

- 4.116. The central mature hawthorn/blackthorn hedgerow is another feature of the site which contributes to its existing character, and it could be incorporated into the layout of a proposed development. However, it is likely that at least part of this would necessarily be lost to enable any practical development proposal to be formulated. It might be possible for this part of the hedgerow to be retained as part of the open space element of a development scheme.
- 4.117. The hedgerow along Hook Lane is of lesser importance, but could be enhanced by its restoration and appropriate management, together with the replanting of the extensive gaps which currently exist. If combined with appropriate hedgerow tree planting, this feature would assist in providing suitable screening between properties within, or served from, Hook Lane and those to be developed on this site.
- 4.118. It has been established that the Channel Tunnel Rail Link will not involve any land take from the allocated site. Noise from the CTRL and A20/M20 roads is not a constraint to development, although proposals will need to be accompanied by a supporting acoustic report and appropriate mitigation measures, in accordance with policy ENV4.
- 4.119. Proposals for vehicular access, together with off-site improvements involving road widening and the provision of footways and lighting, will be determined in the light of detailed landscape and highway safety considerations. Pedestrian/cycle links onto both West Street and Ashford Road will also be required. Off-site improvements will be sought at the junctions of Hook Lane/Ashford Road and Ashford Road/West Street.
- 4.120. Development will also need to comply with other policies of this Local Plan. Principally, ENV2 which seeks to achieve quality in new development schemes, H24 regarding the provision of affordable housing, ENV18 where an archaeological watching brief is required, and CF1 relating to the provision of education facilities.

**POLICY H11 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ON LAND AT HOOK LANE, HARRIETSHAM, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, PROVIDED THAT THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE SATISFIED:**

- (1) THE HEDGEROW AND TREE SCREEN ALONG THE SITE'S NORTHERN BOUNDARY IS RETAINED AND REINFORCED WHERE APPROPRIATE. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NO NEW BREACHES ARE CREATED IN THE LINE OF THIS HEDGE WHERE NONE CURRENTLY EXIST. CONSIDERATION SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF OTHER HEDGEROW FEATURES WITHIN AND AROUND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ALLOCATED SITE; AND
- (2) PROPOSALS FOR VEHICULAR ACCESS, TOGETHER WITH OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS INVOLVING ROAD WIDENING AND THE PROVISION OF FOOTWAYS AND LIGHTING, WILL BE DETERMINED IN THE LIGHT OF DETAILED LANDSCAPE AND HIGHWAY SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS; AND
- (3) THE PROVISION OF PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE LINKS TO BOTH WEST STREET AND ASHFORD ROAD; AND
- (4) OFF-SITE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE JUNCTIONS OF HOOK LANE/ASHFORD ROAD AND ASHFORD ROAD/WEST STREET.

**East of Hermitage Lane, Maidstone**

- 4.121. Land East of Hermitage Lane, Maidstone is allocated under policy H1 for 380 dwellings, and will be developed in conjunction with a woodland park allocated under policy ENV24. It is the largest urban periphery allocation in this Local Plan, and a key element of the site's development will be

the treatment of landscaping within and around the boundaries of the site. The submission of a landscaping scheme in accordance with policy ENV6 will therefore be required.

- 4.122. The areas of trees, woodland and other features which have been identified as important landscape features within the site consist of:
- (i) the strip of established sweet chestnut coppice situated along the site's south-eastern boundary, lying mostly between public footpath KB19 and the western limit of existing development served off Poplar Grove, which provides valuable screening of views between the site and the existing developed area;
  - (ii) the dense belt of naturally regenerated birch/willow on the site's north-eastern boundary, which screens views between the site and the existing development along Howard Drive, and which will assist in maintaining the privacy of the rear of these properties from being overlooked by the new development;
  - (iii) the existing woodland, consisting principally of sweet chestnut coppice with oak standards, situated on higher land in the southern part of the site, between the reservoir footpath and the site's south-eastern corner, which makes a significant contribution to the character of the local landscape, being visually prominent from local and more distant viewpoints. Along the northern fringe of this woodland, there is an area of natural regeneration of birch, cherry and other species, which also contributes to the overall mass and density of the woodland area, and which should be retained within the proposed landscape scheme for the site; and
  - (iv) the open grassed knoll situated to the east of The Old Hermitage is a prominent and visually attractive feature of the site, which should be retained and safeguarded within the landscape scheme for the development.
- 4.123. The purpose of a landscape scheme for the site will be to secure the retention of the areas of trees, woodland and other features described, together with their reinforcement and/or appropriate future management to secure their continuing landscape benefit or function. An important factor in this will be the appropriate siting of development and/or its ancillary features, such as footpaths or roads, in relation to these areas, to prevent either their direct loss or later indirect pressures for their progressive removal or mistreatment.
- 4.124. The aim of providing a strong belt of new structural landscaping consisting of native tree and shrub species along the boundary of the area of the site identified for housing development formed by the reservoir footpath, is to screen and soften the appearance of a hard urban edge from viewpoints with the Strategic Gap to the west of the site, and to create a clear landscaped boundary between the urban development and the proposed park/open space on agricultural land to the west of the site.
- 4.125. The landscaping scheme will also identify areas of tree and shrub planting within the development, consisting of native tree species and a significant proportion of native shrub species, to provide an appropriate setting and landscape quality to the area.
- 4.126. The access will be taken from Hermitage Lane only, through the woodland park, and a secondary emergency access will be necessary from the Allington area. The roads should not be linked other than for emergency vehicles. The Borough Council will investigate the potential to provide a bus route provided that an effective mechanism to avoid rat running by ordinary vehicles can be guaranteed.
- 4.127. Access and turning facilities for public transport together with the enhancement of facilities along the Hermitage Lane/Tonbridge Road corridor will be required under policies T3 and T23, and general highway improvements will be necessary in accordance with policy T23. The Hermitage Lane junction accessing the site will need to be designed to a high standard, and traffic management measures will be required to deter through traffic from using Heath Road and North Street. Cycle and pedestrian links will be provided in accordance with policy T8, and contributions

will be sought to enable the implementation of the park-and-ride facility at Barming Station. These requirements will be secured through legal agreements and planning conditions.

- 4.128. An archaeological evaluation of the site has been completed, which revealed significant archaeological remains within the field to the south of the allocation, south of the woodland. The County Archaeologist considers that although it would be preferable for these remains to be preserved in situ, having regard to Government advice contained in PPG16 together with the overriding need for housing land, their retention in situ is not essential. However, any development proposals for the whole site must satisfy the criteria set out in policies ENV17 and ENV18 of this Local Plan, and archaeological conditions will be attached to any planning consent.
- 4.129. Development will also need to comply with other policies of this Local Plan. Principally, ENV2 which seeks to achieve quality in new developments, H24 regarding the provision of affordable housing, H37 for the requirement of public open space, R10 in respect of local retail facilities and CF1 relating to the provision of educational and community facilities. The County Education Authority has indicated a likely need for a new school in this area, given the size of development proposals. Land for a new school is therefore reserved under policy CF8. The number of new houses is also likely to generate the need for a new doctor's surgery and land for this purpose is reserved under policy CF6. The requirements for the allocated site can be achieved through the attachment of planning conditions or the signing of legal agreements.

**POLICY H12 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED ON LAND EAST OF HERMITAGE LANE, MAIDSTONE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, PROVIDED THAT THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ARE SATISFIED:**

- (1) THE RETENTION OF TREES AND WOODLAND LOCATED TO THE SITE'S SOUTH-EAST AND NORTH-EAST BOUNDARIES, THE RETENTION OF TREES AND WOODLAND OCCUPYING THE RIDGELINE IN THE SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE SITE, TOGETHER WITH A SCHEME FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THESE AREAS, AND THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPE PLANTING ALONG THE RESERVOIR FOOTPATH, AS WELL AS THE FUTURE TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE KNOLL ADJOINING THE OLD HERMITAGE; AND
- (2) ACCESS AND TURNING FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT, THE DESIGN OF THE HERMITAGE LANE JUNCTION TO A HIGH STANDARD AND A SECONDARY EMERGENCY ACCESS POINT TO BE SECURED TO THE ALLINGTON AREA; AND
- (3) THE SIGNING OF LEGAL AGREEMENTS TO SECURE:
  - (A) THE LAYING OUT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PROPOSED WOODLAND PARK TOGETHER WITH ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF THE LAND;
  - (B) THE SUBMISSION OF A TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TO DETER THROUGH TRAFFIC FROM USING HEATH ROAD AND NORTH STREET, BARMING;
  - (C) A CONTRIBUTION TO ENABLE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BARMING STATION'S PARK-AND-RIDE FACILITY, TOGETHER WITH THE PROVISION OF SECURE CYCLE/PEDESTRIAN LINKS TO THE SITE;
  - (D) THE PROVISION OF A CYCLEWAY/PEDESTRIAN LINK ALONG HERMITAGE LANE FROM BARMING STATION TO THE A20 LONDON ROAD WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF THE HIGHWAY LAND;
  - (E) THE ENHANCEMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES ALONG THE HERMITAGE LANE/TONBRIDGE ROAD CORRIDOR, TO THE SATISFACTION

## OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH AND KENT COUNTY COUNCILS;

- (F) THE PROVISION OF AN ELEMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H24;
- (G) THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE EDUCATION AND HEALTH FACILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY CF1; AND
- (H) THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SHOPPING FACILITIES FOR THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY R10.

**Bridge Nursery, Maidstone**

- 4.130. Bridge Nursery is allocated for 80 dwellings, in conjunction with public open space under policy ENV24. Bridge Nursery is characterised by a number of mature trees and hedgerows within and around the boundaries of the site. Their retention is essential in order to mitigate views of new built development and also to maintain a distinct separation between the urban and rural areas. The Borough Council will therefore require the submission of a landscaping scheme for the site in accordance with policy ENV6.
- 4.131. Areas of trees and hedgerows which are to be retained as part of development proposals consist of:
- (i) the native hedgerow fronting the A20 on the site's southern boundary, which provides valuable screening of views of the road and its traffic from within the site, and which mitigates the visual impact of the retail warehouse development on its further side;
  - (ii) the individual coniferous and broad-leaved trees standing alongside the eastern edge of the former access trackway into the site from the A20, together with selected areas of existing mature shrubs between them, which serve as the basis for providing a clear definition of the limits of the expansion of the urban area, and limiting the impact of the latter on the rural quality of the adjoining open space/amenity area;
  - (iii) the more westerly section of the rectilinear group of beech trees, the mass and substance of which provide an important focal point within the site, and provide visual contrast to its generally broad and open aspect; and
  - (iv) selected individual specimens of ash and other broad-leaved species (excluding elm) situated along the site's eastern boundary, which provide screening of the existing urban edge from longer distance viewpoints to the north and north-west of the site.
- 4.132. It is also important that the existing hedge along the A20 frontage and trees around the western edge of the housing site should be subject to coherent long-term management and control, rather than be sited within individual private gardens. The same applies to the trees along the eastern boundary of the site which mark the present urban edge. This could be achieved through a planning obligation, and the granting of planning permission is wholly dependent upon the satisfactory resolution of this issue within a landscape scheme.
- 4.133. The enhancement of the visual qualities of the proposed amenity land by appropriate planting of groups of individual specimens of native broad-leaved trees and areas of native shrubs will also be required as part of landscaping proposals.
- 4.134. Development will also need to comply with other policies of this Local Plan. Principally, ENV2 which seeks to achieve quality in new developments, ENV18 requiring a watching archaeological brief, H24 which seeks the provision of affordable housing, and CF1 relating to the provision of educational and community facilities.