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1 Introduction

1.1 The District of Dover lies on the coast of East Kent and, at its closest, is some 34km from France. The settlements in the District consist of the three towns of Dover, Deal and Sandwich and a variety of rural villages and hamlets. A little under two thirds of the population in the District live in the towns of Dover and Deal.

1.2 Dover is the District's principal town with the major jobs base, an international gateway and hub for transport centred on the Port. The town also has the largest settlement with a population of approximately 32,600 people (2001 Census Data). Despite this the town has a restricted range of facilities and choice of housing.

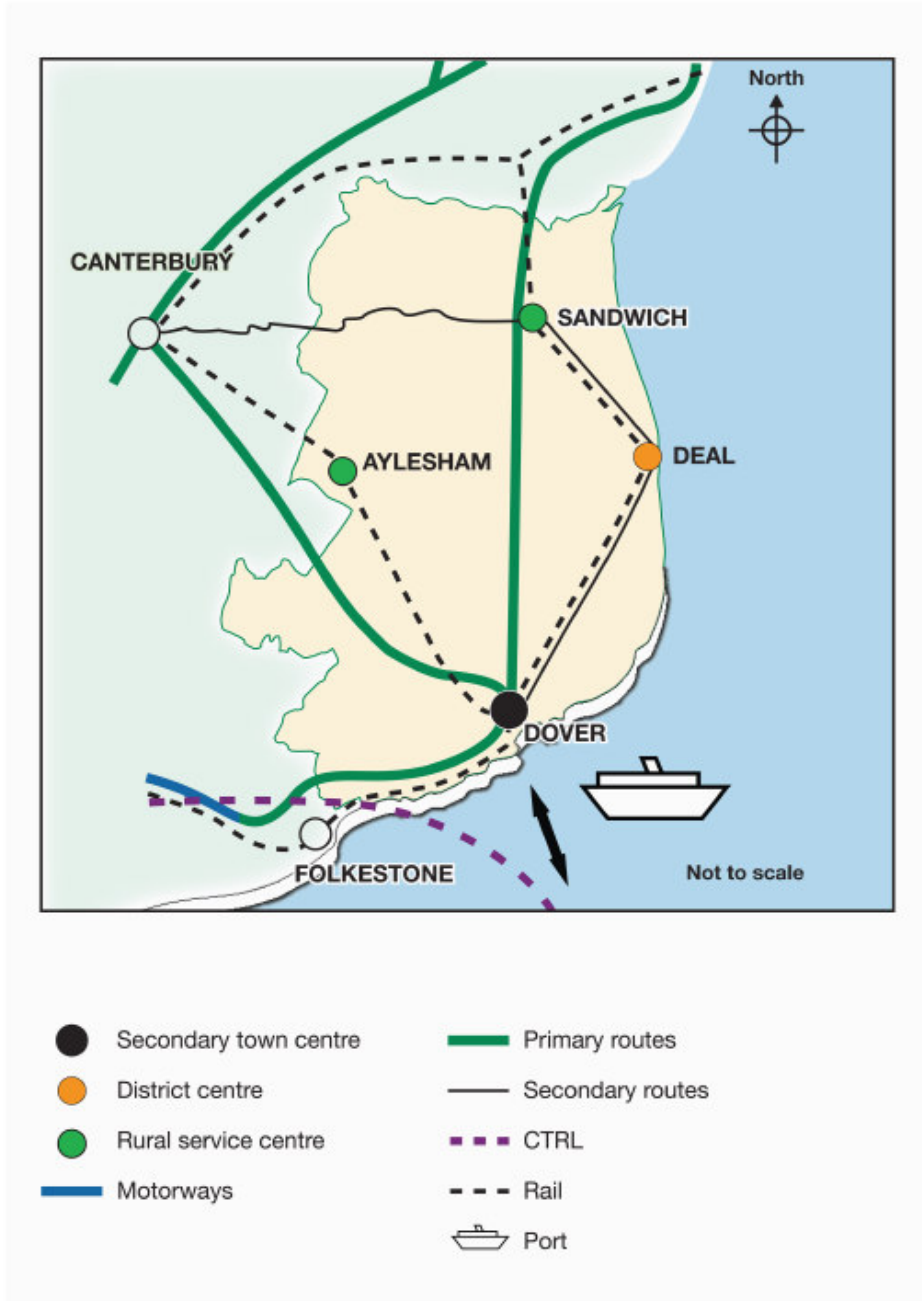
1.3 Deal, which has a slightly lower population than Dover (28,768 at the time of the 2001 Census), is a historic town located on the coast of the District. It is located away from the principal road network and consequently commercial activity tends to be small-scale, locally based and dominated by town centre and short stay seaside tourism.

1.4 Sandwich is a historic Cinque Port and market town located in the north east of the District. The town centre serves the daily needs of the town and neighbouring villages and the medieval street pattern and high concentration of Listed Buildings are a major draw for tourism. To the north of Sandwich there is a pharmaceutical research and development centre of international importance.

1.5 The extensive rural area contains a great diversity of settlements, in terms of character, size and facilities, ranging from the planned villages associated with the former East Kent Coalfield to the villages and hamlets that have their origins in farming.

1.6 The rural area covers 28,209 Ha and is home to around 43,000 people. The main rural centres are Sandwich in the north and Aylesham in the west. In common with most rural areas, the main issues revolve around;

- the retention of basic services and facilities;
- the level of public transport (especially by bus); and
- the need for affordable housing for local people.



Picture 1.1 Location Map

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Purpose of Study

1.7 The purpose of the Dover District Settlement Review and Hierarchy is to inform the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and to identify spatial objectives for the District's settlements. The key aim is to identify those settlements that are in the most sustainable locations, based on the range of facilities and services present, and which would benefit socially or economically from further development. In broad terms the Strategy will;

- define a sustainable settlement hierarchy;
- identify the current role of the settlements and
- identify settlements within the hierarchy that would be suitable for future development.

Contribution of this study to the Evidence Base

1.8 The Dover District Settlement Review and Hierarchy follows work that has already been undertaken by the Council as part of the Evidence Base for the LDF, which commenced in 2003. The main actions the Council have undertaken are:

- October 2003 - letters sent to landowners and agents inviting them to send in suggested sites for future development;
- June/July 2004 - Dover District Rural Retail Survey;
- February 2005 - Public Opinion Research;
- March 2005 - workshop to discuss Issues and Options;
- June 2005 - stakeholder workshops;
- July 2005 - District and Parish Council and local community group Workshops;
- April 2005 - Parish Council's asked their views on future development in their parish;
- 2006 - Parish Council's asked their views on the current settlement hierarchy;
- 2006 - LDF Working Group considered options for development allocations; and
- January 2007 - the Council held an infrastructure summit;

Summaries of the workshops can be viewed on the Council's web site (www.dover.gov.uk/localplanreview/workshops)

1.9 The Council has also surveyed the provision of facilities in the rural settlements in June and July 2007. The measures used are primarily the existence of services such as shops, post offices, schools and public transport provision.

2 Literature and Policy Review

National, Regional and County Context

2.1 A key principal underpinning National, Regional and County policy is the need to create, support and promote sustainable communities. A key element in achieving this is to reduce the need to travel by locating housing, employment and services closely together, to promote the viability of services and to strengthen community facilities.

National Guidance

2.2 The new planning system, introduced by the Government in 2004, seeks to develop strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and to promote community cohesion in both urban and rural areas. High quality design and well planned public spaces that are integrated with the built form are a key component of the Governments place making agenda.

2.3 The Government has produced a range of policy statements and guidance notes that are relevant to a Settlement Strategy. These are;

- Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development;
- Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing;
- Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning for Town Centres;
- Planning Policy Statement 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas;
- Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Development Frameworks; and
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 Transport.

2.4 The key points from this guidance are:

- Development that would attract large numbers of people, such as retail, leisure and office development, should be located in one place to promote their viability, vitality and social inclusion;
- There should be a sustainable pattern of development, locating development in settlements with community facilities, access to jobs, key services and infrastructure;
- There should be a hierarchy of centres in the LDF;
- Development in rural areas should be located in villages where it can enhance or maintain the settlement's sustainability;
- Development should reduce the need to travel by locating and encourage cycling, walking and public transport;

2.5 Appendix 1 of this document summaries the key points from each guidance statement or document.

Draft South East Plan

The South East Plan identifies a strategic network of town centres in the region that consist of Primary and Secondary Regional Centres (Policy TC2). These centres will be the focus for future large scale developments. Dover has been identified as a Secondary Regional Centre, as have the neighbouring centres of Folkestone and Westwood. Canterbury has been identified as a Primary Regional Centre. Growth, however, will not be limited just to these centres as the full network in the south east

will include other towns, villages and other local centres. The South East Plan states that Local Authorities should set out a hierarchy of the other towns, villages and local centres to complete the network in their area.

Policy H3 in the Draft South East Plan states that new housing needed to meet the district requirements – whether on previously developed land or on greenfield land – should be in sustainable locations which have the necessary infrastructure, services and community provision, or where this provision is planned. Housing developments should generally be in locations that are, or can be, well served by a choice of transport modes, with higher densities in and near locations well served by public transport.

2.6 Policy H3 also states that creative use should be made of opportunities for housing development within the region's cities and towns, while recognising the need to provide for other community needs that contribute to the quality of life. Local authorities should also identify in Local Development Documents suburban and rural areas which are in need of renewal and should give particular consideration to the benefits that could arise from encouraging housing development or redevelopment in these areas.

2.7 In rural areas some housing development will be required in order to meet identified social or economic needs and provision should be set out in policies in Local Development Documents. Parish plans and local housing assessments will have a key role to play in establishing the extent and types of needs for housing in villages.

2.8 Policy RE2 states that local authorities should provide a range of sites for industrial and commercial uses in locations that are accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply, focus on urban areas and in locations that promote the use of public transport.

2.9 Paragraph 3.4 in the South East Plan states that it is important to support economic diversity through the promotion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and businesses in rural areas. A balanced economy requires a range of types of employment space in terms of size, location and cost.

2.10 This is reflected in RE2, which states that '*...accessible and well-located industrial and commercial sites should be retained where there is a good prospect of employment use. Local Development Documents should be supportive of the agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries, and rural economic diversification and non-land based business proposals in towns and villages or on farm sites where applications show positive benefits, based on clearly defined criteria and evidence-based assessments.*'

2.11 The South East Plan seeks to promote tourism in rural areas for local employment or which is associated with all types of rural development initiatives. In surrounding countryside areas with significant tourism potential, local authorities should identify actions to strengthen linkages between market towns and their hinterlands through the provision of integrated sustainable transport and complementary product development, investment and marketing.

Kent and Medway Structure Plan

2.12 The Kent and Medway Structure Plan endorses the aim of using sustainably located, previously developed land and buildings before developing greenfield sites. This is reflected in Policy SS4, which proposes a sequential approach to the location of development.

2.13 The Structure Plan considers that town centres and inner urban areas, which have a choice of transport and good access to services and jobs, are ideal locations for mixed-use development at relatively high densities. The Plan suggests that within these areas, retail, leisure, and housing uses may compete for available sites. Retail and leisure development should have priority in the core of town centres which should be defined in Local Development Documents.

2.14 The overall strategy for development in the rural areas is to resist pressure on the urban fringes and avoid suburbanisation of the countryside.

2.15 Other than at the major/principal urban areas or Strategic Development Locations, the Kent and Medway Structure Plan seeks to concentrate significant development at Rural Service Centres. In Dover District, Sandwich has been identified as a Rural Service Centre and Aylesham has been identified as a Strategic Development Location.

2.16 Proposals for development at other rural settlements should demonstrate that it would be sustainable (Policy SS1) and meet the following two criteria (Policy SS7):

- there is good road and public transport access and connectivity and;
- there is an existing core of employment and community services.

Rural Delivery Frameworks

South East Rural Delivery Framework 2006-2009

2.17 The 2006-2009 Rural Strategy asked each region to set up a partnership arrangement. The South East Rural Partnership, chaired by GOSE, is a partnership of senior officers representing key delivery partners in the public, private, and voluntary sectors at regional and local level.

2.18 The strategy is based around 10 themes of equal priority:

- Biodiversity
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Exclusion
- Food and Farming
- Forestry
- Green Space
- Heritage
- Housing
- Landscape
- Water and Waste

2.19 Transport is addressed by all the themes, particularly in Exclusion. With regard to housing, the Strategy identifies that the lack of affordable or appropriate homes is one of the biggest issues facing rural communities, and has a significant impact on the sustainability of vibrant communities.

Kent Rural Delivery Framework

2.20 Kent County Council is currently reviewing rural delivery services in the County under a newly produced rural delivery framework. The Kent Rural Board founded in 2005 has commissioned work to devise a 'Vision for Rural Kent':

- The rural economy is productive, innovative and sustainable
- Local food & rural products are promoted and purchased across Kent
- Sustainable management of Kent's environmental resources
- The quality & attractiveness of Kent's rural heritage is maintained & enhanced
- Development is consistent with local rural needs without unacceptable impacts
- Rural communities are vibrant, provide a local work force, and are able to access the majority of facilities and services locally

2.21 The purpose of the delivery framework is to shape issues arising out of change in rural Kent and highlight areas for action under the following headings:

1. The Rural Economy
2. The Rural Environment
3. Fostering Vibrant Rural Communities

The Rural Economy

2.22 This objective highlights challenges facing rural Kent in the form of the decline in land-based employment, increased global competition, and tackling the limited rural skills base; whilst setting out opportunities in the form of recent CAP reform, attracting investment from knowledge-based SMEs, and developing a strong link between Kent as a tourist destination and its agricultural assets.

The Rural Environment

2.23 This centres on the host of obstacles facing rural Kent: tackling climate change, managing the environment, increased environmental regulation and addressing urban expansion. Opportunities arise in strengthening land management, promoting Kent's cultural distinctness, encouraging rural sustainable development and reform of the CAP.

Fostering Vibrant Rural Economies

2.24 Key issues here are the lack of local jobs, affordable housing, decline in services and facilities, demographic change, and changing consumer behaviour.

Other Reports

2.25 The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) produces a yearly report the 'State of the Countryside'. This highlights the main issues facing the rural areas in England, such as the economic well being, or housing provision. The document also sets out the key services which it perceives as being important to the sustainability of our rural communities. These are:

- Banks;
- Petrol Stations/ car sales / repairs;
- Shops;
- Post Office;
- GP Surgeries;
- Dentists; and
- Primary Schools.

2.26 In addition the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) suggested in their document 'Fair Access to Rural Services' (2006) that other services also contribute to the quality of life in rural areas. These services are;

- Pubs / Cafes / Restaurants
- Places of Worship
- Community / Village Hall
- Pre-School / nursery.

Dover District Council Documents

Local Plan

2.27 Two of the three aims in the Dover District Local Plan (adopted in 2002) focused on creating a more sustainable pattern and form of development and to achieve greater equality of access and opportunity for all.

2.28 Consequently, the Plan directed most development to the urban areas. The Local Plan policy for development in rural area was guided by policies in the 1996 Kent Structure Plan, which sought to restrain housing in the rural areas, protect the countryside and preserve the character of rural settlements.

2.29 The 1996 Structure Plan set out policies for different levels of development for villages (RS2), small rural towns (RS3(a)), villages that are important for conservation (RS3(b)) and hamlets and sporadic development (RS5). As the Structure Plan did not define villages and hamlets and there was no policy guidance in the Policy Guidance Notes, the Council's definition of a village for planning purposes was a settlement containing around 100 dwellings with a basic level of services such as shop/post office and community facilities such as such as a village hall, church and school. This definition stemmed from a Government discussion paper 'Housing in Rural Areas' (1988), which indicated that below 100 dwellings it became difficult to support services.

2.30 The result of the Council's exercise was that the towns and villages were categorised and set out in Policy HS3.

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,
Ringwoud, Ripple, Shepherdsweil, 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.

2.31 The Local Plan also included policies for the expansion of Aylesham. The expansion of Aylesham was originally identified in the 1990 Kent Structure Plan with the aim to regenerate the village and this part of the former coalfield while assisting the neighbouring local authority, Canterbury City Council, meet its housing requirements. The allocation was then carried forward to the 1996 Kent Structure Plan and adopted in the Dover District Local Plan 2002 following close scrutiny and modifications during two public inquiries. The Aylesham Masterplan, Supplementary Planning Guidance was adopted by the Council in 2005 after extensive public consultation.

2.32 Policy HS1 is also relevant as this policy confines development within urban and village boundaries and therefore restricts development in the rural area to specific villages, which have been designated as the RS2 and RS3 categories in Policy HS3, by identifying confines.

Aylesham Master Plan

2.33 To help achieve the strategic objectives for Aylesham set out in the Kent Structure Plan and the Dover District Local Plan, the Council partnered with SEEDA, English Partnerships, Kent County Council, Aylesham Community Development Partnership and Aylesham Parish Council, to create the Aylesham Masterplan.

2.34 The aspiration was to regenerate and expand the village to provide seamless integration of new and existing uses, creating a strong and vibrant community centred on sustainable neighbourhoods. The proposals were subject to an extensive public consultation and reflected the aspirations of the local community and key stakeholders.

2.35 The final document was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2005 and set out the Masterplan for the development of the 1000 new dwellings, new retail, primary school facilities, open spaces, station improvements and environmental enhancements. The majority of the residential development would, however, require the use of greenfield land. An integral part of the proposed development would be to improve the range and choice of facilities in the village and to strengthen its role as the primary rural centre in the west of the District.

2.36 The Council has now received (September 2007) a planning application for the village expansion. It is a hybrid application, outline for 1210 dwellings and associated infrastructure with a full application for the first phase of 191 dwellings and all associated works and infrastructure, together with new shops and apartments; alterations to existing shops and apartments; refurbishment of public open spaces, including Market Square; street furniture; landscaping; temporary works access; compounds and off-site highway improvements.

Community Strategy

Dover District Community Strategy

2.37 The Dover District Community Strategy 2003 does not specifically identify key issues for the urban or rural areas. There are, however, overarching key themes from which priorities and targets can be developed. These are:

Community

2.38 To meet the social needs, reduce crime and the fear of crime and create a healthy district in which both the individual and the community realise their potential.

Opportunity and Access

2.39 To provide opportunity and access for all individuals to all goods and services and enable business to deliver those goods and services where needed.

Regeneration

2.40 To create a district where opportunities meet the aspirations of an appropriately trained and motivated workforce.

Environment

2.41 A District where consideration for the care and long term future of our surroundings, natural and man made, is part of everyday life and decision making, ensuring that the district is a healthy and attractive place to live.

Vision For Kent

2.42 The Vision for Kent was produced by the Kent Partnership, which includes representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. The first version of the Vision for Kent was published in 2002 and then updated in 2006. The key themes are:

- Economic success;
- Learning for everyone;
- Improved health, care and well-being;
- Environmental Excellence;
- Stronger and Safer Communities;
- Enjoying Life;
- Keeping Kent Moving; and
- High Quality Homes.

2.43 The key issues for Dover in this document are

- Traffic and pollution;
- Encouraging investment and new jobs; and
- Tackling social problems in deprived areas.

Dover Rural Retail Survey

2.44 A Retail Survey undertaken by CgMs in 2003 for the Council indicated that retail provision is principally concentrated in Dover and Deal town centres, although local and specialist retailing is also provided in Sandwich. The principal focus of out of centre shopping is the White Cliffs business park at Whitfield, Dover. Dover and Deal have also attracted national multiple retailers, such as Marks and Spencers, Boots and Woolworths.

2.45 In 2004 Dover District Council and the Kent Association for Rural Retailers undertook a survey of the provision of facilities in the rural area of Dover District. The survey targeted vital village services, such as shops selling food, post offices and pubs. Forty nine communities were visited, even if they did not have a shop or post office, to see whether it would be viable to provide some limited service.

2.46 The results indicated that the centres of Aylesham, St Margaret's, Wingham, Eastry and Ash, were doing well, but on the whole, the retail scene in the rural areas was not particularly healthy. The survey also raised concern for the long term viability of the thirteen post offices in the rural area as half were stand alone and susceptible to closure if the owner decided to retire or leave the industry.

2.47 Another concern was that only a third of the shops ran suitable management software programs that enabled them to have control on areas such as ordering, stock control, space allocation of goods and profit margin. 70% of retailers were, therefore, not achieving the correct profit margin and around half were at danger levels with turnover and possibly close to closure. The survey also suggested that many shops could increase turnover by refitting their properties and undertaking a marketing campaign.

2.48 With regard to new development maintaining the vitality of the village shops, the study suggests that this will be dependant upon the retail outlet. It suggests that those shops that are already struggling will not benefit from development because it is likely that they are not large enough and do not provide the stock range required. It is therefore safe to assume that if existing residents are not using it, new residents will not. The study did suggest that villages with viable shops, such as Eythorne and Preston, would be secured well into the future if around 100 to 200 dwellings were development.

Rural Housing Need

2.49 The adopted Dover District Local Plan included a policy (HS10) for affordable housing in rural locations beyond the village confines (rural exceptions schemes). This policy indicated that such development should only be located in villages with a good range of facilities, a primary school and a shop. Supplementary Planning Guidance was produced by the Council to assist in the implementation of the policy.

2.50 To date there have been four Rural Exception schemes (i.e. development proposals for 100% affordable housing) that have been developed in Ash, Staple, Wingham and St Margaret's. The Rural Housing Trust is currently investigating the need for affordable housing in Goodnestone, Nonington, East Langdon and Ripple .

Town Plans and Village Appraisals

Parish & Town Plans

2.51 In 2000 the Government's Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside - The Future' introduced parish plans. The purpose of the plan was to set out a vision of what is important; how new development can be best be accommodated and the quality standards it should meet; how to preserve valued local features and how to map out the facilities which the community needs to safeguard for the future.

2.52 Deal Town Council are in the process of developing a Town Plan with the objectives of developing partnerships, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to produce and implement an action plan.

2.53 There are, however, three recent Parish Plans produced in the district. These are for Eastry, Temple Ewell and Preston.

Eastry Village Action Plan 2003

2.54 The Parish Council undertook a survey of their area to inform the Parish Plan's Action Plan. The Plan considers a range of issues including street lighting, crime, youth activities, traffic, social amenities and public transport. The plan also discusses village development for which it recommends that industrial units should not be included within any proposals for Eastry Hospital; and Eastry Court Farm should be included within the village confines.

Temple Ewell Parish Plan 2005

2.55 The Temple Ewell Parish Plan was also drafted after a survey of the area, the results of which informed the Action Plan. The survey indicated that there is a large proportion of the population who have lived in the area for six or more years, around a third of the population works in Dover but almost the same number work outside the District. The survey also indicated that the primary school was considered to be important for the community, there was a need for affordable housing, and parking was a perceived problem.

2.56 The Action Plan set out actions for a variety of issues including transport and parking, education, the environment, community, leisure, housing and planning. The conclusions for the latter indicated that the Parish would seek sites for affordable housing to be identified in the LDF and to promote the reuse of buildings. The Parish would, however, oppose any large scale developments.

Preston Parish Plan 2006

2.57 This plan was also based upon a survey of the parish, which again covered a variety of similar issues to those above. The main concerns were speeding traffic, limited public transport and the lack of low cost housing. The survey also indicated that there was a need to control future development. The Action Plan stated that for housing and future development, the Parish Council would undertake a housing needs survey and produce a village design statement respectively.

LDF Consultation

2.58 In order to ensure that stakeholder and local community groups have been fully involved in the early stages of the production of the LDF, the District Council held a series of workshops. These events helped to identify the issues that were facing the District and key priorities for Dover, Deal, Sandwich and the rural areas that needed to be tackled in the Local Development Framework. Local stakeholders and interested groups were invited to attend these events.

2.59 In addition, the Council wrote to all the Town and Parish Council's in the District for their views on the future development in their parish. The Council also held three workshops for the Town & Parish Council's to discuss future development options. The responses the Council received were as follows.

Ash Parish Council

2.60 Ash Parish Council anticipated that, because of the recent high level of development, there will be no demand for additional housing, other than in-filling, in the foreseeable future.

Aylesham Parish Council

2.61 No demand for additional housing beyond what is envisaged in the Masterplan.

Deal Town Council

2.62 The Town Council would not like to see any additional housing until sufficient infrastructure has been put in place (this would include sufficient doctors and dentists).

Eastry Parish Council

2.63 Eastry Parish Council indicated that new development should be limited to the development of 40 units at the Hospital site; a small housing development at Eastry Court Farm; and infilling in the rest of the village. No other housing development was felt necessary. The Council wishes Eastry to remain a rural village and not developed into an urban town.

Great Mongeham Parish Council

2.64 Great Mongeham Parish Council would like to see some housing growth over the next 20 years. They would especially like to see local needs housing that will be affordable to local residence.

Langdon Parish Council

2.65 The Parish Council suggested that a blanket presumption against development would be too restrictive. Minor development should be allowed, providing all the relevant criteria is met. It was also felt that in-filling should be allowed, subject to the relevant criteria. There are at least two possible areas of land which could be identified - Church Farm and possible affordable housing in East Langdon by the Rural Housing Trust.

Northbourne Parish Council

2.66 This Parish would not wish to seek any additional housing growth over the next 20 years.

Preston Parish Council

2.67 This Parish Council does not have any current plans for additional housing growth.

Sandwich Town Council

2.68 The Town Council expressed an interest to take part in any workshops but their response did not mention whether they would like any additional growth.

Stourmouth Parish Council

2.69 At the time of the consultation the Parish Council had no views to put forward but were anxious to preserve the character of the village.

Walmer Parish Council

2.70 Members would not favour any further expansion without considerable investment made to the infrastructure, which is already over-stretched. Walmer has seen a substantial increase of housing stock in recent years with the development of the former Barracks site and further increases are anticipated with the development of the remaining half of the North Barracks site and the estate off Downlands. The accessibility of doctors, dentists and adequate water pressure are all areas of growing concern to local people. Considerable investment would be required in such services as well as better paid job opportunities before further influx of people could be sustained.

Whitfield Parish Council

2.71 It should be ensured that greenfield sites are not used for the building of the proposed 4000 new homes. It is imperative that if more housing is to occur, the infrastructure for medical and educational facilities must be in place before any development.

Wingham Parish Council

2.72 Extra housing, in particular low cost housing, will be required in Wingham but the necessary accompanying infrastructure must be in place.

Woodnesborough Parish Council

2.73 Woodnesborough Parish Council would like to see some housing growth over the next 20 years. They would especially like to see small starter homes that will be affordable to local residence.

Priorities

2.74 The main priorities for the District Settlement Strategy that have emerged from the review of the strategic guidance and local issues are as follows:

Strategic Planning Guidance

2.75 Strategic Planning Guidance and Policy indicates that future development in the district should be first directed to existing main centres (i.e. Dover and Deal) to promote their viability and vitality, social inclusion, and more sustainable pattern of development. Development in rural areas should be located in local service centres in the first instance or located in settlements where it can help maintain the viability of their communities.

2.76 The Regional Special Strategy has identified Dover as a Secondary Regional Centre but also indicates that Local Authorities should set out a hierarchy of the other towns, villages and local centres to complete the network in their area. The Kent and Medway Structure Plan has identified Sandwich as the Rural Service Centre and Aylsham as a Strategic Development Location.

Local Considerations

2.77 Policy HS3 in the Dover District Local Plan set out a hierarchy of settlements for development and this policy has been successful in directing development away from less sustainable locations. It is, however, not feasible to continue with this policy as the policies in the 1996 Structure Plan, on which HS3 was reliant, have been replaced by a sequential policy in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. The new settlement strategy will have to take account of this.

2.78 The Local Plan also had policies for Aylesham and the Council has adopted a Masterplan for the development as Supplementary Planning Guidance. As part of the transitional arrangements from the Local Plan to the Local Development Framework, these policies have been 'saved'. This development has now reached the planning application stage.

2.79 With regard to the wider rural area information, on the provision of facilities is currently reliant upon work carried out at the time of the Local Plan. Information on the rural settlements has been obtained through the Parish Plans but, unfortunately, there are only three that have been completed at this time. The Council has, however, received responses as part of informal LDF consultation, which has indicated what the Parish Councils views are for future development. Information on the retail health of settlements has also been obtained through a study commissioned by the Council.

2.80 In summary the main issues raised are:

- The Aylesham development is moving forward as a planning application has been received.
- That the Parish Councils of Eastry, Great Mongeham, Langdon, Walmer, Wingham and Woodnesbough are not averse to future development subject to other issues such as infrastructure being in place.
- The Parish Councils of Ash, Aylesham, Northbourne, Preston and Stourmouth would not be seeking further development.
- The Council's retail study has indicated that the economic health of shops in Ash, Wingham, Eastry and Aylesham may benefit from further development.
- The main issues in Parish Plans are the lack of affordable housing, the extent of public transport, youth activities and traffic.

3 Identifying the Role of Settlements

Urban

3.1 The District has three towns, Dover, Deal and Sandwich. Dover has a slightly larger population than Deal and is the principal town. Government guidance indicates that future patterns of growth should be managed so that the fullest use of public transport is achieved and development is focused in existing centres. The South East Plan has already identified Dover as a Secondary Regional Centre in the region. The urban areas provide the range of facilities that would meet the sustainable requirements for managed growth and would be the focus for significant development in the District.

Dover

3.2 The town has the major jobs base, is an international gateway centred on the Port and is renowned for its military heritage. Despite this it has a range of social and economic problems that have proved hard to tackle. Its town centre has a restricted range of facilities and is not popular with residents⁶, although some large-scale out of centre shops serve wider needs and help to retain custom within the District. The centre is, however, losing ground to others outside the District, which have larger catchments and are improving at a faster rate. Choice of housing is generally restricted by a high proportion of terraced homes and some parts of the town have significant problems with the condition of housing.

3.3 For planning purposes, the Dover Area includes the parishes of Whitfield, River and Temple Ewell. They are already contained within Dover's urban confines in the adopted Dover district Local Plan and were also identified as part of the urban area in the preceding Dover Western Parishes Local Plan adopted in 1993. These areas, whilst they have their own character, form part of the urban area of Dover and use the services located in the town.

3.4 Whitfield is located in the northern part of the town with the A2 running through it. The White Cliffs Business Park, the Port Zone business area, secondary school and the District Council Offices lie to the south of the road whilst on the north side there is a hotel, primary school and fast food take-aways. Although the two parts have different characteristics the built form is continuous. The A2 does, however, act as a separating feature between the north and south of Whitfield and whilst there is an underpass, this is of limited appeal to cyclists and pedestrians.

3.5 River and Temple Ewell are located in the north western edge of the town along and alongside London Road. Development is complete from the main town to the edge of Temple Ewell with no physical separation.

Deal

3.6 Deal is located away from the principal road network and is supported by a constrained highway system. Consequently commercial activity tends to be small-scale locally based and dominated by town centre businesses and short stay seaside tourism. The town has an overriding residential character, which is the root of its appeal. The town does, not surprisingly, experience a considerable amount of out commuting by residents to neighbouring employment centres. The redevelopment of the former Betteshanger Colliery, just to the north of Deal, presents the largest opportunity to redress this. The town centre is characterised by small-scale development on a historic street pattern, which only offers limited scope for expansion; but the centre is nonetheless generally well thought of by residents.

3.7 The Deal area, for planning purposes, includes Sholden and Walmer. The historic expansion of Deal has meant that there is now very little or no distinct physical separation between these areas and the built urban form of Deal. These areas are also included within the urban confines of Deal in the Dover District Local Plan.

Options for Urban Settlement Growth

3.8 Although the urban area of Dover has been identified in the South East Plan as a Secondary Regional Centre and, therefore, the dominant centre in the District, it is still worth considering the alternatives for settlement growth for the District.

Option 1 Dispersal

3.9 This would spread new growth around small or medium sized sites around Dover, Deal and the Rural Area equally.

3.10 *Advantages*

- Enables settlements to grow organically with limited impact;
- Could meet local housing needs and support existing community facilities; and
- A variety of development meets the needs of different market sectors;

3.11 *Disadvantages*

- Would be contrary to national guidance and would have to have exceptional reasons to justify it.
- Does not take account of urban brownfield potential;
- Likely to raise need for infrastructure improvements that are too great to be resolved through development contributions;
- Would encourage more car journeys
- More difficult to achieve mixed-use developments containing a full range of supporting services and facilities;
- Spread of development puts extra pressure on public and private finances;
- Would not assist in the regeneration of Dover;
- Some settlements not well served by public transport;
- maximises the need for greenfield and increases the likelihood of conflict with landscape protection issues; and
- Greenfield land would still be required for development.

Option 2 Development focused at Dover

3.12 This option would concentrate most development in or adjacent to the the town of Dover, with a lesser amount at Deal, Sandwich and in rural settlements.

3.13 *Advantages*

- Makes the best use of existing education, health, social and retail facilities;
- Has potential to make best use of employment allocation at White Cliffs Business Park;
- Would assist in the regeneration of Dover and enhance the range and quality of local services;
- Would provide opportunities for mixed use developments (such as local shops, community uses within the residential development); and
- Potential to fund infrastructure improvements.

3.14 *Disadvantages*

- Dover is physically constrained by topography and additional growth could not all be accommodated on brownfield land;
- Major development would require greenfield land take; and
- There could be a social impact when the new areas are developed adjacent to the older areas in the town.

Option 3 Development focused at Deal

3.15 This option would concentrate most development in or adjacent to Deal with some at Dover, Sandwich and rural locations.

3.16 *Advantages*

- Has potential to make best use of employment allocation at Betteshanger;
- Would provide opportunities for mixed use developments; and
- Potential to raise funding to improve infrastructure.

3.17 *Disadvantages*

- Deal is constrained by the historic street pattern and road infrastructure within the town and poor connections to the wider highway network. It is unlikely that development contributions would rectify this situation. The existing infrastructure provision, therefore, could not cope with high levels of development;
- There is no evidence of sufficient commercial demand for employment and shopping to be concentrated here;
- Would not make best use of higher order educational facilities, retail and employment opportunities in Dover;
- Much of North Deal is within a flood risk area;
- The low availability of large brownfield sites would result in the loss of greenfield and agricultural land; and
- Would not assist in the regeneration of Dover.

Public consultation and engagement

3.18 The idea of focusing development at Dover was also supported by those who attended the workshops which were held by the Council for the LDF evidence base. Those attending the Deal and Sandwich workshops indicated that they preferred lower levels of development, given the limited infrastructure and historic settlement patterns. Those that attended the workshop in Dover told the Council that:

- there has been a considerable amount of discussion around plans for the town (over 20 years) and it was about time something positive actually took place in Dover;
- the plans for the town needed to be very ambitious;
- ambitious plans for the town will encourage investors;
- there is a need and desire within the Town for this to happen;
- priority should be given to improving existing housing;
- Dover needs to grow but there was concern about capacity and infrastructure;
- Dover is lagging behind other towns – need to invest and improve;
- the town needs upgrading, in particular, the areas of St.Radigunds and Tower Hamlets; and
- an increase in population implies new, better quality housing that will bring with it a range of benefits.

3.19 Some limited concern was, however, expressed about the ambition and population growth for Dover on the grounds that:

- Green areas are under pressure already;
- More development will set a precedence;
- Water is a big issue;
- Risk of devaluing the quality of the environment; and
- Concern was raised about pace and loss of greenfield sites.

3.20 Plans were made available at the Dover workshop for representatives to identify potential sites that might be suitable for future development. Representatives were invited to identify their preference and support for different development sites in and around the town. The possibility of additional development at Whitfield, Connaught Barracks, Buckland Paper Mill, Old Park Barracks, Coombe Valley industrial estate and town centre locations were all discussed at the workshop.

3.21 A community and stakeholder workshop was also held as part of the development of the Dover Masterplanning Project. Further information on all the LDF workshops and the Dover Masterplanning Project workshop can be viewed on the Council's website www.dover.gov.uk/localplan/workshops.asp

Analysis of Options

3.22 Option 2 is the preferred option. Focusing development at Dover would assist in the regeneration of the town, make the best use of existing education, health, social and retail facilities; and would make the best use of the employment allocation at White Cliffs Business Park. Those people attending the consultation workshops at Dover, also indicated that Dover should be the focus for future development. The town has also been identified in the Regional Plan as the dominant centre in the District and focusing development here would be in conformity with that Plan.

3.23 The first option, that of Dispersal, has too many disadvantages, most notably being contrary to current government policy in that development would not be focused at the major centres and would not reduce the need to travel. The option would also not assist in the regeneration of Dover.

3.24 The third option, focusing development in Deal, also has resounding disadvantages. The existing infrastructure would not be suitable for development at the envisaged scale and it is also unlikely that development contributions would be able to alleviate the problems. Comments from the Deal consultation workshop indicate that residents would not support this option. There is also no evidence to indicate that there is sufficient commercial demand for additional employment and shopping in the town. Development here, as with Option 1, would also not assist in the regeneration of Dover.

Preferred Option

3.25 The Preferred Option is, therefore, to concentrate development at Dover (Option 2) with some development at Deal, Sandwich and the rural area. Dover is the largest of the towns in the District, an international gateway and has the larger employment sites. The town also has social and economic problems that would benefit from development. The maximum use must be made of previously developed land in the town that is suitable for redevelopment not only to make efficient use of land resources but to improve the appearance and functioning of the town. Development would also provide an opportunity to widen the choice and range of housing that is currently on offer. The Council estimates that 3020 homes could be accommodated on brownfield land and that the need for more employment land can be met through development of White Cliffs Business Park and Farthingloe.

3.26 It is also envisaged that Deal would retain and develop the town's popular appeal as a place to live through some further growth. Increased housing opportunities are aimed to cater primarily for local people and to help support the development of employment areas at the former Betteshanger Colliery and the Richborough area. There is also a need for community facilities in the north and middle Deal areas.

3.27 As Sandwich has been identified as a Rural Service Centre in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, the town should be the first option for development in the rural area. Options for development sites will, however, be restricted as the town falls within a flood risk area and is also a historic town.

Rural

Sandwich

3.28 Sandwich is a historic Cinque Port and a market town renowned for its medieval street pattern and high concentration of Listed Buildings. The town centre serves the daily needs of the town itself and neighbouring villages. The shops in the town centre are, however, showing signs of stress due to reducing levels of trade but it remains well thought of by residents. The Richborough area to the north of Sandwich is a major employment centre containing a pharmaceutical research and development complex of international importance, other small scale industry and brownfield areas suitable for commercial redevelopment. Sandwich has been identified as a Rural Service Centre in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

3.29 To accommodate development within the rural area, this Strategy will need to identify those settlements that are suitable for development. In the past this was through Policy HS3 in the Dover District Local Plan, which set out a hierarchy of the urban areas, villages, small rural towns and hamlets and sporadic development. This policy was, however, based on now defunct policies in the 1996 Kent Structure Plan. To accommodate development in the rural settlements, it is imperative to review this the settlement hierarchy and then assess the potential for development in rural settlements based on sustainable criteria.

Settlement Review

Regional and County Policy

3.30 The Government's policy is to focus new development at urban areas, to utilise existing services and to underpin urban renewal and at rural centres where it can help the settlement to function more sustainably. This approach has been developed at the regional level in the South East Plan.

3.31 The South East Plan identifies a strategic network of town centres in the region that consist of Primary and Secondary Regional Centres (Policy TC2). These centres will be the focus for future large scale developments and include;

- **Primary Regional Centre:** such as Canterbury; and
- **Secondary Regional Centre;** such as Dover and the neighbouring centres of Folkestone and Westwood.

3.32 Growth, however, will not be limited just to these centres as the full network in the south east will include other towns, villages and other local centres. The South East Plan states that Local Authorities should identify other towns, villages and local centres to complete the network in their area.

3.33 The Kent and Medway Structure Plan includes a retail hierarchy but this is different to the South East Plan network. This comprises of Regional and Sub-Regional Centres, which have a broad retail basis serving a wide catchment area, such as Canterbury; Principle Town Centres that provide the main focus for shopping, local government and other services within the District such as Dover; and Urban and Rural Service Centres, which serve smaller urban areas or parts of urban areas or are at the centre of rural catchments and include Deal and Sandwich respectively. Aylesham has also been identified as a Strategic Development Location. Small scale developments a smaller rural settlements may be identified in LDF documents if they have good road and public transport access and have an existing core of employment and community services.

Dover District Settlement Review

3.34 For the purposes of this Review, the South East Plan's network classification will be used as this will supercede the Structure Plan in 2008. The higher order towns will therefore fall into the Primary and Secondary Centres as defined in that Plan. Dover will, therefore, will be classed as a Secondary

Regional Centre. This reflects the greater number of higher order facilities provided in the town, such as medical facilities, number of secondary schools or higher education facilities. This will be the primary focus for future development in the District.

3.35 The other urban area in the District, Deal, also has higher order functions but not to the extent of those in Dover. It is proposed designate this town as a District Centre and will be the secondary focus for development.

3.36 For the rural settlements, the District will judge a settlement's position in the hierarchy by the number of facilities and services provided. Sandwich and Aylesham serve surrounding rural settlements and provide a range of facilities and services that reflect this function. It is proposed to designate these settlements as Rural Service Centres. Sandwich and Aylesham will, therefore, be the principle focus for development in the rural area.

3.37 Rural settlements with facilities and services that serve the village and a wider rural area will be classed as Local Centres. These settlements will be the secondary focus for development in the rural area. Settlements with limited facilities will be designated as 'villages' and will be the tertiary focus for development. Settlements with few or no facilities or services will not be considered suitable for future development.

3.38 To summarise, it is proposed that the settlements with a greater amount of facilities and which serve a greater area will be higher up the settlement hierarchy and, therefore, more suitable for development. The table below summarises the categories.

Settlement Definition	Description
Secondary Regional Centre	Centres of importance in the East Kent and Ashford sub-region (as defined by the Draft South East Plan), which are suitable for the larger scale developments.
District Centre	Centre of importance for District and a focus for shopping and other services for the town and rural catchment areas. Would also be the secondary focus for development in the District suitable for 'urban scale' development.
Rural Service Centre	The principle focus for shopping and other services for the rural catchment area and suitable for a scale of development that would reinforce its role as a provider of services to a wide rural area.
Local Centre	Villages that provide services for local rural area and the secondary focus for development in the rural area at a scale that would reinforce its role.
Villages	Villages that have limited services for residents and the tertiary focus for development in the rural area.
Hamlets and sporadic development	Small settlements with few or no facilities and not suitable for further development.

3.39 Now that the settlement hierarchy has been established it is necessary to identify the settlements that will fall within each category. For this the Council surveyed the facilities provided at the settlements.

Survey Methodology

3.40 A survey was conducted to identify the level of local facilities in the District's rural settlements to establish whether any would be in a sustainable location for future development to enhance their viability and vitality and to meet the growth options highlighted in the Core Strategy.

3.41 The survey of the rural settlements was carried out in June and July 2007 and looked at the service provision under the following headings;

- retail (post office village shop, public house & cash point);
- community (village hall, church, medical facilities & primary school); and
- transport (bus and train connections).

3.42 The Retail and Community sections also include an 'other' category to identify if a settlement has any other facilities, such as a car servicing garage or fire station, that may enhance the overall suitability of a settlement for future development. For the transport section, the survey also noted the frequency of times a village was served by public transport. To determine the quality of the local bus services, the Council used the Department of Transport's quality standard of an hourly service.

3.43 These categories were based on the services that have been highlighted as important to the sustainability of rural communities by the Commission for Rural Communities or which contributed to the quality of life in rural areas as identified by IDeA Agency.

3.44 With regard to the villages surveyed, the Council started with the list of settlements that had previously been identified for development or had potential for development within the village confines in HS3. These included sites with specific development (Aylesham) and villages falling within parts (iii), (iv) and (v) of the policy. The list was then broadened to include settlements that were over 50 dwellings and those that had been suggested for future development by landowners (through earlier LDF informal consultation) to assess their suitability.

3.45 Issues such as flood risk and designated landscapes were not taken into account as the survey was concerned with the way in which a settlement functioned. Those issues will be considered through the Sustainability Appraisal of the LDF and as part of the site specific considerations.

Existing Situation

Summary of Settlement Facilities Survey by Parish

3.46 The following summaries, in alphabetical order of Parish, consider the three areas of provision; retail, community and transport. A table summarising all the facilities within each settlement is included in Appendix 2. A short statement as to whether the settlement would be suitable for development then follows.

3.47 This statement is based on the provision of facilities. Ideally, settlements that have local shops and are served by a regular public transport service would be considered as sustainable locations and, therefore, the preferred option for future development. There may, however, be situations when a settlement is deficient in, for example local shops, but may have a local primary school. Development may, in such cases, be beneficial to the viability and vitality of the settlement.

Alkham Parish

3.48 Alkham

Retail; Alkham does not have a post office or general shop but does have public house and garden centre with cafe.

Community; The settlement has a village hall and church.

Transport; There is a bus service to Dover and Folkestone with two buses every hour during week days.

The lack of basic facilities provided at this settlement suggest car usage would be encouraged and Alkham would not be a sustainable location. There would, therefore, be a presumption against additional development in this settlement.

Ash Parish

3.49 Ash

Retail; Ash has 10 retail outlets which include two general stores, a pharmacy and a car servicing garage. The settlement has two public houses, a take-away and restaurant.

Community; Ash has a doctors surgery, a village hall, a nursery and two primary schools.

Transport; The settlement is served by bus connections that run hourly to Sandwich and Canterbury week days.

Although the settlement has lost two shops since the survey for the Local Plan, there is a good range of facilities and services, which would suggest that Ash would be suitable for future development. The retail survey suggested that the village shops at this settlement could benefit from further development. The Parish Council has, however, raised concerns for further development.

Aylesham Parish

3.50 Aylesham

Retail; Aylesham has a range of shops (nine in total) that would serve the local community including a post office, a Coop and butchers.

Community; Aylesham has a village hall, two churches and two primary schools. A new medical centre is currently under construction. The settlement also has a Fire Station, Welfare Club, sports club, Youth Leisure Centre and the Aylesham & District Community Workshop Trust (which includes a library).

Transport; The settlement has an hourly bus service to Canterbury and Dover and is served by the rail network.

Although Aylesham has a good range of facilities, some of these are not of the quality or range usually associated with a settlement with the function of serving the hinterland. The settlement has been identified for major development (1000 dwellings to help enhance facilities and provide new shops) in the Dover District Local Plan (2002) and as a Strategic Development Location in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006). The Council has now received the planning application for the development. Additional development beyond the allocation would not be suitable. The settlement remains a suitable location for strategic employment provided this enhances the range and quality of services.

Capel-le-Ferne Parish

3.51 Capel-le-Ferne

Retail; At the time of the Local Plan survey there were three shops but two have closed leaving one general store and a post office in the village hall. This post office has, however, been identified for closure by the Royal Mail in 2008.

Community; The settlement has a village hall, a primary school and two churches. The settlement is also a tourist destination as there are two holiday parks. The nearest doctors surgery is in Folkestone.

Transport; Capel has a good bus service, which runs to Folkestone or Dover every thirty minutes during week days.

Although Capel-le-Ferne has lost retail facilities since the previous survey and now only has one retail facility, the settlement does have a primary school and is well served by public transport. This would be a preferred settlement for development.

Eastry Parish

3.52 Eastry

Retail; Eastry has a good range of shops (nine in total) including a bakers, butchers, general store and two hair dressers. Like many other villages this number is slightly down on the previous survey for the Local Plan.

Community; There is a Doctors surgery and a clinic for alternative medicines at Eastry. The village also has a village hall, church, fire station, scout hall/headquarters & children's nursery.

Transport; Eastry is well served by public transport as there are bus routes to, Deal Sandwich, Canterbury and Ramsgate that run half hourly during weekdays.

Eastry would be a sustainable location for further development as the settlement has a range of local shops, a medical centre and has good bus connections to the major centres. The Parish Council has indicated it would only be necessary to development the Hospital and at Eastry Court Farm.

3.53 Felderland

Retail; The settlement does not have any retail facilities.

Community; There are no community facilities.

Transport; There are no direct links to the public transport network but there is a bus stop on A258 near Worth.

Further development would not be suitable at this settlement.

Eythorne Parish

3.54 Elvington

Retail; The settlement has a village store and a hairdressers as well as two take-away restaurants.

Community; There is a village hall and a church. The settlement also shares a primary school with Eythorne which is located on the edge of Eythorne within walking distance (around 0.3km) of Elvington.

Transport; The settlement is served by a hourly bus service to Deal/Sandwich/Ramsgate and to Dover/Canterbury.

Comparison with the previous survey, carried out for the Local Plan, indicates that there has been of loss of facilities in the settlement. The settlement does, however, have the basic facilities (some of which are shared with Eythorne), including a primary school and an hourly bus service to the main centres. The settlement would be suitable for further development.

3.55 Eythorne

Retail; The settlement has a limited range of facilities, consisting of a village store (with Post Office), hairdressers and car service garage.

Community; There is a primary school, two village halls, two churches and a bowls club.

Transport; There are five bus services (including two KCC funded services) but only two are hourly to Deal, Sandwich, Ramsgate or Canterbury .

The settlement has a primary school, is connected to public transport and has local services. The settlement is also located close to an employment site. The settlement could, therefore, be considered for further development.

Great Mongeham Parish

3.56 Great Mongeham

Retail; The settlement currently has a post office but this may be closed by the Royal Mail next year. The settlement also has a car service garage and a public house.

Community; Deal Mongeham Primary School is located within the Deal urban area (the parish boundary overlaps with the edge of the Deal urban area). There is also a Christian Centre and village hall.

Transport; The settlement has four bus services (two KCC funded) but only one is hourly to Deal, Sandwich and Canterbury.

The settlement currently has the basic facilities (a primary school, good public transport and a general shop) that would meet the sustainable requirements for future developments. The viability of the shop may be in doubt, however, if the post office is closed. The Parish of Great Mongeham overlaps with the urban boundary of Deal so facilities in the town would also be accessible. The Parish Council has also indicated that they would like to see some growth over the next twenty years.

Goodnestone Parish

3.57 Chillenden

Retail; Chillenden does not have any local shops but does have one public house.

Community; There are no community facilities other than the local church.

Transport; There are two KCC funded bus routes but these are limited to one journey a day.

The lack of facilities would not make Chillenden a suitable location for further development.

3.58 Goodnestone

Retail; Goodnestone has a local shop, which also has a post office within it, and a public house.

Community; The settlement has a primary school and a local church.

Transport; There are two KCC funded bus routes but these are limited to one journey a day.

Goodnestone has the basic local facilities, such as post office and primary school, but poor public transport. Although there is poor public transport, future development would be acceptable in this settlement.

Guston Parish

3.59 Guston

Retail; There is one public house.

Community; The settlement has a parish hall and a local church.

Transport; The settlement is served by a KCC funded bus, which runs six journeys a day during the week and on Saturday.

The settlement would not be suitable for further development due to the lack of local facilities.

Hougham Without Parish

3.60 West Hougham

Retail; West Hougham only has one public house.

Community; The settlement has a village hall.

Transport; There are no public transport connections to this settlement.

Further development would not be sustainable at this settlement.

Kingsdown with Ringwould Parish

3.61 Kingsdown

Retail; Kingsdown has a variety of facilities including a post office, butchers, hairdressers, newsagents, three public houses, a tea room, car sales, guest houses and a holiday park.

Community; The settlement has a primary school, a village hall, church, a scout campsite and golf club.

Transport; There is one hourly bus service to Deal.

Kingsdown has a good selection of local shops, community facilities and has a hourly bus service. This settlement has the basic criteria that would enable sustainable future development. This is a preferred settlement for development.

3.62 Ringwould

Retail; The settlement has one public house and an Alpine Plant Centre but there is no general store or post office.

Community; There is a village hall and a local church.

Transport; The settlement has three bus services, one runs hourly to Dover and Deal but the other two are less frequent and only run two or six journey's a day.

Although the settlement is served by an hourly bus service, the lack of basic local facilities would make this settlement unsuitable for future development.

Langdon Parish

3.63 East Langdon

Retail; There were no local facilities at the time of the survey.

Community; There is a primary school, village hall and church serving East Langdon.

Transport; There are two bus services, one makes two journey's a day, the other (KCC funded) six.

Although East Langdon is poorly provided for in terms of local facilities, the settlement does have a primary school and is served by public transport. The Parish Council has indicated that minor and in-filling development should be allowed. Future development would be acceptable at this settlement.

3.64 Martin

Retail; There is a public house.

Community; There are no community facilities.

Transport; There are two bus service, but neither are frequent being one journey on Tuesday the other six journey's a day.

Martin does not have the facilities that would make this a sustainable location for future development.

3.65 Martin Mill

Retail; There is one public house in this settlement.

Community; There are no facilities.

Transport; The settlement is served by both rail and bus services. Bus services are, however, limited to six journeys.

3.66 Although Martin Mill is one of the few rural settlements served by rail, the lack of general facilities would make this settlement unsuitable for further development.

Lydden Parish

3.67 Lydden

Retail; There are no shops but there are two public houses, a car servicing/repair garage and car sales.

Community; There is a primary school, a village hall and local church. A recent planning permission for a doctors surgery was granted in 2007 although development has not yet commenced.

Transport; There is an hourly bus service to Dover and Canterbury.

Although there are no local shops in Lydden, the settlement does have some important local facilities, such as a primary school, which will be improved once the new surgery is developed. It is also served by a regular bus service. This settlement would be suitable for future development.

Nonnington Parish

3.68 Nonnington

Retail; There is a post office with a small shop, public house and petrol station/garage in Nonnington.

Community; There are two village halls, a local church and a hall for religious meeting.

Transport; There are three bus services running through Nonnington. One is hourly to Dover and Canterbury, the other two are funded by KCC and run less frequently.

Nonnington has a post office and has a good bus service. The lack of shops may be due to the close proximity of the settlement to Ayelsham (approximately 3km) which acts as the service centre for the rural area. Further development would be possible at this settlement.

Northbourne Parish

3.69 Finglesham

Retail; Finglesham has one public house but no other local facilities.

Community; There are no community facilities.

Transport; Finglesham is not serviced by public transport. There is a bus stop beyond the settlement on Broad Road but this not within easy walking distance.

Finglesham does not provide the basic facilities that would support new development.

3.70 Little Betteshanger

Retail; There are no facilities in this location.

Community; Northbourne Primary School is located less than a third of a kilometre away. There are no other facilities.

Transport; The settlement is not served by public transport.

Although a school is within walking distance of Little Betteshanger, the settlement does not have any facilities and is not served by public transport.

3.71 Northbourne

Retail; The settlement has one public house but no other facilities.

Community; The settlement has a primary school and a church.

Transport; The settlement is served by an hourly bus.

Although Northbourne is poorly provided for in terms of local facilities, the settlement does have a primary school and is served by public transport. The Parish Council has, however, indicated that they would not wish to seek any further development.

Preston Parish

3.72 Elmstone

Retail; The settlement has no facilities

Community; The settlement has a local church.

Transport; There are no public transport connections.

Elmstone is poorly provided for and would not be suitable for further development.

3.73 Preston

Retail; There are four shops in Preston, which include a farm shop, a butchers and a village store. The settlement also has one public house.

Community; There is a primary school and a village hall.

Transport; The settlement is served by two bus routes to Margate/Canterbury and Aylesham/the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital Margate/Westwood shopping centre. These, however, run infrequently with either four or two journey's a day respectively.

Preston does have the basic requirements such as a local shop and a primary school but the bus service is poor. There is also an employment site to the north of the village. Apart from the public transport provision, the settlement provides the basic local facilities that would support or benefit from new development. The Parish Council have, however, indicated that they do not have plans for this.

Ripple Parish

3.74 Ripple

Retail; Ripple has one public house.

Community; There is a primary school, a village hall and local church.

Transport; There are three bus connections but these are limited and only run one or two journeys a day.

There is a lack of general facilities in the settlement but there is a primary school which may make development more sustainable. Development may be possible but only after option in the preferred settlements have been considered.

St Margaret's Parish

3.75 St Margaret's at Cliffe

Retail; There is a good range of facilities at St Margaret's including a post office, village shop, hairdressers, cafe's restaurants and two public houses.

Community; There are three schools, a village hall, a surgery and other facilities such as a small library, a bowl's club, fire station, and museum. The settlement also has guesthouses and a caravan park.

Transport; The settlement is served by an hourly bus route to Deal Dover and Canterbury as part of the 'Diamond' service.

The settlement consists of three areas, Nelson Park, St Margaret's at Cliffe and St Margaret's Bay. Nelson Park does not have any of the supporting facilities other than the bus connections and would only be suitable for small scale development. There is a public house and cafe at St Margaret's Bay but this is primarily a residential area without services. Most of the facilities in St Margaret's can be found in the central part, St Margaret's at Cliffe and this part would be suitable for future development.

Shepherdswell and Coldred Parish

3.76 Shepherdswell

Retail; Shepherdswell has a Co-op and a public house.

Community; There is a good range of facilities, which include a doctors surgery, village hall, primary school and Scout/Guides HQ.

Transport; Shepherdswell has a poor bus service but it is one of the few rural settlements with a regular rail service.

Shepherdswell is a settlement that would be suitable for further development as it has local facilities and has good public transport links to the towns.

Staple Parish

3.77 Barnsole

Retail; There are no local facilities other than a public house. The settlement does have a garden centre, a nursery and a vineyard that would cater for a wider catchment area.

Community; There are no facilities.

Transport; There are no public transport connections.

Barnsole does not have suitable facilities for further development.

3.78 Staple

Retail; The settlement has a public house but no other local facilities.

Community; There is a village hall and local church.

Transport; There are two bus routes, one hourly to Canterbury & Deal, the other runs two journeys a day.

Although Staple has good public transport, the lack of local facilities would result in commuting to other centres and this would be unsustainable.

Stourmouth Parish

3.79 East Stourmouth

Retail; Stourmouth has a public house and a small farm which sells a limited range of seasonal produce.

Community; There are no community facilities.

Transport; There is an infrequent bus service that runs through East Stourmouth.

Further development would not be suitable at this settlement.

Sutton Parish

3.80 Ashley

Retail; There is a public house but no other local facilities.

Community; There are no facilities in this category.

Transport; There are three bus services running though Ashley to Deal/Sandwich and Canterbury. None are frequent, the most being two journeys a day.

The lack of facilities and the infrequent bus service would not make this settlement a poor sustainable location for development.

3.81 East Studdal

Retail; The settlement has lost one shop/post office since the Local Plan survey and now only has one store. The village also has a horticultural nursery.

Community; There are two halls, one is a small village hall the other is a Parish Community Centre, which is used for various activities.

Transport; There is a bus service but this is infrequent.

The settlement does have the basic facilities and would be suitable for further development.

Tilmanstone Parish

3.82 Tilmanstone

Retail; Tilmanstone only has one public house and a saddler.

Community; There is a church, village hall and an Old Peoples Retirement Home

Transport; The village is served by an hourly bus that runs to Dover or Ramsgate.

3.83 Although Tilmanstone is served by public transport it does not have the necessary facilities to support new development.

Wingham Parish

3.84 Wingham

Retail; There is a wide choice of facilities in Wingham (there are 13 shops and 3 public houses).

Community; There is a primary school, a dental surgery, fire station, two halls and a church in Wingham.

Transport; Wingham has four bus services. Two are hourly services to Canterbury, Sandwich and Deal. The other two are less regular and run to Margate, the QEQM Hospital and Westwood in the District of Thanet.

Wingham has good facilities and is served by a regular bus service. This would be a preferred settlement for development. The Parish Council are supportive of future residential development subject to infrastructure provision.

3.85 Wingham Green

Retail; The settlement has a general store within a petrol station. Adjacent to the petrol station there is also a second hand/classic car dealership.

Community; There are no facilities in this settlement.

Transport; The settlement falls along the route of the two hourly bus services to Canterbury, Sandwich and Deal.

The settlement has a basic shop for day to day goods in the petrol station and it is well served by public transport but there are no community facilities. Development would not be suitable.

Woodnesborough Parish

3.86 Woodnesborough

Retail; Woodnesborough has a general store with a post office and a public house.

Community; There is a village hall and local church.

Transport; There is an hourly bus service to Sandwich, Deal and Canterbury and a KCC funded service on Thursday to Deal and Sandwich.

Woodnesborough has the basic facilities and is well connected by public transport. The Parish Council is positive towards development over the next twenty years. Woodnesborough is also situated very close to Sandwich, the rural service centre for the north of the district. The edge of the built form of Woodnesborough is less than half a kilometre away from the that of Sandwich's (the distance from centre to centre is roughly 2 km). Woodnesborough is a preferred settlement for development because it has a local shop & post office, is served by a public transport, has support of the Parish Council and is in close proximity to Sandwich.

Worth Parish

3.87 Sandwich Bay Estate

Retail; There are no retail facilities on the estate.

Community; There is a wildlife centre, a boating club and there are two private golf courses, but there are no other local facilities.

Transport; The Estate is not served by public transport.

Sandwich Bay estate is not suitable for further development.

3.88 Worth

Retail; There is a local shop and two public houses.

Community; There is a primary school, a local church and village hall.

Transport; Worth has a hourly bus service (Diamond Route) to Deal and Canterbury.

Worth has good local facilities and public transport connections and would be suitable for further development.

Commentary on Survey Results**National Issues**

3.89 The State of the Countryside (2006 to 2007), produced by Commission for Rural Communities indicates that most services have seen reductions in the number of outlets between 2006 and 2007 in rural areas. The installation of cashpoints has, however, increased in number across the country. Over the last year, rural areas have seen a small increase in supermarkets and a notable increase in the number of free cash points but NHS dentists, banks and building societies, job centres and petrol stations all show appreciable falls.

3.90 With regard to public transport the document indicates that the percentage of households with access to a good bus service (thirteen minutes walk from a bus stop and an hourly service) has increased in the rural area over the past three years, although the overall percentage is lower than the households in urban areas.

Survey Commentary

3.91 In line with the national trend, the facilities in rural settlements in the Dover District have decreased in number. Comparing the current survey with that done for the Local Plan background paper in 1997, the rural settlements in Dover, have on the whole, lost retail facilities.

3.92 Of the settlements surveyed, Aylesham, St Margaret's, Ash, Eastry and Wingham provide the greatest range of facilities and the basic day to day goods and medical care requirements for residents. These settlements are also well served by public transport. The number of cash points has not followed the national trend as only Eastry appears to have a cash point within one of the stores. Wingham Green use to have one within the petrol station but this has since been removed. Some of the larger grocery shops did provide 'cash back' and Wingham had a local branch of a national bank.

3.93 The settlements that provided some basic facilities, such as a post office and shop, and were connected by the public transport network included Capel-le-Ferne, Shepherdswell, Kingsdown, Eythorne, Elvington, Woodnesborough, Worth, Great Mongeham, Preston, and Goodnestone. The bus services in, Shepherdswell, Preston, Goodnestone are, however, less than one bus an hour. Aylesham, Shepherdswell and Martin Mill were the only rural settlements that had rail connections.

Role of Settlements in Rural Area

3.94 Sandwich is the higher order centre that serves the rural area in the northern part of the District. The facilities within the town include primary and secondary schools, larger food stores, a greater choice of shops, financial institutions and is a public transport destination (both by train and bus). The town is also a focus for employment.

3.95 Aylesham should also provide a similar function as Sandwich for the West of the District but it does not currently have this role. The settlement has lost some facilities since the Local Plan but the the proposed development will regenerate the settlement and confirm its status as a Rural Service Centre.

3.96 St Margaret's, Wingham, Ash, and Eastry also appear to serve the rural area, providing a range of shops and facilities such as doctors or dentists, which are not found in other rural settlements. The rural area in the northern part of the district appears to be better catered in this aspect with Wingham, Ash and Eastry being located there. St. Margaret's, in the east, and Shepherdswell, in the west, provide shops and a medical centre. Residents in the rural area to the south would have to travel to Dover or Folkestone for such facilities but this situation should be improved when the new medical centre is completed in Lydden.

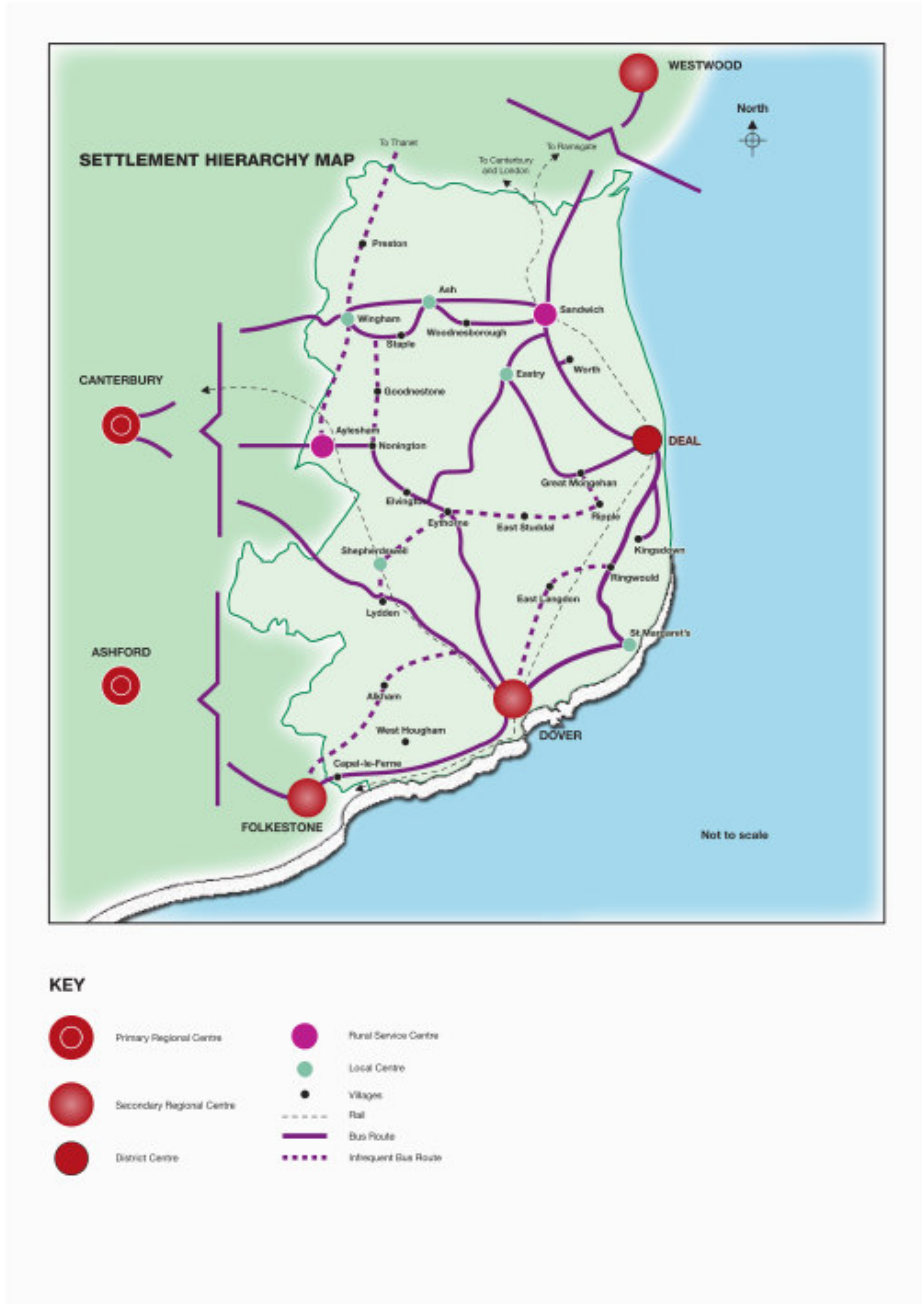
4 Settlement Strategy

4.1 The Objectives set out in the introduction of this document sought to;

- define a sustainable settlement hierarchy;
- identify the current role of settlements; and
- identify settlements within the hierarchy that would be suitable for future development.

4.2 From the survey it was possible to identify settlements within the hierarchy that would be suitable for future development. The table below identifies the settlements which fall under each category.

Settlement Definition	Settlement
Secondary Regional Centre	Dover
District Centre	Deal
Rural Service Centre	Sandwich - Established Centre Aylesham - Proposed Centre
Local Centre	Ash Eastry St Margaret's Shepherdswell Wingham
Villages	Alkham Caple-le-Ferne East Langdon East Studdal Elvington Eythorne Goodnestone Kingsdown Great Mongeham Lydden Nonington Preston Ringwould Ripple Staple West Hougham Woodnesborough Worth
Hamlets and sporadic development	All other settlements



Map 4.1 Settlement Hierarchy Map

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Settlement Network

4.3 One of the objectives of a sustainable settlement hierarchy is to ensure that all residents have reasonable access to a range of services and facilities. This can be gauged in relating to a combination of physical proximity and public transport links. This also needs to take account of the facilities offered by nearby settlements that lie outside the District but nevertheless serve some of its residents' needs.

4.4 Map 4.1 above illustrates the location of Secondary Regional Centres, District Centre, Rural Service Centres and Villages in the District together with their public transport connectivity and significant settlements in neighbouring Districts.

4.5 Settlements in neighbouring Districts provide facilities and services for residents in this District. For example, taken in isolation the south west of the District would appear to be poorly served. Folkestone is, however, located on the District boundary line and would provide most of the facilities and services for the south western corner of the Dover District. Similarly, Canterbury, to the west, and Westwood to the north, also provide higher order services and facilities for residents in the Dover District. The area that appears to have low provision of facilities or services is the central area of the District.

4.6 The District on the whole does, however, have good public transport connectivity and most settlements designated as a village or above should be able to access these services. The recent Diamond Route bus service, which runs to Dover, Deal, Sandwich and Canterbury, has improved this provision.

4.7 There may, however, be connectivity issues within the north west, south west and between the A256 and A258 where there are less frequent bus services. This may be an issue to monitor through discussions for the Dover Transport Strategy.

4.8 From this Map, it can also be seen that there are no significant geographical gaps in the provision of facilities in the District. Settlements in the north are served by Sandwich and the Local Centres of Eastry, Ash and Wingham. Deal and the Local Centre of St Margaret's serve the eastern part of the District whilst Aylesham, which is to be expanded to fully take-up the role as a Rural Service Centre, and Shepherdswell serve the western side. Dover town serves the whole district as well as providing local services to settlements in the south.

4.9 Since the Council's facilities and services survey, the Royal Mail has announced a consultation on the possible closures of post offices in Great Mongeham, Woodnesborough, Caple-le-Ferne and Goodnestone. At the time of writing this Settlement Strategy the outcome of the consultation was not known. The Council will, look again at the Settlement Strategy after the Royal Mail has made its final decision.

The Settlement Hierarchy will be used by the council to inform the LDF on matters relating to the role of settlements in the District and planning policy towards their future, including the distribution, type and amount of development that is appropriate.

Settlements have been identified in the hierarchy on the basis of their size, level of services, community function and public transport links. No account has been taken of constraints such as flood risk, access and landscape. The suitability of a settlement to accommodate further development, as identified in the Hierarchy, should not be taken to mean that there is suitable land for development at that settlement. This is a matter to be determined by the LDF Core Strategy and site Allocations Document, informed by the Sustainability Appraisal.

5 Appendix 1 - Summary of Government Guidance

Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

5.1 This sets out the broad principles for sustainable development. In terms of settlement strategy the key points are

- 'Focus development that attracts large numbers of people, especially retail, leisure and office development in existing centres to promote their viability and vitality, social inclusion and more sustainable pattern of development' (paragraph 27(vi)).
- 'Reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport provision to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development. Planning should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges' (paragraph 27 (vii)).

Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing

5.2 This outline the key principles for housing delivery. The key points that are relevant to settlement strategy are:

- '...to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure' (paragraph 36)
- 'The need to provide housing in rural areas, not only in market towns and local service centres but also in villages in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability' which '...should include, particularly in small rural settlements, considering the relationship between settlements so as to ensure that growth is distributed in a way that supports informal social support networks, assists people to live near their work and benefit from key services, minimise environmental impact and, where possible, encourage environmental benefits' (paragraph 37).

Planning Policy Statement 6 - Planning for Town Centres

5.3 This Statement outlines the key principles for town centre development. The key point for settlement strategy is to;

- '... define a network and a hierarchy of centres each performing their appropriate role to met the needs of thier catchments' (Chapter 2).

Planning Policy Statement 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

5.4 This Statement outline the principles for Rural Areas. The key points for settlement strategies are:

- 'Most developments which are likely to generate large numbers of trips should be located in or next to towns or other service centres that are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling' (paragraph 1 (iii)).
- 'decisions on the location of other developments in rural areas should, where possible give people the greatest opportunity to access them by public transport, walking and cycling consistent with achieving the primary purpose of the development' (paragraph 1 (iii)).
- 'New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government's aim is to protect the countryside for sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscape, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all' (paragraph 1 (iv)).

- 'Away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling. These centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development' (paragraph 3).
- 'Planning authorities should set out in LDDs their policies for allowing some limited development in, or next to, rural settlements that are not designated as local service centres, in order to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these communities. In particular, authorities should be supportive of small-scale development of this nature where it provides the most sustainable option in villages that are remote from, and have poor public transport links with, service centres' (paragraph 4).

Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Development Frameworks

5.5 This sets out the Government's policy on the preparation of local development documents which will comprise the local development framework. It requires a hierarchy of centres to be illustrated on the Proposals Map where it is relevant in the Core Strategy (Annex 2).

Planning Policy Guidance 13 - Transport

5.6 Planning Policy Guidance 13's (PPG13) objectives are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level and to promote more sustainable transport choices.

- 'ensure that strategies in the development and local transport plan complement each other and that consideration of development plan allocations and local transport investment and priorities are closely linked' (Paragraph 6, point 6).

6 Appendix 2 Summary Table of Settlement Survey Results

Village	Parish	No. of Dwellings*	Post Office	Shop	PH/Cafe	Cash Point	Other	Village Hall	Medical Facilities	Church	Primary School	Other	Bus	Train
Aylesham	Aylesham	1,515	1	9	4	-	-	1	1	2	2	5	Y	Y
St Margarets	St Margarets	1,202	1	5	6	-	1	1	1	1	3	5	Y	N
Ash	Ash	1,113	1	10	4	-	-	1	2	1	2	1	Y	N
Capel -Le-Ferne	Capel-Le-Ferne	787	1*	1	2	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	Y	N
Eastry	Eastry	984	1*	9	4	-	-	1	2	1	1	3	Y	N
Wingham	Wingham	541	1*	13	3	-	1	1	2	1	1	1	Y	N
Kingsdown	Ringwood with Kingsdown	859	1	4	4	-	2	1	0	1	1	1	Y	N
Shepherdswell	Shepherdswell & Coldred	638	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	YL	Y
Eythorne	Eythorne	613	1*	2	2	-	1	2	-	2	1**	1**	Y	Y***
Elvington	Eythorne	381	-	2	2	-	-	1	-	1	1**	1**	Y	N
Lydden	Lydden	260	-	-	2	-	2	1	-	1	1	1	Y	N
Woodnesborough	Woodnesborough	293	1*	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	1?	2	Y	N
Nonington	Nonington	287	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	Y	-	-	Y	N
Worth	Worth	250	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	Y	N
Great Mongeham	Great Mongeham	151	1*	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	Y	N
East Studdal	Sutton	162	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	YL	N
Preston	Preston	215	-	4	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	Y	N
Ringwood	Kingsdown with Ringwood	181	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	Y	N
Alkham	Alkham	154	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	Y	N
West Hougham	Hougham Without	132	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	N
Staple	Staple	120	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	Y	N
Ripple	Ripple	124	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	YL	N

Village	Parish	No. of Dwellings*	Post Office	Shop	PH/Cafe	Cash Point	Other	Village Hall	Medical Facilities	Church	Primary School	Other	Bus	Train
Guston	Guston	90	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	Y	N
Tilmanstone	Tilmanstone	122	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
Little Betteshanger	Northbourne	78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	N	N
Martin Mill	Langdon	90	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	YL	Y
Sandwich Bay Estate	Worth	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	N
East Langdon	Langdon	71	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	Y	N
East Stourmouth	Stourmouth	55	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	N
Elmstone	Preston	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	N	N
Ashley	Sutton	77	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	YL	N
Northbourne	Northbourne	68	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	Y	N
Goodnestone	Goodnestone	73	1*	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	YL	N
Barnsole	Staple	70	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	N	N
Wingham Green	Wingham	82	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Y	N
Finglesham	Northbourne	93	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	N
Martin	Langdon	52	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	YL	N
Chillenden	Goodnestone	45	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	YL	N
Feiderland	Eastry	59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	N

* Joint PO and Shop ** Accessible to both Eythorne and Elvington *** East Kent Light Railway YL Limited service

* Approximate number of dwellings based on settlement and small hinterland.

Please note that on the 3rd October 07 the Post Offices in Great Mongeham, Capel -Le-Ferne, Goodnestone and Woodnesborough were identified for closure by the Royal Mail.