

### **Policy H3 - Future locations for housing growth**

**6.14** The council has identified Maidstone town centre, Invicta Park Barracks on Royal Engineers Road and Lenham as future broad locations for housing growth, where the expectation is that development will not take place at these locations until the latter end of the plan period (2026-2031).

#### **Maidstone Town Centre**

**6.15** It is acknowledged that there is an oversupply of poorer quality office stock in the town centre which is no longer fit for purpose. This has the effect of suppressing the town centre office market and thereby inhibiting new development which could better meet modern business needs. A route to tackle this is to rationalise the supply of the poorest stock through conversion or redevelopment to alternative uses. Over the time frame of the plan it is anticipated that the value of the lowest quality office stock, in terms of rents, will fall further making redevelopment for alternative uses increasingly viable. With a corresponding uplift in the market for town centre apartments, this trend could see the delivery of significant new housing in and around the town centre. In view of the market shifts needed, delivery is likely to be realised towards the end of the plan period. The town centre broad location has the potential to deliver in the order of 600 additional homes.

#### **Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone**

**6.16** Invicta Park Barracks covers a substantial area (41 ha) to the north of the town centre. It comprises a range of military buildings, including army accommodation, set within expansive parkland. The site is currently home to the 36 Engineer Regiment. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has categorised the site as a 'retained' site in its most recent estates review (2013); there are no immediate plans to vacate this site.

**6.17** The MoD keeps its property portfolio under regular review. It has been confirmed that, in the longer term, there could be some prospect that the site may be declared surplus and so become available for alternative uses.

**6.18** In recognition of this potential, and the need to plan positively for it, the draft local plan identifies Invicta Park Barracks as a broad location for future housing growth towards the end of the local plan period (post 2026). The site has the potential to deliver in the order of 1,300 new homes.

#### **Lenham**

**6.19** Lenham is identified as a rural service centre in the local plan, primarily because of the range of services and facilities in the village, transport infrastructure, local employment opportunities and the fact that the village serves its local population and surrounding areas.

**6.20** Approximately 40 ha of land adjacent to the east and west of Lenham's built form is considered suitable to accommodate additional housing in the region of 1500 dwellings in total if required towards the latter end of the plan

period (post 2026). The topography of this area is low lying and does not have the same landscape or infrastructure constraints as some other areas of the borough. However, it is accepted that a number of infrastructure improvements and mitigation measures (e.g. transport, highways, education, health, sporting facilities) would be required to ensure that any future development is integrated into the existing fabric of the settlement and to ensure that Lenham remains a sustainable settlement.

### **Policy H 3**

#### **Future locations for housing growth**

The following locations are identified as future locations for housing growth for the later phases of the plan period (2026 onwards):

1. Town centre: some 600 dwellings;
2. Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone: some 1300 dwellings; and
3. Lenham: some 1500 dwellings.

Appendix F sets out the broad criteria which will govern development in locations (2) and (3). Detailed site allocations for sites (2) and (3) will be made as part of a local plan review.