Local	**Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006**: Policy QL6-10 regarding Conservation Areas, Archaeology, Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** Policies ENV9 – ENV20 **MBC Community Strategy -** Key Theme: Environment and Planning and Land Use **MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009 -** Priority Themes Quality Living and a Healthy Environment **Other local strategies:** Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - A Management Plan for 2004-2009 **Strongly associated Core Strategy policy -** CS2

Preferred Option. Policy CS 10

Link to Policy CS2 on local character appraisals
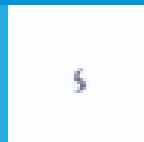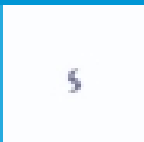
Set out Policies which will:

- Guide development affecting demolition / development / change of use of Listed Buildings
- Guide development proposals affecting Conservation Areas (link to Conservation Area Character Assessments)
- Policy to deal with Archaeological sites including Ancient Monuments
- Policy to deal with Historic Parks and Gardens

Policy Issue	CS10 - Heritage and local distinctiveness
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. Therefore an alternative could be to not provide a specific policy for Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas and rely on guidance in PPG/PPS's or the legislation. However it is considered important to have a Core Strategy policy which deals with local issues, character and local distinctiveness which is not adequately covered by Regional policies and PPG advice. Without this, it would be difficult to value and protect such important areas.
Indicators	Number of Conservation Area Character Appraisals produced

Number of Listed Buildings at risk |

## Landscape, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity - Policy CS11

Policy Issue	CS11 - Landscape, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
Aims	To protect and enhance areas of high landscape quality within the Borough – particularly designated areas of landscape character (AONB, Special Landscape Areas (SLA)) and local areas of landscape importance where these are justified through appropriate assessments.
	To work with partners such as the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory committee to conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB.
	To protect, conserve and enhance wildlife habitats and wild species, particularly where these are identified as internationally, nationally or locally important, and to secure net biodiversity gains. To develop a network of linked habitats.
	To protect, conserve and enhance veteran and other important trees, woodland and hedgerows.
	To minimise, mitigate and compensate for adverse effects of development on habitats in general.
	Along with partners including Kent Wildlife Trust, restore and recreate important wildlife habitats in accordance with the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan, in particular calcareous grassland, acid grassland/heathland, lowland meadows, wetland habitats and ponds.
	To maintain and enhance wildlife habitats in and around urban areas, including through the protection of informal open space, gardens and biodiverse brownfield sites.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS12** – Local Development Frameworks – to take account of relevant strategies including those on biodiversity and environmental protection. **PPS9**: Biodiversity. Policies should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. Detailed guidance on preparing criteria based policies for considering proposals which may affect

Policy Issue	CS11 - Landscape, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
	designated sites including sites of biodiversity interest and ancient woodland. These policies should be distinguished from those applied to nationally important sites. Through policies in plans, local authorities should also conserve other important natural habitat types that have been identified in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 74 list, as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and identify opportunities to enhance and add to them. **PPS7** – Sustainable Development in rural areas. That the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in areas of designation, but that policies should also allow for developments which if suitably located and of approrpaite scale, will add to the economic and social well being of those communities. Planning authorities should rigorously consider the justification for retaining locally important landscape designations which need to be based on Landscape Character Assessments. **Circular 05/2005 -** Planning Obligations. Paragraph B16 "compensating for loss or damage caused by development"
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy CC12 – Character of the Environment and Quality of Life Policy C2 – AONB. LDD's to have regard to AONM Management Plans Policy C3 – Landscape and countryside management Policy NRM4 – Conservation and improvement of Biodiversity – Criteria based policy for local authorities to avoid net loss of biodiversity and opportunities for net gain.
Local	**Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006**: Policy SPG2 – Biodiversity.

Policy Issue	CS11 - Landscape, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
	Policy EN4 – AONB
	Policy EN7 – County and Local designations
	Policy EN6 – International Wildlife designations
	Policy EN8 - Wildlife habitats and species
	Kent Design - Technical Appendix - Biodiversity (Emerging Maidstone Biodiversity Action Plan - to conform to Kent BAP.)
	Kent Biodiversity Action Plan
	Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan
	Policy – ENV33, ENV34, ENV35, ENV37, ENV38, ENV39, ENV40, ENV41
	Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Guidelines 1999
	MBC Community Strategy - Key Theme Environment
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009 - Key Theme : A Healthy Environment
	Other local strategies:
	Addressing Climate Change - Environment and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny report
	MBC Climate Change Plan and Climate Change Action Plan
	Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - A Management Plan for 2004/9
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policy - CS2
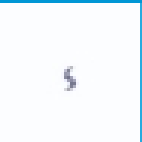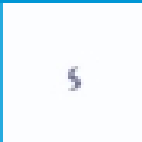
Preferred Option. Policy CS 11

Review the Special Landscape Area in the context of other plan objectives and provide detailed definition to SLA and other local landscape and nature designations.

Confirm detailed definition of all relevant regional and national designations eg AONB

Provide a suite of development plan policies which provide the necessary levels of protection to:

- Internationally and nationally important wildlife sites;
- Local Wildlife Sites;
- Habitats identified as being of importance in the UK and Kent Biodiversity Action Plans;
- Sites and habitats supporting species recognised as being important under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Veteran and other important trees and hedgerows;
- Ancient woodland; and
- Other biodiversity interest.

Ensure that in those cases where the need for development is felt to over-ride the need to protect the site, habitat, species or other biodiversity feature, that:

- Impact is avoided or minimised;
- Any unavoidable impact is appropriately and adequately mitigated and/or compensated.

Identify how all development will contribute to net biodiversity gain, including by securing or helping to secure the favourable conservation status of designated sites.
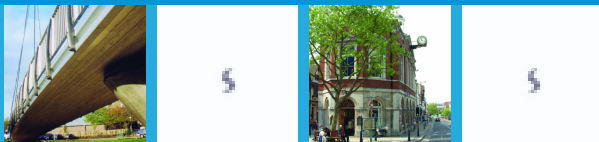
Set targets for large-scale restoration and recreation of wildlife habitats, and to identify areas within which this will be targeted in order to create a coherent network of sites.

Where there is a requirement for tree and shrub planting as part of a landscape scheme, this should help to maintain and enhance the current extent and quality of natural and semi-natural habitats within built-up areas and gardens by identifying networks of important wild urban open space, and protecting areas where private gardens and other small areas of open space contribute to or buffer this network.

Require comprehensive and appropriate assessment of impacts (including positive impacts) on sites, habitats, species and other biodiversity features prior to development.

Policy Issue	CS11 - Landscape, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	PPS7 suggests that rigid local landscape designations could unduly restrict sustainable development in rural areas and that criteria based policies, supported by Landscape Character Assessments should provide the policy basis. Therefore, an alternative option could be to delete the Special Landscape Area (Countywide designation) and the Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI). Local Landscape Designations play an important role in recognising and protecting the distinctive landscape and features that contribute to the character and identity of an area, particularly when supported by character assessments. The KMSP Policy incorporates the need to facilitate social and economic well being of the rural communities which are situated in the SLA and therefore it is not considered that such a policy would be unduly restrictive. There are strong national and regional guidelines for protecting and enhancing local wildlife habitats and therefore there are no realistic alternatives to the biodiversity elements of the Policy.
Indicators	Number of sites lost which are designated as being of international, national or local wildlife importance. Number of sites which are improvement in condition status (which are designated as being of international, national or local wildlife importance). Number of hectares of Ancient Woodland lost Increase in ha. of target habitats and no. of protected areas (ie Local Nature Reserves) Kent Biodiversity Action Plan Targets Character Assessment Guidelines

Role of the Countryside - Policy CS12

Policy Issue	CS12 - Role of the Countryside
Aims	To manage and protect the countryside as an important resource, strictly controlling any development to conserve the character and appearance of the open countryside and natural resources . To set out the limited circumstances where development may be acceptable in order to meet the social and economic needs of rural communities and also support land based activities and carefully manage access and recreational use of the countryside.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS7 -** Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. Promote policies which will raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas and promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture sectors – these should reflect the needs and circumstances of the local area.
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy C3 – Landscape and Countryside Management Policy C4 – Countryside Access and Rights of Way
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy EN1 – Protecting Kent's Countryside Policy EP8 – Farm diversification Policy EP9 – Protection of Agricultural land **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** Policies ENV28, ENV29, ENV43, ENV44, ENV45 **MBC Community Strategy -** Key Theme: Environment and Land Use and Planning **MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009 -** Priority theme Quality Living and a Healthy Environment

Policy Issue	CS12 - Role of the Countryside
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS2, CS3, CS5, CS11

Preferred Option. Policy CS 12

Work with partners to create positive and high quality countryside management to encourage: protection and enhancement of distinctive local qualities of areas of the Borough of Maidstone; landscape scale conservation to avoid fragmentation of habitats.

Support small economies and social well being of small rural communities through small appropriate development to meet local needs.

Landscape Character Assessments to contribute to the framing of development policies , planning development control decisions and agri-environmental and other land management regimes.

Support small scale development of Business Class and service industries if well related to rural service centres or other larger villages
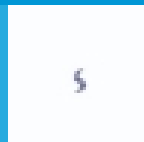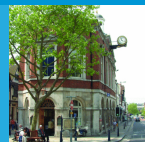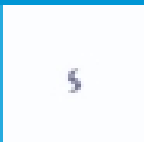
No provision for business development elsewhere with exceptions for the reuse of existing buildings, expansion of existing businesses, subject to good accessibility and no adverse impact .

In compliance with Policy CS2 identify and support the distinctive roles and characters of the rural service centres and smaller settlements, including the use of Parish Plans and design statements.

With partners support measures to address the problems of accessibility to jobs and services for many rural communities, recognising the necessity of the car for transport.

Policy Issue	CS12 - Role of the Countryside
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	SA objective SA7 is to create and sustain vibrant communities, SA14 to protect the Borough's countryside; SA8 to improve accessibility to all services and facilities. Government policy is clear that urban areas should be the focus of all development and that the countryside should be protected. Large areas of the Boroughs countryside is

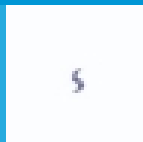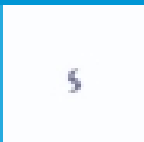| Policy Issue	CS12 - Role of the Countryside
	subject to national and local protection designations. Agriculture and the rural economy of Kent has changed significantly since the War with for macro economic reasons.
	Consequently, there is little in the way of alternative strategies.
	Cafe Conversations confirmed that people value the countryside for its own sake. However, there was clear support for sustainable development to meet the needs of local communities. Rural communities do not want to see a further "suburbanisation" of the countryside and rural settlements and want to maintain the distinctiveness of the different parts of the Borough.
Indicators	Accessibility of rural population to services and facilities
	Review of the Landscape Character Assessment guidelines
	No. of partnership projects implemented to enhance the countryside

Natural resources and Sustainable Construction - Policy CS13

Policy Issue	CS13 - Natural resources and sustainable construction
Aims of policy	To mitigate against flood risk and resist inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding or where the development could increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
	Encourage development which utilises renewable energy sources and reduces reliance on fossil fuel consumption
	Seek an improvement in air quality through supporting Air Quality Management Plans and mitigating effects of pollution through design and reducing congestion
	Prevent or limit the effect of exposure to environmental noise where this has been shown to be harmful
	Making the best use of utility infrastructure (such as drainage and sewage) particularly on large sites, using a "whole site" coordinated approach
	Work towards minimising and mitigating the effect of Climate Change through the pursuance of Sustainable Construction techniques and a more sustainable approach to using natural resources. Work towards the South East Plan goal of stabilising and reducing the region's ecological footprint.
	This will be tackled through the following themes:
	• Water Efficiency
	• Renewable Energy (Carbon Emissions)
	• Energy Efficiency
	• Accessibility
	• Lifetime Homes
	• Waste and Materials
	• Site Considerations (concerning Construction stage techniques)

Policy Issue	CS13 - Natural resources and sustainable construction
Conformity:	
National	**PPS25** - Development and Flood Risk (sequential approach to development in flood risk areas). **Supplementary consultation paper to PPS1** - Planning and Climate Change (Dec 2006) **Code for Sustainable Homes** - published Nov 2006. **The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003**
Regional	**South East Plan** Submission Draft March 2006: Policies - NRM3, NRM7, NRM8, - Natural Resource Management Policy CC3 - Resource Use Policy CC4 - Sustainable Construction Policies EN1, EN5, EN6 - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy NR1 - Prudent use of natural resources Policy NR2 - Energy Generation Policy NR3 - Renewable Production Policy NR4 - Combined Heat and Power Policy NR5 - Pollution Impacts Policy NR6 - Development sensitive to pollution Policy NR7 - Air Quality Policy NR8 - Water Quality Policy NR10 - Development and Flood Risk

| Policy Issue	CS13 - Natural resources and sustainable construction
	Policy NR11 - Flood Protection
	Minerals LDF
	Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan
	Policies - ENV1, ENV4, ENV49, ENV50, ENV51, ENV52
	MBC Community Strategy - Key Theme Environment
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2009 - Key Theme Quality of Life (KO15, KO18)
	Other local strategies:
	Addressing Climate Change - Environment and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny report 2003/04
	MBC Climate Change Plan and Climate Change Action Plan
	The Medway Catchment Flood Management Plan June 2004
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS16

Preferred Option. Policy CS 13

All major development proposals (10 or more residential units/1000m^2 floorspace and above) will be required to submit a formal assessment illustrating how sustainable construction techniques have been explored and incorporated into the proposal, and reasoning the choices made for the particular development. The assessment will follow the guidance set out in the Council's Sustainable Construction SPD. In recognition of potential economic factors, developments falling below the recognised threshold will be only encouraged to submit the assessment, although it is expected that in future years this will become compulsory for all.

For all proposals that fall within the threshold outlined above:

- Residential developments will meet at least "very good" EcoHomes standard, or equivalent or superseding the Code for Sustainable Homes standard.
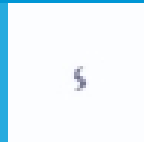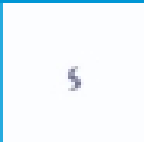
- Commercial developments will meet at least BREEAM "very good" standard, or any equivalent / superseding scheme standard.
- A part of these requirements will be a reduction of at least 15% of predicted CO_2 emissions through on-site renewable energy production/energy efficiency measures (as provided for in PPS22, and recently encouraged in a ministerial statement).

"Very good" standards will represent a first step in Council requirements, with the potential to explore an "Excellent" requirement in future years, guided by the Sustainable Construction SPD.

SUDS to be provided on all new developments to minimise surface water run-off unless it can be shown to be not practical. The long term maintenance of such schemes should also be considered. All new development will be required to incorporate into the design water efficiency and energy conservation measures identified in the SPD.

In conjunction with guidance to be found in the Sustainable Construction SPD, all new developments will incorporate design features to further the amount of recycling undertaken and utilisation of green / living roof technology will be encouraged where practical within new development.

SPD guidance will be taken into account concerning biodiversity and site considerations when dealing with water courses. The improvement and naturalisation of water courses will be an expected feature of all developments where relevant. Any case where this is not possible must be justified.

All planning applications for new development within Flood Risk Areas (as defined by the Environment Agency), will need to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. Where development is considered acceptable, flood resistant materials will be a standard requirement.

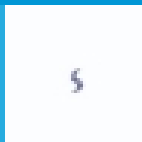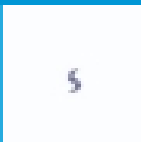Residential amenity will be protected from adverse impacts from noise, odour or light pollution.

Development in Air Quality Management Plan areas should incorporate measures to improve Air Quality and mitigate against existing effects where it is shown to adversely affect amenity.

Proposals for development near to known noise generators will be required to incorporate measures to mitigate against the noise and improve amenity.

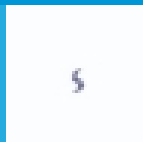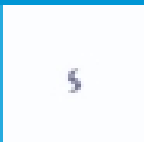| Policy Issue	CS13 - Natural resources and sustainable construction
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	**Flood risk** - PPS25 requires that a sequential approach is adopted for all development in areas at risk from flooding. The Environment Agency is now a statutory consultee for planning applications and they now have "call-in" powers where Local Authorities ignore their advice. There is therefore a strong Government stance on this issue for Local Planning Policies to deal with development and flood risk. There is therefore no realistic alternative approach. Energy conservation - there are no legislative requirements for developers to consider energy conservation measures as part of new building, therefore, there is an alternative option of status quo. This is not considered an acceptable alternative due to the need to mitigate against and adapt to climate change and the Council has taken a pro-active stance through its Climate Change Plan on such issues. **Sustainable Construction -** Status quo - rejected because need to make pro-active stance and reduce the effects of climate change More rigorous approach rejected - Changes to Building Regulations (Part L) have increased the minimum standard, although it will take time for this to be fully implemented. The planning system plays a key role in delivering higher environmental standards in developments and the Government is supportive of policies which can go further and exceed the regulations. However it is important for delivery and realism that the planning system and building regs achieve a middle ground. Increasingly higher targets will be required, and met, as the application of sustainable technologies and techniques becomes more commonplace, however a realistic base must first be established. Evidence exists that confirms sustainable techniques are already increasing in economic viability, and this will become more the case as economies of scale are factored in. Therefore it is considered that the preferred policy approach will set a challenging standard for developers but one that is fair and realistic too.

	The Council's Climate Change Plan requires positive intervention in order to mitigate against climate change (through energy conservation, renewable energy, material conservation and recycling, passive cooling etc) and adaptation to the effects of climate change (through water conservation and harvesting, more resilient design of new buildings, layout and aspect and planning for flood risk) This policy would meet Sustainability Appraisal Framework objectives 2, 11, 12, 15, 17 Cafe Conversation consultation showed broad support for recycling / waste reduction and green issues. Particular concern over water shortages
Indicators	AMR Core Indicator 7 - Number of planning applications granted contrary to the advice of the EA on either flood defence grounds or water quality Number of dwellings built to ecohomes excellent or very good standards. Number of commercial buildings built to BREEAM excellent or very good standards. AMR Core Indicator 9 - Number of developments incorporating renewable energy technologies. Improvement in Air Quality in AQMP areas

Affordable Housing and other housing needs - Policy CS14

Policy Issue	CS14 Affordable Housing and other housing needs
Aims of policy	To seek decent, accessible, properly maintained homes in a good quality environment for the Borough's population. To address the needs of the rural areas by allowing development that specifically meets local community need, through the use of Rural Exception sites and specific plan allocations in appropriate locations in order to provide affordable housing to meet local needs in perpetuity. To create a more inclusive community and to achieve this we will take account of the housing needs of people including those with a disability, young people, older people, minority groups and households on a low income. We need to be able to improve people's homes so that they can continue to live safely and independently. Where this is not possible we should ensure that the accommodation available is of a type and design to meet those needs. To respond to the needs of the gypsy & traveller community.
Conformity:	
National	**PPS3:** Housing (2006) and Housing - Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas (2005) and Sustainable Communities - People, Places and Prosperity (2005) **Housing Market Assessments:** Draft Practice Guidance (2005) **PPS7**: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004) **Circular 01/06:** Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006:** Policy CC11: Supporting an Ageing Population Policy H4: Affordable Housing

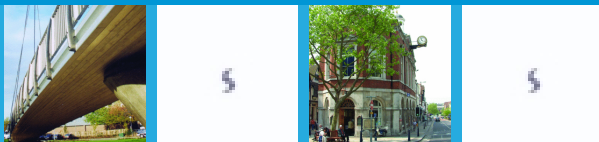| Policy Issue	CS14 Affordable Housing and other housing needs
	Paragraph 9.1 to 9.7: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers - An Interim Statement **South East Regional Housing Strategy 2006-2009, published by the South East Regional Housing Board**
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy HP6: Range and Mix of Housing Provision Policy HP7: Affordable Housing Provision Policy HP8: Affordable Housing on Rural Exceptions Sites Policy HP9: Provision of Permanent and Transit Gypsy Accommodation **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** Policy H26: Nursing Homes (to be reviewed) Policy H30: Local Needs Housing in Rural Areas Policy H36: Accommodation for Gypsies (to be reviewed) **Local Development Framework (Submitted Policies)** Policy AH1: Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (2006) **MBC Community Strategy -** Key Theme Housing **MBC Strategic Plan 2006 -2009**: Priority Theme 5: Quality, decent homes that people can afford (KO21, KO22, KO25) **Other local strategies and/or evidence base:** Housing Strategy 2005-2009 (plus key worker, older people and rural housing supplements) published by Maidstone Borough Council Housing Needs Survey 2005 and Maidstone Balancing Housing Markets Report 2005

Policy Issue	CS14 Affordable Housing and other housing needs
	Ashford, Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, and Tunbridge Wells Gypsy and Traveller Need Survey 2005/06
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS6, CS16

Preferred Option. Policy CS 14

The Council will have regard to a number of other national, regional and local guidance when planning for affordable housing and other housing needs

- To implement policy AH1 of the Affordable Housing DPD (2006), in order to meet the affordable housing need identified in the Housing Needs Survey 2005

- To allocate land for market and affordable housing through the Land Allocations DPD to meet an identified need for affordable housing

- To meet the needs of the elderly by providing sheltered accommodation and extra care nursing homes through the allocation of land in the Land Allocations DPD

- To recognise that necessary improvements cannot be achieved by new building alone. Best use must be made of the existing housing stock in the borough to meet housing needs for different types of dwelling, to meet sustainability objectives for conservation of energy and natural resources, and to improve and regenerate whole neighbourhoods in the Borough.

- To meet the needs of the rural population by providing local needs housing through the allocation of land in the Land Allocations DPD and working in partnership with Parish Councils

- To meet the identified need for gypsy and traveller sites in the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Survey 2005/06 through:
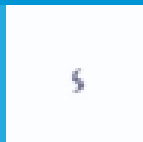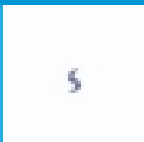
i. a criteria based policy in the Core Strategy which sets out the criteria for assessing the suitability of sites in advance of site specific allocations being identified (see point below) and reviews and updates existing Local Plan Policy H36, particularly in terms of the definition of a gypsy (in line with Circular advice and case law)

ii. the allocation of land in the Land Allocations DPD

Policy Issue	CS14 Affordable Housing and other housing needs
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	**The status quo option** If the Council does not attempt to resolve the housing need identified in the 2005 survey, it would have a negative effect on the economic and social well being of the Borough. Like the rest of the UK, Maidstone has an increasing elderly population and, if the Council does not plan for the needs of this sector of the community now, severe problems for future generations will be created. To ignore the needs of the rural population will create imbalanced communities because young single people and new families will not be able to access housing in the parish they have local connections through family or work. If the Council does not meet the need identified in the 2005/06 Gypsy and Traveller Needs Survey by allocating land, it will not be in a position to defend the loss of sites on an ad hoc basis at planning appeals. It is far more desirable to make provision for such sites in a planned and sustainable manner. **The option of relying on increased housing provisions to reduce house prices** This approach was examined in Kate Barkers' Review of Housing Supply (2004) and the Government's Response to Kate Barker's Review of Housing Supply (2005). Whilst the Government is supporting a step change to increase the numbers of additional homes in the South East, it recognises that additional housing supply alone will not reduce house price to a level affordable by those on lower incomes. Maidstone's housing market is buoyant, and a

	small reduction in house prices brought about by an increase in housing provision will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the majority of householders who currently cannot gain access to the housing market. **Criteria based policies** The Council gave consideration to including criteria based policies for sheltered housing, nursing homes and exception sites but decided not to include them given that there was no clear purpose or need. Development would be guided by the general Core Strategy housing policies and government guidance (through PPS's). Background evidence into the extent of need for these categories of special needs is being prepared and specific allocations to meet any need shown will be made in the Land Allocations DPD.
Indicators	Number of affordable housing units provided through DPD policy Number of rural exception sites provided in line with local needs surveys Number of Gypsy and Traveller sites provided for in line with need identified in survey / DPD AMR Core Indicator 2d: Affordable housing net completions Future identification of need for elderly accommodation, which is currently being investigated

Regeneration of Maidstone urban area - Policy CS15

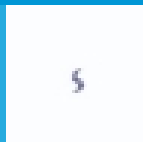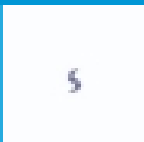| Policy Issue	CS15 - Regeneration of Maidstone urban area
Aims of policy	To assist the delivery of an urban renaissance through the physical, economic, cultural and environmental regeneration of appropriate town centre and other urban sites. To improve the local environment , particularly the setting of the historic built environment in the All Saints area, improve local air quality and provide a solution to the transport dominance of the road pattern, including areas around the High Street, Queens monument and King Street. To enhance urban green spaces and support provision of art through the Public Art Strategy Investigate ways of regenerating the area between lower Sittingbourne Road and Ashford Road To provide a basis for detailed Area Action Plans Support proposals for enhancement of the River Medway and its tributaries for landscape, biodiversity and leisure
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1**- Delivering Sustainable Development **PPS6** - Town Centres
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission draft March 2006:** Policy TC1 - Development of town centre Policy T1 - Manage and Invest (minimise negative environmental impacts of transport) and Policy KTG11 - Implications of KTG on surrounding area
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006:** Policy TP8 - Future Strategic Transport Schemes (lists Upper Stone St / All Saints link road as scheme to be promoted through LTP)

Policy Issue	CS15 - Regeneration of Maidstone urban area
	Policy QL2 - Priorities for the Public Realm (environmental improvements)
	Policy QL3 - Movement and Accessibility in the Public Realm
	Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan
	Policy T18 - Highway Proposals
	Policy ED2 - Employment areas
	MBC Community Strategy - Key Theme - Land Use Planning
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2009 - Priority Theme Prosperity (KO3, KO4)
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS5, CS15 and CS17

Preferred Option. Policy CS 15

This policy will:

- Specifically deal with areas within the town centre and larger urban area which are economically, socially or physically degraded.
- Support proposals which will enable sustainable economic growth and provide for a wide range of uses including residential to support the vitality and viability of the town
- Encourage proposals for redevelopment for mixed uses, (link with Policy CS2) particularly in areas where existing employment uses are no longer viable
- Develop and improve transport links which will improve traffic flows through the town, and for the environment of the All Saints area through realignment of road patterns to remove the dominance of the road network on the urban fabric
- Create and maintain new public spaces which improve the historic environment and the general street scene, incorporating new urban green spaces and public art (Link also to CS2 and CS17)
- Support proposals which improve and enhance the environment and leisure use of the River Medway, and its tributaries particularly as it runs through the town centre

The Council aspires to progress a revised proposal for the All Saints link road and to improve Upper Stone Street to regenerate the surrounding areas.
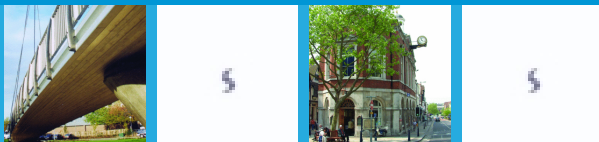
Provide a basis for a detailed Area Action Plan(s) and SPD.

Policy Issue	CS15 - Regeneration of Maidstone urban area
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	The Preferred Approach will meet SA Framework objectives 4 and 7

Through the Cafe Conversations consultation there was broad support for the All Saints scheme and in general, work to the Upper Stone St / High Street area

Status Quo - the appearance of the area is widely acknowledged to be a blot on Maidstone's appearance, which effects the economy by the lack of investment. The regeneration of the area through a landmark regeneration project, will deliver a step change necessary to improving the whole area. therefore the status quo position is not acceptable as it would not resolve the environmental problems that presently exist due to the dominance on the road network in the area

Leave area to market forces - there has been a lack of investment in this area in the past and this is detracting from the important historic environment and harming the setting of listed buildings. Therefore, some form of proactive intervention is required |
| Indicators | Number of sites brought back into use within High St ward

Number of new public open spaces

Milestones towards the implementation of All Saints Link Road project |

Community Facilities / Development Contributions - Policy CS16

Policy Issue	CS16 Community facilities and development contributions
Aims	To ensure all development is conditional on timely provision of appropriate community and other infrastructure. Developer Contributions will be sought in a reasonable, consistent and transparent manner. Developers and landowners will be provided with improved certainty of expectation, with authoritative advice available at an early stage through pre-application discussions. A clear set of soundly based priorities to be established and followed in the negotiation of developer contributions, with the appropriate engagement and consultation with appropriate partners and local community representatives throughout the negotiation process. Seek to increase understanding and realistic level of expectations of development viability and s.106 contributions amongst the community, partner organisations and developers / landowners.
Conformity:	
National	**Circular 05/2005** on the legal basis of development contributions
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy S8 Whole Life Costing principles to be utilised when considering social infrastructure costs Policy CC5 Infrastructure and Implementation planning.
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy IM1- LPAs will require appropriate contributions to meet the costs of community and other infrastructure generated by new development. Contributions to be agreed before planning permission is granted and the facilities will be provided with an agreed phasing.

Policy Issue	CS16 Community facilities and development contributions
	KCC - draft Development Contributions Guide (anticipated Sept. 2006)
	Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan: Policy out of date with current guidance
	Maidstone Local Development Framework - Submitted DPD policies AH1 affordable housing and OS1 open space
	MBC Community Strategy: Key Theme - Land Use and Planning
	MBC Strategic Plan: n/a
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies: CS7

Preferred Option. Policy CS 16

To provide development plan policy basis for the negotiation of development contributions, and for guidance set out in a Developer Contributions SPD on the processes and priorities to be followed in the negotiation of developer contributions. This will provide flexibility to address material considerations in each case, in negotiations led by the development control case officer in consultation with partners and with regard to the requirements of Circular 05/2005.

Establish a "framework approach" with appropriate financial and legal mechanisms to enable the pooling of resources to provide the new infrastructure and services needed to meet the needs created by the cumulative impact of multiple new developments. Critically, development should not be permitted until the basis for the funding of such facilities has been agreed.

Policy will require a declared level of contribution above stated development thresholds (see adopted Policies AH1 and OS1 in the Development Plan Documents 2006) with the proviso that lesser contributions will be acceptable on the presentation of evidence on the viability of a development proposal, to the satisfaction of the Council.
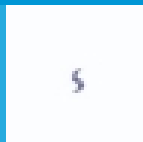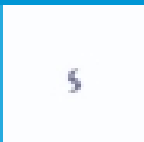
Policy to reflect Circular 05/2005 but to be flexible enough to respond to likely changes in circumstances until further legislative changes apply, possibly with a Planning Gain Supplement to be introduced but not before 2009.

Policy will operate along side specific policy requirements in the Open Space DPD Policy OS1 and Affordable Housing DPD Policy AH1 and draft Core Strategy Policy CS7 on strategic scale infrastructure.

The Whole Costing Approach to be adopted to best locate multifunctional new community infrastructure, reflecting SEP Policy S8.

Policy Issue	CS16 Community facilities and development contributions
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	The Cafe Conversations identified two key concerns to be the need for new social infrastructure to meet the needs created by new development to be met in a timely manner, and that existing shortages should not be exacerbated by new development. The Sustainability Appraisal objective SA8 focuses on the need to improve accessibility to all services and facilities. Strategic policies clearly require that appropriate contributions to the costs of necessary infrastructure created by development are provided in a timely manner. The scope for contributions is highly prescribed in Circular 05/2005, in particular that development should not be required to make up for pre-existing shortages in services and social infrastructure not directly related to the development. Therefore the key alternatives lay in the priorities to be given to competing demands for developer contributions and the processes to be adopted; these matters will be addressed in the subsequent SPD.
Indicators	Appropriate extracts from the Register of s.106 Planning Obligations, showing the level of contributions secured and the purposes put, published through the Annual Monitoring Report. AMR Core Indicator 3b - Amount of new housing within 30 mins public transport of facilities

New leisure / recreational / cultural facilities - Policy CS17

Policy Issue	CS17 - New tourist / cultural / recreational facilities
Aims of policy	Promote and enhance the "offer" and facilities for tourist / recreation / Culture / Arts for residents, workers, tourists and visitors to the Borough
Conformity:	
National	**PPG 17** - Planning for open space, sport and recreation DCLG Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism
Regional	**South East Plan - submission draft March 2006:** Policy CC8c / KTG11 - Maidstone as a Regional Hub and Principal Centre should be focus of leisure uses Policy TSR2 - Rural Tourism Policy TSR5 - Tourist Accommodation Policy TSR6 - Visitor Management Policy S7 - Cultural and Sporting activity
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy QL13 - Cultural development and the arts Policy QL15 - Formal / informal recreation facilities Policy QL16 - Water based recreation Policy EP11 - Tourist development and regeneration Policy EP12 - Tourist accommodation **Extant Local Plan Policy - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** Policy ED17 - 26 Tourism Policies Policy CF13 - Arts and Cultural facilities **MBC Community Strategy** - Key Theme Leisure, Sport and Entertainment

Policy Issue	CS17 - New tourist / cultural / recreational facilities
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006 -2009 - Key Theme Prosperity (KO3), Quality Living (KO11)
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policies - CS5 and CS15
	Other local strategies: Public Art Strategy, Economic Development and Tourism Plan

Preferred Option. Policy CS 17

Major new leisure, culture, tourism and recreation facilities to be concentrated on Maidstone town centre reflecting its status as the County Town to integrate with new employment and housing development without unduly affecting residential amenity.

Promotion of cultural and sporting activities, including the Arts, particularly in areas of regeneration (cross check with town centre policy) and in rural areas

Protect existing tourism facilities and encourage improvements which will broaden the range and type of offer
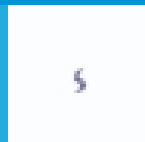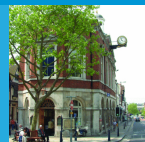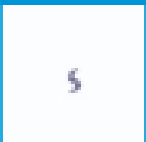
Promote tourist and recreation based rural diversification where this will support local economies, providing it is at an appropriate scale for the location, is of a high standard of design and minimise the impact on the landscape

Resist the loss of open space particularly in areas of deficit

Provide new open space as part of new development in line with standards set out in the Open Space DPD

Policy Issue	CS17 - New tourist / cultural / recreational facilities
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	Policies would meet SA Framework objectives 7,8 and 9 Cafe conversation consultation - response were supportive of new leisure, recreational facilities, particularly anything which enhanced the use of the river, many comments centred on needing leisure activities for young people and

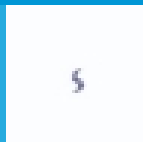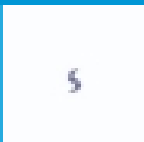| Policy Issue	CS17 - New tourist / cultural / recreational facilities
	not just within the town but for rural areas too. There were some negative comments about the nighttime economy which centred around safety
	Preferred Approach chosen because - It is important to integrate leisure, cultural and tourism development with other development particularly housing, in order to improve access to these facilities, particularly in areas of current deficit (often the suburbs). It is also important to protect existing facilities from other competing land uses in order to maintain a vibrant mix within town centre and other service centres. Provision of new leisure, cultural and tourism facilities contribute to the local economy
	Therefore by not directing such uses to areas where there is already a concentration (ie town centre and other sustainable locations) would be harmful to the local economy, landscape, and would increase reliance on the car
Indicators	Total floorspace of new leisure facilities provided
	Number of new tourist facilities / accommodation provided
	Link with Art at the Centre project outcomes
	Amount of public open space lost, mapped on areas of deficit

Education and Lifelong learning - Policy CS18

Policy Issue	CS18 - Education and Life-long learning
Aims of policy	Broad based support for the promotion and provision for life-long learning for the changing needs of the population, including: Support for proposals for a new higher and further education facilities, where it would improve provision and access to such facilities Encourage proposals which provide for dual-use school / community facilities in urban and rural areas Resist the loss of educational facilities
Conformity:	
National	**PPS1** - Delivering Sustainable Development
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006:** Policy S5 - Education and Skills Policy S6 - Higher Education Policy RE1- supporting Regionally important sectors and clusters Policy RE3 - Human Resource Development
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006** Policy EP1 - Land, workforce, education and skills Policy EP5 - Land for technology and knowledge clusters **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan** Policy CF11 - Tertiary Education Policy CF8 - Primary School provision **MBC Community Strategy** - Key Theme Education

Policy Issue	CS18 - Education and Life-long learning
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006 - 2009 - Key Theme Prosperity (KO5), Lifelong Learning (KO6, KO7, KO8, KO9) **Strongly associated Core Strategy policy -** CS3, CS4

Preferred Option. Policy CS 18

Policy to support improving higher and further education facilities within the Borough, which could include the development of a new campus, based around a technology cluster of media and medical industries - either as extension to existing facilities or as a way of improving access to facilities for residents

To encourage mixed use provision of education facilities with other community uses and encourage dual use of such facilities

Improve access to primary and secondary education facilities and ensure adequate range of provision is met in both urban and rural areas as population change demands

Encourage provision of adult learning facilities linked to employment provision through S106 contributions

Resist the loss of educational facilities unless it can be demonstrated that there will no longer be a need (in short term or long term) for similar community or education use (link to Policy CS14 on accession model)
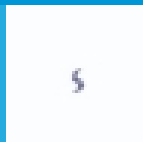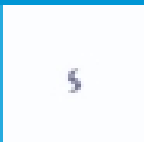
To give full regard to the accessibility of education facilities when determining the location of new housing land allocations

Policy Issue	CS18 - Education and Life-long learning
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	Policy would meet SA Framework objectives 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 18 by improving longer term prospects of the community including social inclusion and prosperity Cafe Conversation consultation - there was a general acceptance that more community facilities were needed and this included higher education provision

Policy Issue	CS18 - Education and Life-long learning
	By not expanding on the higher education provision, there would be limited opportunities for residents to improve their skills and knowledge. High education provision has also important links with technology and research industries, which would improve the employment prospects of the Borough and attract new investment.
Indicators	Access to education facilities for population (within x miles?) - Maintain the Accession Model to determine access to facilities Improvements to skills level for higher education?

Decision and implementation process - Policy CS19

Policy Issue	CS19 - Decision and implementation process
Aims of policy	Improve information about and understanding of planning in the community and improve citizen and community engagement in plan making and planning development control decisions.
	Improve the openness and transparency of the Borough Council's decision making as Local Planning Authority.
	To improve the quality and sustainability of development through the quality of decision making by providing relevant information and training to Members of MBC, Parish Councils and community leaders in the non-parished areas of the Borough.
	To improve public perceptions of the "fairness" of the planning system and the reputation of MBC by ensuring effective enforcement of planning policies and development control planning decisions and to work with partners to improve the coordination of compliance with all legislation impacting on development process.
	To provide a quality planning service to the public, householder and business applicants and developers.
	To strive for a high quality construction process and encourage the formation of considerate contractors standards
Conformity:	
National	**Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** introduces the principles of developing sustainable communities into mainstream planning activities. **PPS1**- sustainable development
Regional	**South East Plan - Submission Draft March 2006** Policy CC1 - promotes good governance
Local	**Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006**: n/a **Extant Local Plan - Maidstone Borough Local Plan**: n/a

Policy Issue	CS19 - Decision and implementation process
	MBC Community Strategy: priority theme to to improve access to services and inclusion
	MBC Strategic Plan 2006-2009: the theme of Core Values emphasising customer care and Key Objective 26 - increasing the accessibility and transparency of Council decision making; KO28 facilitate better voluntary and community sector working; and KO30 promote harmonious community relations.
	MBC/LGA: Reputation Project
	Strongly associated Core Strategy policy - n/a

## Preferred Option. Policy CS 19

Implement the provisions of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement DPD in relation to community engagement and consultation by the Local Planning Authority in decisions on plan making and planning development control. This includes: development of the Planning Forum of local community and business representatives and a Planning Agents sub group; the firm encouragement of pre-application discussions between developers and local communities on major planning applications, together with the firm encouragement to developers to submit a statement of consultation with all major applications; and offering advice and facilitating pre-application discussions between the LPA and developers.

To develop improved access by electronic delivery of planning services to secure maximum "Pendleton Points" whilst not neglecting those without such computer access.

To develop partnership working with related services improve the quality of decisions and to achieve good development, a good quality of construction process and compliance with all relevant requirements.

Provide a mechanism for supporting and encouraging community self-determination in formulating Parish Plans, Village Design Statements etc
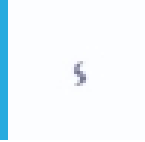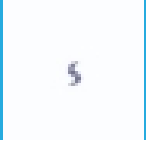
To embrace the "plan, monitor and manage approach", publishing the results of monitoring through the Annual Monitoring Report and improve the quality of research and evidence on the impact of policies.
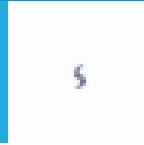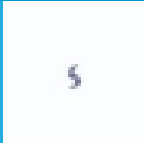
To encourage the use of electronic media for publishing information about the preparation of LDDs and to provide access to relevant background information and evidence, and to encourage the submission of public and stakeholder comments through electronic media, in order to improve public access to information and the economy and efficiency of the planning service.

To develop the use of the Contact Centre and electronic media to provide information and answer routine queries about planning, in order to allow professional time to be best targeted to deal with more complex enquiries and advice.

Policy Issue	CS19 - Decision and implementation process
Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection	To follow the minimum requirements of the Planning Act 2004 and regulations rather than the additional commitments to engage the community set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The SCI was adopted in April 2006 and all LDDs should be prepared in accordance with it. The main alternative is to less rigorously embrace the "spatial planning approach", pursue a more traditional "land use" planning approach - excluding Core Strategy policy on matters of process and implementation. This would limit policies to only matters that more directly impact on the decision to grant or refuse planning permission. The Cafe Conversations work revealed deep public concern on "process" issues, how well the the planning service operated, as well as a deep interest in and desire for accessible information about the "big" planning issues to be faced in Maidstone as well as the direct impact of new development in their own local neighbourhood. The Sustainability Appraisal Objective 7 seeks to create and sustain vibrant communities, focusing on increasing the ability of people to influence decisions and encouragement of engagement with community activities.

Policy Issue	CS19 - Decision and implementation process
Indicators	Number and % of Major planning applications submitted with a statement of consultation Number of "hits" on the LDF web pages Number and % of planning applications and submitted electronically Number and % of consultation comments on planning applications submitted electronically

Glossary

Throughout this document a number of abbreviations have been used as follows:	
AAP	Area Action Plan
ALLI	Area of Local Landscape Importance
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Model (a recognised industry assessment for sustainable construction and design)
DPD	Development Plan Document
EA	Environment Agency
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
KCC	Kent County Council
KMSP	Kent and Medway Structure Plan
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NGP	New Growth Point
MBC	Maidstone Borough Council
ODPM	Office of Deputy Prime Minister (now the Department of Communities and Local Government)
PDL	Previously developed land
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance Note
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal

Throughout this document a number of abbreviations have been used as follows:	
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEMSL	South East Maidstone Strategic Link
SEP	South East Plan
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SoS	Secretary of State
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
TBA	To Be Agreed