AGENDA

LEISURE AND PROSPERITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 22 March 2011
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Burton, Mrs Gibson, Mrs Joy (Vice-Chairman), Nelson-Gracie, Paine (Chairman), Pickett and Mrs Smith

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1. **The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Notification of Substitute Members**

Continued Over/:

Issued on 7 March 2011

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Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ

4. Notification of Visiting Members

5. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

a) Disclosures of interest
b) Disclosures of lobbying
c) Disclosures of whipping

6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information

7. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 February 2011 **1 - 9**

8. Rural Economy **10 - 44**

Interview with:

Liz Harrison, Kent County Council Rural Regeneration Manager;
Huw Jarvis, Kent Downs and Marshes Leader Programme Manager; and
John Foster, Economic Development Manager.

9. Future Work Programme **45 - 59**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEISURE AND PROSPERITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2011

PRESENT: Councillor Paine (Chairman)
Councillors Burton, Mrs Joy, Nelson-Gracie, Pickett and Mrs Smith

19. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast

Resolved: That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

20. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Gibson.

21. Notification of Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

22. Notification of Visiting Members

It was noted that Councillor English was a visiting Member, interested in agenda item 9.

23. Disclosures by Members and Officers:

It was noted that Councillor Burton declared a personal interest in agenda items 10 by virtue of his membership of the Marden Business Forum.

24. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information

Resolved: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

25. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 January 2011

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2011 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

26. LSP Thematic Quarterly Performance Report

The Chairman welcomed Zena Cooke, Director of Regeneration and Communities, Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager and John Taylor, Chairman of Economic Development and Regeneration LSP

Delivery Group to the meeting, and invited them to present the delivery group update to the Committee.

Ms Cooke summarised that Overview and Scrutiny played an important role in holding the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to account, the update informed the Committee of the progress made by the group and its planned future activity.
Ms Cooke explained that the LSP Board had five delivery groups, and that the past twelve months had seen radical changes in the way they approached issues. Over the past year the sub groups and their memberships had been established as well as the priorities and outcomes they were seeking to achieve. The priorities, outcomes and actions will be considered by the LSP Board in March 2011. In answer to a question Ms Cooke stated that this structure was different to the previous LSP, which had been considered too large to operate effectively.

The Chairman asked how the membership was formed, and whether there were any funding issues. Ms Cooke informed the Committee that in each delivery group there are representatives from throughout the Borough that hold influential roles in different sectors and gave examples, indicating that this was considered to be the LSP's strength. She explained that each group had a support officer from within the Council, along with a Cabinet Member to ensure continuity. The Chairman of each delivery group was not from the Council in order to promote better partnership working and ownership and by default that Chairman is then a Member of the LSP Board. Ms Cooke stated that the LSP does not hold a budget. However, at the end of last financial year they had received approximately £250,000 as an LSP in Performance Reward Grant. The Board decided to use this to fund community based projects. Ms Cooke highlighted that there were few bids relative to economic development and regeneration, however the 'Time Banking' project in Parkwood had made a successful bid and received funding. In answer to a question Ms Cooke informed the Committee that 'resource mapping' had been undertaken to collate information and identify public sector spending across the Borough. A final draft of this had recently been received and a workshop will be held to validate the information and then used to support the Board in discussions to decide where to direct spending over the next twelve months and beyond.

In answer to a question, Mr Taylor informed the Committee that many businesses including Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Network Rail, KCC, MBC, are required to work together to create a strong influence over rail services in Maidstone. The Chairman asked for Mr Taylor's opinion on whether Maidstone was well placed to get out of the recession. Mr Taylor informed the Committee that in comparison to the rest of Kent a recent report from the Federation of Small Businesses indicated that Maidstone was doing well. A further document related to this from the Chamber of Commerce showing statistics from surveys was scheduled for the meeting of the Chamber Board on Thursday 24 February 2011, after which time the Council will receive it. The Committee welcomed this and suggested the Leader of the Council should be made aware of this information.

The Committee agreed to receive quarterly updates from the LSP on the progress and outcomes from the Economic Development Regeneration Delivery Group, and for the Committee to consider liaising with the LSP for ideas for the 2011/12 future work programme.

Resolved: That the officers and Mr Taylor be thanked for the information and it be recommended that:

a) The LSP Economic Development and Regeneration Delivery Group provide quarterly updates to the Committee; and
b) The document from the Invicta Chamber of Commerce be circulated to the Committee following the meeting of the Chamber Board on Thursday 24 February 2011.

27. Demographic & Transport Data Check

The Chairman welcomed Mr Darren Bridgett, Principal Planning Officer (Policy) and Mrs Flo Churchill, Interim Head of Core Strategy Development to the meeting, and invited them to present the report.

Mr Bridgett presented his report to the Committee highlighting the three sets of projections as mentioned projections as mentioned on page 13 of the agenda. In answer to a question Mr Bridgett informed the Committee that the figures are updated as soon as the information is available, enabling the calculations to be as accurate as possible. It was not clear if any trends had been spotted over a period of time, but that accuracy had been maintained. In response to a request Mr Bridgett agreed to circulate an example of the calculation used to improve Members understanding. The Committee also enquired if further information was available regarding the variance between the expected and delivered housing rates. Mr Bridgett confirmed that this information would be available via Kent County Council and agreed to circulate this to the Committee.

The Committee asked how robust the decision was when it was based on statistics alone. Mr Bridgett informed the Committee that it was difficult to include all of the other factors involved, however the Economic Development Strategy and Employment Land Review was being updated which played a major part in the process. In time, the 2011 Census information would be used as part of the calculations. However this information will begin to be released over a two year period starting the end of 2011, after the Core Strategy document has been through the publication consultation (regulation 27).

The Committee enquired about the information used in the calculation, and gave examples of the 'Travel to Work' scheme and Eastern European seasonal workers. Mr Bridgett informed the Committee that both permanent and seasonal workers may not have been included, and that the travel to work statistics comparing Maidstone to the South East and

National figures would need to be clarified. The Committee agreed that this should be presented to the Committee within this municipal year.

Mrs Churchill, gave a presentation to the Committee on the transport data (attached at Appendix A).

Ms Churchill informed the Committee that although Jacobs had been commissioned to address any transport issues raised, this was at a cost of £10,000 per model which took four weeks to complete. She highlighted that there are two types of modelling used, Strategic-level transport model (e.g. the Core Strategy) and the Site-level transport model (this is much more detailed, but due of the level of detail, this will not work over a wider area such as the entire borough).
In answer to a question Ms Churchill stated that they would look at ways to reduce parking within the Borough to encourage cycling and walking, and that there is no policy in place to support this, although it is stated in Government Guidance. Ms Churchill confirmed that a previous model will be used as an example for the workshop scheduled for Thursday 3 March 2011. All Members would be invited to attend the work shop in order to fully understand the process.

Resolved: That the officers be thanked for the information and it be recommended that:

a) Mr Bridgett liaises with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to ensure the appropriate spreadsheet containing an example of how calculations are used is circulated to the Committee;
b) Information regarding the variance between the expected and delivered housing rates be obtained and circulated to Members during this Municipal Year;
c) Travel to work statistics comparing Maidstone to the South East and National figures would be clarified and circulated to Members; and
d) Clarification on the Eastern European seasonal workers statistics be circulated to Members.

28. Future Work Programme

The Committee considered the future work programme, it was noted that the 3rd quarter performance monitoring report and the rural economy will be considered at the next meeting.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that as part of the rural economy review, a Rural Business Survey would be undertaken by Members and requested that they return their results to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer by the end of March 2011.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded the Committee that the following events were scheduled; 14 March, Rural Economy Tour meeting in the Gateway Reception at 9.15am;and 22 March, 4pm at the Museum

for a tour of the East Wing with Simon Lace, Museum and Heritage Manager.
The Committee discussed the possibility of changing the schedule for the rural economy tour so that a discussion with members from the Marden Business Forum could take place over lunch. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Councillor Malcolm Greer and Interim Head of Core Strategy Development, Mrs Churchill had agreed to accompany Members on the Rural Tour, and was seeking confirmation from two beneficial Council officers who would hopefully attend. The Committee suggested that space permitting the shadow Cabinet Member, Councillor Tony Harwood should be invited.
The Overview and Scrutiny Officer offered to circulate information following previous Scrutiny meetings to aid with research for the Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee of the progress made towards the rural economy review, and reminded both the Committee and members of the public of the contact number to use for providing further information.

Resolved: That:

a) Members will meet in the Gateway Reception on 14 March at 9.15am for the rural economy tour;
b) The information from previous Scrutiny meetings relating to the rural economy would be circulated; and
c) The work programme be noted.

29. Duration of Meeting

6.30pm to 8.33pm.

Minute Item 27

Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22nd February 2011

Transportation Modelling Background Note

Background

1.1 Maidstone Borough Council has commissioned Jacobs to create a multi-modal transport model to assist in the assessment of transport strategies to address issues raised by future development growth aspirations in the Core Strategy.

The Visum Model

1.2 Jacobs have used the Visum Model which is a sophisticated travel demand modelling tool which uses software to replicate real world transportation systems. Visum models are used to simulate actual travel patterns and existing demand conditions. Travel demand is generated using land use data and socio economic data such as household size, car availability, census and employment data. Once a Visum model has been used to replicate existing conditions it can then be used to predict future travel patterns and demands based on changes in land use and/or changes in demographics. Future traffic projections are based on assumptions about how population, employment, vehicle operating costs and other factors will change over time.

1.3 Jacobs have stated that they are confident that the Visum Model remains the best tool to model accurately the impact of development proposals on the local and strategic road network in the context of the emerging Maidstone Core Strategy.

1.4 The Model concentrates on peak hour conditions in the urban area as this is the part of the Borough where MBC policies are seeking regeneration and brownfield development to revitalise vacant office and retail units. Congestion in Maidstone has long been recognised as a serious issue by Members, the public, transport operators and the development industry..

1.5 The Model is a strategic tool, aimed at producing evidence to help support the overall strategy and vision for the Borough encompassed in the Core Strategy. It assesses the likely use of various modes of transport and the resulting travel patterns in and around the town. It is not intended to give accurate representations of individual turning movements at every junction, and so would not be used for site specific development control detailed impact assessments. Other modelling techniques and tools are available that are capable of modelling site specific situations.

1.6 The Visum Model tests a set of assumptions about the provision of a package of transport measures and its performance in dealing with the LDF Core Strategy development options. The model is calibrated against traffic flows and public transport patronage in 2007, and therefore the input data identifies the changes predicted to take place by 2026in the size and location of housing, employment and retail sites in the Borough. It is trying to predict the increased level of demand for travel and then assess how the road and public transport networks would cope with it.

1.7 The decision that was taken at Cabinet on 9th February 2011 will impact on the eventual results that will emerge from the model. It is important in terms of the robustness of the evidence base that any Inspector can be satisfied that what has been modelled is what is contained in the Core Strategy and therefore we will look to run the model again according to the decisions that are made about the distribution of development across the Borough. Members should note that it costs £10,000 to run the model and takes approximately 4 weeks to obtain any results. We will ask Jacobs to run the model again when we have received results from the work that is being carried out into an updated Employment Land Review.

1.8 The guiding principles of measures that have been included in assumptions within the current model scenario relate to the following matters:

- Promotion of sustainable transport
- Seeking to manage the demand for travel downwards
- Measures that are achievable within the plan period; and
- Measures that are within the bounds of reasonable expectations of available finance

Modelling Processes

2.1 The model is presented with a schedule of expected housing, employment and other development sites for 2026, and a package of transport initiatives. The model is then run to produce morning and evening peak performance figures for 2026. The model uses an assessment of 'generalised cost' to predict which mode of travel people will use, and what would be their chosen destination. This is a combination of the actual cost (such as car fuel or public transport fares) and an estimated cost equivalent to the time taken to travel. For instance the generalised cost of a bus journey is the monetary 'value' of the walking time to a bus stop, the waiting time (dependant on the frequency of service), the time taken by the bus to reach the appropriate bus stop, and the time taken to walk to the final destination.

2.2 We have so far looked to the model to produce a set of outputs that concentrate on the congestion levels on the main routes in and out of the town centre, using data such as travel times on specific routes, proportion of trips made by various modes, and cordon flows. Model runs have been based on previous iterations of development scenarios and will therefore not be valid in the face of the current approach to development distribution.

2.3 The transport strategy that will be adopted in support of the Core Strategy must also be achievable within the Core Strategy Plan Period, in that the funding for any infrastructure could be reasonably expected from development including Community Infrastructure Levy and the New Homes Bonus or other sources such as LTP, LSTF, LEP, and LIP. Site specific S106 requirements would also be expected. We do need to be alert to how changes in funding regimes may impact on how schemes may be funded.

Sensitivity

3.1 It must be borne in mind that calculations of capacity become very sensitive when the highway network becomes overloaded as a relatively small predicted increase in demand can create a sharp increase in travel times unless alternative means of travel are available. When the model reaches an upper level of congestion that can be accommodated on the network any demand above this level would be predicted not to be able to complete their journeys within the peak hour i.e. they would travel at different times and/or travel to different destinations or make other arrangements such as working from home.

Summary

4.1 Given the complexity of issues involved in the discipline of transportation modelling Members need the opportunity to look at the model and the way in which the assumptions that are going to be contained within it operate and influence the final output. As this would require a great deal of technical information it is proposed that a Member workshop be held to which Jacobs would be invited to explain the assumptions behind the model, the sorts of data the model uses and how changes to spatial distributions will affect the outcomes.

4.2 If such a workshop were to be held it would give members the opportunity to have a full discussion of all the matters relating to transport modelling in an arena that also provides the technical expertise beyond the remit of your planning officers. Officer attendance would be restricted to allow the focus to remain on Member concerns

4.3 Both Members from Maidstone BC and KCC would be invited and the workshop will be arranged as soon as possible.

Maidstone Borough Council

Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 22 March 2011

Rural Economy

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

1.1 In December 2010 the Committee agreed to review the Rural Economy, focussing on three objectives.

- To identify the key challenges facing the rural economy and what support is offered to new businesses and existing businesses. To determine which factors the Borough Council, in co-operation with its partners could influence in order to strengthen the rural economy;
- To investigate opportunities to develop appropriate planning and financial policies, preparing for upcoming legislation such as the Localism Bill; and
- To consider ways of sharing good practice to establish how to improve and support the rural economy, especially small businesses.

1.2 The Council and Kent County Council (KCC) have been working in partnership to establish key factors that challenge the rural economy, including issues surrounding broadband coverage as part of KCC's work on the Kent Rural Delivery Framework (KRDF). The Committee is requesting further information on how the Council can support the KRDF and the rural communities.

1.3 As the Kent Downs and Marshes Group is assisted by KCC to cover Maidstone and other local authorities, the Committee is requesting further information on how the Leader Programme works, what is its vision for the future and how can we ensure they are realised.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to interview the KCC Rural Regeneration Manager, the Kent Downs and Marshes Leader Programme Manager and Economic Development Manager with regard to the KRDF and Leader Programme to support the rural economy.

2.2 Areas of questioning could include but are not limited to:

- What are Maidstone's key challenges – can they be faced and overcome;
- What is the Council currently doing to support the rural economy;

- Is there more that the Council could do to pro-actively strengthen both residential and commercial aspects of the rural economy;
- Are you aware of other initiatives being undertaken by other local authorities, which if applied to Maidstone could be beneficial for the boroughs' residents; and
- How is the Council supporting the Leader Programme – can you provide examples of projects within Maidstone that has received funding.

3. KRDF & Leader Programme

3.1 Under the new Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2007-2013, the Leader approach acts as a delivery mechanism. This is not a fund or set of objectives, but a community led method of harnessing local knowledge, to approach RDPE funding in rural areas which can be used to help deliver a range of Programme Objectives.

3.2 Leader will be implemented through Local Action Groups (LAGs), which should represent public and private partners and local interest groups therefore covering a broad selection of sectors of the local society and economy.

'LAGS will develop and submit Local Development Strategies which will set out their plans for their areas, including selection criteria for local projects. The Selection Panels for LAGs will include representatives from the Regional Development Agencies, which are responsible for the overall management of the delivery of the Leader approach, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Once the groups are selected, they will be responsible for delivering against their Local Development Strategy, selecting and funding projects which best meet the priorities for their area and support the delivery of their Strategy.'[1]

3.3 The Leader can provide grants of up to £50,000 (depending on the project) for rural businesses and communities from late 2008 until 2013. This money can contribute to capital or revenue costs, and is available to social and community groups, rural and land based businesses.

'Projects seeking funding must be able to fit with the overall strategies of the Local Action Groups, broadly these are:

- improve the competitiveness and sustainability of Kent's land-based sectors through diversification, innovation, and adding value to products;
- fostering sustainable rural tourism and related businesses; and
- assisting rural communities and businesses in managing change and combating rural deprivation.'[2]

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[1] http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/leader.htm [accessed 7/3/11]
[2] http://www.kentruralnetwork.org.uk/leader [accessed 7/3/11]

3.2 The KRDF was published by the Kent Rural Board in July 2006 and sets out the first, dedicated multi-agency action plan for Kent's rural areas. The framework is attached at **Appendix A** and sets out:

- a future vision for Kent's rural areas;
- a framework to manage the change currently impacting Kent's rural businesses, communities and environment ; and
- the 15 priority areas for partnership action.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

4.1 The new Strategic Plan 2011-15 sets out a priority for Maidstone to have a growing economy. The rural economy review will seek to address this priority.

Kent
rural delivery framework

contents

CD includes:

The Kent Rural Delivery Framework's Implementation Plans

The Kent Rural Evidence Base Report

This document has been produced by the Kent Rural Board.

For further copies or information please contact:
Kent Rural Board Secretariat, C/o Rural Regeneration Manager, Rural Regeneration Team, Regeneration and Economy Division, Environment and Regeneration Directorate, Kent County Council, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX

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If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact the Regeneration and Economy Business Support team (01622 221636). A mini-com is available if required.

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foreword

This document sets out the first, dedicated multi-agency action plan for Kent's rural areas and - through partnership work - seeks to address holistically the key issues impacting our rural businesses, communities and environment.

The need for joined-up, evidenced-based and forward thinking approaches has never been so great. All facets of Kent's rural agenda are experiencing significant levels of change. The scale of these changes requires proactive action from all of Kent's rural stakeholders – if we are to ensure that future impacts are mitigated and opportunities are seized. Working in increasingly innovative, entrepreneurial and collaborative ways will be essential to ensure that our rural businesses continue to grow, compete and flourish, our rural communities remain vibrant and our rural environment conserved.

A significant number of people have given their time freely in the production of this document, which represents the coming together of the views of many rural stakeholders across Kent. These contributions have been invaluable, and I would like to thank everyone who has taken part to date.

I would also like to stress that the action plans contained in the CD at the back of the document represent just the start of the process of achieving our vision of a pioneering rural economy, vibrant rural communities and a valued rural environment. As such, we look forward to continuing these dialogues, and would welcome new partners becoming involved in the process of further developing and implementing the framework.

Richard Long
Chair of the Kent Rural Board
June 2007

Introduction

Kent is, quintessentially, a rural county. Just over 85% of Kent's land area is classified as rural, whilst 29% of the population lives in rural parts of the County. Rural areas also contribute significantly to the economy with more than a third of Kent's total businesses being located in rural areas.

Yet, Kent's rural areas are currently experiencing significant levels of change. Continued globalisation of markets, increasing competition, agricultural policy reforms, escalating house prices, an ageing population, increasing water scarcity, and climatic change represent just some of the challenges facing rural Kent.

The magnitude of these issues means that they need to be given serious attention to ensure that rural Kent continues to function economically, socially and environmentally.

The Kent Rural Board was set up in 2005 to bring together a range of key rural stakeholders to develop a more strategic and collaborative approach to understanding and addressing these issues. Through looking at the three cornerstones of rural economy, community and the environment, the Kent Rural Delivery Framework identifies a range of interlinked, evidence-based objectives and proposed actions. The Board hopes to stimulate new solutions to proven needs, by working in partnership with public, private, community and voluntary sectors in these areas.




A glimpse into the future.........a vision for rural Kent in 2017

A pioneering rural economy

Kent has successfully bucked the trends of the past decade. It has bypassed the pain that CAP reform and the rising dominance of Chinese agriculture have generated in other parts of the UK. Along with other rural-based enterprises, the County's land-based sector has embraced modern skills training and proved to be adaptable, entrepreneurial and competitive. Profits are growing. Kent has become a showcase for innovation in non-food crops initiatives aided by its world class biotechnology and land-based R&D sector.

Collaboration amongst local producers is strong, and the County has become renowned for its high quality premium products. Local consumers are now actively seeking out high quality and traceable local products. 95% of all public sector bodies in Kent are sourcing products from within the county. London is increasingly a key market – Kentish produce has become established as the local produce brand within the capital.

A dynamic rural knowledge economy has been successfully established in Kent. Faster, improved rail connections and an excellent ICT infrastructure have provided an impetus for a range of knowledge-driven and creative industries to locate and set-up within rural Kent. Kent has become distinguished by its high level of rural business start-ups, notably by women and younger people.

Vibrant rural communities

Kent's rural communities are enjoying a renaissance. Well designed affordable rural housing schemes, combined with better local employment opportunities, are helping to retain younger people and families – and creating more diverse yet cohesive communities. Rural residents of all ages are engaging with issues that affect them and participating in local activities and community-run initiatives.

Growing interest in local produce and increasing demand for 'sustainable lifestyles' has created a wider customer base for local shops in many rural areas, reversing previous trends for closure. Innovative, community-owned schemes are generating creative solutions to the provision of a range of rural services and facilities. ICT advances, and its increased accessibility has enabled many rural residents, particularly the elderly, to access a range of goods and services 'virtually' without the need to travel. It has also fostered a growth of remote and home working which has contributed to the revitalisation of Kent's villages and rural towns.

A valued rural environment

The increasing cost of private transport, growing environmental concerns and strong facilitation have enabled the development of a range of sustainable and affordable public transport options – and reduced rural dependency on car-based travel. Walking and cycling have become increasingly popular modes of travel – with increasing use of Kent's countryside as a free 'outdoor gym'.

Increasing contact with the countryside has created a 'new environmentalism' across Kent –and successful steps have been taken to reduce the ecological footprint of Kent's communities through a range of water conservation and waste mitigation initiatives. The prohibitive costs of imported energy and growing impacts of climatic change have led to a flourish of micro-generation energy initiatives and increased uptake of locally-produced biofuels. This has created new markets for Kent's woodland and land-based sectors. Eco-sensitive land-management practices are widespread, and economically underpinned by a successful rural tourism industry and growing markets for locally distinctive and environmental products. Development pressures have been sustainably managed, and the strong landscape-driven 'sense of place' of Kent's rural communities maintained.




Where are we now?

The innovative Kent Rural Evidence Base project draws upon a range of rural research sources (including Defra's Rural Research Hub) to provide an up-to-date understanding of Kent's rural areas.

From this evidence it is possible to see that rural Kent in 2007 shares some elements of the vision:

- More than a third (36%) of Kent's businesses are based in the rural area. Small and micro businesses are a particular feature of the rural economy, and self-employment is also important.
- The land-based sector continues to make a significant contribution to the Kent economy – recent estimates suggest a figure of around £600 million.
- Kent has the largest rural population of all local authorities in the South East and is home to almost a quarter of the region's rural population (22%).
- High quality, distinctive landscapes are a key feature of rural Kent – together the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) cover 32% of the area of Kent.

However, there are also characteristics and trends which are clearly counter to the vision:

- Kent has a significant number of rural residents with low skills and educational attainment. Over a quarter of the working age rural population have no qualifications.
- Farm incomes in Kent average £25,050 per annum which is below that of the South East and England. Only 17% of Kent's farmers are involved in added value activities.
- Kent's rural communities and rural residents are increasingly dependent on urban areas for their place of work, the location of services they need and for affordable housing. Some 13% (20,000) of rural households in Kent do not have a car.
- Almost half of the South East's worst areas of rural deprivation are to be found in Kent. Average household incomes are noticeably lower in rural Kent than in the rural South East and 25% of the region's poor rural households are located in Kent.
- Water is becoming an increasingly scarce resource. The South East is one of the driest, yet most populated parts of the UK and domestic water consumption is higher than the UK average (160 litres per head per day).

Key drivers of change	Impacts on rural economy	Impacts on rural communities	Impacts on rural environment
Globalisation & homogenisation	Increasing competition for Kent's rural businesses Growing market for 'locally distinctive, high quality niche products'	Loss of distinctiveness and sense of place (clone towns) Less dependence on local jobs, services & networks	Loss of distinctive and iconic landscapes e.g. traditional orchards and hop fields
Climate and environmental change	Threats to business viability from extreme weather events, pests/diseases & water scarcity Opportunities for land-based business to diversify into biofuel etc Growth of rurally-based eco-enterprise	Encourages greater use of local services and purchasing of local goods Need to champion alternatives to growing car use whilst recognising reliance	Threats to biodiversity from extreme weather events, pests/diseases & water scarcity Potential opportunities to develop new varieties and types of crop (non-food crops); land-use change
Technical change	ICT advances are increasing opportunities for businesses to locate/set-up in rural Kent New technologies are enabling a 'new agricultural revolution'	Opportunities to deliver jobs and services in new ways to rural residents Possible loss of existing social networks/isolation	Opportunities to use land-based products in new ways e.g. for production of renewable energy
Demographic change and urban growth	Potential new markets for local goods and services (e.g. local food) Incomers associated with high levels of business start-up Loss of local skill base as young people move away	High rural house prices Ageing of the rural population creating new pressures on public services (health, transport etc) Potential increase in social capital with incoming population	Increased pressure for greenfield development Increased pressure on water resources
Policy change	Reform of the CAP is allowing farmers greater freedom to farm to the demands of the market The EU's Lisbon agenda is seeking to increase Europe's competitiveness	Changes to rural policy agenda at national and regional level are requiring new approaches to rural delivery	Demands for higher levels of environmental quality driven by EU legislation (e.g. Water Framework Directive, Agricultural Waste Directive) and Gothenburg agenda CAP reform placing more emphasis on environmentally friendly farming and production of 'public goods' Renewable energy targets are creating impetus to increase application in Kent

Why a delivery framework for rural Kent?

Any intervention must be based on a clear understanding of what the issue is, why it is a priority and how it can realistically be addressed. This is the role of the Kent Rural Delivery Framework – to provide a strategic framework for action within rural Kent.

The production of this framework is particularly timely given recent changes in the rural delivery landscape. At a national level, the Haskins Review and the DEFRA Rural Strategy have resulted in the formation of Natural England, the transfer of the rural socio-economic agenda to the Regional Development Agencies and the formation of the Commission for Rural Communities. This has led to changes in the regional policy and delivery context, demonstrated by the publication of the South East Rural Delivery Framework 2006-09 and SEEDA's Regional Economic Strategy (2006-2016).

Within this emerging rural delivery agenda, there is an increasing need for inter-regional disparities to be understood and addressed. Evidence shows that overall, rural Kent compares more closely to the average rural characteristics of England rather than to the rural average of the South East. For example, contrary to the perceived affluence of the South East, rural Kent has almost half of the South East's worst areas of rural deprivation. This, combined with the fact that the county has over one fifth of the South East's rural population (22%), means that the resources required to address rural need are arguably greater in Kent.

The Kent Rural Delivery Framework represents an informed and integrated response to these regional changes and seeks to highlight Kent's specific needs. In particular, the framework seeks to:

1) **Identify what will make a difference** through the articulation of clear, evidence-based priorities for rural delivery in Kent, set within the national and regional policy context, but reflecting local needs and opportunities.
2) **Simplify the way in which services are delivered to customers** through working between delivery organisations.
3) **Secure greater coherence** between rural policy and other local strategies and delivery plans e.g. Kent Prospects (Kent Economic Strategy), Vision for Kent.
4) **Bridge the silos of individual strategies and organisations** through identifying and linking priorities to help join-up activity in rural areas – and target interventions to make the most effective impact.

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Cross cutting themes of the framework

The development of the framework has also led to the identification of a number of cross cutting themes that will be essential to future rural delivery in Kent. These are:

1) **The importance of innovative and entrepreneurial approaches** – whilst enterprise and innovation are key elements of any economic development strategy, it is clear that employing innovative and entrepreneurial approaches will be key to addressing the economic, social and environmental challenges facing Kent's rural areas. In particular, there is a need to learn from and share best practice – both within and outside Kent.
2) **Managing change** – all aspects of Kent's rural agenda are undergoing significant change. The drivers of these changes are demographic, economic, environmental, as well as institutional arising from changing funding streams and new regional and national structures.
3) **Embedding new ways of working** – a greater emphasis on collaborative and evidenced-based approaches will be key to the new emerging rural agenda.

supporting rural enterprise

Where are we now?

- **Rural areas are an economic asset and contribute significantly to Kent's economy**

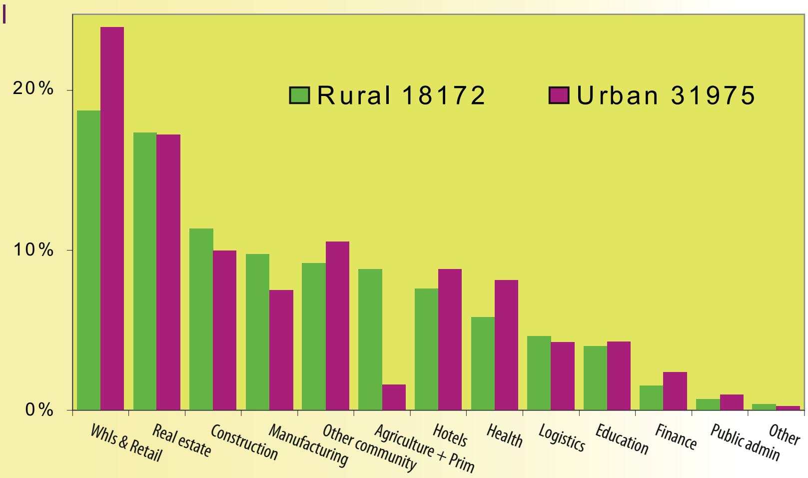
  More than a third (36%) of Kent's businesses are based in rural areas. This equates to over 18,000 businesses. The performance of Kent's economy is therefore directly influenced by the prospects of its rurally located businesses.

- **Kent's rural economy is complex and diverse in its composition – with strong interdependencies with urban areas**

  The majority of businesses in rural Kent are rurally located as opposed to land-based. Indeed, the profile of rural businesses is broadly similar to that of urban-based businesses. Over half of all rural businesses are to be found in the real estate, construction, manufacturing and health and public services. This mirrors the situation nationally. Micro-businesses are a particular feature of rural economies and Kent is no exception. Three quarters (74%) of Kent's rural businesses are in the 0-5 employees category, compared to two thirds (66%) of urban businesses.

  At present 54% of Kent's working rural residents commute out of the County's rural areas, with more than a third (36%) working in urban areas and 18% working outside the County altogether (mostly in London). It is the higher skilled (and better paid) workers that are more likely to commute, with managers and senior officials, professionals and associate professionals accounting for nearly half of all residents commuting from rural areas to work. Reverse commuting also occurs, creating close economic linkages, and interdependencies between the urban and rural economy. Almost half (43%) of those working in a rural business, originate from outside the rural area.

Figure 1: **Kent urban and rural businesses by sector**



- ## Rural areas are inherently entrepreneurial with high levels of self-employment

Rural areas are often perceived to be less entrepreneurial than urban areas, although the evidence challenges this view. The respected Global Enterprise Monitor has shown levels of enterprise between urban and rural areas to be broadly similar – although women, older people and incomers were more enterprising in rural areas. Countryside Agency research has concluded that two thirds of new firms are created by people moving into rural areas.

Self-employment is a significant feature of Kent's rural economy with 13% of rural residents being classed as self-employed – representing 19% of the working population. It is interesting to note that in Kent, 40% of those who are self-employed live in the rural area compared to the regional average of 31%. Homeworking and home-based businesses are significantly more important in Kent's rural areas with 23% of Kent's rural workforce working from home (compared to just 14% of the urban workforce).

- ## The success of the rural economy is dependent upon the skills, flexibility and productivity of its workforce

Some 150,000 people work in rural areas (20% of the workforce in Kent). Rural areas in Kent are often relatively affluent and have a higher skilled population than urban areas. However, many rural areas contain pockets of economic disadvantage that are masked by the presence of a large number of retired residents and commuters, many of whom work in relatively high paid occupations in London, urban Kent and the rest of the South East.

Like many rural areas, average unemployment in rural Kent is low (2%) – although this conceals small areas of high unemployment often in more remote rural parts such as Romney Marsh with over 4% unemployed. From a regional perspective, Kent is home to 26% of the unemployed rural population of the South East, creating a need to focus on economic inclusion.

44% of the rural working age population have no educational vocational or professional skills or only Level 1 as their highest attainment. The rural South East figure is 38%. Developing a skilled, adaptable and flexible workforce will be key to ensuring the future competitiveness of Kent's rural businesses. Loss of younger demographic age groups in rural areas (the combined effect of house price affordability and perceived job opportunities) continues to remain an economic concern – as well as a social concern.

- ## Agriculture and the land-based industries continue to make a vital contribution to Kent's rural economy

In 2004, Kent had 5,511 registered farm holdings, which equates to around 2,000 farm businesses (approximately 8% of Kent's rural businesses). This represents just over a fifth of the agricultural land and holdings across the South East. The majority of farms in Kent are small (less than 20ha) reflecting the significance of horticulture. Indeed Kent's horticultural enterprises continue to account for two thirds of horticultural land in the South East. Soft and top fruit as well as vegetables and salad crops continue to make a vital economic contribution to Kent's rural economy. Kent also makes a significant contribution to sheep and lamb production as well as key arable crops (peas, beans and potatoes).

Although farming incomes and employment are diminishing, land-based industries continue to make a significant contribution to the rural economy – placed at almost £600 million.

Figure 2: **The value of the land-based industries in Kent**

Activity	% farmed area in Kent	Total contribution
Horticulture	6%	£220.4 million
Arable	58%	£114.5 million
Equestrian	n/a	£100 million
Livestock	18%	£68.6 million
Woodland	11%	£10.6 million
Field Sports	N/a	£67 million

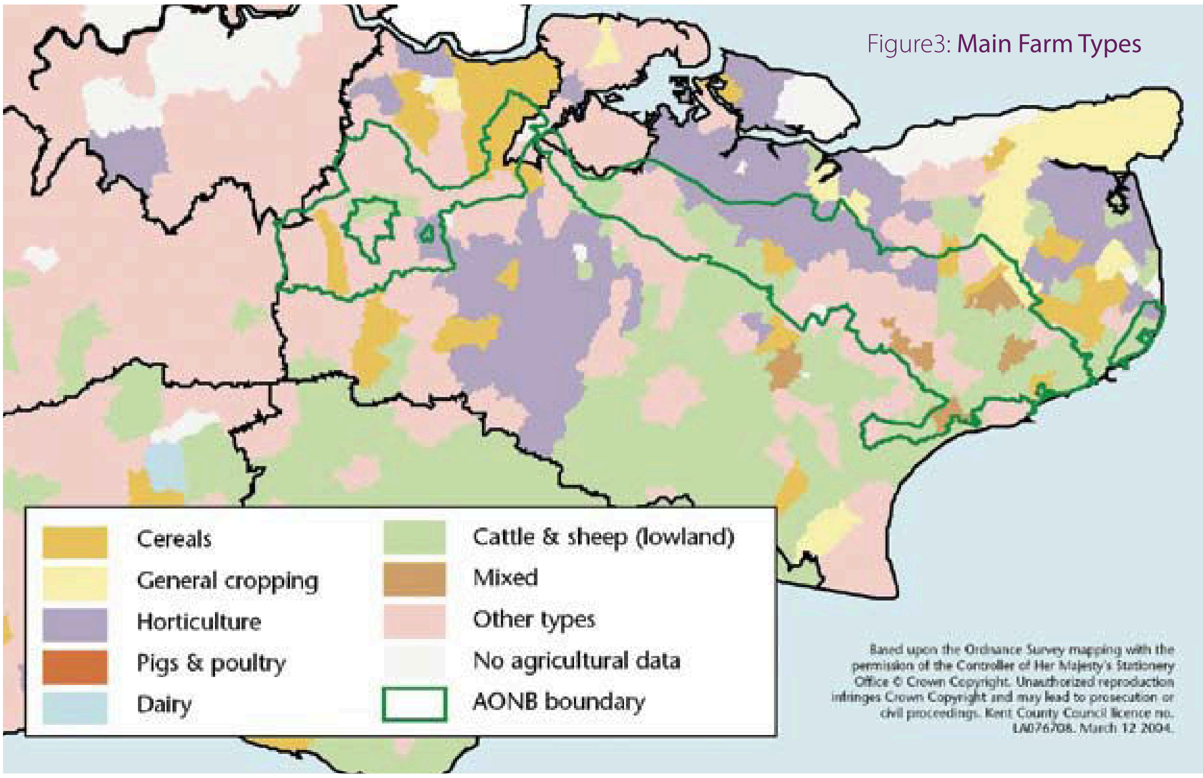


Figure3: Main Farm Types

In addition to these direct economic benefits, land-based businesses produce a range of important indirect benefits. Farmland covers two thirds (67%) of the land area in Kent, and many of the County's 'iconic' landscapes and valued wildlife habitats are the result of farming practices and traditional land-management practices. A robust and viable agriculture sector is, therefore, necessary to maintain them. This resulting 'countryside capital' is also a key driver for Kent's £1.8 billion tourism industry, the quality of life of Kent's residents and is a prime attraction to relocating businesses and incomers.

- **The land-based sector is facing intense pressures**

Average farm income in Kent is £25,050 which is below both the regional and national average. Diversified activities contributed £13,700 on average to this income (42%). High levels of basic commodity production exist within Kent, with 83% of farmers not being involved in added value activities. The age profile of farm holders is shifting across all parts of the UK. There are now fewer farmers aged under 45 than 10 years ago, and a high proportion aged 55 and over. Indeed, over a third (36%) of farmers in Kent and Medway are aged over 55 and only 36% are expected to have a successor creating a need for active succession planning within Kent's farming sector.

Agriculture is facing intensive pressures arising from changing subsidy regimes (CAP reform/introduction of the Single Farm Payment), increasing internationalisation of markets driving down commodity prices, escalating production costs and declining farm incomes. These pressures are driving extensive change within the sector and a particular need for further diversification, specialisation, collaboration and innovation to restore profitability within many businesses.

- **Broadband access is creating significant new business opportunities in rural locations**

ICT developments are creating more opportunities for rural businesses to locate, and compete, in rural areas. The spread of broadband, which now covers the majority of rural Kent, is enabling rural businesses to 'borrow size' from, and interact more closely with, urban areas which have had a long-standing critical mass of financial and business services. ICT is also helping rural businesses overcome the 'thinness' (in terms of critical mass and dispersal) of business and consumer markets. However, for businesses, the speed of connection is increasingly important in terms of being able to access the full range of ICT benefits. It is therefore a priority to increase DSL connection speeds within rural Kent.

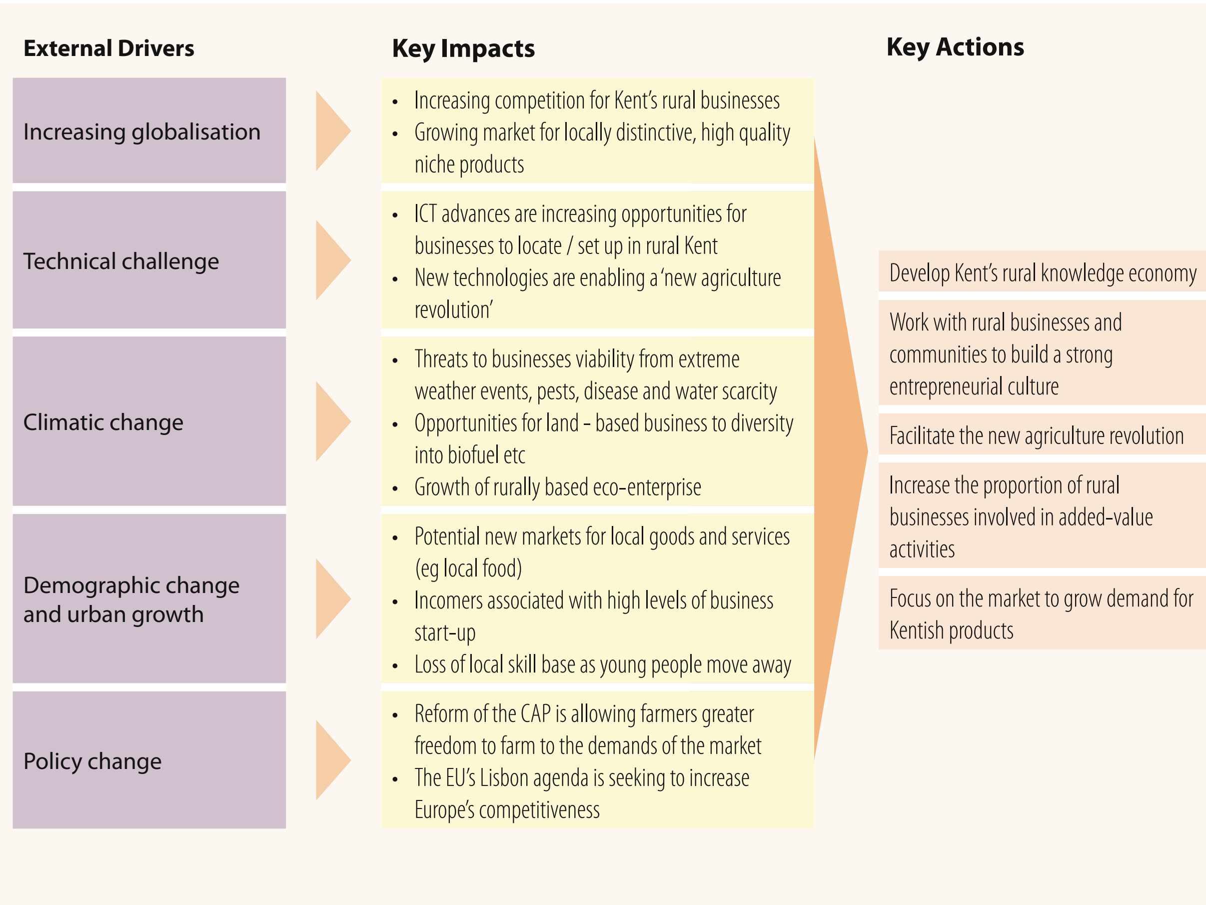
Kent is well positioned to further develop its rural knowledge economy - creating new and higher quality rural jobs

The knowledge economy tends to be perceived as an urban phenomenon. However, recent evidence confirms that just over a third of Kent's knowledge economy businesses are rurally located and that the proportion of employees working in the knowledge economy is higher in the rural area (18%) than the urban area of Kent (13.4%). The vast majority (96%) of these knowledge-based businesses are micro-businesses (1-10 employees).

Part of this growth in the rural knowledge economy is being driven by changes in the land-based sector. Technological developments are enabling a 21st century 'agricultural revolution' with new markets rapidly emerging for innovative products and processes for non-food crops (e.g. pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, biodegradable polymers derived from wheat). Kent continues to be well served by institutions undertaking land-based research and high-end R&D facilities. The County also has the largest grouping of knowledge-intensive businesses within the agriculture and food sector in the South East. This provides an excellent environment for innovation, particularly around non-food crop applications.

However, Kent's proximity to London and its high quality rural environment has also attracted a wide variety of knowledge-intense businesses from other sectors. Defra sponsored research has found that 'accessible rural areas' which are close to major metropolitan centres have locational advantages given their high proportions of resident highly-skilled knowledge workers. These areas will continue to emerge 'as places where 'knowledge workers' increasingly live and start up businesses, and as places where knowledge-intensive industries increasingly locate'. Combined, these higher value sectors comprising the rural knowledge economy offer real potential to develop skills, higher paid employment and business opportunities in rural areas.

Figure 4: **Drivers of change within Kent's rural economy**



Key challenges facing Kent's Rural Economy

- **How to foster innovation and entrepreneurship amongst Kent's rural businesses and communities.** Continued globalisation is creating increasing competition for Kent's rural businesses, generating a need to become more innovative to stay ahead.
- **How to maximise opportunities afforded by ICT advances to further develop Kent's rural knowledge economy.** The rise of the rural knowledge economy is requiring sustained investment in rural ICT technological infrastructure and creating considerable opportunity for new knowledge-based enterprise, home working and higher-income employment in rural Kent.
- **How to enable a 'new agricultural revolution'.** CAP reform, fluctuating commodity prices, increasing production costs and declining farm incomes are creating an urgent need for diversification, innovation, specialisation and collaboration between businesses. New technologies, especially in the non-food crop sector, are creating significant opportunities to build upon Kent's existing cluster of knowledge-intensive land-based industries.
- **How to increase the number of businesses involved in added value and development of specialist/ niche products.** Consumer demand for convenience food products is growing (particularly within London and the South East), whilst increasing consumer sophistication is creating demand for a more added value and specialised tourism products e.g. themed/guided walks and local produce menus.
- **How to grow the market for Kent's products and address supply chain gaps**. Concern over the environment, in particular carbon emissions and food miles will create new opportunities for Kent's rural economy. Local produce, currently low in people's consciousness and underdeveloped in commercial and marketing terms, will gain in importance. Existing distribution services and supply chains require developing and farmers will need to reconnect with the consumer to understand their market.
- **How to mitigate the environmental footprint of Kent's rural economy** – environmental concerns are creating increasing impetus for fostering home-based businesses & home working, eco-enterprises development and local purchasing. New markets are also being created for the land-based sector products around the generation of renewable energies, bio-degradable materials and carbon off-setting schemes.

What do we need to do?

The priority themes for action are:

- Develop Kent's rural knowledge economy
- Work with rural businesses and communities to build a strong entrepreneurial culture
- Facilitate the 'new agricultural revolution'
- Increase the proportion of rural businesses involved in added-value activities
- Focus on the consumer to grow demand for Kentish products

How will we do this?

A range of actions have been developed to ensure the priority themes relating to Kent's rural economy are met. These can be found on the CD at the back of this document in action plan 1.

fostering vibrant rural communities

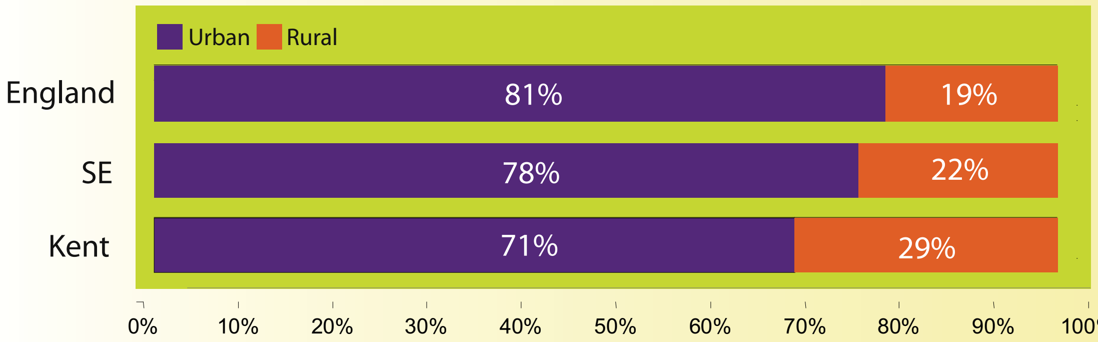
Where are we now?

- **Kent is home to almost a quarter of the South East's rural population**

Following the 'rural and urban definition' adopted in 2004 as the standard for national statistics, almost a third (29%) of Kent's residents live rural areas. This proportion is notably higher than the averages for the South East and rural England, which are placed at 22% and 19% respectively. With a rural population of over 390,000, Kent also has the largest rural population of all local authorities in the South East.

Although there are no specific projections for future rural population growth, Kent's total population (currently placed at 1.33 million) is forecast to rise 7.6% (based on projected dwelling planning permissions and allocations) by 2016.

Figure 5: **Urban and rural pop %** (Source ONS, 2001 Census)



- **Kent is, quintessentially, a rural county**

Just over 85% of Kent (302,327 hectares) is defined as rural and accounts for 19% of the South East's rural land area. The County also has more than 300 rural settlements, comprising 13 larger rural towns and 162 villages, with the remainder being small hamlets.

Whilst the density of Kent's rural population is generally greater than other parts of the South East, there are notable exceptions with Romney Marsh being the only area in the South East classified as sparsely populated.

- **Rural Kent has a faster ageing population profile**

Currently, Kent's rural population contains more middle aged/older people (45-74) and fewer young people (15-29) than the general population. Over 40,000 or 26% of all Kent rural households are pensioner households. Furthermore, almost 49,000 or 31% of rural households in Kent have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness and over 40,000 (10%) are involved in providing unpaid care for others.

Kent's rural demographic profile will become more pronounced through the continued inward migration of retirees, increasing average life expectancy and the outward migration of younger people. As a result, the number of 65-year-olds is expected to increase 20% faster across rural England in the next 25 years. This relatively faster ageing population profile will have implications for future service delivery in rural areas.

Figure 6: **South East rural population by county** (Source ONS, 2001 Census)

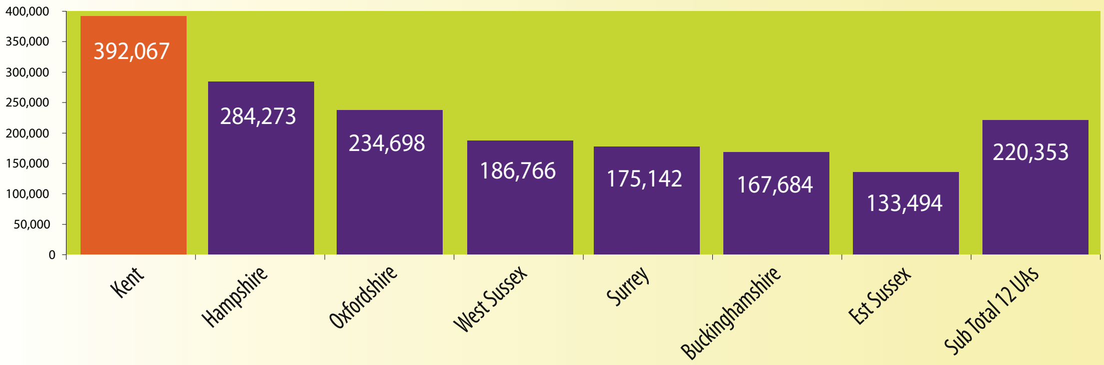
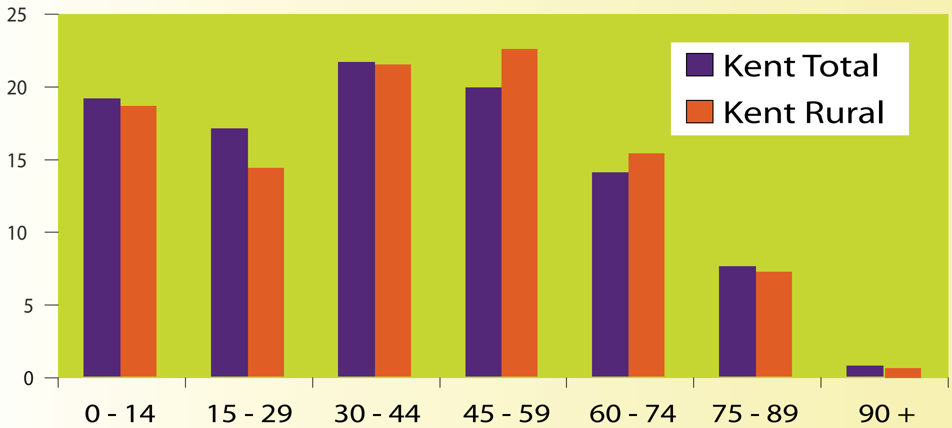


Figure 7: **Kent's rural and urban age groups** (Source ONS, 2001 Census)



There is an increasing shortage of affordable rural housing to meet local needs

High property prices can make it difficult for young people who have grown up in a rural area to remain there. Nationally, 45% of prospective newly forming householders (16-35) in rural areas could not afford to set up home where they currently live, whilst in the South East, only 2% of rural wards are deemed 'affordable' when compared against average local wages earned in rural sectors.

Affordability has also deteriorated over recent years with average house prices rising by 73% between 2000 and 2005 in rural areas, compared to 68% in urban. Workplace-based earnings data (which are not distorted by the effects of commuter incomes) illustrate that the average earnings in rural areas have not kept pace – and that the affordability gap is particularly acute in the South East. Research by the Commission for Rural Communities and SEERA suggests that between 946 and 1,925 affordable homes are needed in rural Kent per year, compared to the current build of around 90 units per year.

The lack of affordable rural housing is also generating a wider impact on rural businesses as lower paid workers cannot afford to live locally. Apart from creating difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, these trends are also fuelling a growth in reverse commuting from 'more affordable' urban areas to rural areas. Families are also being increasingly separated by distance in rural areas leading to a loss in social infrastructure (e.g. ability to care for elderly relatives, informal provision of childcare) and implications for the provision of local services.

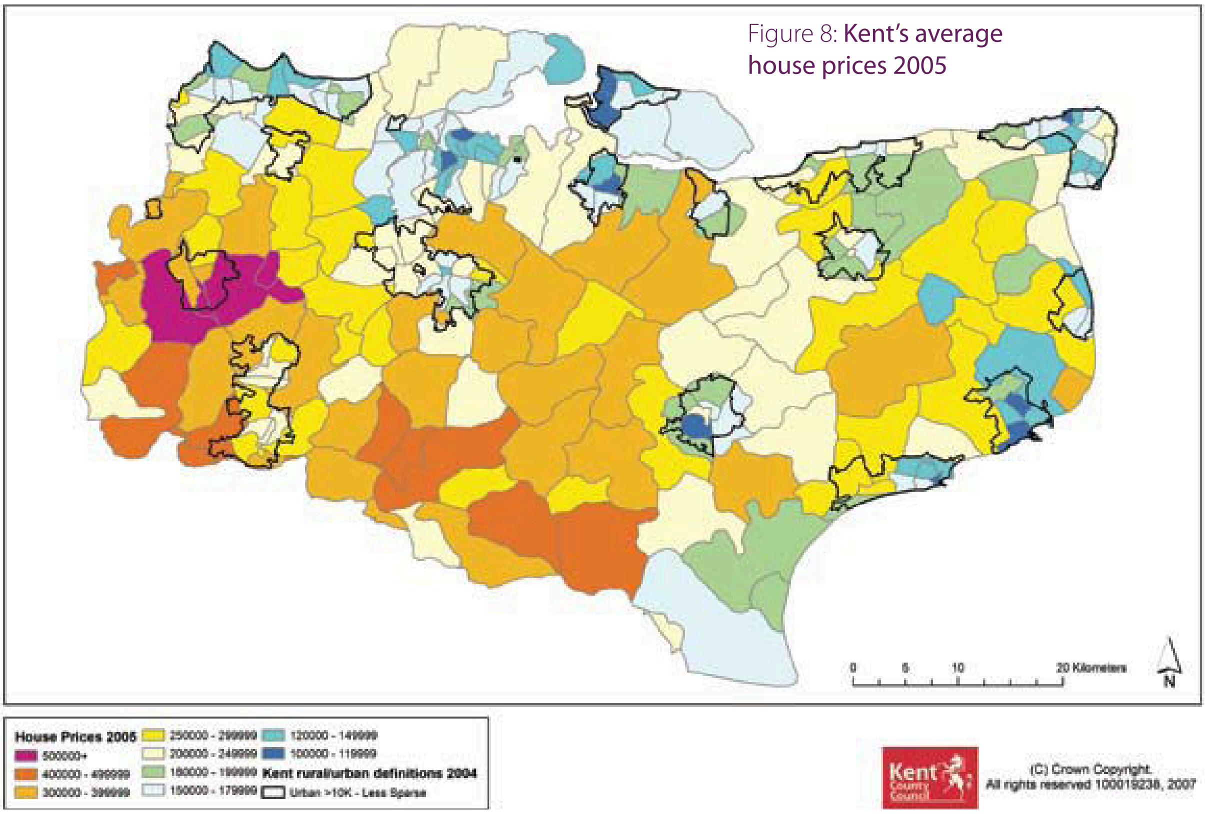


Figure 8: Kent's average house prices 2005

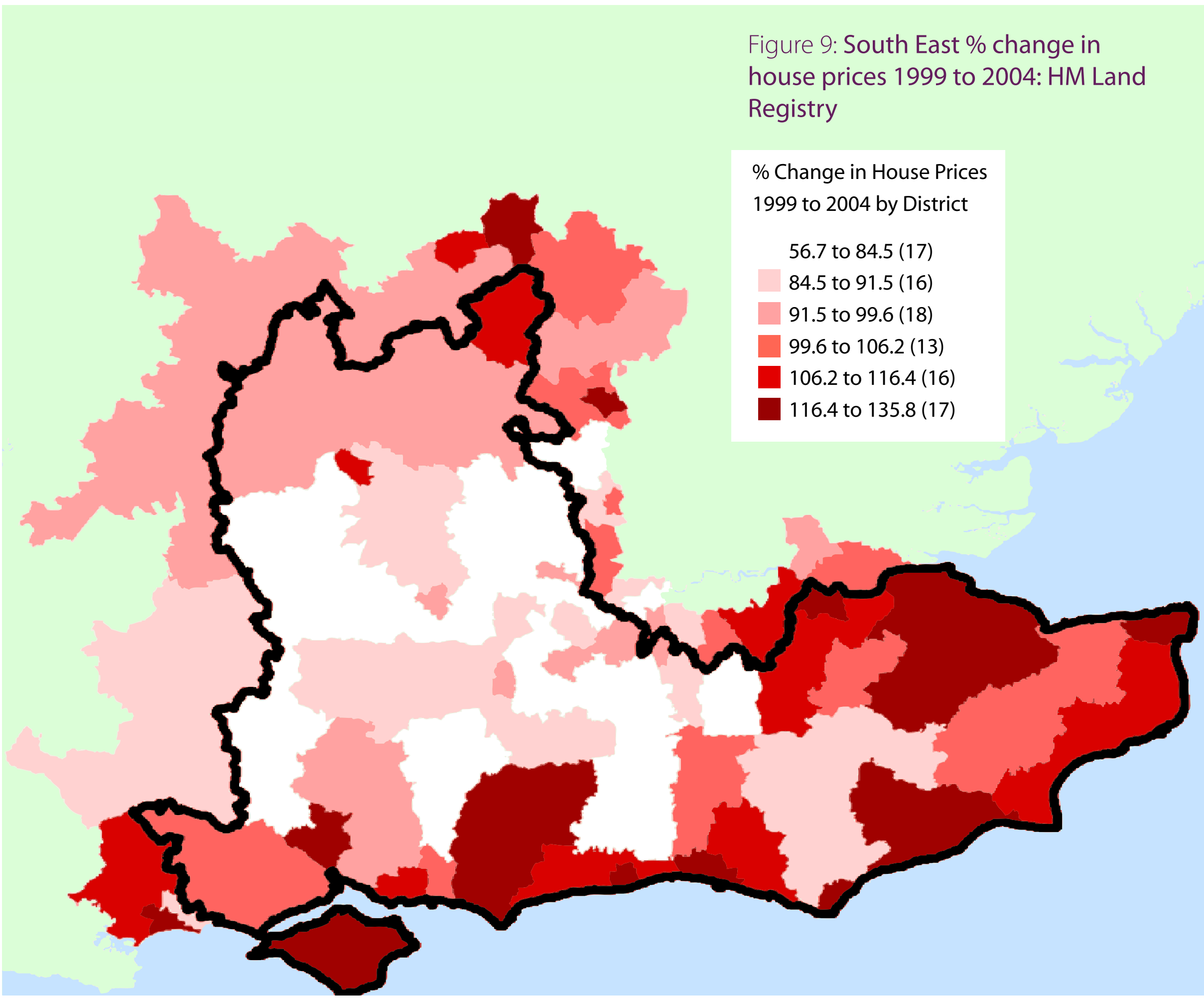


Figure 9: South East % change in house prices 1999 to 2004: HM Land Registry

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- **There is a need to encourage greater patronage of existing locally-provided rural services and foster innovation to address gaps in supply**

Rural residents are typically less able to access the same level of services locally than their urban counterparts. Factors, such as changes in consumer behaviour, increasing personal mobility (for the majority) and use of the internet, continue to create significant challenges for sustaining a range of services within rural areas – notably village shops, pubs and post offices. These facilities have an important social and economic role, particularly through acting as a focal point for many rural communities.

For example, whilst most rural communities would wish to have access to a local shop, the level of purchasing can create difficulties in sustaining it as an economically viable business. A survey of small independent rural retailers in Kent found that one fifth were at risk of closure in the next 2-3 years. Thus, to remain viable, rural retailers are having to find new and innovative approaches to service delivery (home delivery, bespoke services, co-location of shop with pub/post office/community hall). Furthermore, in some rural areas, community-run enterprises are providing innovative solutions where gaps in commercial provision have arisen (e.g. community-run shops, hosting farmers markets in local churches etc)

- **Accessibility is a key issue for many rural communities**

Local accessibility to public transport is much greater for urban households than it is for rural households. Public transport does serve many small towns and villages, but for most rural hamlets and isolated dwellings, public transport is well beyond the accepted convenient walking distance of 1km. Given the lack of convenient public transport and the distances required to access employment or services, many rural households are reliant on having their own car or van for transport. Almost half (47%) of rural households have more than one car. However, a significant minority (13%) has no car.

Internet access is creating new opportunities for rural communities to access essential services, information and carry out transactions without having to make lengthy journeys. Broadband is now widely available, although the speed and cost of access can be an issue.

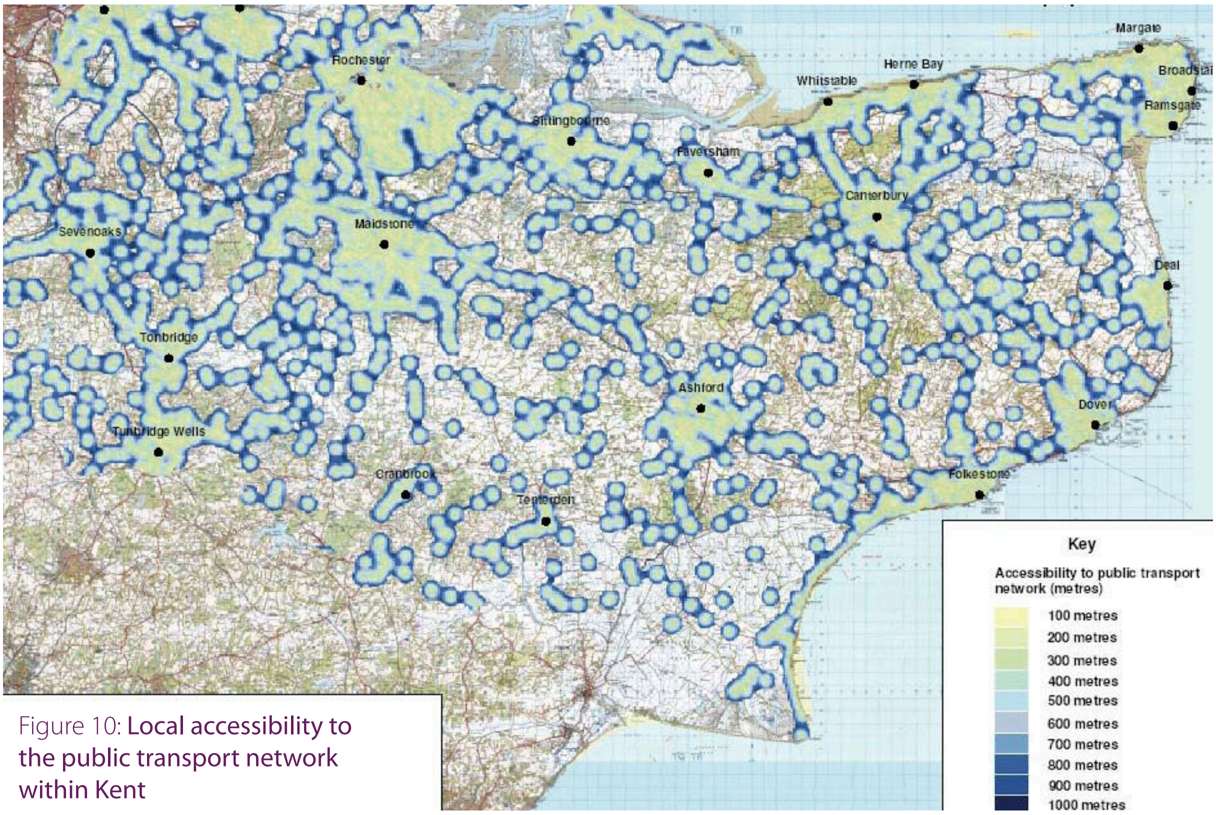


Figure 10: **Local accessibility to the public transport network within Kent**

Rural Kent has significant pockets of deprivation and wider prevalence of dispersed disadvantage

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a national measure and identifies areas of deprivation across the country. According to this index, the South East has 43 of the worst 20% of rural areas in England. Almost half (21) of these are in Kent. For income, employment, health, education, crime and the living environment, rural Kent has more than its proportionate share of the worst areas in the South East.

It should also be noted that deprivation can also take more dispersed forms within rural areas – and can become concealed by the appearance of relative prosperity and above average incomes. This hidden geography of deprivation is further compounded by cultural stereotypes of the 'rural idyll'. The nature, therefore, of rural deprivation – particularly the dispersed aspect – often requires very different interventions to those employed in urban areas.

Figure 11: **IMD ranking of South East rural areas**

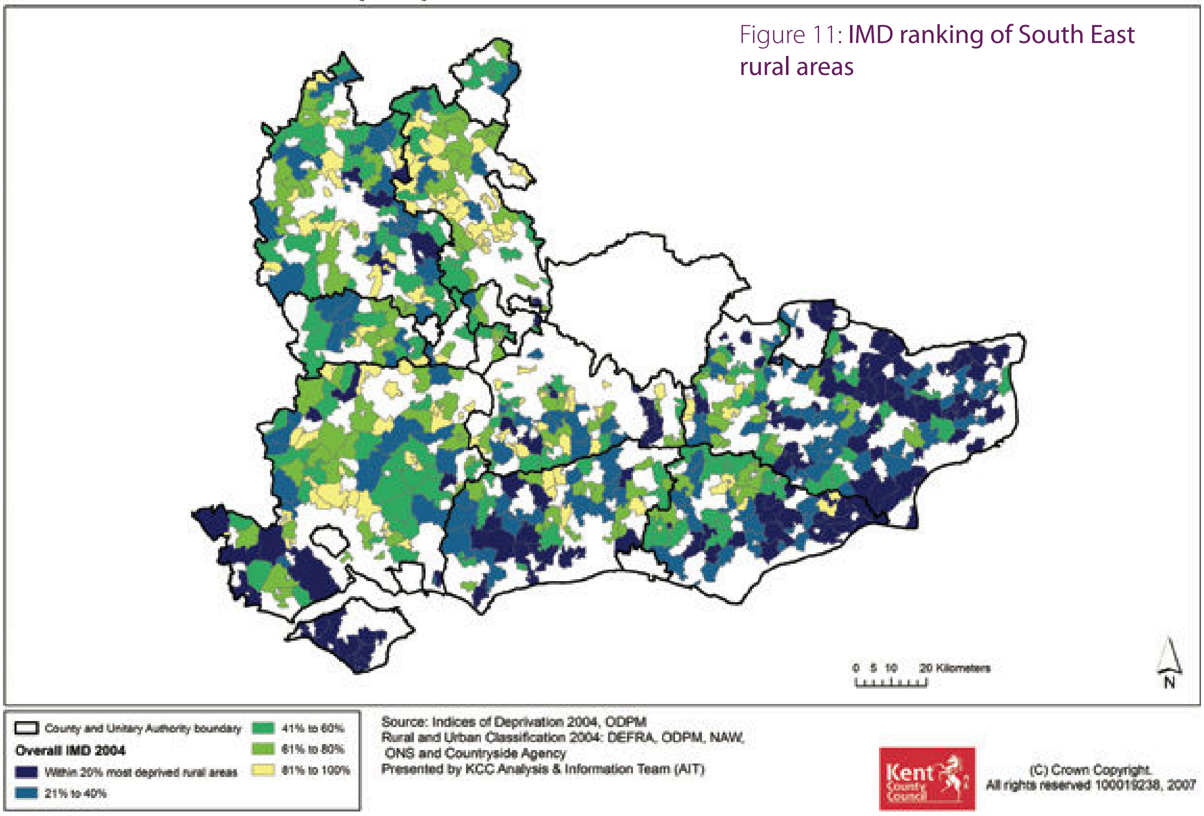
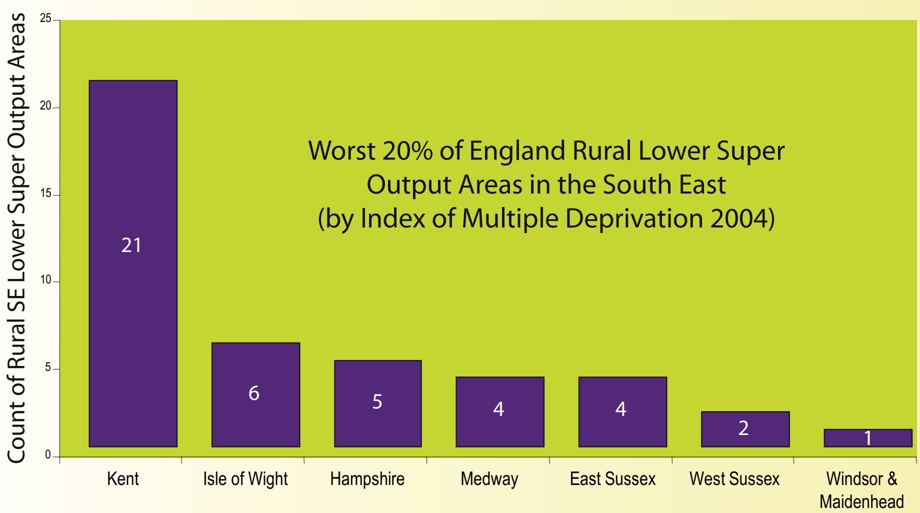


Figure 12: **Incidence in the South East of areas of the worst deprivation in rural England**



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Key challenges facing Kent's Rural Communities

- **How to evolve service delivery in rural areas and maximise the benefits of technological advances.** ICT is creating new opportunities for innovative service delivery in rural areas. Striking the balance will be key to avoid undermining the viability of local face-to-face services, whilst ensuring fair access to all.
- **How to ensure fair access to employment and essential services.** Access for rural households is a mixed picture.
- **How to empower rural communities to develop innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to issues facing their areas.** Community-led initiatives can make a real difference. There is a need to invest in developing the necessary capacity and experience within rural communities to facilitate the further development of initiatives addressing local needs.
- **How to provide more affordable rural housing to meet local needs.** Rural house prices have risen faster, and a to higher level than in towns. A lack of affordable housing is impacting rural businesses and leading to a loss of social infrastructure.
- **How to plan and meet the future needs of Kent's ageing rural population profile.** Kent's rural areas are experiencing a faster rate of ageing population. Over the next 25 years, the number of over 65-year-olds is expected to increase 20% faster across rural England.
- **How to reduce disadvantage and deprivation within Kent's rural communities.** There is a need to challenge the myth of the rural idyll and establish a greater understanding of the nature and extent of rural deprivation and disadvantage.

What do we need to do?

The priority themes for action are:

- Create cohesive and dynamic rural communities
- Develop an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to rural service provision
- Improve rural access and transport provision
- Increase the provision of affordable rural housing to meet local needs
- Address rural disadvantage and support independence

How will we do this?

A range of actions have been developed to ensure the priority themes relating to Kent's rural communities are met. These can be found on the CD at the back of this document in action plan 2.

Figure 13: **Drivers of change in rural communities**

External Drivers	Key Impacts
Increasing globalisation	• Loss of distinctiveness and sense of place (clone towns) • Less dependence on local jobs, services and networks
Technical challenge	• New ways of offering jobs and services to rural residents • Possible loss of existing social networks and isolation
Policy change	• Changes to the rural policy agenda at national and regional level are requiring new approaches to rural delivery
Climate change	• Encourage greater use of local services and purchasing local goods • Champion alternatives to growing car use whilst recognising reliance on the car in many rural areas
Demographic change and urban growth	• Relatively high rural house prices creating affordability issues for younger residents • Faster ageing of the rural population creating new pressures on public, health and leisure services • Community polarisation and loss of social infrastructure

Key Actions

- Create cohesive and dynamic rural communities
- Develop an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to rural services
- Improve rural access and transport
- Increase the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs
- Address rural disadvantage and support independence

valuing the rural environment

Where are we now?

- **Rural Kent is well known for its distinctive, valued and diverse 'Garden of England' landscapes and places**

Kent's varied physical environment and rich history gives the County's countryside its special, valued character. High quality, distinctive landscapes are a key feature of rural Kent, with 52% of the County being covered by landscape designations. The Countryside Agency's Countryside Character approach recognises 7 character areas in Kent reflecting the diversity of Kent's countryside. Two of these areas, the Kent Downs and the High Weald have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are nationally important landscapes which have a similar status to national parks

Around two thirds of Kent's land is agricultural with woodland comprising a further 10.6%. Kent is the second most wooded area in the South East and has the largest percentage of ancient woodland of any county in England. This, together with Kent's long history of hops and fruit production has created a number of distinctive and iconic landscapes which, through the 'Garden of England' imagery, has created a strong landscape-based identity for the County. Vernacular architecture e.g. oast houses, are an important facet of Kent's cultural identity – all direct contributors to rural Kent's sense of place and local distinctiveness. The quality of Kent's rural landscapes is a key driver for the leisure and tourism economy, and offers a high quality of life for Kent's rural residents and prospective inward investors.

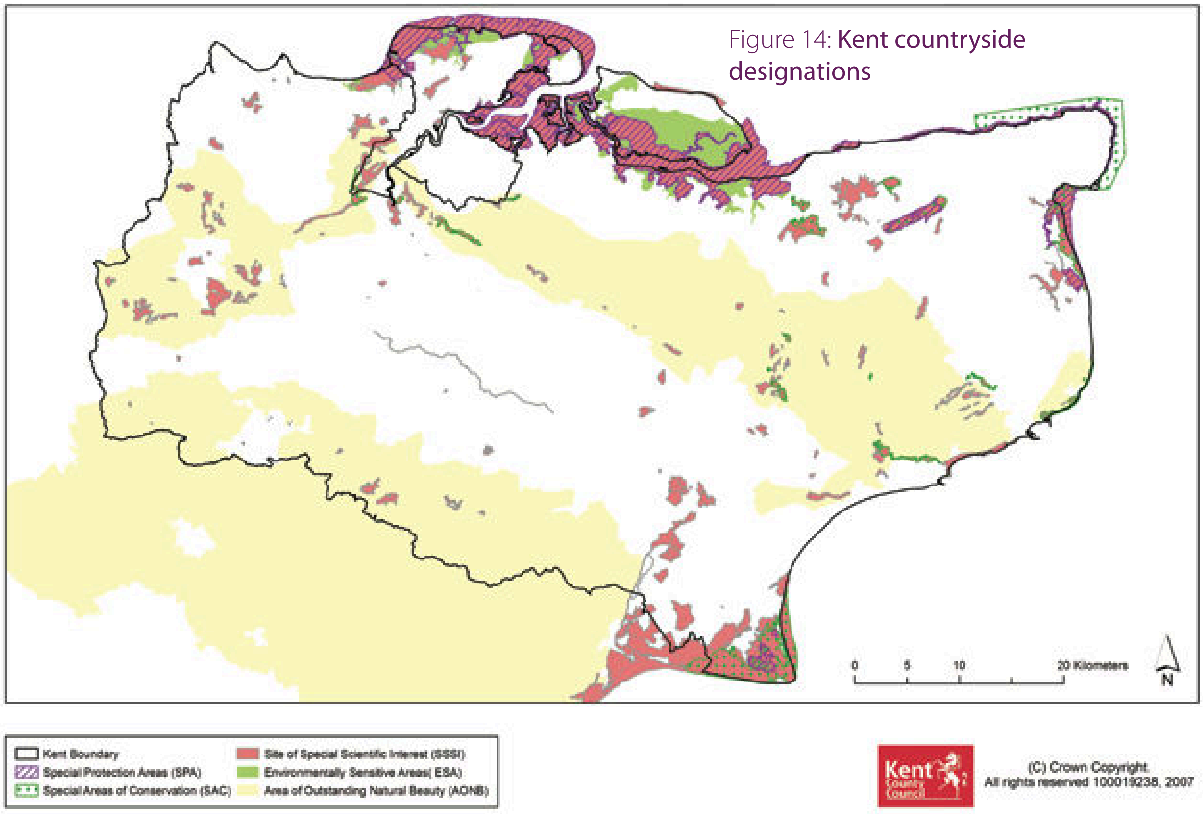


Figure 14: **Kent countryside designations**

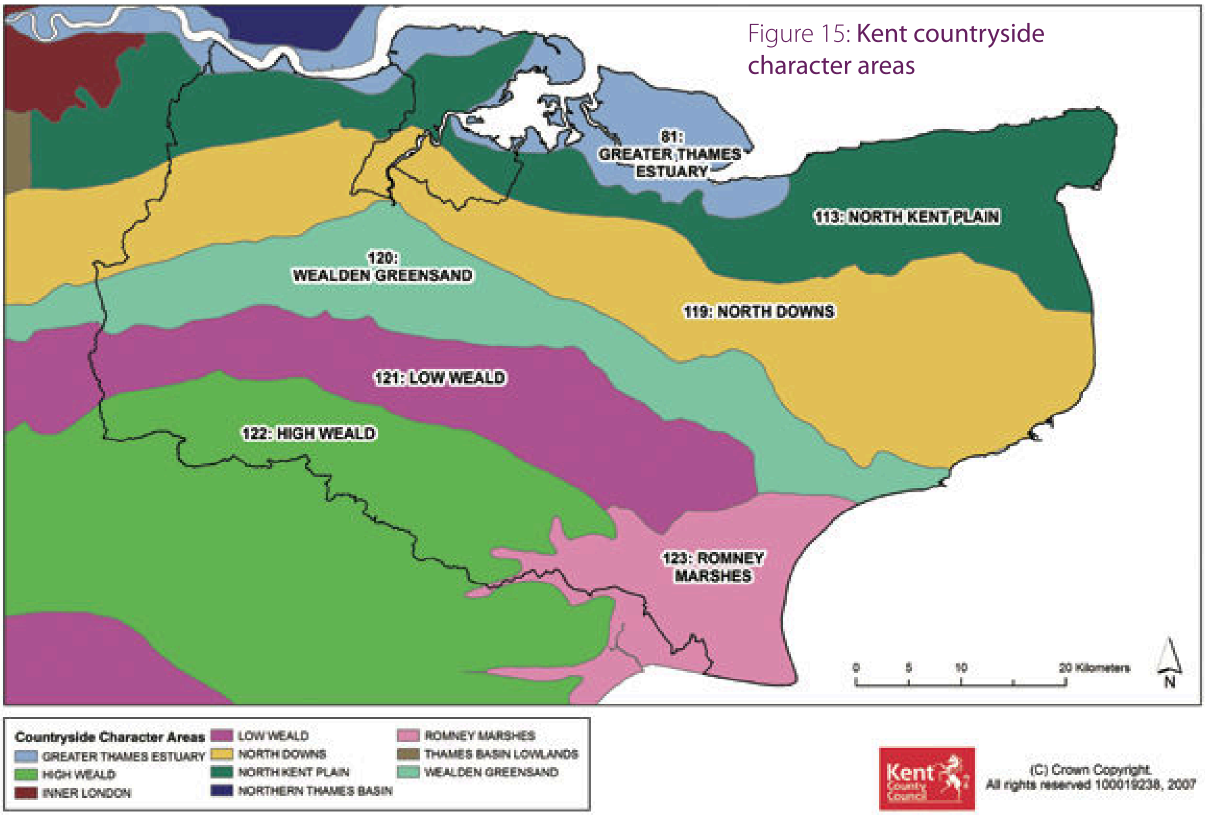


Figure 15: Kent countryside character areas

- **The quality of Kent's environmental resources (soil, water, biodiversity) need to be protected by good land management**

As well as contributing to the landscape character detailed above, Kent's environmental resources are valuable in their own right and their high quality needs to be protected.

There are a wide range of habitats in Kent including wetlands, woodland, chalk grassland and habitats related to lowland arable farming and fruit cropping, extensive cereal field margins, ponds and old orchards. 16% of the county has been designated for its nature conservation interest but all its habitats can be valuable for their biodiversity if suitably managed. Many of these habitats provide a stronghold for UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species such as the Water Vole, Great Crested Newt, Song Thrush and Dormouse. However, changes in agricultural practices and the impact of development on the countryside have been important factors contributing to a decline in biodiversity in the County. Bird populations are often used as a general indicator of biodiversity. The trend in Kent, as elsewhere, is one of continuing and long-term decline.

In terms of water quality, the biological quality of Kent's rivers is generally better than that for England and Wales, with over 97% of rivers in good or fair categories in 1995. Chemical water quality is declining both nationally and in Kent, despite improvements during the early 1990s. In fact the decline has been more rapid in Kent than in the rest of England & Wales. Clearly, the impacts of climate change with changing rainfall patterns will generate new challenges for managing water quality. With less water in the summer it is likely to become increasingly difficult to maintain river flows and to ensure that treated effluent is effectively diluted. Equally, intense winter rain could result in flooding (possibly overwhelming drainage systems) and again impacting on water quality.

Kent's agricultural land is of particularly high quality - 38% is classified as Grade 1 and 2 quality compared with 17.5% in England and Wales. These high quality soils underpin Kent's successful horticultural and agricultural enterprises and are vital for their productive character. However, many of Kent's most valued habitats depend upon lower grade soils to support them and their management is of vital importance to the Kent environment. The most significant threat to agricultural land comes from development. The Kent Land Cover Survey highlighted a 7% increase in the area of developed land across Kent & Medway 1990-99. Poor land management can also result in a loss of quality and is a less obvious threat.

Figure 16: **Kent landcover change** (Source: KCC Kent Land Cover Survey 1999)

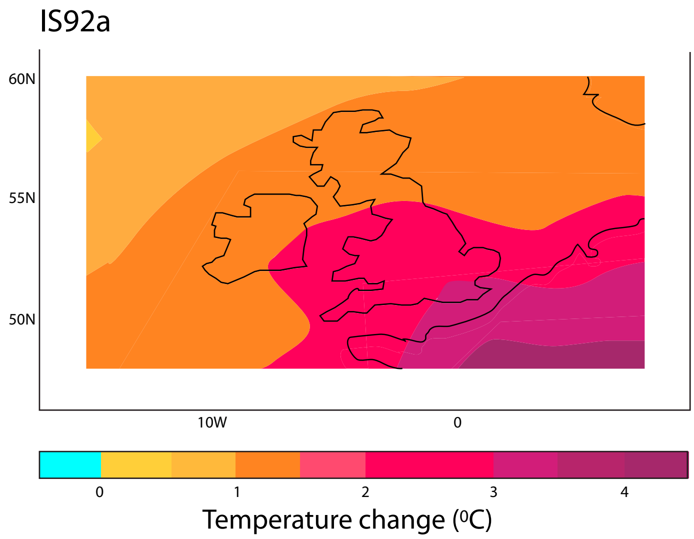
Kent and Medway Broad Landcover	ha. 1990	ha. 1999	90-99 ha. change	90-99 ha. % change
Arable	138,520	136,172	-2,348	-1.70%
Grassland	102,876	105,394	2,518	2.45%
Orchard & Hop	21,701	14,162	-7,539	-34.74%
Woodland	44,561	48,619	4,058	9.11%
Development	56,177	60,308	4,131	7.35%
Others	25,042	23,780	-1,262	-5.04%
Total	**388,877**	**388,435**	**-442**	**0%**

- **The South East is forecast to experience greater impacts from climate change than any other region in the UK.**

According to the UK Climate Impacts Programme, winters will be warmer, wetter and more variable, while summers will be hotter and drier with up to a 40% decrease in precipitation and temperature increases in excess of 4°C by 2080. More extreme weather incidents are also predicted.

The implications of these changes are widespread. With less water available in the summer, the increased incidence of droughts will have implications for crop yields and land use. However, the warmer temperatures could also offer new opportunities for agricultural, viticultural and horticultural production. Extreme weather could damage crops and infrastructure and make it more difficult for wildlife to survive. Land management for both production and wildlife conservation will need to take account of all aspects of climatic change, and forward planning will be essential to reduce exposure to risk and loss.

Figure 17: **Average annual temperate rise (ºC) predicted over the UK by 2080, relative to the 1961-1990 average for IS92a UKCIP Medium-High Scenario for emissions**



- ## Kent has considerable potential to develop renewable energy from its land-based resources

There is a need for widespread adoption of renewable energy sources to meet regulatory standards, reduce concerns over future security of supply and to mitigate climate change. Kent has 39,487 hectares of woodland, which is 10.6% of its land area. This extensive woodland resource is currently under-utilised and could supply wood fuel. There are also opportunities in Kent to develop biomass farming (oilseed rape, willow, miscanthus etc.), anaerobic digestion facilities to produce biogas and small scale wind power generation. Examples of such renewable energy production exist but currently on a fragmented basis.

- ## Current patterns of resource use within the South East are unsustainable

The ecological footprint of South East residents in 2000 was 55 million global hectares- that is 29 times the physical area of the region. If all the world's population lived like the average South East resident, we would need three and a half planets. It is clear then that current patterns of resource use are unsustainable.

Water consumption is a particular issue in the South East which is one of the driest, yet most densely populated parts of the UK. Domestic water consumption is 160 litres per head per day (unmetered) which is higher than the UK average – around a third of this is estimated to be used flushing toilets. The Environment Agency has highlighted that per capita water consumption has risen between 3 to 5% in the last 10 years.

80% of water in Kent comes from groundwater. Kent already has a relatively low annual rainfall and global warming is predicted to further decrease summer precipitation. The growth areas of Kent Thameside and Ashford will also place increased demands on water supplies as their populations increase. The prospect of a simultaneous decrease in summer rainfall and increased demand (domestically and commercially) will place real stresses on the County's water resources. The impacts on rivers and wetlands (many of which depend on ground water levels being maintained) could be severe.

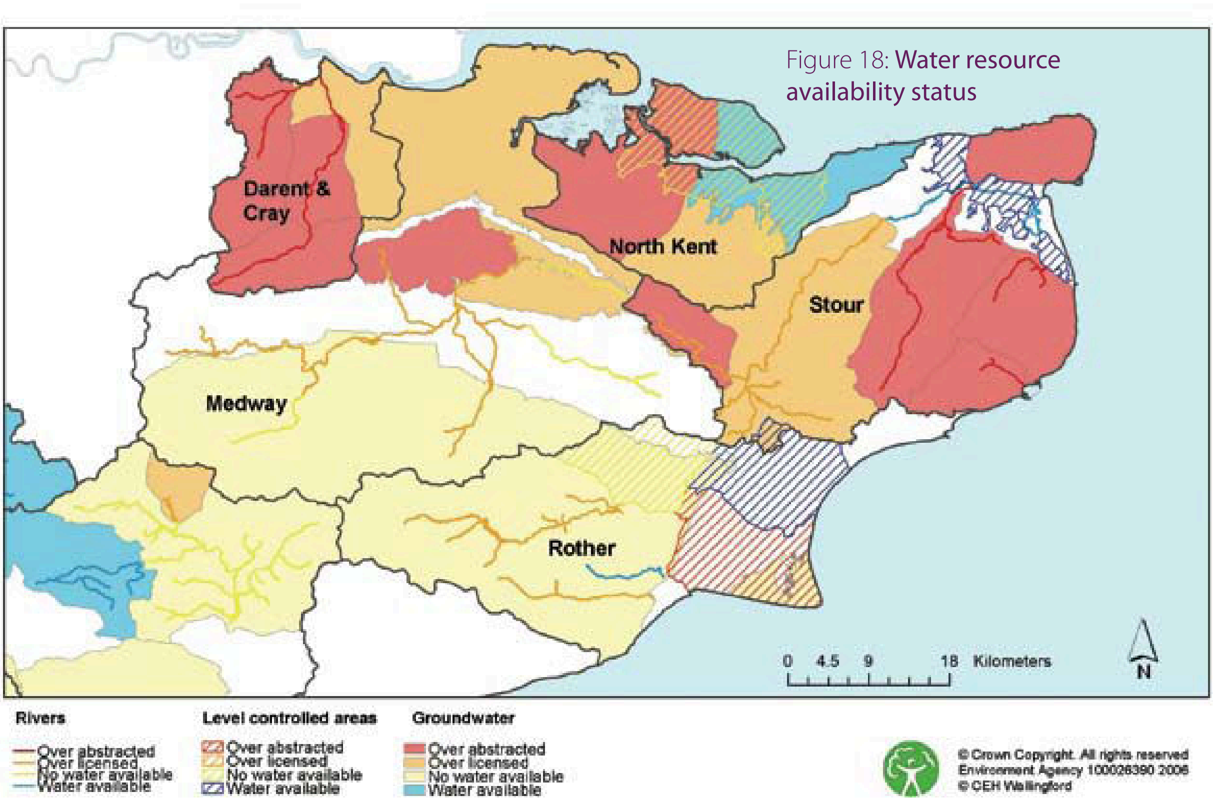


Figure 18: Water resource availability status

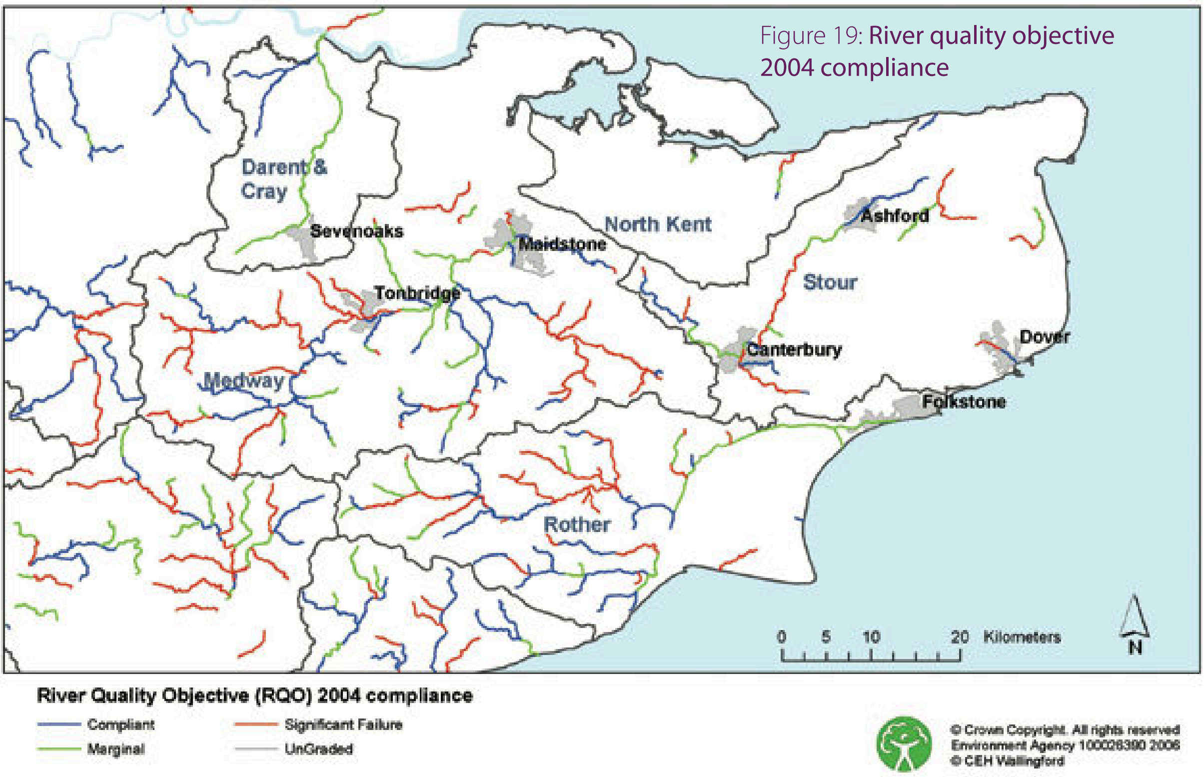


Figure 19: River quality objective 2004 compliance

Transport is another area of concern. The distance between home and work for rural residents is on average 50% more than for urban residents. The complex commuting patterns between urban and rural areas, and beyond into London make it unsurprising that rural Kent has higher average travel to work distances than the rural South East and rural England.

There is a need to proactively manage pressures arising from urban growth on Kent's rural areas

Some 85% of the land of Kent is classified as rural and just 15% is urban development. In the decade 1990-2000, there was a 7% increase in the area of developed land and this trend towards the development of previously undeveloped land is set to increase over the next two decades. In July 2002, the Government designated two growth areas in Kent – the Thames Gateway and the Ashford area. In the Thames Gateway, the aim is to create 84,000 new jobs, 17,000 indirect jobs and build up to 50,000 new homes by 2020. For Ashford the targets are 31,000 new homes and 28,000 new jobs by 2031. The impact of these areas will extend way beyond the immediate growth areas into the rural hinterland. Funding has been committed to support improvements at the interface between urban and rural environments, as well as habitat protection and creation. The challenge will be to maximise potential opportunities and minimise the impacts from this growth. Based on the total strategic housing provision of projected dwelling planning permissions and allocations, the Kent population is forecast to rise by 7.6% across the county by 2016.

Key challenges facing Kent's rural environment

- **How to maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of Kent's rural environment.** Kent has a variety of distinctive and iconic landscapes – such as traditional orchards - which are intrinsic to its identity, and sense of place. The increasing homogenisation of places and culture is resulting in a gradual erosion of local distinctiveness and the development of 'clone towns'.
- **How to minimise the impact of climatic change, yet adapting to its inevitable consequences.** The South East is predicted to experience greater impacts than any other UK region. Climatic change will create new risks for the land-based sector along with opportunities to grow new types of crop.
- **How to develop a lower carbon economy, based particularly on the production and consumption of biofuels (from locally derived products).** The South East is facing a prospective 'energy gap', with growth in global demand and political instability creating a need for secure, affordable and sustainable energy supplies. Combusting fossil fuels is also a key contributor to carbon dioxide emissions, and sub-regional planning targets are creating further impetus to invest in renewable energy technologies.

- **How to manage the impacts of urban growth.** Kent has 2 of the South East's growth areas (Ashford and Thames Gateway) and adjoins Greater London. The urban fringe (peri-urban) is an important component of Kent's environment – and it is important to recognise increasing urban-rural inter linkages and interdependencies.
- **How to achieve 'One Planet Living'.** It takes an area almost 30 times larger than the South East to support the region's consumption. All rural residents and businesses need to consider ways of reducing their ecological footprints.

What do we need to do?

The priority themes for action are:

- Conserve Kent's distinctive rural character and sense of place
- Help the land-based sector to adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Increase the production and consumption of renewable energy across rural Kent
- Manage the impacts of urban growth
- Live within environmental limits (One Planet Living)

How will we do this?

A range of activities have been developed to ensure the priority themes relating to Kent's rural environment which met. These can be found on the CD at the back of this document in action plan 3.

Figure 20: **Environmental drivers of change**

External Drivers	Key Impacts
Climate change	• Changing land-use & crop choice • Bio-diversity • Increasing aridity
Demographic change and urban growth	• Increased pressure on water resources • Growth in households creating demand for more housing
Increasing globalisation	• Loss of local distinctiveness (landscapes, built environment) • Cheap agricultural imports undermining custodial role of land-based sector
Policy change	• Demands for higher levels of environmental quality driven by EU legislation • CAP reform • Renewable energy targets are creating impetus to increase application in Kent

Key Actions

- Help the land-based sector adapt to climatic change
- One Planet Living
- Manage Kent's urban growth
- Conserve Kent's distinctive rural character and sense of place
- Increase the production and consumption of renewable energy



Annex 1

Urban and rural definition 2004

The Kent Rural Delivery Framework uses the nationally adopted urban and rural definition 2004. Essentially, this definition allocates an area as urban when the majority of it falls inside a settlement where the population is 10,000 or more. Areas below this threshold are defined as rural.

Settlement type

The analysis of rural and urban has been built upon a detailed analysis of the land area of England, where each hectare grid square (100x100 metres) is allocated to one of 4 settlement types:

- dispersed dwellings and hamlets
- village
- small town and fringe
- urban (>10k population)

Sparsity

Each hectare grid square is also given a sparsity score based on the number of households in surrounding hectare squares up to a distance of 30 km.

Up to 8 classes of area are possible; four settlement types as above, in either a sparse or less sparse setting.

Super Output Areas

Super Output Areas will eventually become the standard area for datasets across the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and beyond. Super Output Areas (SOAs) are built from groups of the Output Areas (OAs) used for the 2001 Census (each Output Area contains approximately 125 households and 300 population).

There are 3 levels of SOA, the Lower (Level 1) is used for the Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics. Lower SOAs contain approximately 5 OAs, 1,500 population and 725 households. Kent has 883 LSOAs in total.

There are 253 rural LSOAs in Kent which is 29% of the total in Kent, 22% of the 1,154 SE rural LSOAs and 4% of all England's rural LSOAs.

Super output Areas (lower)	Kent	Kent % of SE	SE	SE % of Eng	England	Kent % of England
Urban	630	*15%*	4,165	*16%*	26,455	*2%*
Rural	253	*22%*	1,154	*19%*	6,027	*4%*
Town & fringe	125	*23%*	550	*18%*	3,081	*4%*
Village, hamlet and isolated dwellings	128	*21%*	604	*21%*	2,946	*4%*
Total	883	*17%*	5,319	*16%*	32,482	*3%*

Source ONS, 2001 Census

Local Authority urban rural classification 2005

Many statistics are only available at Local Authority level. In order to differentiate between rural and urban for these statistics it is necessary to classify Local Authorities as rural or urban. The Rural/Urban Local Authority District Classification is a six-way classification, from major urban districts through to Rural-80 ones, where over 80% of the population is considered to be in rural areas.

The six classes are:

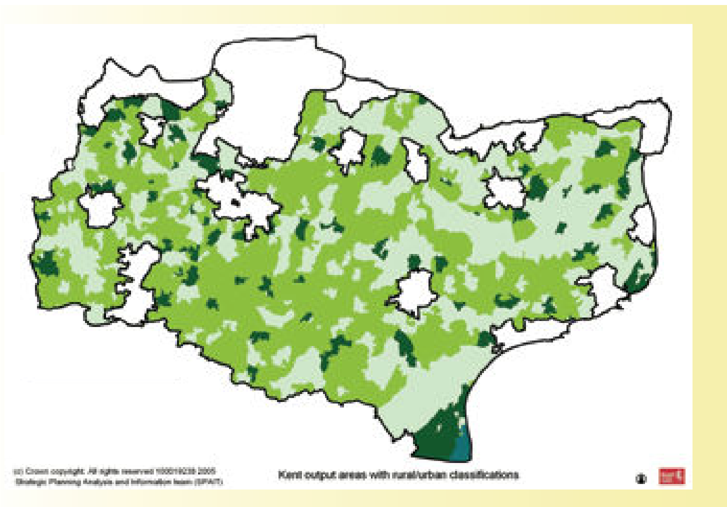
1. Major urban: districts with either 100,000 people or 50 percent of their population in an urban area with a population of more than 750,000. There are 76 English districts in this group.
2. Large urban: districts with either 50,000 people or 50 percent of their population in one of 17 urban areas with a population between 250,000 and 750,000. There are 45 districts in this group.
3. Other urban: districts with fewer than 37,000 people or less than 26 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns. There are 55 districts in this group.
4. Significant rural: districts with more than 37,000 people or more than 26 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns. There are 53 districts in this group.
5. Rural-50: districts with at least 50 percent but less than 80 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns. There are 52 districts in this group.
6. Rural-80: districts with at least 80 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns. There are 73 districts in this group.

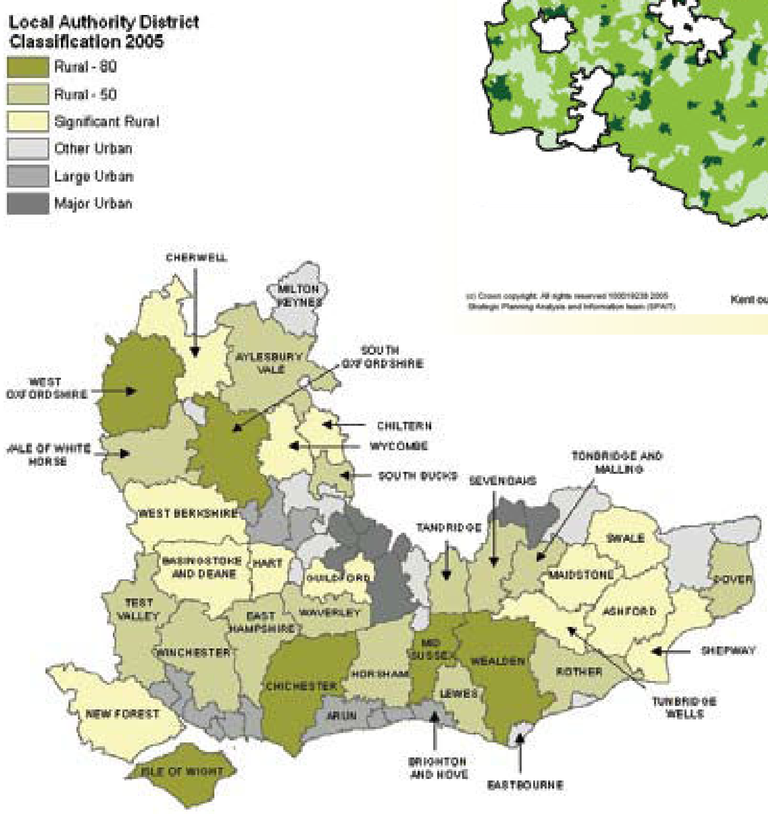
Predominantly rural districts are the Rural 80 and Rural Predominantly rural districts are the Rural-80 and Rural-50 categories.

Mixed districts are significant rural and other urban categories.

Predominantly urban districts are the large urban and major urban categories.

Figure 21: Rural classifications





Annex 2

The knowledge economy

The term "knowledge economy" is defined as an economy which is "based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information as the main driver of productivity, competitiveness, economic growth, wealth creation and employment across all industries " (OECD 1996 and APEC 2000).

The Knowledge Economy is characterised by:

- The increasing importance of science, research and development, technology and innovation in knowledge creation.
- The use of information and communications technology (ICT), computers and the internet to generate, share and apply knowledge.
- The need for highly qualified and skilled workers, demand for education and training and new organisational learning and managerial methods.
- The collaborative partnerships between industry, government and academic research institutions.

'Knowledge industries' dominate wealth creation in the sectors of technology, publishing and communications, finance and business services, education, research and development, media, cultural and creative activities. 'Knowledge workers' - professional, managerial, scientific and technical workers with higher levels of qualifications are key workers across all sectors of the economy.

The knowledge economy in rural England

A research report "The Knowledge Economy in Rural England", prepared for Defra by the Local Futures Group, suggests that today's rural economies are less dependent on land-based industries and agriculture and are becoming highly diversified with the bulk of new job growth being concentrated in services, including tourism.

"The main strands of rural economic development, for which the knowledge economy is relevant are the rising knowledge-intensity of traditional agricultural and linked industries – through product and process innovations based on advances in biotechnology, ICT and materials technology (organic produce, logistics, etc). The growth of knowledge-driven businesses and industries in rural areas, especially accessible rural areas – elements of high technology, eco-tourism, micro business services, craft-intensive textiles and furniture, etc is driven by the environment, lifestyle, entrepreneurship, falling entry barriers to knowledge industries and other factors.

The spread of broadband and transport networks that enable rural businesses to 'borrow size' from closer, denser interaction with metropolitan cities – the latter's critical mass of finance and business services, cultural amenities, government services and other knowledge economy assets (underpinned by the economies of scale and scope that make for urban agglomeration).

The main economic challenges facing rural areas are obvious ones – overcoming the 'thinness' of business and consumer markets (in terms of critical mass and dispersal), the adverse business, skills and cultural legacies of de-industrialisation in resource-based industries (agriculture and fisheries, mining and extraction), the seasonal and uncertain nature of tourism-related industries, the tensions between older population gain and younger population loss (the combined effects of house price affordability and job quality) and the general difficulties in 'aggregating demand' in the SME and household population for public and private services and business infrastructure."

The report finds that

"There is considerable potential across the whole of rural England to develop a low-carbon, 'green knowledge economy' based on product and process innovations. Obvious areas for knowledge-driven growth include renewable energy, environmentally friendly materials, sustainable construction techniques, food and bio-sciences more widely, re-cycling and a host of business, consultancy and information services that support sustainable development practice in households, businesses and throughout the public and community sectors. 'Ecotourism' is a field for larger flagship projects that could boost rural knowledge economies in the less competitive regions. High-end R&D can be embedded in rural areas by creating rural university campuses (with a green focus) designed to facilitate linkages with local SMEs and industry sectors."

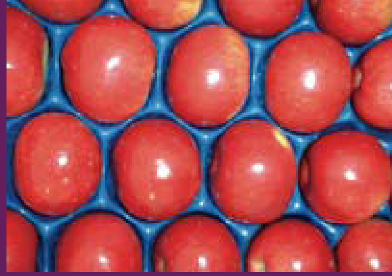
The report concludes

"That accessible rural areas are emerging as places where 'knowledge workers' increasingly live and start up businesses, and as places where knowledge-intensive industries increasingly locate. Our analysis suggests this spatial trend in the knowledge economy will continue into the future, raising the issue of economic sustainability in cities and the issue of social and environmental sustainability in accessible rural areas. Remote rural areas and the Defra lagging areas run the risk of being marginalised by the knowledge economy in terms of growth and employment – while still facing demographic pressures on housing and services."

Knowledge-intensive industries

The report includes a broad range of sectors in its definition of knowledge intensive industries.

1. Knowledge-based production: aerospace, electrical machinery and optical equipment, printing, publishing and recorded media, chemicals and energy.
2. Knowledge-based services: telecommunications, computer and related services, R&D, finance and business services, air transport services and recreational and cultural services.
3. Public services, with high levels of professional expertise are highly knowledge-intensive: education, health, public administration, etc employ large numbers of graduates.
4. Creative industries: publishing, printing, reproduction, wholesale/retail sale of books, journals and periodicals and sound recordings, software consultancy, reproduction of computer media, motion picture and video production, distribution and projection, news agency, radio and television activities, artistic and literary creation, advertising photographic, architectural/engineering activities, manufacture of media equipment, materials and instruments, wholesale of electrical household goods, operation of arts facilities and library, archives and museum activities.

Annex 3

Membership of the Kent Rural Board

Rupert Ashby	Country Land and Business Association, South East Director
Mark Bilsborough	Swale Borough Council, Chief Executive
Valerie Carter	South East England Regional Development Agency, Rural Director
Robert Clewley	Business Link Kent, Chair
Stuart Gibbons	Kent County Council, Head of Rural Regeneration
Mike Gilks	Government Office South East
Richard Long (Chair)	KCC Lead Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence Programme
Bobby Neame CBE, DL	Chairman Shepherd Neame and rural champion for Kent Ambassadors
Chris Older	National Farmers Union, Kent Chair
Chris Reynolds	Chair of Kent Downs ANOB Board
Mike Taylor	Director of Kent County Agricultural Society Executive Board
Rt Rev Stephen Venner (Bishop of Dover)/ Simon macLachlan	Action with Communities in Rural Kent, President/ Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Vice President
Sarah Ward OBE, DL	Kent Rural Taskforce Chair
Fidelity Weston	Kent Wildlife Trust, Chair
Nigel Whitburn	Kent Association of Parish Councils, Chair

Maidstone Borough Council

Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 22 March 2011

Future Work Programme

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

1.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is recommended to review the work programme attached at **Appendix A**.

3. Future Work Programme

3.1 Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that it remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

3.2 The Forward Plan for 1 February 2011 - 31 May 2011 contains the following decision relevant to the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- High Street Improvement Project
- Adoption of the Maidstone Local Bio Diversity Action Plan
- Housing Strategy 2011-15
- Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft
- Private Sector Housing Review of HMO licensing fees, conditions and assistance
- Core Strategy Progress
- Building Surveying Charges

The report with further details on this is attached at **Appendix B**.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

4.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy'; and
- 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'.

4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2010-2011

Date	Items to be considered
22 June 2010	• Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Work Programming 2010/11
27 July 2010	• Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture Written Vision Statement • Cabinet Member for Regeneration Written Vision Statement • High Street Regeneration • Value of Leisure and Culture Review
14 September 2010	• Local Development Framework Targets and Distribution • 1st Quarter performance monitoring
28 September 2010	• Call-In, Core Strategy
12 October 2010	• Value of Leisure & Culture Review interview with John Holden
26 October 2010	• Holiday Play Schemes (Jim Boot and Kate Pomphrey) • Draft Housing Strategy(Duncan Bruce) • Housing Allocations (John Littlemore)
TBC – Feb?	• Local Development Framework Document • Assessment of data quality for core strategy
23 November 2010	• Interview with Cabinet Member for Regeneration– mid-year progress • Interview with Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture– mid year progress • Interview with Mandy Hare and Simon Lace as part of the Leisure and Culture Strategy Review • Obtain volunteers for daytime meeting with Sally Staples, KCC
13 December 2010 (Monday)	• 2nd quarter performance monitoring report • Maidstone Market Update • Interview with Jason Taylor as part of the Leisure & Culture Review • Rural Economy?
25 January 2011	• Rural Economy
21 February 2011	• Joint Leisure & Prosperity O&S and LDDAG meeting
22 February 2011	• Demographic & Transport Data Check • LSP thematic quarterly performance report

22 March 2011	• 3rd quarter performance monitoring report • Rural Economy – Interview with John Foster, MBC, Liz Harrison, KCC Rural Regeneration Manager, Huw Jarvis, Leader Programme.
26 April 2011	• Interview with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture – Progress Over the Year • LSP thematic quarterly performance • Rural Economy – Interview with Elaine Collins, Network of Rural Business Forums.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

1 February 2011 to
31 May 2011

Councillor Christopher Garland
Leader of the Council

Forward Plan
February 2011 - May 2011

INTRODUCTION

This is the Forward Plan which the Leader of the Council is required to prepare. Its purpose is to give advance notice of all the "key decisions" which the Executive is likely to take over the next 4 month period. The Plan will be up-dated monthly.

Each "key decision" is the subject of a separate entry in the Plan. The entries are arranged in date order – i.e. the "key decisions" likely to be taken during the first month of the 4 month period covered by the Plan appear first.

Each entry identifies, for that "key decision" –

- the subject matter of the decision
- a brief explanation of why it will be a "key decision"
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- who will be consulted before the decision is taken and the method of the consultation
- how and to whom representations (about the decision) can be made
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection
- the wards to be affected by this decision

DEFINITION OF A KEY DECISION

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or
- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

WHO MAKES DECISIONS?

The Cabinet collectively makes some of the decisions at a public meeting and individual portfolio holders make decisions following consultation with every member of the Council. In addition, Officers can make key decisions and an entry for each of these will be included in the Forward Plan.

WHO ARE THE CABINET?

Councillor Christopher Garland
Leader of the Council
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Tel: 07766 343024

Councillor Ben Sherreard
Cabinet Member for Environment
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Tel: 07789 408452

Councillor Marion Ring
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
marionring@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 686492

Councillor John A Wilson
Cabinet Member for Community Services
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Tel: 01622 720989

Councillor Richard Ash
Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture
richardash@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 730151

Councillor Malcolm Greer
Cabinet Member for Regeneration
malcolmgreer@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01634 862876

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

The Council encourages and welcomes anyone wishing to express his or her views about decisions the Cabinet plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or Cabinet Member (the details of which are shown for each decision to be made).

Alternatively, the Cabinet are contactable via our website where you can submit a question to the Leader of the Council or any Cabinet Member on-line. There is also the opportunity to invite the Leader of the Council to speak at a function you may be organising.

Cabinet Roadshows are held 3 times a year in different wards. This is an opportunity for you to meet the Cabinet Members direct and discuss any issues that may concern you.

Decision Maker, Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made and, if delayed, reason for delay:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
Cabinet Due Date: 9 Feb 2011	Core Strategy: setting of the Gypsy & Traveller pitch target To decide the Core Strategy numerical target for Gypsy and Traveller pitches for the period 2006-2016.		Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning 21st January	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy: setting of the Gypsy & Traveller pitch target
Cabinet Due Date: 9 Feb 2011	Core Strategy 2006 - 2026 To set a housing and employment target for the borough and agree a spatial pattern of development for inclusion in the draft Core Strategy for public consultation, and to approve the revised Core Strategy programme.	All Members' workshops on 25 October 2010 and 6 January 2011 to develop optimal strategy.	Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning 24 January 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy Progress

Forward Plan
February 2011 - May 2011

Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
Cabinet Due Date: 9 Feb 2011 Original Date: 15 Oct 2010	Adoption of the Maidstone Local Bio Diversity Action Plan To adopt the LBAP and its associated actions	As the document is large it will be posted on MBC website for consultee to access. The executive summary will be enclosed with the report.	Jason Taylor, Parks and Open Spaces Officer 1st November 2010	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Adoption of the Maidstone Local Bio Diversity Action Plan
Cabinet Due Date: 9 Feb 2011	Housing Strategy 2011-15 The Housing Strategy is part of the Council's Policy Framework. It will decide how housing is developed in Maidstone for the next 5 years	All partners & stakeholders & general public Website Stakeholder, partner and public consultation	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Safety 30 January 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Housing Strategy 2010-15

Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
Cabinet Due Date: 9 Mar 2011	Core Strategy 2006-2026: Public Consultation Draft The Core Strategy Development Plan Document will set out the spatial vision and strategy for the future development of Maidstone borough to 2026. This is a draft document for public consultation, to seek views on the Council's preferred strategy from local residents, businesses and other interested parties.	Stakeholders, Member workshops, LDDAG and Leisure & Prosperity Overview & Scrutiny Committee during preparation of the draft Core Strategy, and wider public consultation with local residential and business communities in spring and later in the year. Internal and external stakeholder consultations to develop the draft Core Strategy for public consultation in spring. Following consideration of the representations received, a further round of public consultation will be undertaken later this year.	Michael Thornton, Head of Spatial Planning 18 February 2011	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy 2006-2026: Public Consultation Draft

Forward Plan
February 2011 - May 2011

Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:**	**Consultees and Method:**	**Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:**	**Relevant Documents:**
Cabinet Due Date: 9 Mar 2011	High Street Improvement Project To consider whether to approve the final designs and budget for the High Street Improvement project	Bus operators, taxi representatives, disability groups, retailers and Town Centre Management, Kent County Council. A programme of stakeholder engagement is taking place. A planning application has also been submitted	Brian Morgan, Assistant Director of Regeneration & Cultural Services August 6th 2010	Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for High Street Improvement Project
Cabinet Member for Regeneration Due Date: 28 Feb 2011	Private Sector Housing Review of HMO licensing fees, conditions and assistance To review and agree Housing Assistance available from April 2012, to set the licence fees for Houses in Multiple Occupation and conditions from April 2012	Key stakeholders meeting	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Safety 6/11/2010	Cabinet Member Report for Private Sector Housing Review of HMO licensing fees, conditions and assistance

Forward Plan
February 2011 - May 2011

Decision Maker and Date of Decision/Month in which decision will be made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary of Decision to be made:	Consultees and Method:	Contact Officer and deadline for submission of enquiries:	Relevant Documents:
Cabinet Member for Regeneration Due Date: 18 Mar 2011	Building Surveying Charges To agree the Building Surveying Charges from 4th April 2011	Senior Management Cabinet Member Circulated report	David Harrison 03/03/2010	Cabinet Member Report for Building Surveying Charges

Quarter 3 Leisure & Prosperity Key Performance Indicator Exception Report

PI Status		Direction of Travel*	
	Alert		Improving
	Warning		No Change
	Unknown		Getting Worse

*Direction of travel is assessed by comparing the performance for the current period against the same period for the previous year. Quarter 3 20010/11 has been assessed against Quarter 3 2009/10.

A place to achieve, prosper and thrive
KO 001 Increase the prosperity of the borough by stimulating investment and working with existing businesses to create a distinctive local economy

PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10 Out-turn	Q1 2010/11	Q2 2010/11	Q3 2010/11		Q4 2010/11	Year to date	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	2010/11 Status
					Target	Value							
KPI 001	Percentage of total spend with local suppliers	26.05%	29.63%	29.61%	30%	26.2%		28.6%	30%	David Tibbit	Target will be slightly missed		
	There has been a dip in the percentage of expenditure with local suppliers compared with previous quarters this year due to one-off large purchases, such as the new wheelie bins, not being repeated in the third quarter. It is likely that the target outcome of 30% for the year will be marginally missed.												

A place to live and enjoy
KO 016 Improve the cultural offering of the borough through projects like the Museum East Wing Extension

PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10 Out-turn	Q1 2010/11	Q2 2010/11	Q3 2010/11		Q4 2010/11	Year to date	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	2010/11 Status
					Target	Value							
KPI 037	Visits or uses of the museum per 1,000 population	804	205.2	219.5	200	131.4		556.1	800	Simon Lace	Annual target will not be achieved		
	More than 40% of the Museum's public galleries are now closed for the East Wing refurbishment work. After a busier than usual summer period visitor numbers declined in the third quarter and are at around 80% of the previous year's levels. Poor weather in November and December will also have contributed to poor visitor numbers in those months. It is now unlikely that the annual target will be achieved.												

Quarter 3 Leisure & Prosperity Key Performance Indicator Exception Report

PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10 Out-turn	Q1 2010/11	Q2 2010/11	Q3 2010/11		Q4 2010/11	Year to date	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	2010/11 Status
					Target	Value							
KPI 040	Donations received for the Museum's East Wing Extension		£42,000	£4,220	£82,500	£3,900		£50,120	£330,000	Simon Lace	Annual target will not be achieved		
	Management team and the Cabinet have already been alerted to the decline in donations received for the East Wing project. A new approach to the Heritage Lottery Fund for an increase in grant aid will be made in January 2011.												

A place to live and enjoy
KO 017 Deliver enough of the right type of well designed new homes where they are needed, maximising the numbers of affordable homes

PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10 Out-turn	Q1 2010/11	Q2 2010/11	Q3 2010/11		Q4 2010/11	Year to date	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	2010/11 Status
					Target	Value							
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	399	46	39	45	43		128	180	John Littlemore	Target will be met		
	This indicator has only marginally missed the quarterly target and the head of Housing and Community Safety has confirmed that the delivery programme is on track to achieve the annual target.												

A place to live and enjoy
KO 018 Improve the condition, accessibility and energy efficiency of existing housing , including reducing fuel poverty

PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10 Out-turn	Q1 2010/11	Q2 2010/11	Q3 2010/11		Q4 2010/11	Year to date	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	2010/11 Status
					Target	Value							
KPI 043	Average time taken to process disabled facilities grants (weeks)	4.2	4	5	4.5	9.5		6.17	4.5	Stuart White	Annual target will not be achieved		
	The approvals of Disabled Facilities Grant’s have been delayed because of capital budget issues. The funding for DFG is now confirmed and the processing times should therefore reduce during quarter 4 however, these delays mean that the annual target will not be achieved.												

Quarter 3 Leisure & Prosperity Key Performance Indicator Exception Report

A place to live and enjoy
KO 020 Improve the quality of the built environment including protecting the borough's heritage and ensuring new developments are well designed

PI Ref	Indicator Description	2009/10 Out-turn	Q1 2010/11	Q2 2010/11	Q3 2010/11 Target	Q3 2010/11 Value	Q4 2010/11	Year to date	Annual Target 2010/11	Responsible Officer	Expected Outcome	Direction of Travel	2010/11 Status
NI 157b	Processing of planning applications: Minor applications	89.10%	90.32%	85.06%	87.00%	80.25%		85.44%	87.00%	Rob Jarman	Target will be slightly missed		
	There were 2 planning committees in November which always has a disproportionate impact on minor applications. A review into the operation of the planning committee and a review of fees and productivity in Development Management are underway which aims to mitigate this impact and make performance on minor applications more consistent. Dependent on the number of applications received during the forth quarter the annual target could be achieved however, there is a higher probability that the annual target will be marginally missed.												
KPI 047	Percentage of planning enforcement cases signed off within 21 days	83.8%	87.71%	86.33%	80%	62.41%		78.68%	80%	Rob Jarman	Target will be met		
	There are two Enforcement Investigation Officers. During Quarter 3, one was off for over 2 months and for over a week both were sick. Therefore, planning case officers took on some of the investigation work but there was a time lag which has impacted on the performance of this indicator. It is anticipated that performance levels will return to their previous level which means that the annual target is still achievable.												