

Draft Core Strategy Spatial Vision and Objectives
As agreed at the Local Development Document Advisory Group meetings
28 June 2010 and 26 July 2010

Draft Spatial Vision:

By 2026 Maidstone will be a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community benefiting from an exceptional and unique urban and rural environment. The Core Strategy will help in delivering sustainable growth and regeneration while protecting and enhancing the borough's built and natural assets.

Regeneration will be prioritised and delivered at the urban area of the county town first to make best use of brownfield land, so the release of greenfield sites, well related to existing urban areas, will be phased after 2016. Development will be led by a sustainable and integrated transport strategy, together with necessary strategic and local infrastructure.

The establishment of a multi-functional green and blue network of open spaces, rivers and water courses will safeguard biodiversity and define the urban character of Maidstone while offering access to the countryside, which will be valued in its own right. The character and identity of all rural settlements will be maintained by directing suitable development and supporting infrastructure to the rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst.

Employment skills will be expanded to meet an improved and varied range of local jobs, and there will be a better balanced housing market to meet the community's needs. Development will be of high quality design, and constructed in a sustainable manner to respond to climate change and protect the environment and biodiversity.

Draft Spatial Objectives:

- a) *To provide for xxxxx new homes and xxxxx new jobs, primarily in skilled employment uses, in the borough alongside developing learning opportunities.*
- b) *To focus new development at Maidstone urban area with:*
 - *90% of new housing built within and adjacent to the urban area of Maidstone, appropriate sustainable greenfield development being well located to the existing urban area*
 - *The aim of providing 60% of new housing across the plan period on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings*
 - *New employment allocations in Maidstone town centre strictly coordinated and targeted with opportunities on the most suitable greenfield sites only.*
- c) *To transform the offer, vitality and viability of Maidstone town centre, including office, retail, further and higher education, leisure and tourism*

functions, together with a significant enhancement to the built and natural environment.

- d) To create sustainable, innovative and well designed new neighbourhoods of sufficient scale to achieve good levels of local services, green space, development mix, and strategic infrastructure in a timely manner, as well as creating opportunities for local power generation.*
- e) To consolidate the roles of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst as rural service centres with successful village centres, as the focus of the network of rural settlements, with retained services and regenerated employment sites.*
- f) To support new housing in the borough's smaller villages that meets local need and is of a design, scale, character, tenure and location appropriate to the settlement, and supports the retention of services and facilities.*
- g) To safeguard and maintain the unique character of the district's landscapes, including the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and distinctive local landscapes, whilst facilitating the economic and social well-being of these areas including the diversification of the rural economy.*
- h) To respect and enhance the character, extent and biodiversity of green spaces and the aquatic environment within and around built areas, together with the linkages between the spaces.*
- i) To ensure that new development takes account of the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change and improve air quality by locating development to minimise energy use; to promote travel patterns that reduce the need to travel by car; to develop a greater choice of sustainable transport measures, particularly in the urban area; to support water and energy efficiency measures in existing development; and to encourage renewable energy sources and sustainable drainage solutions in new development.*
- j) To ensure that any new development is designed to a high quality and makes a positive contribution to the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated, including the protection of the built and natural heritage and its biodiversity.*
- k) To provide for the type of future housing that meets the changing needs of the borough's population, including provision for an ageing population and family housing, affordable housing at x%, and accommodation that meets the local needs of the gypsy and traveller community.*
- l) To ensure that key infrastructure and service improvements needed to support delivery of Core Strategy objectives and policies are brought forward in a co-ordinated and timely manner, and that new development makes an appropriate contribution towards any improvements required as a result of such new development.*