

Chapter Ten

HOUSING

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INTRODUCTION

10.01 Adequate housing is a basic human need, but not everybody's needs are being met. While the planning system cannot solve housing problems, it can ensure that enough land is available for housebuilding and seek to ensure that housebuilders cater for the needs of the population. Although the Council no longer builds houses, it remains the largest landlord in the District (with some 5,000 homes) and works in partnership with housing associations to provide new homes. The Council, therefore, has a dual role through use of its planning powers and as a provider of housing. Consequently, the Council's housing strategy will be implemented through the joint working of the Planning and Housing Departments.

Existing Situation

10.02 The District contains two urban areas, Dover and Deal, the small rural town of Sandwich and a large rural area with many villages and hamlets. The population of the District, according to the 1991 Census, is 103,216. The County Council forecasts that this will increase to 106,800 by 2006¹. Despite the relatively small increase in population, a demand for new houses is expected because there is a strong trend for the size of households to decrease. In 1981, the average size was 2.62 people per household but by 1991, this had fallen to 2.41. By 2006, it is likely to have fallen again to 2.19 people per household - the third lowest in Kent.

10.03 About two thirds of the population lives in the urban areas. This proportion has remained constant since the 1981 Census. The household size and age profile of the urban and rural populations are very similar. Deal, however, has a higher proportion of retired people than Dover. The 1991 Census also revealed a quarter of the population to be suffering from a limiting long term illness and that, of these people, over one half are above retirement age. While this is about the same as the national average, it points to the importance of new housing to cater for the specific needs of the District's population. The main areas of specific need concern the elderly, the disabled and those people who cannot afford adequate and appropriate housing. Owing to the role of the public sector as enabler, rather than provider, of housing, the planning system is increasingly looking to the private sector to make a significant contribution to meeting those needs.

10.04 There is a strong unsustainable characteristic to the District's pattern of development, in terms of the relationship between where people live and centres of employment. This is particularly the case in Deal and the rural areas. In this respect, an analysis of the location of housebuilding between 1986 and 1993 shows that the proportion of houses built in the rural area closely reflects the distribution of population. In addition, the poor economic outlook for the District makes it particularly important to ensure that the level of house-building is geared to meeting the needs of the existing population and not allowed to run at higher levels, which could encourage people to move into the District. With the exception of Aylesham, the Structure Plan housing land quantities have been set with this in mind.



Former Royal Victoria Hospital, Dover, converted to affordable housing

10.05 The 1991 Census has revealed that the District's housing stock grew over the period 1981-91 by 11%, while the population increased by about 2%. This underlines the point that the demand for additional dwellings comes mainly from household formation, as a result of the strong trend towards smaller households. However, in 1991 the District contained 2,634 more dwellings than households, which indicates that 6% of the housing stock is lying vacant. This compares poorly with the national average of 4.8% and suggests that making better use of existing housing is an important issue. However, while the

Council can take this into account in the management of its own housing stock, it does not have any influence over the private sector on this matter.

10.06 Other changes in the housing stock included an increase in the proportion of single person households and non-household residents who live in some form of care, an improvement in basic household amenities (although lack of amenities remains higher than the national average), and a large shift away from local authority and privately rented housing to owner occupation and housing association rented. Over the period 1981-91, the percentage of local authority rented housing fell from about 25% to 15%, while owner occupation rose from about 59% to 72%. The indications are that these trends are likely to continue during the Plan Period.

Applying the Plan's Aims and Objectives

10.07 In relation to Aim 1, Objectives 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 13 are relevant. The thrust of these Objectives is to concentrate housing development at the urban areas, avoid building on fresh land, maximise the re-use of previously developed land, meet the needs of the local population, encourage energy efficient development, provide adequate open spaces and encourage high densities near major public transport routes and town centres.

10.08 In relation to Aim 2, Objective 18 seeks to protect the local economy by not allowing housing on employment sites.

10.09 Aim 3 concerns equality of access. Objective 22, which is concerned with physical access and financial constraints on access, and Objective 23, which seeks to encourage housing development to be built to the highest design and amenity standards, are relevant.

Housing Strategy

10.10 From the existing situation and the Objectives, several strong themes emerge and together form the Plan's housing strategy. The strategy seeks to:-

- (a) control the upper and lower levels of available housing land;
- (b) direct provision to the urban areas;
- (c) target provision better towards the needs of the local population;
- (d) provide a choice of housing opportunities in terms of size, type and location of dwelling within the constraints set by the Plan's objectives;
- (e) manage the existing stock in a way which reflects local peoples' needs; and
- (f) to accommodate future employment generated housing in a sustainable manner.

A MORE SUSTAINABLE PATTERN OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

10.11 The relationship between the location of jobs, shops and social facilities, and where people live, has a strong bearing on the amount of travel people undertake and the type of transport they use. A more sustainable pattern of development would reduce the need for travel by ensuring that people live as near as is practical to facilities. It would also ensure that there is a viable choice of means of transport, which would help to reduce peoples' reliance on the private car. This approach is reflected in Structure Plan Policy S1 which seeks to achieve a sustainable pattern of development which will reduce the need to travel.

10.12 The first aim of Structure Plan Policy S6 is to concentrate housing provision at the urban areas, while recognising that the rural settlements have a role to play in contributing to overall requirements and choice of location. The task of the Local Plan is to apply this approach to the particular circumstances of the District. Residential development should be concentrated at Dover and Deal within the urban boundaries shown on the Proposals Map. In the District's rural area residential development will have a lesser role being generally limited to that necessary to meet local needs or sustain local communities and adding to choice of location.

10.13 While 36% of the economically active population lives in the rural area, in 1993 this area contained only 25% of all the District's jobs. However, many jobs in the rural area are located at Sandwich and as a result there is a large imbalance between resident workforce and jobs in the town. More housing may help to redress this and create a balanced settlement. However, there are particular reasons for not allocating fresh housing land at Sandwich in the Plan. Firstly, the Structure Plan Policy H1 housing requirements are met and there is no need to allocate additional housing sites. Secondly, the scale of housing development required to redress the imbalance would involve a substantial release of fresh land contrary to Structure Plan Policy S6. Thirdly, Sandwich is a small historic town of great conservation merit and its character and setting within an open and largely flat landscape would be undermined if such development was allowed. Fourthly, the majority of the built-up area of Sandwich and its countryside setting lies within a flood risk area and, taking a precautionary approach, new residential development should be directed away from areas at risk from flooding in order to protect life and property. In assessing the employment generated housing requirements of Pfizer, the Council has identified sites in sustainable locations, taking into consideration the role of the various settlements distributed through the northern part of the District, accessibility, environmental and conservation interests. This approach is in line with PPG3, PPG7, PPG13 and Kent Structure Plan Policies S1 and S6(a). Similar considerations will be taken into account when determining proposals for windfall developments.

10.14 Additionally, in the rural area services are sparse and in long term decline. This trend is a national problem which has its roots in increasing personal mobility, new forms of commercial competition and financial decision making. Consequently, previous levels of rural housebuilding have made little difference in slowing down, let alone reversing, the trend. The result is an increasing need for people in rural areas to travel and an increasing dependence on private transport. The Plan's approach to rural settlements is, therefore, to support the maintenance of existing services and their expansion, wherever possible, while limiting house-building to that required to meet specific local or community needs. Restraint policies have been applied for many years but they have primarily been based upon countryside protection. This Plan widens the justification for, and degree of, restraint to include the new sustainable issues of reducing the need to travel, restraining travel generated pollution, and encouraging choice and ease of access to jobs, shops and other services.

10.15 Higher density residential development within urban areas can help to make public transport more viable and, in doing so, provide people with more choice as to how they can travel. Following the advice in PPG13, the Council will support higher densities near public transport centres, and along routes well served or with the potential to be so served by public transport and close to local facilities. The Council will also ensure that developments at least achieve the minimum density advised in PPG3. However, higher density development will not be supported at the expense of open space requirements or the erosion of the character of an area.



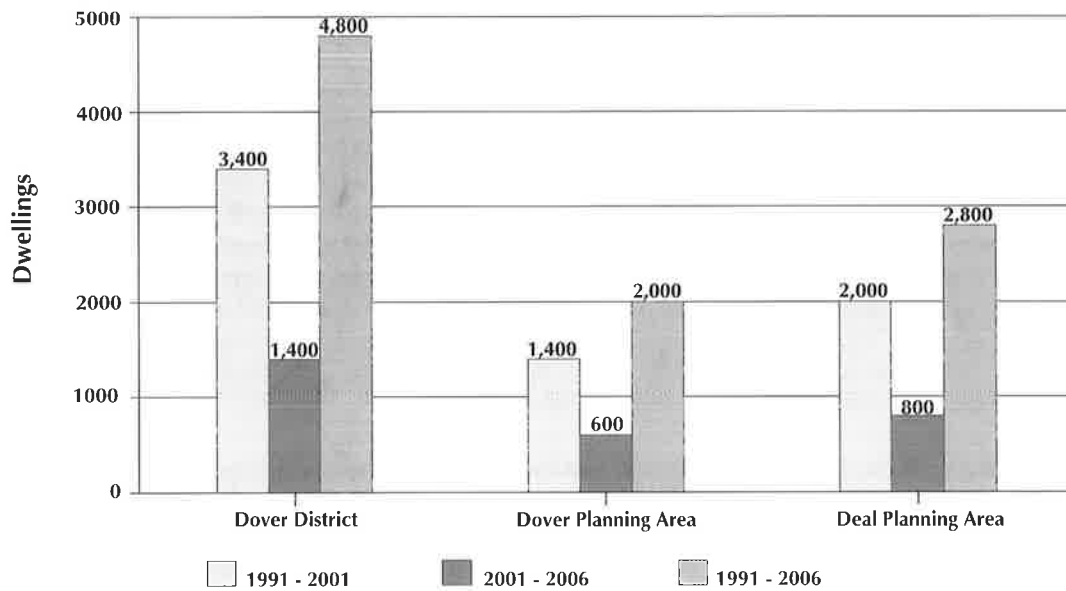
High density development, Walmer

10.16 A mixture of residential with other uses, especially within the centre of urban areas, can provide the potential for people to live close to their work and to other facilities and, consequently, reduce the length of journeys. This could be achieved through, whenever feasible, requiring large scale developments to include a mixture of uses and through encouraging residential development next to commercial, subject to there being no conflict with the policies of the Plan, especially the supply of land identified for other uses. This matter has been addressed in relation to land allocated through the Plan and, where appropriate, the policies in Chapter 15.

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

10.17 Structure Plan Policy H1 sets out the number of new dwellings which should be planned for in the District over the Plan Period. It also gives an indication of how the total should be divided between the Structure Plan Areas of Dover and Deal. This is shown in Figure 10.1.

Figure 10.1 : Structure Plan Housing Requirement 1991 - 2006



Source: Kent Structure Plan 1996

Note: Deal Planning Area includes the provision of 1,000 dwellings at Aylesham (see Chapter 14)

10.18 The supply of land for housebuilding is assessed annually through a joint study carried out by the Kent Planning Officers Group. The Plan is based on the study that was carried out in 1999.

10.19 Housing land supply consists of sites which either have an unimplemented planning permission or are allocated in a local plan. The sites are broken down into two categories:-

- (a) Large sites: Those capable of accommodating five or more dwellings net. Such sites are assessed individually by the Study.
- (b) Small sites: Those capable of accommodating up to four dwellings net. Such sites are not individually assessed. Instead, an annual average figure, based upon the previous 5 years construction rates, is used to calculate their contribution to total supply. The 1999 study estimates that small sites will contribute 66 dwellings per year throughout the District.

10.20 The supply of housing land is constantly changing, due to planning permissions expiring and not being renewed, new permissions for conversion and redevelopment on sites not previously identified, and to alterations in density on identified sites. Such changes can result in both losses and additions to the supply. Additions to the supply are known as bonus. By its very nature, it is an unpredictable source of housing land but it can also be highly significant.

10.21 To reflect the fact that the proposals for Aylesham are not related to the District's general housing requirements, the 1999 Study draws a distinction between the special allocation at Aylesham and the general requirements for the District. Figures 10.2 and 10.3 are based upon the Study's results. The figures which exclude Aylesham, provide an accurate picture of the general housing land situation and will be used to implement Policy HS2. Figure 10.2 shows that in relation to the District's five year requirement there is an over-supply of housing land for 160 dwellings or 15% ($1229 - 1069 = 160$). Figure 10.3 shows that the total land supply exceeds the housing requirement over the whole Plan Period, an over-supply of 226 dwellings or 15% ($1755 - 1529 = 226$). The specific allocation of housing land for the expansion of Aylesham is considered in Chapter 14.

Figure 10.2 : Housing Land Requirements and Land Supply 1999 - 2004

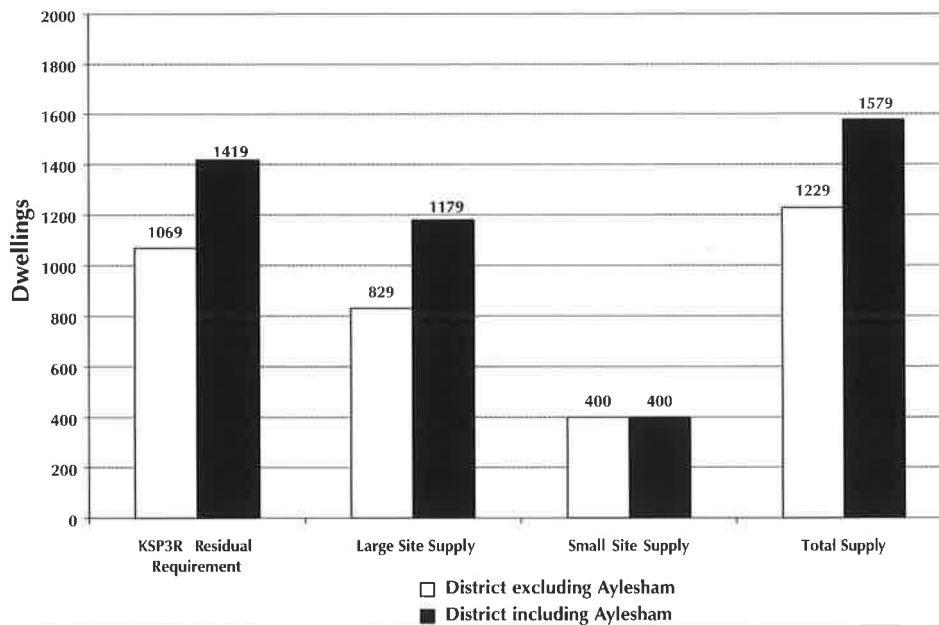
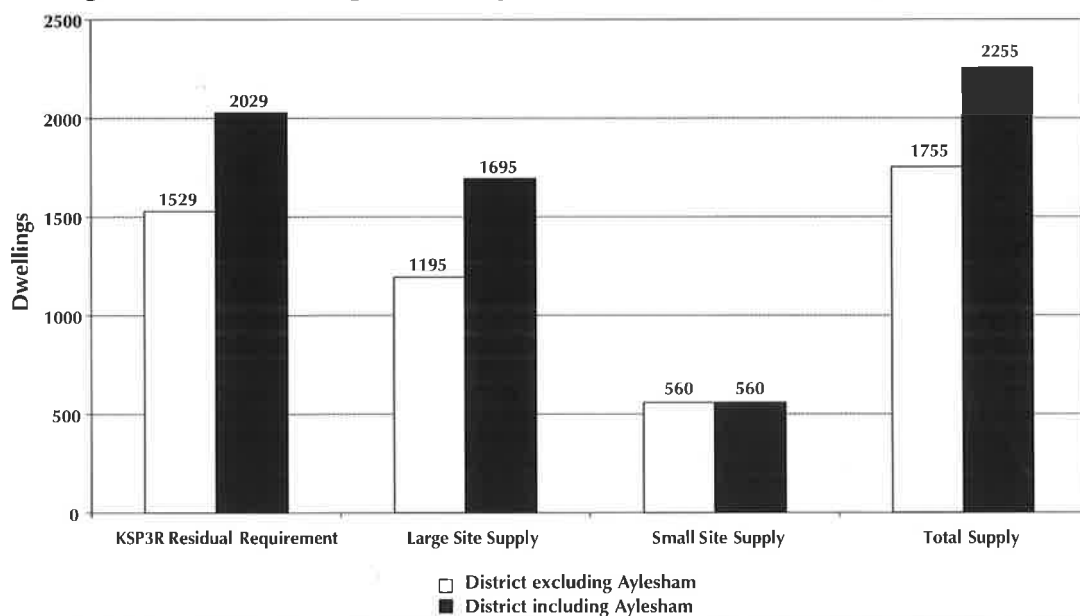


Figure 10.3 : Housing Land Requirements and Land Supply 1999 - 2006



10.22 The actual rate of house building is outpacing not only the Structure Plan rate, but also the rate implied by the supply. This is due to the take-up of bonus permissions. The implications of this are serious in terms of undermining both the Structure Plan and Local Plan strategies. In the Deal area, it could cause an even greater imbalance between population and jobs and, therefore, increase out commuting. In the Dover area, where the housing requirement is already set above the trend, it would encourage in migration at a time when economic prospects are at best uncertain.

10.23 The Council is, for these reasons, anxious to ensure that the surplus of housing land is controlled in a way which allows for some flexibility but prevents building rates which are unrelated to the needs of local people. This will be achieved through:-

- (a) resisting the release of any fresh land, in accordance with Structure Plan Policy S6;
- (b) reviewing sites allocated in previous plans²;

- (c) reassessing the suitability and capacity of sites where permission comes up for renewal in the light of the Plan's new policies regarding sustainable development and open space; and
- (d) when there is a 10% or greater surplus in the District's five year housing land supply, assessing the relative need and site suitability for alternative uses whenever permission is sought on large bonus sites - should the site prove to have potential for another use (particularly employment or open space) permission for housing will be refused.

Policy HS1

Housing development will not be permitted on land outside the urban boundaries and village confines shown on the Proposals Map unless justified by other development plan policies.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside, restraining pollution, concentrating development at the urban areas, allowing limited housing development in rural settlements consistent with their size and function and reducing the need for travel. The policy works toward recycling redundant resources before new ones are exploited but the exact effects of this are unpredictable. It will be dependent upon whether there are under used sites within those areas. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Policy HS2

Land is allocated for housing on the following sites:-

Site	Estimated Capacity
Dover Eye Hospital	35
Old Park Barracks, Dover	98
North Barracks, RMSM, Deal	100
South Barracks, RMSM, Deal	115
Eastry Hospital	40
Former Tarmac Works, Eastry	20
Sandwich Industrial Estate	300
Northwall Road, Deal	33
Puma Manufacturing Site, Ash	45
Land to the rear of 85-99 Sandwich Road, Ash	53

On unallocated sites within the urban boundaries and village confines, housing development will be permitted provided housing is the most suitable land use. In the case of housing proposals for new large sites permission will only be granted if it would not result in the planned housing provision for the District being significantly exceeded.

Environmental Appraisal

Owing to the number of sites and variables involved, the policy has a wide range of effects which makes analysis complicated. The impact of each proposal is considered under the relevant policy for each site.

RURAL SETTLEMENTS

10.24 The Structure Plan's Rural Settlement Policies and Policy S6 form a framework within which settlements can be classified and their role in contributing towards overall housing provision established. While Policy S6 and the Key Diagram define Kent's urban areas, it is left to local plans to define villages and hamlets (for the purposes of Policies RS2 and RS5) and to consider whether any villages should be identified under Policy RS3.

Classification of Settlements

10.25 The Council has already carried out much of this work for the Dover and Western Parishes Local Plan and interim studies of the rest of the District. Work on the Dover District Local Plan has reviewed this and the resulting classification is set out in Policy HS3.

10.26 The criteria used to classify settlements for the purposes of implementing the Structure Plan's Rural Settlement Policies are based on that developed for use in previous local plans. There is no legal definition of a village or hamlet and no policy guidance in PPGs or the Structure Plan. The Council's definition of a village for planning purposes is that a settlement should contain around 100 dwellings and a basic level of services such as a shop/post office, and community facilities such as a village hall, church and school. These criteria stem from the former Department of the Environment discussion paper³ which shows that at around 100 dwellings it becomes difficult for settlements to support services and facilities. Furthermore, this approach is borne out by survey work carried out to assess the number of dwellings and level of facilities and services in the District's rural settlements. The classification recognises the major expansion of Aylesham, proposed by Structure Plan Policy H1, and the potential for larger housing development, in accordance with Policy RS3(a), at Ash, Sandwich on the Industrial Estate, and at Eastry on the former Tarmac works and the Hospital site. Structure Plan Policy RS3(a) applies only to the allocated sites at Ash, Sandwich and Eastry and the remainder of the settlements will be subject to Structure Plan Policy RS2.

10.27 To give effect to the Structure Plan's Rural Settlement Policies it is necessary to draw up village confines for those settlements which are classified as small rural towns and villages. The oversupply of housing land in the District during the Plan Period, combined with the special qualities of the District's countryside and the Plan's Objectives to concentrate development at the urban areas, reduce the need to travel and restrain pollution, has led to the village confines being drawn as tightly as possible, to deliberately exclude the possibility of 'rounding off'. An additional aim of drawing the confines tightly is to minimise the possibility of intensifying the density of development on the periphery of villages, in order to avoid a harsh definition between villages and the countryside. As a general rule, the confines have been drawn to follow recognisable features on the ground, such as property boundaries and exclude non-residential buildings on the edge of confines. They may consist of one or more parts.

Policy HS3

The Council will use the following classification of settlements when applying the Structure Plan's Housing and Rural Settlement Policies:-

- (i) urban areas:**
Dover (including parts of the Parishes of River, Temple Ewell and Whitfield);
Deal (including parts of Sholden, Walmer and Mongeham);
- (ii) H1 specific development:**
Aylesham;
- (iii) RS2 villages:**
Alkham, Aylesham (excluding the H1 development area) Capel-le-Ferne, East Studdal, Elvington, East Langdon, Eythorne, Great Mongeham, Kingsdown, Lydden, Nonington, Preston, Ringwould, Ripple, Shepherdswell, Staple, St. Margaret's, West Hougham, Wingham, Woodnesborough, Worth;
- (iv) RS3(a) small rural towns and villages:**
small rural town - Sandwich
villages - Ash and Eastry;
- (v) RS3(b) villages:**
Goodnestone;
- (vi) RS5 hamlets and sporadic development:**
All other settlements.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy works towards the Objectives of protecting the countryside, restraining pollution, recycling redundant resources, concentrating development at the urban areas, allowing development in rural settlements consistent with their size and function and reducing the need for travel. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Ash

10.28 Ash is one of the largest villages in the District. It has a wide range of commercial and community facilities and is served by a good rural bus service which provides direct connections to Canterbury, Sandwich and Deal. In addition, the railway station at Sandwich is about 5 km away. Ash is also conveniently located to help meet the employment generated housing needs arising from development in the Sandwich Corridor and, in particular, from the pharmaceutical company Pfizer. These factors combine with the need to sustain and strengthen the village's role in the settlement hierarchy to justify its classification as a RS3(a) settlement and to allocate land for around 85 dwellings.

10.29 Two sites are allocated for housing development, the Puma Manufacturing site, which is previously developed land, and a greenfield site to the rear of 85-99 Sandwich Road. The capacity of these sites is estimated as 45 and 85 dwellings respectively, giving a combined total of 130 dwellings. A 20% element of affordable housing will be sought on both sites. As the total number of dwellings is in excess of the envisaged 85 needed during the Plan Period some dwellings will be phased for construction after 2006. On the basis that previously developed land should be used before greenfield land, the site at Sandwich Road will be phased.

10.30 Redevelopment of the Puma Manufacturing site is dependent on the relocation of the existing business together with site preparation and is unlikely to result in housing completions before 2004. However, there are no such constraints to the development of the Sandwich Road site, which indicates that work on the first phase could start earlier. The first phase on this site will comprise 45 private sector dwellings and at least 8 affordable dwellings. This takes account of the capacity of the Puma Manufacturing site, the need to provide for a commercially viable first phase, and the need to provide as much affordable housing as soon as possible. The second phase for the remainder of the housing, including the balance of the affordable housing, will be phased for post 2006 to allow the opportunity for the redevelopment of the Puma Manufacturing site. However, this will be subject to review after the completion of the 30th private sector dwelling or June 2003, whichever is sooner. If, at this time, sufficient progress has not been made to demonstrate that the Puma Manufacturing site is likely to be substantially developed during the Plan Period, the second phase will be allowed to proceed to make good any shortfall in the requirement for dwellings in Ash.

Puma Manufacturing Site

10.31 The site lies between Sandwich Road and New Street and has an area of about 1.3 hectares. It was originally a poor house and a brewery but is now used by Puma Power Plant to manufacture generators. However, it is not a site which can properly serve modern-day needs due to its layout, age and condition of the buildings, and proximity to residential areas. Environmental difficulties have arisen from the testing of plant and the movement of heavy goods vehicles. Consequently, the company intends to relocate within the Plan Period which creates the opportunity for housing redevelopment. Although this will result in the loss of employment land there are other opportunities in the locality and redevelopment will create environmental benefits for the village.



Former poor house on Sandwich Road, Ash

10.32 The site is capable of accommodating a minimum of 45 dwellings. At least 20% of the dwellings provided should be affordable. An element of small one and/or two bedroom dwellings should be provided in accordance with Policy HS11. A children's playspace should also be provided to a LAP standard in accordance with Policy OS2 and Appendix 2.

10.33 Most of the buildings on the site are utilitarian and will need to be demolished. However, the building and brick wall that front onto New Street are within the Street End Conservation Area and should be retained and incorporated into any development proposals. Development must preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. In addition, the former brewery house, which features a clock, has architectural merit and developers will be encouraged to retain it within any redevelopment.

10.34 The site rises in the south eastern corner to produce significant level changes. Some excavation will be needed in order to allow development in this area. However, the soft edge along New Street and Cherry Garden Lane, which consists of earth mounding and vegetation, should be preserved, incorporated and reinforced as part of the redevelopment. Development should be set back from New Street and Cherry Garden Lane and designed in a manner to minimise its effect on the skyline. Development to the west of the retained brick wall should front New Street and incorporate footway provision along this part of the site. On the Sandwich Road frontage development should be sensitively designed and front the Road in order to ensure that there is continuity of street scene.

10.35 Owing to its former use, the site may be contaminated. A survey and evaluation will, therefore, be necessary prior to the determination of any planning application, in accordance with Policy ER4. The existing accesses are located on Sandwich Road and Cherry Garden Lane. It would be difficult to achieve a satisfactory access to Cherry Garden Lane without causing harm to its rural character. Vehicular access to the residential redevelopment should therefore be from Sandwich Road. It should be restricted to a single access point and designed to minimise visual impact on the street scene.



Interior of the Puma Manufacturing site

Policy HS4

Planning Permission for residential development on the Puma Manufacturing site, Ash shown on Sheet 1 of the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided:-

- (i) there is a minimum of 45 dwellings of which at least 20% should be affordable;**
- (ii) a range and mix of dwelling types and sizes including an element of one and/or two bedroom dwellings is provided;**
- (iii) a Local Area for Play is provided in accordance with the standards contained in Appendix 2 of the Local Plan;**
- (iv) the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Street End Conservation Area and its setting;**
- (v) the building and brick wall which are within the Street End Conservation Area are retained and incorporated into the development;**

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- (vi) **new buildings have minimal impact on the skyline and do not dominate nearby residential properties;**
- (vii) **Development is set back from Cherry Garden Lane and from New Street east of the retained building, and the existing soft edges on these road frontages are retained and reinforced through landscaping;**
- (viii) **to the west of the retained brick wall on New Street and on the Sandwich Road frontage, development fronts the road and incorporates the provision of a footway;**
- (ix) **a survey and evaluation is carried out to determine the extent of any contamination and remedial measures proposed to ensure that the development does not pose a risk to human health; and**
- (x) **vehicular access to the site is achieved from a single access point on Sandwich Road.**

Environmental Appraisal

The policy contributes to the Objectives of protecting the countryside, providing open space, recycling redundant resources, enhancing the historic environment, allowing development in rural settlements which is commensurate with their size and function and encouraging alternatives to the private car. The policy works against the Objectives of protecting employment sites from other development and concentrating investment in the urban areas.

Land to the rear of 85-99 Sandwich Road, Ash

10.36 The site covers 3.12 hectares of land at the eastern end of the village. It consists primarily of a single agricultural field and is bounded on two sides by housing, abutting the rear gardens of residential properties in New Street and properties fronting Sandwich Road. To the west of the site there is a combination of agricultural warehouses. Immediately to the east, there is a hedge and a public footpath that runs along the entire eastern boundary.

10.37 The site is of sufficient size to provide a substantial open space capable of serving residents of the surrounding area as well as the development itself. The development would lend itself to an informal layout around a central open space. To reinforce this informality, there should be a variety of roof pitches and a range and mix of house styles. An element of smaller one and/or two bedroom dwellings should be provided in accordance with Policy HS11. Care must be taken with the design of the housing development in order to avoid any domination of the nearby residential properties and to ensure that the development is not prominent from any longer range views. The existing hedge along the eastern edge of the site should be retained and structural landscaping, incorporating the existing vegetation, should be provided around the perimeter of the site. Landscaping features should be incorporated within the development of the site in order to create visual interest.

10.38 Vehicular access to the development should be achieved from a single point located on Sandwich Road and designed in a manner to minimise its effect on the street scene including road side banking, visibility splays and rural character of the village. An emergency access to New Street must be provided when the development exceeds 50 dwellings. In addition, pedestrian and cycle links should be provided to Sandwich Road and New Street and a pedestrian link to the existing public footpath. The open space should contain a play space to a LEAP and a LAP standard in accordance with Policy OS2 and Appendix 2 of the Plan.

10.39 As set out in paragraph 10.29 the development will be phased. In order to ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken, which provides a mix of dwelling types and sizes and the appropriate amount of affordable housing, open space and landscaping at each stage of the development, the Council will only permit proposals for the whole of the site. Such proposals will need to demonstrate that they are capable of satisfactory implementation in phases.

Policy HS5

Planning Permission for residential development on land to the rear of 85-99 Sandwich Road, Ash shown on Sheet 1 of the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided:-

- (i) **there is provision for up to 85 dwellings of which 20% should be affordable;**
- (ii) **a range and mix of dwelling types and sizes including an element of one and/or two bedroom dwellings is provided;**
- (iii) **a public open space to meet the needs of the development and deficiencies in the local area, incorporating a Local Equipped Area for Plan and a Local Area for Play, is provided;**
- (iv) **the development minimises its impact on the skyline and should not dominate the nearby residential properties;**
- (v) **structural landscaping, incorporating existing vegetation, is provided;**
- (vi) **vehicular access is achieved from a single access point on Sandwich Road with an emergency access to New Street, together with pedestrian and cycle links to the local highway and footpath network; and**
- (vii) **the proposals are for the complete development of the site but include a phasing programme to consist of a first phase of no more than 45 private sector dwellings plus a minimum of 8 affordable dwellings which includes a mix of dwelling types and sizes and the appropriate amount of landscaping and open space, and a second phase for the balance of the development which, subject to progress on the redevelopment of the Puma Manufacturing site, is not to be commenced until after the end of the Plan Period.**

Environmental Appraisal

The policy contributes to the Objectives of providing open space, allowing development in rural settlements which is commensurate with their size and function and encouraging alternatives to the private car. This policy works against the Objectives of protecting the countryside, recycling redundant resources and concentrating investment in the urban areas.

Northwall Road, Deal

10.40 The site south of Northwall Road is approximately 1.2 Ha. in size. It is bounded by Northwall Road to the north, residential uses, and North Deal Playing Field to the east, the railway line to the south and industrial premises to the west. The site is currently occupied by a mixture of former agricultural buildings, a vacant semi-derelict dwelling, and a paddock. Appropriate development will provide an opportunity of improving the poor overall appearance of the site. This part of Deal is within an area at risk from predominantly tidal flooding. Development proposals will need to accord with the provisions of Policy WE8 regarding safeguarding development from the risks of flooding, in particular no bedrooms will be allowed below 6.18 m. AOD.

Policy HS6

Planning permission for residential development on land south of Northwall Road, Deal, as shown on Sheet 4 of the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that:-

- (i) **the development comprises a minimum of 33 dwellings;**
- (ii) **provision is made for pedestrian access between the site and North Deal Playing Field;**

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- (iii) a structural landscape buffer is provided on the boundaries of the site to the south with the railway line and the west with the industrial premises;
- (iv) a mixture of house types and sizes, including one or two bedroom properties, is incorporated into the design of the development;
- (v) at least 7 dwellings are for affordable housing;
- (vi) there is provision for a Local Area for Play in accordance with standards contained in Appendix 2 of the Local Plan;
- (vii) no sleeping accommodation is provided below 6.18 metres AOD; and
- (viii) the development is acceptable in terms of traffic generation and access.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy contributes to the Objectives of providing open space, concentrating development in the urban area, and minimising the need to travel. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Former Tarmac Works, Eastry

10.41 The 0.8 Ha. site lies on the west side of Herendon Road at the south west corner of Eastry. The site is bordered to the north by a detached dwelling beyond which are further residential properties fronting Gore Lane. To the east, on the other side of Herendon Road, is a loose collection of houses and a haulage yard. To the west the site borders the countryside. The site is of triangular shape which slopes steeply away from the road towards the countryside. It is contained by Herendon Road and boundary hedgerows and trees. The site was previously used for the manufacture of concrete blocks but that use ceased in the late 1980's and since then it has remained disused. The various former industrial buildings and installations have been demolished. Development of the site is severely constrained by its topography and the presence of the pylon and overhead powerline situated on the western boundary of the site. For safety and amenity reasons development will not be permitted under the pylon or within any safety or easement zone required by National Grid. This part of the site may fall within that required for structural landscaping. Landscaping on the western boundary of the site will be important because of its topography which affords open views of the site from the roads and the proposed cycleway to the west. It is important that the landscaping is sufficient to provide an effective screen to minimise this visual impact. If necessary the height of development will be restricted. The majority of the site falls within Groundwater Protection Zone 1 and the remainder is covered by Zone 2. Given the nature of the former use of the site there will be a requirement to undertake a site investigation survey of potential contamination (Policy ER4). The proximity of the site to one of four medieval cemeteries in and close to Eastry village will require the prospective developer to undertake an archaeological assessment and if appropriate evaluation (Policy HE6).

Policy HS7

Planning permission for residential development on land at the former Tarmac Works, Eastry, as shown on Sheet 4 of the Proposals Map, will be permitted provided that:-

- (i) the development does not exceed 24 dwellings;
- (ii) there is no built development on land required for safeguarding purposes in connection with the operation of the pylon or overhead powerline;
- (iii) a Local Area for Play (LAP) is provided in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 2 to the Plan;

Continued

- (iv) existing trees and hedgerows within the site are protected and incorporated into the design of the development;
- (v) a structural landscape buffer is provided along the western and northern site boundaries;
- (vi) a mixture of house types and sizes, including one and two bedroom properties, is incorporated into the design of the development;
- (vii) a survey and evaluation is carried out to determine the extent of contamination, and remedial measures proposed to ensure that the development does not pose a risk to human health; and
- (viii) provision is made for an archaeological evaluation in advance of any planning decision, and for the consequent appropriate level of archaeological mitigation in accordance with the archaeological policies of this Plan.

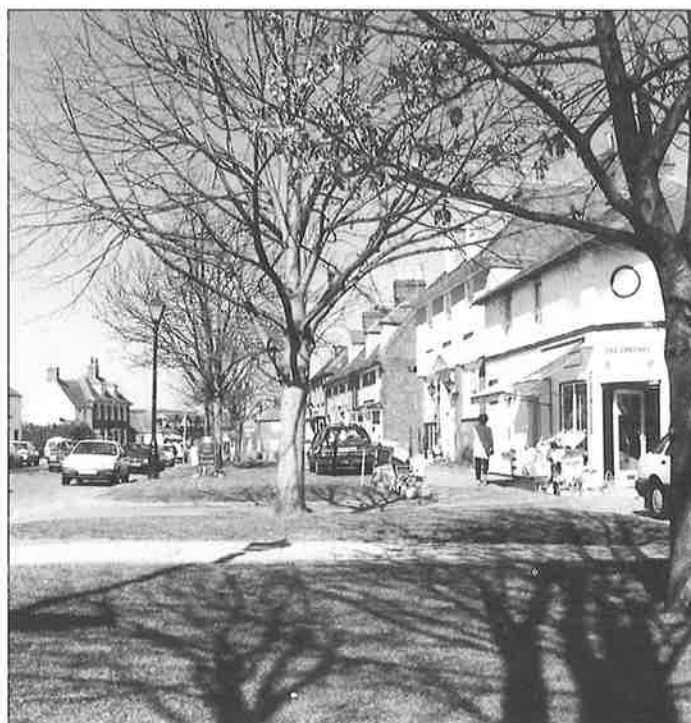
Environmental Appraisal

The policy contributes to the Objectives of providing open space, protecting and enhancing landscapes, recycling redundant resources, and allowing development in rural settlements which is commensurate with their size and function. The policy works against the Objective of concentrating investment in the urban areas.

Development Within Village Confines

10.42 Structure Plan Policy RS2 restricts development in villages to minor development such as infilling. Policy RS3(a) concerns villages which have potential for development exceeding this, while Policy RS3(b) concerns those which are of exceptional conservation importance. Elsewhere, Policy RS5 aims to prevent development, subject to particular exceptions.

10.43 In restricting development in villages to minor development, Policy RS2 limits this to sites in suitable locations within the confines. For the purposes of the Local Plan, suitable is defined as complying with Policies DD5 and DD6 regarding small sites, infilling and backland development, and open space policies. Additionally, land which is located between buildings on the periphery of confines and the confines itself, such as back gardens, will only be suitable for development if it would not result in a stark, or more intensive, definition between the built-up part of the village and its surrounding countryside. The intention is, therefore, to aim for a looser knit pattern of development on the periphery of villages, rather than building intensively up to the confines, in order to maintain a gradual transition from built settlements to countryside.

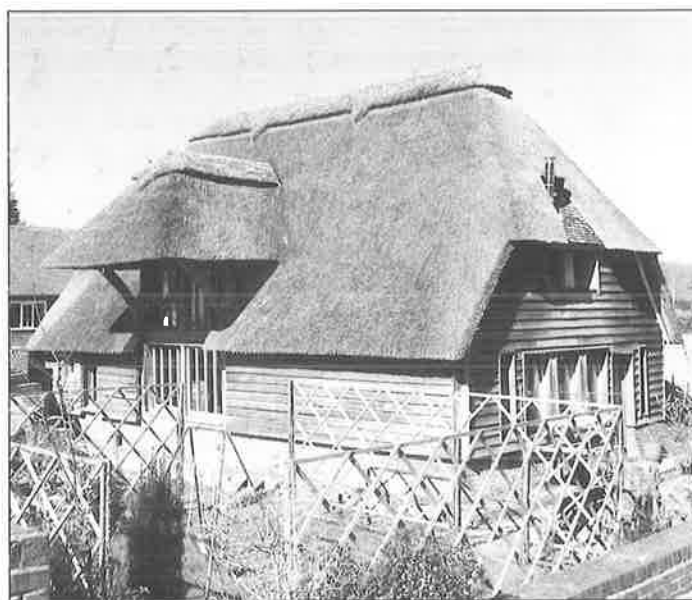


Wingham, a RS2 settlement

Conversion of Rural Buildings

10.44 Part (ii) of Structure Plan Policy RS5 allows for the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings, provided that this would be acceptable on environmental, traffic and other planning grounds.

10.45 There has been significant pressure in the District for such buildings to be converted to dwellings which has, in effect, added to sporadic residential development. However, PPG7 advises that such proposals should be treated with particular care and that it may be appropriate to apply the same strict control that relates to new housing in the countryside. The Council believes that such a strict approach would be in accordance with the Plan's Objectives to protect the countryside, concentrate development at the urban areas, and allow limited housing development in villages. Consequently, while the Council is keen to see buildings re-used, the emphasis in the countryside will be firmly upon commercial uses (see Chapter 3). There will only be limited circumstances in which residential conversion will be acceptable.



Barn converted to residential use, Nonington

Outside village confines conversion to dwellings will be resisted although conversion to a residential institutional use or a rural worker's dwelling would be permitted when justified under Policies HS12 and 13 respectively. Permission may be granted for residential conversion if the building lies within village confines, provided that a suitable business or tourism use cannot be found, or that residential use is part of a scheme for business or tourism use.

10.46 While the re-use of rural buildings for residential use can contribute to meeting housing requirements, it can have minimal economic benefit. PPG7 advises that where the creation of local employment is a priority it may be appropriate to restrict residential re-use unless attempts have been made to secure a suitable business re-use, or if it is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use. The Council considers that this approach should be applied to the re-use of rural buildings in villages in order to seek to redress the imbalance of jobs to workforce in the rural area, and hence reduce the need for travel. This approach is also consistent with the policy objectives of the East Kent Rural Development Area. Consequently, the first preference is for buildings to be re-used for employment or tourism related uses. In order to justify permission for residential re-use in villages, applications should be accompanied by a statement setting out the steps that have been taken to secure a suitable employment or tourism related re-use. A particular requirement will be that genuine and adequate attempts have been made to market the premises and have failed to produce a viable offer. Marketing should be through an appropriate estate agent and for a period of time which fully tests demand having regard to the buoyancy of the prevailing market conditions.

10.47 In line with PPG7, proposals for re-use will only be allowed if the building is of a permanent and substantial construction, its form, bulk and design is, or can be made to be, in keeping with its surroundings, and conversion or adaptation will not damage its character or setting. Additionally, buildings in the countryside must be capable of conversion without the need for major or complete reconstruction.

10.48 Rural buildings can provide important nesting and roosting sites for barn owls and bats. Where buildings contain such sites they should be protected in any conversion. Additionally, new roosting and nesting sites can easily be accommodated when buildings are converted. Conversions should therefore make provision for new roosts and nesting sites.

10.49 If the building to be converted has an adverse effect upon visual amenity, the Council will seek improvements to the external appearance. Any proposals which involve historic buildings must also comply with historic environment policies. In this respect, it should be noted that residential conversions

can easily harm historic buildings and the Council may take the view that some such buildings are not suitable for residential use.

Policy HS8

Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings for residential use will only be permitted if:-

A Within village confines

- (i) it can be demonstrated that the building has been appropriately but unsuccessfully marketed to secure an employment or tourism related use or where such use would be unacceptable on planning grounds, or residential conversion is part of a larger scheme for employment or tourism related use;**
- (ii) the building is of permanent and substantial construction;**
- (iii) its form, bulk and design is, or can be made to be, in keeping with its surroundings;**
- (iv) conversion or adaptation will not damage its character or setting; and**
- (v) where appropriate provision is made for nesting boxes and roosts for barn owls and bats.**

B Outside village confines

- (i) it is for a residential institutional use which meets the terms of Policy HS12, or there is a need within the terms of Policy HS13 to house a rural worker;**
- (ii) the building will not require major or complete reconstruction; and**
- (iii) the above criteria A(ii) to A(v) are met.**

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside and managing and enhancing habitats/species and recycling redundant resources. No Objectives are adversely affected.

SPECIFIC HOUSING NEEDS

10.50 Several groups of people have specific housing needs, which should be recognised by the planning system. These needs concern either particular requirements for land or special design features in dwellings.

Affordable Housing

10.51 Many people in the District have a need for, or better access to, housing but cannot afford open market prices. This problem is recognised in PPG3, which allows local plans to indicate an overall target for the provision of affordable housing, together with targets for specific sites, provided that they are based upon evidence of need and site suitability. The Council may then seek to negotiate with developers for an element of affordable housing in individual schemes and ensure that the dwellings are always kept available for this purpose. This will usually entail management by a housing association. This advice is reflected in Structure Plan Policy H6.

10.52 The Council has commissioned a survey of housing needs in the District. This demonstrates that there is a clear justification for the Council to request developers of suitable sites to provide an element of affordable housing together with an element of general market low cost housing. The scale of identified need is so high that it far exceeds the overall Structure Plan provisions. This does not, however, provide

justification for the release of fresh land; it only justifies the provision of a proportion of affordable housing on sites which accord with development plan policies.

10.53 The level of need in the rural area is so high that it cannot be met there without seriously breaching fundamental policies regarding the location of development and protection of the countryside. The Plan, therefore, aims to meet the bulk of need in the urban areas, with the villages playing a support role. Given the overall level of housing need in the District and the



Affordable housing, Wingham

quantity of housing provided for by the Kent Structure Plan, it is unrealistic to assume that these needs can be fully met over the Plan Period. Nevertheless, the Council considers that an achievable aim would be to seek to provide at least 20% of the Structure Plan Policy H1 dwelling requirement for the Plan Period as permanent affordable housing. Consequently, the Plan sets out to achieve a target of around 60 affordable dwellings per year up to 2006 to be provided for through Policy HS9 and on the allocated housing sites identified in Policy HS2 and at Aylesham (Policy AY3). Part of the South Barracks, Deal may offer an opportunity for affordable housing depending upon the outcome of a study into the feasibility of a home/work complex (AS4).

10.54 For the purposes of implementing the Plan's policies, affordable housing is defined as housing provided and managed in a way which serves to reduce the purchase price or rental levels of dwellings below normal market rates to enable initial and subsequent occupation by those in housing need. This will be achieved through the involvement of a registered social landlord and/or the imposition of conditions or legal agreements restricting the occupancy of dwellings to those in need. Affordable housing also includes low-cost market housing which has a role to play in providing for local housing needs.

10.55 To help meet the full range of the District's housing needs, the Council will negotiate with private developers to provide affordable housing. Exactly how much affordable housing a particular development should contribute will depend upon market and individual site factors. Only large developments will be able to bear the costs of such a contribution. In this respect, a large development is defined as one which produces 25 or more dwellings, including flats, or one which could form part of an overall development cumulatively producing 25 or more dwellings, or one which is a residential site of one hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings. The Council will wish to ensure adequate arrangements are made to guarantee that the affordable housing is initially occupied, and subsequently always kept available for those in need - this will be defined as those households eligible for inclusion on the Council's housing waiting list.

Policy HS9

The Council will seek agreement with developers of residential schemes of 25 or more dwellings or on residential sites of one hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings, to include an element of permanent affordable housing. The size of the element will be determined through negotiation taking into account market and site conditions. The Council will also seek agreement to restrict initial and subsequent occupation to people already resident in the District who cannot afford open market housing.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy has no direct relationship with the Objectives.

10.56 The opportunities for providing affordable housing in the rural area under Policy HS9 will be very limited. The Council will, therefore, continue to consider affordable schemes outside village confines as an exception, in accordance with Structure Plan Policy H5. However, the occupants of such housing are often the least mobile section of the population for both financial and physical reasons. The Council believes that affordable housing should, therefore, only be located in villages which have a good range of facilities, which must include a primary school and a shop. Detailed advice on how this will be implemented is set out in the Council's Affordable Housing - Rural Exceptions Scheme Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Policy HS10

Permission for schemes for affordable housing in the rural area beyond village confines will be permitted provided:-

- (i) local needs exist and are documented in a comprehensive appraisal of the parish prepared by the applicant and/or Parish Council, and where appropriate, of adjacent parishes;**
- (ii) these local needs cannot otherwise be met;**
- (iii) the development is of a suitable size and type and will be available at an appropriate cost to meet the identified local need - schemes which include cross subsidies between higher priced and affordable housing, or a discounted initial purchase price, will not be permitted;**
- (iv) the site is well related in scale and siting to a village and its services;**
- (v) the development is located at a village which has a good range of facilities which must include a primary school and a shop and good access to public transport; and**
- (vi) initial and subsequent occupation is controlled through legal agreements to ensure that the accommodation remains available to meet the purposes for which it was permitted.**

Environmental Appraisal

New housing would be allowed on the edge of settlements and this has negative environmental effects through the loss of countryside and the use of fresh resources.

Small Households

10.57 As noted in paragraph 10.02, there is a strong trend towards decreasing household size and, by the end of the Plan Period, the District is projected to have the third smallest average household size in Kent. In line with the provisions of PPG3, the Council will seek housing developments to include an element of smaller (one and two bedroom) dwellings. No thresholds have been identified above which this policy will apply. This introduces an element of flexibility to the policy which due to the pressing need for small units in the District will allow it to be applied to appropriate small scale developments. It is unlikely, however, that development of less than 15 units will be expected to comply with the requirements of the policy. This requirement may be additional to the element of permanent affordable housing which could be negotiated through Policy HS9.

10.58 In addition, the sub-division of large residential properties can be a significant source of small dwellings. Such proposals will be supported, provided that they would not cause harm to the character of an area or to any residents living nearby. Access, parking and amenity space requirements must also be met and, in the case of listed buildings and those within conservation areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, there should be no conflict with the appropriate policies regarding design. Furthermore, in order not to erode the supply of small family houses, only dwellings with five or more bedrooms and a

gross internal floor area of 110 sq. m. (1,184 sq. ft.) are considered to have the potential to be converted. Proposals will also have to comply with the standards operated by the Council's Health and Housing Department under the Housing Act 1985, which set out, amongst other things, minimum floorspace space standards for each unit of accommodation.

Policy HS11

In order to ensure that the needs of small households are catered for the Council will:-

- (i) seek to include an element of one and/or two bedroom housing in proposals for residential development; and**
- (ii) permit proposals for the sub-division of residential properties into a number of dwellings provided the residential property has a floor area greater than 110 square metres and 5 or more bedrooms, and the character of the area and amenities of adjacent residents would not be harmed.**

Environmental Appraisal

The policy works toward the Objective of restraining pollution. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Institutional Uses

10.59 The structure of the population indicates that there is likely to be a continuing need for facilities and services to care for the elderly and younger population. The County Council's Social Services place emphasis on 'care in the community' and provide services which care for people in their own homes. This approach will not suit everyone's circumstances and there may still be a need for old peoples', nursing, and rest homes. In addition, other institutional uses, such as childrens' homes, may also be required.



Old people's home, Tilmanstone

10.60 Planning permission is not required for small scale uses involving six or less residents living as a single household in an existing dwelling. However, when permission is required for large scale uses (seven or more), the Council will be concerned to ensure that viable tourist accommodation is not lost, the building is appropriately located in terms of proximity to shops and public transport, and it is suitable for the use.

10.61 In addition, the use itself should not cause harm to nearby residents through, for example, noise and general disturbance from associated traffic. Outdoor amenity space should also be provided and include a degree of privacy. Areas used for other purposes, such as car parking or containing outbuildings, will not count as amenity space. Homes for people who may have mobility difficulties should not be sited in areas which contain steep gradients. Extensions to existing institutional homes will be judged against Policies DD1 and DD8.

10.62 In addition to planning permission, proposals will also have to meet the registration requirements of Kent County Council Social Services and the Fire Officer. Support services, such as day care centres, are dealt with in Chapter 13.

Policy HS12

Proposals for residential institutional uses will only be permitted if they:-

- (i) do not involve the development of land outside the urban boundaries and village confines, unless they are for the conversion of a rural building;**
- (ii) would not result in the loss of viable tourist accommodation;**
- (iii) would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of occupants of adjacent dwellings;**
- (iv) have access to local amenities such as shops and public transport;**
- (v) meet parking standards and provide access for emergency vehicles without harming the character of the area; and**
- (vi) provide amenity space for residents, including a private area.**

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside, restraining pollution, minimising the need to travel and encouraging more sustainable forms of transport. No Objectives are adversely affected.

Dwellings for Rural Workers

10.63 There may be cases when new housing is needed in the countryside to house people employed in agriculture, forestry, or another land use for which a rural location is essential. Structure Plan Policy RS5 makes a specific exception to the general restriction on development in the countryside and at hamlets for such demonstrated needs.

10.64 Accommodation for agricultural workers is the most commonly sought exception. Annex I to PPG7 gives comprehensive guidance on the case that must be made if planning applications of this type are to succeed. In addition, the Council will encourage whole farm plans to be submitted with applications. In other cases, the applicant must also clearly demonstrate essential need. In assessing proposals, it is always necessary to determine whether there is a functional requirement that full-time workers must live nearby and to apply a financial test to provide further evidence that the stated intentions to engage in the activity are genuine and capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time. In all cases, the applicant must demonstrate that the unit and the activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so. When a new dwelling is essential, it will also be necessary to examine whether the need could not otherwise be met by existing housing accommodation in the area and that the size and siting of the proposed dwelling is suitable in relation to the identified functional need. New dwellings which are positioned away from existing buildings or other dwellings or are too large in relation to the income which the unit can sustain in the long-term, will not be permitted.

10.65 When permission is granted, the Council will impose an occupancy condition to ensure that the dwelling is only used to meet the type of housing need which has been identified. If it is for an agricultural or forestry worker, the model condition recommended in Annex I to PPG7 will be used. If the applicant controls other dwellings in the same planning unit which do not have occupancy conditions and need to be occupied in connection with the same use, the Council will impose an appropriate occupancy condition. The Council may, in some cases, seek a planning obligation to tie the occupation of a dwelling to the use of the land or buildings on the enterprise to prevent them from being sold separately without further application to the authority.

Policy HS13

Proposals for a rural worker's dwellings outside village confines will only be permitted when:-

- (i) it can be demonstrated that it is essential for the enterprise to function properly;**
- (ii) the need is for accommodation for a full-time worker;**
- (iii) the unit and the activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so;**
- (iv) no other housing accommodation to meet the need is already available locally;**
- (v) it is grouped with existing dwellings or other buildings on the enterprise; and**
- (vi) its size is commensurate with the functional need and income levels of the enterprise.**

Any permission which is granted will restrict the occupation of the dwelling and where appropriate may extend the occupancy control to other dwellings under the control of the applicant and used in conjunction with the farm unit.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of only allowing essential development within the countryside. It works against the Objectives of restraining pollution, concentrating investment at the urban areas and reducing the need to travel.

10.66 In cases where a new enterprise, falling within the terms of paragraphs 10.45-46 is being established or an existing use is expanding, it will be impossible at the outset to satisfactorily demonstrate long-term viability. There may also be occasions when the need for accommodation is short-term. In such cases, the Council may allow a temporary form of accommodation for a full-time worker to be on site for a period of up to three years. However, it will always be necessary for applicants to demonstrate that the new enterprise is planned on a sound financial basis and there is firm intention and ability to develop it. It will also be appropriate to examine whether the need for temporary accommodation could not otherwise be met by existing housing accommodation in the area. Proposals will be subject to their siting being well related to existing buildings or other dwellings and the temporary accommodation ceasing to be occupied, and being removed, once permanent accommodation is occupied. Such a permission will be temporary and will not be renewed beyond a continuous period of three years. In the great majority of cases, the Council will expect an application to be submitted for a permanent dwelling before permission expires. Proposals for a permanent dwelling will be judged against Policy HS13.

Policy HS14

Temporary accommodation will be permitted for people employed by a new enterprise in the rural area, which has yet to prove long-term viability, provided that;

- (i) the rural location and the need for accommodation is essential for the enterprise to function properly;**
- (ii) the need is for accommodation for a full-time worker;**
- (iii) it can be demonstrated that the enterprise is planned on a sound financial basis and there is a firm intention and ability to develop it;**

Continued

- (iv) **no other housing accommodation to meet the need is already available locally; and**
- (v) **it is grouped with existing dwellings or other buildings on the enterprise.**

Planning permission will be subject to strict time and occupancy limits.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objective of only allowing essential development within the countryside. It works against the Objectives of restraining pollution, concentrating investment at the urban areas and reducing the need to travel.

Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople

10.67 Gypsies are defined in the Caravan Sites Act 1968 as “persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showmen, or persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such”. Structure Plan Policy H8 requires provision to be made for gypsy sites in accordance with identified need. Although the District Council has made no direct provision for gypsies, there is a site at Aylesham which is provided and managed by the County Council. The District Council considers that this site is adequate to meet expected demand and does not, therefore, propose any additional provision. However, private planning applications for gypsy sites could nevertheless be made and it is considered that the Plan should provide general policy guidance, in accordance with Department of the Environment Circular 1/94. The location of gypsy sites is a difficult and contentious issue. While sites in the urban areas could give occupiers easy access to a wide range of local facilities and services, such sites are difficult to achieve because of the proximity to existing residential and other built uses. In the rural area, strong restraint applies to all countryside and Circular 1/94 advises that it is inappropriate to make provision for gypsies in open land where development is severely restricted eg AONB, SSSIs and other protected areas. Given that there are many designations covering the District the opportunity to find a satisfactory location will be limited. In all cases, sites should be reasonably well related to local facilities. Whether the distance between a site’s location and local facilities is acceptable will depend upon factors such as local topography and other features but sites should be close enough to give occupiers the opportunity to walk, cycle or use public transport.

10.68 Department of the Environment Circular 22/91 requires the Council to consider the needs of travelling showpeople for permanent sites which can be used as a base, particularly during the winter. The Council is not aware of any demand for such sites in the District. Consequently, none have planning permission and none are proposed in the Plan. As with accommodation for gypsies, the Council considers it more appropriate to provide general criteria based guidance against which any possible future applications can be judged. The considerations set out in paragraph 10.67 apply to travelling showpeople and Policy HS15 will be used should proposals come forward.

Policy HS15

Proposals for gypsy sites and permanent sites for travelling showpeople will be permitted provided that:-

- (i) **the site is reasonably well related to local services and facilities and is served by public transport;**
- (ii) **the site contains substantial natural screening and in the case of a site for travelling showpeople it is reasonably flat; and**
- (iii) **the use of the site would not result in any significant loss of residential amenities to the occupants of nearby properties;**

Continued

Depending upon the characteristics of each case, the Council may seek to use conditions to overcome visual impact and noise objections concerning such matters as landscaping, extent of business operations, length of stay and period of occupation.

Environmental Appraisal

The policy supports the Objectives of protecting the countryside, reducing pollution, minimising the need for travel and encouraging more sustainable forms of transport. No Objectives are adversely affected.

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

10.69 For planning purposes, houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are defined as dwellings which:-

- (a) are occupied by seven or more unrelated people living together, whether as a single household or not; or
- (b) are occupied by six or less people, who do not live together as a single household.

10.70 HMOs are an intensive use and may result in planning problems, such as disturbance to and loss of residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings, inadequate parking, and harm to an area's visual amenity caused by loss of front gardens to create hardstandings and dustbin stores. HMOs also give rise to concerns for health and safety. Planning permission is required to use a dwelling as an HMO but, due to the inherent difficulties of this type of accommodation, it will rarely be given. In such rare cases, Fire Prevention and Environmental Health standards (relating to the size of accommodation) will also have to be met. Should the Council discover an HMO operating without planning permission and the use is not, and cannot be made, acceptable, enforcement action will be taken.

Policy HS16

Planning permission will not be granted for the use of dwellings for multiple occupancy unless:-

- (i) there would be no harm to the amenities of nearby residential property;**
- (ii) there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the building and the character of the locality; and**
- (iii) adequate arrangements are made for car parking and for the storage of dustbins.**

Environmental Appraisal

The policy works toward the Objective of restraining pollution. No Objectives are adversely affected.

LIVING OVER THE SHOP

10.71 From survey work, the Council has found that many shops in the town centres only use the ground floor for retailing, with the upper floors remaining vacant or used for storage. Owing to their lack of use, such premises often have a neglected appearance and are an under used resource. The Council wishes to see this accommodation put to better use, and considers housing particularly suitable as it would bring increased life and vitality into the town centres outside shopping hours. It would also create further opportunities for people to live close to shops, services and public transport and in doing so reduce the need to travel.

10.72 In many cases, it will be difficult to meet full car parking requirements. Equally though, occupants will have much less need for private transport. Any dwellings will need to be accessed separately from the shops. The Council's Housing Department will investigate providing this type of housing in conjunction with other agencies, including housing associations. In certain circumstances, the use of the upper floor of a commercial property as a single flat does not require planning permission. When planning permission is required the relevant policies of this Plan will apply, in particular Policy DD1 where an important consideration will be whether the upper floor(s) of the property is of a sufficient size to allow subdivision to a separate dwelling.

REFERENCES

¹*Structure Plan Technical Working Paper 1/94*

²*The following sites allocated in previous plans are not being carried forward into this Plan:- Broadacre/Marshall's Wick, Lydden; land rear of London Road, Beachwood Avenue and Park Avenue, Deal; land south west of Northwall Road, Deal; land rear of Delf Street and Moat Sole, Sandwich; land opposite St Mary's Church, Strand Street, Sandwich and land off Sandwich Road and Shooter's Hill, Eythorne*

³*Department of the Environment discussion paper 'Housing in Rural Areas: Village Housing and New Villages' (July 1988)*

