

Dartford Local Plan Pre-Submission (Publication) Document July 2021

Habitat Regulations Assessment

Dartford Borough Council

July 2021

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
Isla Hoffman Heap Senior Ecologist	James Riley Technical Director	Max Wade Technical Director	James Riley Technical Director
Georgia Stephens Graduate Ecologist			

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
01	16/12/2020	2020 Update	JR	James Riley	Technical Director
02	12/01/2021	Final	JR	James Riley	Technical Director
03	July 2021	Amendment in response to Plan update	JR	James Riley	Technical Director

Distribution List

# Hard Copies	PDF Required	Association / Company Name

Prepared for:

Dartford Borough Council

Prepared by:

Georgia Stephens

AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited
Midpoint, Alencon Link
Basingstoke
Hampshire RG21 7PP
United Kingdom

T: +44(0)1256 310200
aecom.com

© 2021 AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited ("AECOM") for sole use of our client (the "Client") in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
Background to the Project.....	6
2. Methodology	8
3. Pathways of impact	11
Introduction.....	11
Recreational pressure.....	11
Atmospheric pollution.....	11
Water resources.....	13
Water quality.....	14
4. Test of Likely Significant Effects	16
Background to Dartford Borough.....	16
Physical Scope of the HRA.....	16
Recreational Pressure.....	20
Water quality.....	20
Air quality.....	20
5. The ‘in combination’ scope	22
6. Appropriate Assessment	23
Introduction.....	23
Recreational Pressure.....	23
Bird Disturbance Study and North Kent Visitor Survey.....	24
7. Conclusions	27
Appendix A European Designated Sites within 20km of Dartford Borough	28
The Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar Site.....	28
Introduction.....	28
Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar site.....	28
Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA.....	28
The Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar site.....	29
Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA.....	29
North Down Woodlands SAC.....	31
Peters Pit SAC.....	31
Appendix B Policy Specific Impacts for European Sites	33
Policy.....	33
S1 - Borough Spatial Strategy.....	33
S2: Infrastructure Planning Strategy.....	34
S3: Climate Change Strategy.....	36
S4: Borough Development Levels.....	36
D1: Central Dartford Strategy.....	37
D2: Central Dartford Development Principles.....	38
D3: The mix of uses in Dartford Town centre.....	39
D4: Westgate Allocation.....	39
D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation.....	40
D6: Priory Centre Allocation.....	40
D7: Station Surrounds / River Darent Area.....	41
E1: Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe Strategy.....	42
E2: Ebbsfleet Garden City Development Principles.....	43
E3: Swanscombe.....	44
E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation.....	44
E5: Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation.....	45

E6: Area North of London Road, Swanscombe	45
M1: Good Design for Dartford	46
M2: Environmental and Amenity Protection	47
M3: Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance	48
M4: Flood Risk and Riverside Design	49
M5: Designated Heritage Assets	50
M6: Historic Environment Strategy	51
M7: Affordable Housing	52
M8: Housing Mix	52
M9: Sustainable Housing Locations	53
M10: Residential Amenity Space	53
M11: Extensions, New Dwellings and Garden Land	53
M12: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation	54
M13: Green belt	55
M14: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space Provision	57
M15: Biodiversity and Landscape	58
M16: Travel Management	58
M17: Active Travel, Access and Parking	59
M18: Community Uses	61
M19: Sustainable Economic Locations	61
M20: Provision for Local Business and Skills	62
M21: Identified Employment Areas	62
M22: Bluewater	63
M23: District and Local Centres	64
M24: Food and Drink Establishments	64

Tables

Table 1. Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species	11
Table 2. Screening of Impact Pathways from development in Dartford Borough to European Designated Sites (impacts highlighted in green are screened in for appropriate assessment, impacts highlighted in orange are screened out of further assessment)	17

1. Introduction

Background to the Project

- 1.1 AECOM was appointed by Dartford Borough Council to assist in undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Dartford Local Plan. This is to inform Dartford Borough Council of the potential effects of development within the borough on internationally designated wildlife sites and how they are being addressed in the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The objectives of the assessment are to:
 - Identify any aspects of the Local Plan that would cause an adverse effect on the integrity of international sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) including, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and
 - To advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects were identified.
- 1.3 The HRA of the Dartford Local Plan is required to determine if there are any realistic linking pathways present between an international site and the Local Plan and where Likely Significant Effects cannot be screened out, an analysis to inform Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken to determine if adverse effects on the integrity of the international sites will occur as a result of the Local Plan alone or in combination.
- 1.4 AECOM produced the HRA of previous Local Plans for Dartford. The following European sites were considered in the HRA that AECOM produced for the Dartford Local Plan Development Policies Document in 2015/2016:
 - Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar/SPA
 - Medway Estuary and Marshes Ramsar/SPA
 - North Downs Woodlands SAC
 - Peter's Pit SAC

Legislation

- 1.5 The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 under the terms set out in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 ("the Withdrawal Act"). This established a transition period, which ended on 31 December 2020. The Withdrawal Act retains the body of existing EU-derived law within our domestic law. The most recent amendments to the Habitats Regulations – the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 – make it clear that the need for HRA continues after the Transition Period ended.
- 1.6 Under the Regulations, an appropriate assessment is required, where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon an international site, either individually or in combination with other projects. The Directive is implemented in the UK by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the "Habitats Regulations").

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Regulations state that:

"A competent authority, before deciding to ... give any consent for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site ... must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the plan or project in view of that site's conservation objectives... The competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site."

- 1.7 As 'competent authority', the legal responsibility for ensuring that a decision of 'likely significant effects' is made, for ensuring an 'appropriate assessment' (where required) is undertaken, and for ensuring Natural England are consulted, falls on the local planning authority.
- 1.8 The Habitats Regulations applies the precautionary principle¹ to international sites SAC, SPA, and Ramsar. For the purposes of this assessment candidate SACs (cSACs), proposed SPAs (pSPAs) and proposed Ramsar (pRamsar) sites are all treated as fully designated sites.
- 1.9 Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. This contrasts with the SEA Directive which does not prescribe how plan or programme proponents should respond to the findings of an environmental assessment; merely that the assessment findings (as documented in the 'environmental report') should be 'taken into account' during preparation of the plan or programme. In the case of the Habitats Directive, plans and projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation would be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.
- 1.10 In 2018, the 'People Over Wind' European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling² determined that 'mitigation' (i.e. measures that are specifically introduced to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a plan or project on international sites) should not be taken into account when forming a view on likely significant effects. Mitigation should instead only be considered at the appropriate assessment stage. Appropriate assessment is not a technical term: it simply means 'an assessment that is appropriate' for the plan or project in question. As such, the law purposely does not prescribe what it should consist of or how it should be presented; these are decisions to be made on a case by case basis by the competent authority.
- 1.11 Over the years the phrase 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' has come into wide currency to describe the overall process set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations from screening through to Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI). This has arisen in order to distinguish the process from the individual stage described in the law as an 'Appropriate Assessment'. Throughout this report we use the term Habitats Regulations Assessment for the overall process.

Report Layout

- 1.12 **Chapter 2** of this report explains the process by which the HRA has been carried out. **Chapter 3** explores the relevant pathways of impact. **Chapter 4** summarises the Test of Likely Significant Effects of the policies and site allocations of the Plan considered 'alone' and 'in-combination'. (The Test of Likely Significant Effects itself is undertaken in **Appendix B**). **Chapter 5** contains the Appropriate Assessment for any linking impact pathways that could not be screened out from potentially resulting in a Likely Significant Effect. **Chapter 6** contains the conclusion and a summary of recommendations.

¹ The Precautionary Principle, which is referenced in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) as: "When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm [to the environment] that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. The judgement of plausibility should be grounded in scientific analysis".

² People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)

² Case C-323/17

2. Methodology

Introduction

- 2.1 Figure 1 below outlines the stages of HRA according to current Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance. The stages are essentially iterative, being revisited as necessary in response to more detailed information, recommendations and any relevant changes to the Plan until no significant adverse effects remain.

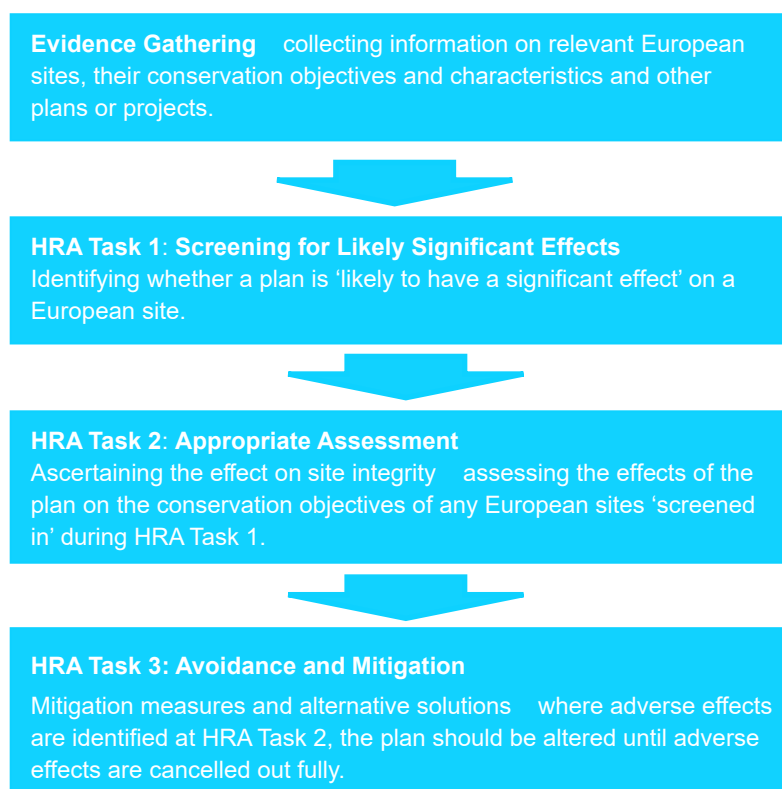


Figure 1 Four Stage Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment (GOV.UK, 2019)

HRA Task 1: Test of Likely Significant Effects (LSE)

- 2.2 Following evidence gathering, the first stage of any HRA is a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) test; essentially a risk assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as Appropriate Assessment is required. The essential question is:
- 2.3 *"Is the project, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European sites?"*
- 2.4 The objective is to 'screen out' those plans and projects that can, without any detailed appraisal, be said to be unlikely to result in significant adverse effects upon European sites, usually because there is no mechanism for an adverse interaction with European sites. This stage is undertaken in Chapter 4 of this report.

HRA Task 2: Appropriate Assessment (AA)

- 2.5 Where it is determined that a conclusion of 'no likely significant effect' cannot be drawn, the analysis has proceeded to the next stage of HRA known as Appropriate Assessment. Case law has clarified that 'Appropriate Assessment' is not a technical term. In other words, there are no particular technical analyses, or level of technical analysis, that are classified by law as belonging to Appropriate Assessment rather than determination of likely significant effects.

- 2.6 During July 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published guidance for Appropriate Assessment³. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 65-001-20190722 explains: *'Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded, a competent authority must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site, in view of the site's conservation objectives. The competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ruled out adverse effects on the integrity of the habitats site. Where an adverse effect on the site's integrity cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan or project can only proceed if there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured'*.
- 2.7 As this analysis follows on from the screening process, there is a clear implication that the analysis will be more detailed than undertaken at the Screening stage and one of the key considerations during Appropriate Assessment is whether there is available mitigation that would entirely address the potential effect. In practice, the Appropriate Assessment takes any policies or allocations that could not be dismissed following the high-level screening analysis and analyses the potential for an effect in more detail, with a view to concluding whether there would be an adverse effect on integrity (in other words, disruption of the coherent structure and function of the European site(s)).
- 2.8 A decision by the European Court of Justice⁴ concluded that measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a proposed project on a European site may no longer be taken into account by competent authorities at the Likely Significant Effects or 'screening' stage of HRA. The UK is no longer part of the European Union. However, as a precaution, it is assumed for the purposes of this HRA that EU case law regarding Habitat Regulations Assessment will still be considered informative jurisprudence by the UK courts. That ruling has therefore been considered in producing this HRA.
- 2.9 Also, in 2018 the Holohan ruling⁵ was handed down by the European Court of Justice. Among other provisions, paragraph 39 of the ruling states that *'As regards other habitat types or species, which are present on the site, but for which that site has not been listed, and with respect to habitat types and species located outside that site, ... typical habitats or species must be included in the appropriate assessment, if they are necessary to the conservation of the habitat types and species listed for the protected area'* [emphasis added]. This has been taken into account in the HRA process, although no areas within the borough have been identified as being necessary for any European sites to achieve their conservation objectives.

HRA Task 3: Avoidance and Mitigation

- 2.10 Where necessary, measures are recommended for incorporation into the Plan in order to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on European sites. There is considerable precedent concerning the level of detail that a Local Plan document needs to contain regarding mitigation for recreational impacts on European sites. The implication of this precedent is that it is not necessary for all measures that will be deployed to be fully developed prior to adoption of the Plan, but the Plan must provide an adequate policy framework within which these measures can be delivered.

Confirming Other Plans and Projects That May Act 'In Combination'

- 2.11 It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and projects that may also be affecting the European site(s) in question.
- 2.12 When undertaking this part of the assessment it is essential to bear in mind the principal intention behind the legislation; i.e. to ensure that those projects or plans (which in themselves may have minor impacts) are not simply dismissed on that basis but are evaluated for any cumulative contribution they may make to an overall significant effect. In practice, in-combination assessment is therefore of greatest relevance when the plan or policy would otherwise be screened out because its individual contribution is inconsequential.

The Scope

- 2.13 There is no guidance that dictates the physical scope of an HRA of a plan. Therefore, in considering the physical scope of the assessment we were guided primarily by the identified impact pathways rather than

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment#what-are-the-implications-of-the-people-over-wind-judgment-for-habitats-regulations-assessments> [Accessed: 07/01/2020].

⁴ People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-3.23/17).

⁵ Case C-461/17.

by arbitrary “zones”, i.e. a source-pathway-receptor approach. Current guidance suggests that the following international sites be included in the scope of assessment:

- All sites within the Local Plan Area (the area covered by the Local Plan); and
 - Other sites shown to be linked to development within the Local Plan Area through a known “pathway” (discussed below).
- 2.14 Briefly defined, impact pathways are routes by which a change in activity within the plan area can lead to an effect upon an international site. In terms of the second category of international site listed above, MHCLG guidance states that the AA should be “*proportionate to the geographical scope of the [plan policy]*” and that “*an AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose*” (MHCLG, 2006, p.6).
- 2.15 **Note** that the inclusion of an international sites or pathway below does not indicate that an effect is expected but rather that these are pathways that will be investigated.

3. Pathways of impact

Introduction

- 3.1 In carrying out an HRA it is important to avoid confining oneself to effectively arbitrary boundaries (such as Local Authority boundaries) but to use an understanding of the various ways in which Land Use Plans can impact on European sites to follow the pathways along which development can be connected with European sites, in some cases many kilometres distant. Briefly defined, pathways are routes by which a change in activity associated with a development can lead to an effect upon a European site. It is also important to bear in mind CLG guidance which states that the AA should be '*proportionate to the geographical scope of the [plan policy]*' and that '*an AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose*' (CLG, 2006, p.6⁶).
- 3.2 The following pathways of impact were considered relevant to the HRA of the Dartford Local Plan. All European sites discussed in this report are shown on Figure 2 in Appendix A. The pathway of loss of functionally-linked land is not considered in this HRA because the nearest allocation is 6.3km west of the closest Special Protection Area (Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar) and is separated from the SPA/Ramsar by the town of Gravesend. There is no evidence significant areas of functionally-linked land for the SPA/Ramsar are found in Dartford.

Recreational pressure

- 3.3 A number of European designated sites within 20km of Dartford Borough boundary have environmental sensitivities to disturbances as a result of recreational pressure. Consultation for the HRA of the (now revoked) South East Plan revealed that potentially damaging levels of recreational pressure are already faced by many European sites. Recreational use of a site has the potential to:
- Cause disturbance to sensitive species such as wintering wildfowl;
 - Prevent appropriate management or exacerbate existing management difficulties;
 - Cause damage through erosion, trampling and fragmentation; and
 - Cause eutrophication as a result of dog fouling.
- 3.4 Different types of European sites (e.g. coastal, heathland, chalk grassland) are subject to different types of recreational pressures and have different vulnerabilities. Studies across a range of species have shown that the effects from recreation can be complex.

Atmospheric pollution

Current levels of understanding of air quality effects on semi-natural habitats are not adequate to allow a rigorous assessment of the likelihood of significant effects on the integrity of key European sites.

Table 1. Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species

Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
Acid deposition	SO ₂ , NO _x and ammonia all contribute to acid deposition. Although future trends in S emissions and subsequent deposition to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems will continue to decline, it is possible that increased N emissions may cancel out any gains produced by reduced S levels.	Can affect habitats and species through both wet (acid rain) and dry deposition. Some sites will be more at risk than others depending on soil type, bedrock geology, weathering rate and buffering capacity.
Ammonia (NH ₃)	Ammonia is released following decomposition and volatilisation of animal wastes. It is also emitted from the exhausts of some vehicles. It is a naturally occurring trace gas, but levels have increased	Adverse effects are as a result of nitrogen deposition leading to eutrophication. As emissions mostly occur at ground level in the rural environment and NH ₃ is rapidly

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government. 2006. *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502244>

	considerably with expansion in numbers of agricultural livestock. Ammonia reacts with acid pollutants such as the products of SO ₂ and NO _x emissions to produce fine ammonium (NH ₄ ⁺) - containing aerosol that may be transferred much longer distances (can therefore be a significant trans-boundary issue.)	deposited, some of the most acute problems of NH ₃ deposition are for small relict nature reserves located in intensive agricultural landscapes.
Nitrogen oxides NO _x	Nitrogen oxides are mostly produced in combustion processes. About one quarter of the UK's emissions are from power stations, one-half from motor vehicles, and the rest from other industrial and domestic combustion processes. NO _x concentrations have been falling for decades due to improvements in abatement and vehicle emissions technology and are expected to continue to do so.	Deposition of nitrogen compounds (nitrates (NO ₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) and nitric acid (HNO ₃)) can lead to both soil and freshwater acidification. In addition, NO _x can cause eutrophication of soils and water. This alters the species composition of plant communities and can eliminate sensitive species.
Nitrogen (N) deposition	The pollutants that contribute to nitrogen deposition derive mainly from NO _x and NH ₃ emissions. These pollutants cause acidification (see also acid deposition) as well as eutrophication. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee has recently published the results of the Nitrogen Futures project ⁷ . That project investigated whether a net improvement in nitrogen deposition (including expected development over the same period) was expected to occur to 2030 at a national scale, under a range of scenarios. The report predicted a fall in nitrogen deposition by 2030 under every modelled scenario.	Species-rich plant communities with relatively high proportions of slow-growing perennial species and bryophytes are most at risk from N eutrophication, due to its promotion of competitive and invasive species which can respond readily to elevated levels of N. N deposition can also increase the risk of damage from abiotic factors, e.g. drought and frost.
Ozone (O ₃)	A secondary pollutant generated by photochemical reactions from NO _x and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These are mainly released by the combustion of fossil fuels. The increase in combustion of fossil fuels in the UK has led to a large increase in background ozone concentration, leading to an increased number of days when levels across the region are above 40ppb. Reducing ozone pollution is believed to require action at international level to reduce levels of the precursors that form ozone.	Concentrations of O ₃ above 40 ppb can be toxic to humans and wildlife, and can affect buildings. Increased ozone concentrations may lead to a reduction in growth of agricultural crops, decreased forest production and altered species composition in semi-natural plant communities.
Sulphur Dioxide SO ₂	Main sources of SO ₂ emissions are electricity generation, industry and domestic fuel combustion. May also arise from shipping and increased atmospheric concentrations in busy ports. Total SO ₂ emissions have decreased substantially in the UK since the 1980s.	Wet and dry deposition of SO ₂ acidifies soils and freshwater, and alters the species composition of plant and associated animal communities. The significance of impacts depends on levels of deposition and the buffering capacity of soils.

⁷ <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/04f4896c-7391-47c3-ba02-8278925a99c5>

- 3.5 The main pollutants of concern for European sites are oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), ammonia (NH_3) and sulphur dioxide (SO_2). NO_x can have a directly toxic effect upon vegetation in very high concentrations or in the presence of equivalent amounts of sulphur dioxide. In addition, greater NO_x or ammonia concentrations within the atmosphere will lead to greater rates of nitrogen deposition to soils. An increase in the deposition of nitrogen from the atmosphere to soils is generally regarded to lead to an increase in soil fertility, which can have a serious deleterious effect on the quality of semi-natural, nitrogen-limited terrestrial habitats.
- 3.6 Sulphur dioxide emissions are overwhelmingly influenced by the output of power stations and industrial processes that require the combustion of coal and oil. Ammonia emissions are dominated by agriculture, with some chemical processes and vehicle exhausts also making notable contributions at a local scale. As such, material increases in SO_2 will not be associated with Local Development Frameworks. NO_x emissions, however, are dominated by the output of vehicle exhausts (more than half of all emissions). Within a 'typical' housing development, by far the largest contribution to NO_x (92%) will be made by the associated road traffic. Other sources, although relevant, are of minor importance (8%) in comparison⁸. Emissions of NO_x could therefore be reasonably expected to increase compared to a situation with no growth, as a result of greater vehicle use as an indirect effect of the Local Plan although a net decrease over time compared to 2020 levels is still the most likely outcome.
- 3.7 According to the World Health Organisation, the critical NO_x concentration (critical threshold) for the protection of vegetation is $30 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$; the threshold for sulphur dioxide is $20 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. In addition, ecological studies have determined 'critical loads'⁹ of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (that is, NO_x combined with ammonia NH_3) for key habitats within European sites.
- 3.8 According to the Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance, "*Beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant*"¹⁰ (see **Figure 3**).

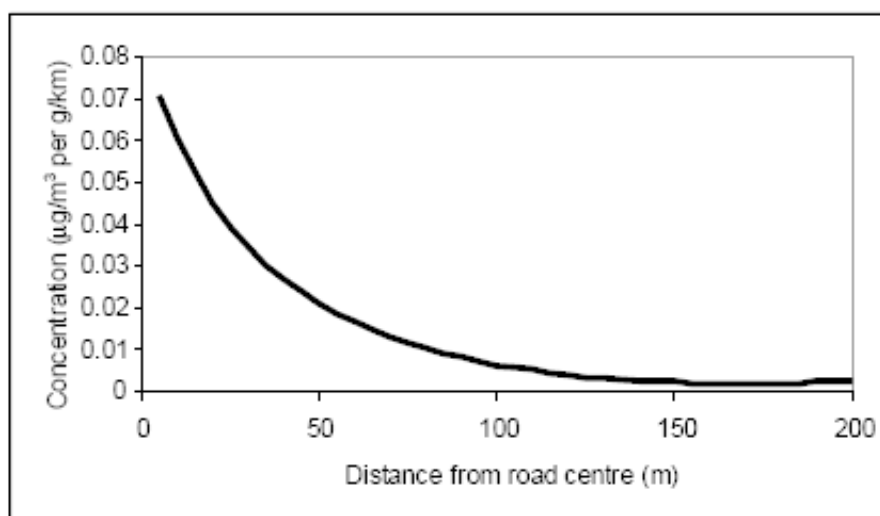


Figure 3: Traffic contribution to concentrations of pollutants at different distances from a road (Source: DfT)

- 3.9 This is therefore the distance that has been used throughout this HRA in order to determine whether European sites are likely to be significantly affected by development under the Dartford Local Plan.

Water resources

- 3.10 Dartford is generally an area of serious water stress (see **Figure 4**).

⁸ Proportions calculated based upon data presented in Dore CJ et al. 2005. UK Emissions of Air Pollutants 1970 – 2003. UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. <http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php>

⁹ The critical load is the rate of deposition beyond which research indicates that adverse effects can reasonably be expected to occur

¹⁰ www.webtag.org.uk/archive/feb04/pdf/feb04-333.pdf

Figure 1: Map of areas of relative water stress

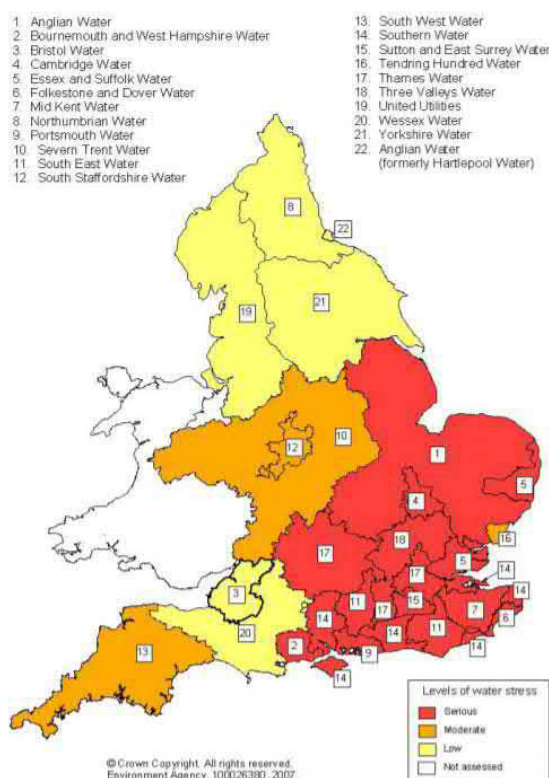


Figure 4: Areas of water stress within England

- 3.11 Development within Dartford Borough over the plan period will increase water demand. According to the Environment Agency's Darent and Cray Abstraction Licensing Strategy (January 2013) and Medway Abstraction Licence Strategy (February 2013), the catchment is groundwater dominated.
- 3.12 The Water Companies relevant to Dartford are Thames Water and Southern Water. Both companies provide wastewater treatment and supply water within Dartford Borough. Thames Water serves roughly the west of the borough and Southern Water serves roughly the east of the borough.

Water quality

- 3.13 Increased amounts of housing or business development can lead to reduced water quality of rivers and estuarine environments. Sewage and industrial effluent discharges can contribute to increased nutrients on European sites leading to unfavourable conditions.
- 3.14 The quality of the water that feeds European sites is an important determinant of the nature of their habitats and the species they support. Poor water quality can have a range of environmental impacts:
- 3.15 At high levels, toxic chemicals and metals can result in immediate death of aquatic life, and can have detrimental effects even at lower levels, including increased vulnerability to disease and changes in wildlife behaviour. Eutrophication, the enrichment of plant nutrients in water, increases plant growth and consequently results in oxygen depletion. Algal blooms, which commonly result from eutrophication, increase turbidity and decrease light penetration. The decomposition of organic wastes that often accompanies eutrophication deoxygenates water further, augmenting the oxygen depleting effects of eutrophication. In the marine environment, nitrogen is the limiting plant nutrient and so eutrophication is associated with discharges containing available nitrogen.
- 3.16 Some pesticides, industrial chemicals, and components of sewage effluent are suspected to interfere with the functioning of the endocrine system, possibly having negative effects on the reproduction and development of aquatic life.

- 3.17 For sewage treatment works close to capacity, further development may increase the risk of effluent escape into aquatic environments. In many urban areas, sewage treatment and surface water drainage systems are combined, and therefore a predicted increase in flood and storm events could increase pollution risk.
- 3.18 However, it is also important to note that the situation is not always simple. While nutrient enrichment does cause considerable problems on the south coast (particularly in the Solent) due to the abundance of smothering macroalgae that is produced, it is not necessarily a problem in other areas where the macroalgae are broken up by tidal wave action and where colder and more turbid water limit the build-up in the first place. Nonetheless, at this screening stage water quality impacts are considered to be an issue that requires investigation.

4. Test of Likely Significant Effects

Background to Dartford Borough

- 4.1 The Local Plan describes the context of Dartford Borough as follows: *“Dartford Borough covers an area of 7,600 hectares, the smallest, but most densely populated, Borough in Kent. Situated within the Thames Estuary, Dartford stands at the pivotal point between Greater London and Kent. Dartford has major national and international connections via the strategic road network, including the M25; Dartford crossing and the A2; and rail services, including from Ebbsfleet International Station (a 17 minute journey time to London St Pancras International).*
- 4.2 *Dartford Borough has two distinct areas. North of the A2 is a largely built-up area, containing 70% of the population, which stretches from Dartford town in the east (adjoining Bexley London Borough) through to the growing communities at Ebbsfleet (adjoining Gravesham Borough). To the south lies an area of open countryside with 12 villages and a number of small hamlets.”*

Physical Scope of the HRA

- 4.3 Further details regarding the interest features and vulnerabilities of the European site included within the scope of the HRA are given in Figure 2 and in **Appendix A**. All baseline data relating to the European site presented is taken from the Natural England Conservation Objectives and Site Improvement Plans for all European sites, identifying the key threats and pressures for those sites, unless otherwise stated.
- 4.4 For the Screening assessment (Table 2) green shading in the final two columns indicates that no impact pathway exists between the European site and any likely significant adverse effects due to the absence of any mechanism for this. Orange shading indicates that a pathway of impact exists and further discussion is therefore required. The main issues for investigation identified are recreational pressure, air quality and water quality.

Table 2. Screening of Impact Pathways from development in Dartford Borough to European Designated Sites (impacts highlighted in green are screened in for appropriate assessment, impacts highlighted in orange are screened out of further assessment)

International Designated Site	Location	Current and possible pressures/threats that could result from development in Dartford Borough	Discussion
Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/ Ramsar	Within 6.3km of Dartford Borough boundary	Recreational Pressure	<p>Increased development within Dartford Borough could lead to higher numbers of visitors to coastal European Sites which can be a major recreational draw for some potentially very disturbing activities such as dog-walking. For example, the nature, scale, timing, and duration of some human activities can result in the disturbance of birds at a level that may substantially affect their behaviour, and consequently affect the long-term viability of the population.</p> <p>Due to the well documented wintering bird population for which this Site is designated, likely significant effects in the absence of mitigation can be concluded for this European Site as a result of recreational pressure and will be discussed further.</p>
		Air Quality	<p>Increased residential development within Dartford Borough will lead to a greater number of vehicles within the borough. As such, increased air pollution is expected from vehicles emissions compared to a situation with no growth. Pollutants released from vehicles may be carried directly by wind currents and deposited to at European Sites or pollutants may become soluble and taken up during evaporation and deposited to European Sites at precipitation.</p> <p>Two interest features of Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site have some limited sensitivity to nitrogen deposition on their habitats (black-tailed godwit and pied avocet). However, their principal habitat is naturally relatively nitrogen rich and has a high critical load of 20-30 kgN/ha/yr. According to the UK Air Pollution Information System (www.apis.ac.uk) the maximum background deposition at the SPA/Ramsar site is 17 kgN/ha/yr which is significantly below the minimum part of the critical load range. As such no adverse effect on the SPA/Ramsar is expected to occur as a result of any increase in nitrogen deposition, particularly since (as already stated in Table 1) the JNCC Nitrogen Futures project expected background nitrogen deposition to fall to 2030 rather than increase, even allowing for growth. There is therefore negligible risk of the background nitrogen deposition rate at this SPA/Ramsar site exceeding its critical load.</p>
		Water Quality	<p>Increased residential development within Dartford Borough could lead to the loss of previously undeveloped land and therefore increased surface water runoff to nearby European Sites. An increase in the local population can also result in an increase in the discharge of treated sewage effluent into the River Thames.</p> <p>However, the European site is too far from Dartford for there to be a realistic surface water pathway connection. Moreover, the estuaries of the Greater Thames have a high sediment load, low water temperatures and high wave action. As such, smothering macroalgal growth, which has caused</p>

			issues for European sites on the south coast, is not considered a threat to achievement of conservation objectives for these European sites. The lower water temperatures and high sediment load restrict algal growth rates such that large algal mats tend not to develop, while the high wave action breaks up those mats that do accrete.
Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar	Within 14.3km of Dartford Borough boundary	Recreational Pressure	Increased development within Dartford Borough could lead to higher numbers of visitors to European Sites. For example, the nature, scale, timing and duration of some human activities can result in the disturbance of birds at a level that may substantially affect their behaviour, and consequently affect the long-term viability of the population. The North Kent coastal European sites (and coastal and estuarine European sites generally) are known to have a relatively large core catchment compared to smaller inland European sites. Therefore, this pathway to this site is screened in as a precaution.
		Air Quality	Increased residential development within Dartford Borough will lead to a greater number of vehicles within the borough. As such, increased air pollution is expected from vehicles emissions, relative to a situation of no growth. Pollutants released from vehicles may be carried directly by wind currents and deposited to at European Sites or pollutants may become soluble and taken up during evaporation and deposited to European Sites at precipitation. However, a zone of 10km is typically used to screen in European sites vulnerable to reductions in air quality. This is based on the average UK car journey being approximately 10.6km ¹¹ . Medway Estuary & Marshes is well outside this zone.
		Water Quality	Increased residential development within Dartford Borough could lead to the loss of previously undeveloped land and therefore increased surface water runoff to nearby European Sites. An increase in the local population can also result in an increase in the discharge of treated sewage effluent into the River Thames. However, the estuaries of the Greater Thames have a high sediment load, low water temperatures and high wave action. As such, smothering macroalgal growth is not a threat to the achievement of the conservation objectives for these European sites.
North Down Woodlands SAC	Within 5.3km of Dartford Borough boundary	Recreational Pressure	Increased development within Dartford Borough could lead to higher numbers of visitors to European Sites. For example, the nature, scale, timing, and duration of some human activities can result in the disturbance of birds at a level that may substantially affect their behaviour, and consequently affect the long-term viability of the population. However, the Site Improvement Plan for this European Site specifies the nature of recreational pressure at this SAC refers to off-road vehicles and all-terrain bikes, not footfall and steps are already being taken to secure site access points to curb this issue. Moreover, while Dartford borough is about 5.3km away at its closest, the main population centres are well over 10km away and thus well beyond the typical core recreational catchment of a small inland European site.

¹¹ GOV.UK (2019). *Average number of trips made and distance travelled*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts01-average-number-of-trips-made-and-distance-travelled>, accessed 13/03/2020

			Therefore, there are no likely significant effects of recreational pressure on this European Site and can be screened out of further assessment.
		Air Quality	Increased residential development within Dartford Borough will lead to a greater number of vehicles within the borough. As such, increased air pollution is expected from vehicles emissions compared to a situation with no growth. Pollutants released from vehicles may be carried directly by wind currents and deposited to at European Sites or pollutants may become soluble and taken up during evaporation and deposited to European Sites at precipitation. However, traffic-related air quality is only an issue where significant roads pass within 200m of a site. The nearest point at which a significant road (the A229) lies within 200m of this SAC is almost 15km from Dartford borough and is very unlikely to be a significant journey to work route for residents of Dartford. Therefore, likely significant effects in the absence of mitigation can be ruled out for this European Site as a result of air quality.
Peters Pit SAC	Within 10.1km of Dartford Borough boundary	None	No Threats identified in the Site Improvement Plan – Screened out of further assessment

Recreational Pressure

- 4.5 There is already a considerable body of evidence available to inform the HRA including:
- The HRAs undertaken for the Local Plans produced by surrounding authorities and the previous Dartford Core Strategy;
 - Conservation Objectives and Site Improvement Plans for all European sites, identifying the key threats and pressures for those sites;
 - Natural England Impact Risk Zones for each SSSI and, in particular, guidance that underlies those impact risk zones; and
 - Detailed visitor survey work and recreation mitigation work for other similar European sites.
- 4.6 The main issue for investigation identified in that HRA report was recreational pressure on Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site, although the Medway Estuary SPA/Ramsar site was also screened in for further discussion as a precaution. This will be discussed further in Section 6.

Water quality

- 4.7 The features of Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site are arguably indirectly sensitive through changes to their habitat (Further details on the features of this European Site can be found in **Appendix A**). Relevant pollutants include non-toxic chemicals such as phosphorus and nitrogen which both come from treated sewage effluent. They are essential nutrients for plant growth but in excess can affect the nutrient status of the waterbody and may cause eutrophication (excessive microbial and vegetative growth) if other environmental conditions are suitable, such as sufficiently low suspended sediment load to allow light penetration for growth, sufficiently warm water temperatures to allow rapid growth during the summer and sufficiently low wave action or adequately sheltered conditions to prevent the breakup of smothering algal mats during the winter. In coastal waters nitrogen is generally the primary growth-limiting nutrient. Aquatic nitrogen comes from various sources such as treated sewage effluent, agricultural fertiliser and animal waste. Some forms of nitrogen, such as ammonia, are both directly toxic and contribute to eutrophication.
- 4.8 However, the estuaries of the Greater Thames have a high sediment load, low water temperatures and high wave action. As such, smothering macroalgal growth is not an issue for these European sites.
- 4.9 Therefore, water quality is screened out of further assessment for Dartford Local Plan HRA.

Air quality

- 4.10 The other possible issue of relevance is air quality. A zone of 10km is typically used to screen in European sites vulnerable to reductions in air quality. This is based on the average UK car journey being approximately 10.6km¹². The only air quality-sensitive European site within 10km of Dartford is North Downs Woodlands SAC (see **Appendix A**). However, traffic-related air quality is only an issue where significant roads pass within 200m of a site. The nearest point at which a significant road (the A229) lies within 200m of the SAC is almost 15km from Dartford borough and is very unlikely to be a significant journey to work route for residents of Dartford. For example, Dartford residents would only need to use the A229 past the North Downs Woodlands SAC if they were travelling to Maidstone borough for work. Based on scrutiny of 2011 census data, Maidstone is a negligible work destination for residents of Dartford. It is not included in the top ten work destinations¹³ and only 346 Dartford residents travel to Maidstone at all for work by car, van or motorbike. This is just 1% of the 27,235 Dartford residents who commute out of the borough for work and is considerably less than 1% of the entire working population of Dartford, including those who both live and work within the borough.
- 4.11 Two interest features of Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site have some limited sensitivity to nitrogen deposition on their habitats (black-tailed godwit and pied avocet). However, their principal habitat is naturally relatively nitrogen rich and has a high critical load of 20-30 kgN/ha/yr. According to the UK Air

¹² GOV.UK (2019). *Average number of trips made and distance travelled*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts01-average-number-of-trips-made-and-distance-travelled>, accessed 13/03/2020

¹³ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/WU03UK/chart/1132462387>

Pollution Information System (www.apis.ac.uk) the maximum background deposition at the SPA/Ramsar site is 17 kgN/ha/yr which is significantly below the minimum part of the critical load range.

- 4.12 Therefore, air quality is also considered unlikely to be an issue as a result of the Local Plan. Therefore, air quality is screened out of further assessment.

5. The ‘in combination’ scope

- 5.1 It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts and effects of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and projects that may also be affecting the internationally designated site(s) in question.
- 5.2 When undertaking this part of the assessment it is essential to bear in mind the principal intention behind the legislation i.e. to ensure that those projects or plans which in themselves have minor impacts are not simply dismissed on that basis but are evaluated for any cumulative contribution they may make to an overall significant effect. In practice, in combination assessment is therefore of greatest relevance when the plan would otherwise be screened out because its individual contribution is inconsequential. The overall approach is to exclude the risk of there being unassessed likely significant effects in accordance with the precautionary principle. This was first established in the seminal Waddenzee¹⁴ case.
- 5.3 For the purposes of this assessment, we have determined that, due to the nature of the identified impacts, the key other plans and projects with potential for in combination likely significant effects are those schemes that have the following impact pathways: Recreational pressure. The following plans have been assessed for their in-combination impact to interact with the Dartford Local Plan:
- Thames Water –Resource Management Plan 2020 – 2100. Final adopted April 2020 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Southern Water –Water Resources Management Plan 2020 - 2070. Final adopted: December 2019 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Thurrock Borough Council Core Strategy Local Plan 2011-2026. Final adopted 21 December 2011 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Bexley Borough Council Core Strategy. Final adopted: 22 February 2012 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Bromley Local Plan: Adopted January 2019 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy. Final adopted February 2011 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2014 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 – 2030, adopted July 2019 [accessed 17th December 2020]
 - Kent Local Transport Plan (LTP4): Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031. Final adopted August 2017 [accessed 5th January 2021].
 - Environment Agency and Defra - River Basin Management Plan Thames River Basin District, December 2015 [accessed 17th December 2020].
- 5.4 It should be noted that, while the broad potential impacts of these other projects and plans has been considered, we have not carried out full HRA on each of these plans – we have however drawn upon existing HRAs that have been carried out for surrounding authorities and plans.
- 5.5 With a view to screening likely significant effects, all impact pathways from Dartford Local Plan alone (other than recreational pressure on the North Kent Estuaries) were screened out due to a lack of either European site vulnerability, or a lack of a connection to growth in Dartford borough. Therefore, the existence of other plans and projects promoting growth in other areas will not alter that assessment.

¹⁴ Waddenzee case (Case C-127/02, [2004] ECR-I 7405)

6. Appropriate Assessment

Introduction

- 6.1 The law does not prescribe how an appropriate assessment should be undertaken or presented but the appropriate assessment must consider all impact pathways that have been screened in, whether they are due to policies alone or to impact pathways that arise in combination with other projects and plans. That analysis is the purpose of this section. The law does not require the 'alone' and 'in combination' effects to be examined separately provided all effects are discussed.
- 6.2 The Dartford Local Plan aims to deliver at least 790 dwellings per annum across the Borough throughout the Plan period to 2036/37.
- 6.3 The HRA screening exercise undertaken in Appendix B indicates policies that were expected to have likely significant effects on the European Sites due to recreational pressures. Due to distance from European sites these effects will arise when growth in Dartford is considered 'in combination' with growth in other North Kent local authorities. At the screening stage, the following policies were screened in and require further assessment:
- S4: Borough Development Levels (delivers new dwellings at a rate of 790 per annum)
 - D4: Westgate Allocation (delivers a minimum of 120 dwellings)
 - D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation (allocates a minimum of 700 dwellings)
 - D6: Priory Centre Allocation (delivers a minimum of 400 dwellings)
 - E1: Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe Strategy (delivers an unspecified number of dwellings)
 - E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation (allocates approx. 2000 dwellings)
 - E5: Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation (delivers a minimum of 4,700 dwellings)
 - E6: Area North of London Road, Swanscombe (delivers an unspecified number of dwellings)

Recreational Pressure

- 6.4 There is growing concern over the cumulative impacts of recreation on key nature conservation sites in the UK, as most sites must fulfill conservation objectives while also providing recreational opportunity. Various research reports have provided compelling links between changes in housing and access levels and impacts on European protected sites^{15 16}. This applies to any habitat, but the additional recreational pressure from housing growth on destinations with water features is likely to be especially strong and some of the qualifying waterfowl are known to be susceptible to disturbance. Different European sites are subject to different types of recreational pressures and have different vulnerabilities. Studies across a range of species have shown that the effects from recreation can be complex. HRAs of Plans tend to focus on recreational sources of disturbance as a result of new residents¹⁷.
- 6.5 Human activity can affect organisms directly (e.g. loss of habitat or by causing species to flee) and indirectly (e.g. by damaging their habitat or reducing their fitness in less obvious ways e.g. stress). The most obvious direct effect is the loss of habitat as a result of increased visitors to a site (i.e. trampling). But human activity can also lead to much subtler behavioural (e.g. alterations in feeding behaviour, avoidance of certain areas and use of sub optimal areas etc.) and physiological changes to species (e.g. an increase in heart rate). While these are less noticeable, they might result in major population-level changes by altering the balance between immigration/birth and emigration/death¹⁸.

¹⁵ Liley D, Clarke R.T., Mallord J.W., Bullock J.M. 2006a. The effect of urban development and human disturbance on the distribution and abundance of nightjars on the Thames Basin and Dorset Heaths. Natural England / Footprint Ecology.

¹⁶ Liley D., Clarke R.T., Underhill-Day J., Tyldesley D.T. 2006b. Evidence to support the appropriate Assessment of development plans and projects in south-east Dorset. Footprint Ecology / Dorset County Council.

¹⁷ The RTP1 report 'Planning for an Ageing Population' (2004) which states that 'From being a marginalised group in society, the elderly are now a force to be reckoned with and increasingly seen as a market to be wooed by the leisure and tourist industries. There are more of them and generally they have more time and more money.' It also states that 'Participation in most physical activities shows a significant decline after the age of 50. The exceptions to this are walking, golf, bowls and sailing, where participation rates hold up well into the 70s'.

¹⁸ Riley, J. 2003. Review of Recreational Disturbance Research on Selected Wildlife in Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage.

- 6.6 Impacts of bird disturbance is particularly well studied. Much research concern stem from the fact that birds expend energy unnecessarily when disturbed and the time they spend responding to humans is time that is not spent feeding¹⁹. Disturbance therefore risks increasing energetic expenditure of birds while reducing their energetic intake, which can adversely affect the 'condition' and ultimately survival of the birds. Additionally, displacement of birds from one feeding site to others can increase the pressure on the resources available within the remaining sites, as they then must sustain a greater number of birds²⁰. Moreover, the more time a breeding bird spends disturbed from its nest, the more its eggs are likely to cool and the more vulnerable they, or any nestlings, are to predators.
- 6.7 Evidence in the literature suggests that the magnitude of disturbance clearly differs between different types of recreational activities. For example, dog walking leads to a significantly higher reduction in bird diversity and abundance than hiking²¹. Scientific evidence also suggests that key disturbance parameters, such as areas of influence and flush distance, are significantly greater for dog walkers than hikers²². A UK meta-analysis suggests that important spatial (e.g. the area of a site potentially influenced) and temporal (e.g. how often or long an activity is carried out) parameters differ between recreational activities, suggesting that activity type is a factor that should be taken into account in HRAs²³.

Bird Disturbance Study and North Kent Visitor Survey

- 6.8 A study was undertaken in 2010/2011 by Footprint Ecology²⁴, who looked at bird disturbance in North Kent. The study focused on recreational disturbance to wintering waterfowl on intertidal habitats and focused on part of the North Kent shoreline, stretching between Gravesend and Whitstable; encompassing three SPAs: the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA, the Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA and the Swale SPA. The key findings of the study are as follows:
- From 1,400 events (records of visitors in the bird survey areas) occurring within 200m of the birds, 3,248 species specific observations were noted of which:
 - 74% resulted in no response.
 - 13% resulted in a major flight.
 - 5% resulted in a short flight.
 - 5% resulted in a short walk.
 - 3% resulted in an alert.
 - Dog walking accounted for 55% of all major flight observations with a further 15% attributed to walkers without dogs. After controlling for distance, major flights were more likely to occur when activities took place on the intertidal zone (compared to events on the water or events on the shore), when dogs were present, and the probability of major flight increased with the number of dogs present within a group.
 - There were significant differences between species with curlew *Numenius arquata* the species with the highest probability of major flight and teal and black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* the lowest.
 - Tide state was also significant with major flights more likely at high tide, after controlling for distance. There was also a significant interaction between distance and tide, indicating that the way in which birds responded varied according to tide.
- 6.9 A visitor survey was undertaken at the same time as the aforementioned bird survey by Footprint Ecology²⁵. The key findings of the survey are as follows:

¹⁹ Riddington, R. *et al.* 1996. The impact of disturbance on the behaviour and energy budgets of Brent geese. *Bird Study* 43:269-279

²⁰ Gill, J.A., Sutherland, W.J. & Norris, K. 1998. The consequences of human disturbance for estuarine birds. *RSPB Conservation Review* 12: 67-72

²¹ Banks P.B., Bryant J.Y. 2007. Four-legged friend or foe? Dog walking displaces native birds from natural areas. *Biology Letters* 3: 14pp.

²² Miller S.G., Knight R.L., Miller C.K. 2001. Wildlife responses to pedestrians and dogs. 29: 124-132.

²³ Weitowitz D., Panter C., Hoskin R., Liley D. The spatio-temporal footprint of key recreation activities in European protected sites. Manuscript in preparation.

²⁴ D. Liley & H. Fearnley (2011). Bird Disturbance Study North Kent. Footprint Ecology

²⁵ Fearnley, H. & Liley, D. (2011). North Kent Visitor Survey Results. Footprint Ecology.

- 542 groups of visitors were interviewed representing information from 930 people with 502 dogs.
 - 65% (345) interviewed groups were accompanied by at least one dog.
 - 96% (521) interviewed groups were local residents who made their visit from home.
 - 70% of visitors who arrive by foot made their visits either daily or most days (in comparison to 31% who arrive by car).
 - 63% of visitors travelled to their visit location by car or van, 34% of visitors arrived by foot, 3% arrived by bicycle and 2% by public transport.
 - 50% of visitors who arrived by car lived within 4.2km of their visit location.
 - 23% of visitors stated they walked off the paths and onto the mudflats or the open beach. Of the 23% of visitors whose routes took them onto the mudflats 65% were accompanied by at least one dog.
- 6.10 Subsequent studies of the North Kent European Sites indicated that, while the core catchment for mitigation (i.e. the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy or SAMMS) was 6km thus excluding Dartford, large sites within 10km of the protection areas are likely to have a significant effect 'in combination' with each other and with growth within 6km of the SPAs/Ramsar sites. In Dartford this therefore means that an adverse effect on the Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site cannot be dismissed without mitigation, as the SPA/Ramsar site lies within 10km of the eastern-most part of Dartford borough around Swanscombe. Dartford has several large developments coming forward within this 10km zone. A number of these were taken forward through the adopted Core Strategy and already have planning permission, including Eastern Quarry and Croxton and Garry. Ebbsfleet Central is proposed for allocation in the new Dartford Local Plan.
- 6.11 In 2015/2016 Dartford Borough Council commissioned Footprint Ecology to undertake an assessment of strategic mitigation options (relating to the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA, Swale SPA and Medway Estuary Marshes and SPA) for large developments within Dartford (to assist in developing a suitable mitigation strategy. Any Dartford mitigation response would work in tandem with the 6km SAMMS that already exists. This resulted in a document on Large Site Options and Habitat Regulations in Dartford which was originally produced in draft form to support the Development Policies Plan submission in 2016 and which was finalised in 2017²⁶. Currently this mitigation strategy is being updated to be published in 2021.
- 6.12 The new Dartford Local Plan States *"The Council's approach is set out in full in the document "Habitats Regulations and Large Sites in Dartford Borough – Guidance for Developers (June 2021)". This requires developments of more than 15 dwellings within the 6km-10km zone to be screened for potential impacts on the SPAs and Ramsar sites and, if necessary, subject to full appropriate assessment. This approach will apply to the Ebbsfleet Central allocation (Policy E4) and to other applicable residential developments coming forward in the zone where they have not already been subject to screening and/or appropriate assessment. The guidance sets out the following options for potential ways in which impacts could be mitigated:*
- *Option 1: Payment of a tariff per dwelling, calculated as a proportion of that applied to developments within 6km of the SPAs and Ramsar sites. The tariff will be used to fund measures that are likely to have an impact on areas which attract less frequent visitors.*
 - *Option 2: Provision of alternative greenspace/ bluespace within or close to the proposed development which provides a demonstrably suitable alternative to visiting the SPAs/ Ramsar sites*
 - *Option 3: Availability of demonstrably suitable alternative greenspace/ bluespace which may divert potential residents from visiting the SPAs/ Ramsar sites which could reduce or negate the need for tariff contributions."*
- 6.13 Furthermore, the Plan states the following: *"It is expected that development will avoid any adverse impacts on existing biodiversity features, including designated sites, priority habitats and species, and waterbodies. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised, mitigated and, as a last resort, loss or damage should be compensated in accordance with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy (Policy S3)."*
- 6.14 Given the accepted core catchment zone of 10km for the European Sites discussed in this documents, three site allocations given in the Dartford Borough Local Plan are located further than 10km from Thames Estuary

²⁶ https://www.dartford.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/382390/Final-large-site-options-and-Habitat-Regulations-Developer-Guide-updated-July-2017.pdf

& Marshes SPA/Ramsar and Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar. Therefore, adverse effects of the following allocations on these European Sites will not arise:

- D4: Westgate Allocation (delivers a minimum of 120 dwellings)
 - D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation (allocates a minimum of 700 dwellings)
 - D6: Priory Centre Allocation (delivers a minimum of 400 dwellings)
- 6.15 However, policy E1: Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe Strategy, E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation (allocates approx. 2000 dwellings), E5: Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation (delivers at least 4,700 dwellings) and E6: Area North of London Road, Swanscombe fall within the 10km catchment zone of these European Sites and will therefore be subject to the above assessment, compensation and mitigation requirements.
- 6.16 The Council has included the following supporting text for policy M15 to specify, for the benefit of applicants, exactly which site allocations set out in the Plan fall within this catchment area and will hence require further assessment:
- 6.17 *“The Council’s approach requires developments of more than 15 dwellings within the 6km-10km zone to be screened for potential impacts on the SPAs and Ramsar sites and, if necessary, subject to full appropriate assessment. This approach will apply to the Ebbsfleet Central allocation (Policy E4) and to other applicable residential developments coming forward in the zone where they have not already been subject to screening and/or appropriate assessment.”*
- 6.18 This mitigation strategy in combination with the policies and amendments set out in the Dartford Local Plan are deemed sufficient to conclude that there will be no adverse impacts on the integrity of European Designated Sites as a result of development in Dartford Borough.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This assessment undertook both Screening and Appropriate Assessment of the policies and any allocations within the Dartford Borough Local Plan.
- 7.2 The international designated sites considered within the Appropriate Assessment for impact pathways that could not be screened out at the screening stage were:
- Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar
 - Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar
- 7.3 Impact pathways considered during the screening were: recreational pressure, water quality and air pollution. Water quality and air quality were screened out at the Screening stage due to a lack of linking impact pathways. Recreational pressure could not be screened out at the Screening stage and was therefore further discussed within the Appropriate Assessment.
- 7.4 Five Site Allocations to provide net new residential development were subject to Appropriate Assessment as they were located within/close to the accepted zones of influence of the aforementioned international sites and could result in adverse effects on the integrity of an international site in combination with other projects and plans. These were:
- D4: Westgate Allocation (delivers a minimum of 120 dwellings)
 - D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation (delivers a minimum of 700 dwellings)
 - D6: Priory Centre Allocation (delivers a minimum of 400 dwellings)
 - E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation (approx. 2000 dwellings)
 - E5: Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation (delivers a minimum of 4,700 dwellings)
- 7.5 Following Appropriate Assessment, it was concluded that Policies E4 and E5 were the only site allocations for which further assessment and mitigation would be required.
- 7.6 It is concluded that subject to the inclusion of the supporting text to Policy M15 as specified in paragraphs 6.16 and 6.17, the Dartford Borough Local Plan will contain sufficient policy framework to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of international designated sites will occur in isolation or in combination with other projects and plans.

Appendix A European Designated Sites within 20km of Dartford Borough

The Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar Site

Introduction

The Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site is located along the North Kent Coast within the Thames Estuary, 6.3km east of the Dartford Borough boundary, whilst the SPA is located 7.2km east of the Dartford Borough Boundary. It is located both within Kent, with approximately 10% within Essex, north of the River Thames.

The Ramsar information Sheet describes the site as a 'complex of brackish, floodplain grazing marsh ditches, saline lagoons and intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat. These habitats together support internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl. The saltmarsh and grazing marsh are of international importance for their diverse assemblages of wetland plants and invertebrates'.

Reason for designation

Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar site

Criterion 2:

'The site supports more than 20 British Red Data Book invertebrates and populations of the GB Red Book endangered least lettuce (*Lactuca saligna*), as well as the vulnerable slender hare's-ear (*Bupleurum tenuissimum*), divided sedge (*Carex divisa*), sea barley (*Hordeum marinum*), Borrer's saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*), and dwarf eelgrass (*Zostera noltei*)'

Criterion 5:

The site supports assemblages of international importance with species with peak counts in winter: 45,118 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Criterion 6:

Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Black-tailed godwit, *Limosa limosa islandica*, Iceland/W Europe - 1,640 individuals, representing an average of 4.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance with peak counts in winter:

Dunlin, *Calidris alpina alpina*, W Siberia/W Europe - 15,171 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3); and, Red knot, *Calidris canutus islandica*, W & Southern Africa (wintering) - 7,279 individuals, representing an average of 1.6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA

Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA is of European importance because: a) the site qualifies under article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the GB populations of the following species listed on Annex I, in any season:

Annex I Species	5 year peak mean 1993/94 – 1997/98	% GB population
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	283 individuals – wintering	28.3% GB
Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	7 individuals - wintering	1.0% GB

The site qualifies under article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed on Annex I), in any season:

Species	5 year peak mean 1993/94 – 1997/98	% of populations
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	1324 individuals – passage	2.6% Europe/ Northern Africa (win)

Species	5 year peak mean 1993/94 – 1997/98	% of populations
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	2593 individuals – wintering	1.7% Eastern Atlantic (wintering)
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>	29646 individuals – wintering	2.1% N Siberia/Europe/ W Africa
Knot <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>	4848 individuals – wintering	1.4% NE Can/Grl/ Iceland/NW Eur
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>	1699 individuals – wintering	2.4% Iceland (breeding)
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>	3251 individuals - wintering	2.2% Eastern Atlantic (wintering)

Non-qualifying species of interest

Other Annex 1 species which regularly occur on the site in non-qualifying numbers are breeding Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, and passage and wintering Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* and Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*. The site also supports nationally important populations of Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Pintail *Anas acuta*, Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* and Pochard *Aythya ferina*.

Environmental Pressures

Coastal Squeeze

Public access/disturbance

Invasive species

Changes in species distribution

Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Vehicles: illicit

Air pollution

Conservation Objectives

“Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features*
- *The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely*
- *The population of each of the qualifying features, and,*
- *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.”*

The Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar site

Introduction

The Medway Estuary SPA and Ramsar site is located along the North Kent Coast within the Thames Estuary, approximately 14.3km east of the Dartford Borough boundary.

The Ramsar information Sheet describes the site as a ‘*complex of rain-fed, brackish, floodplain grazing marsh with ditches, and intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat. These habitats together support internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl. Rare wetland birds breed in important numbers. The saltmarsh and grazing marsh are of international importance for their diverse assemblages of wetland plants and invertebrates.*

Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA

Reasons for designation

The Medway Estuary and Marshes qualifies under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive by supporting in summer nationally important breeding populations of avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) (28 pair, 7% British breeding population) and little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) (24 pairs, 1% British breeding population) both Annex 1 species

The site also qualifies under Article 4.1 by regularly supporting a nationally important wintering population of avocet. During the five year period 1986/87 to a990/91, the average peak count was 70 birds, representing 7% of the British population.

The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 as a wetland of international importance by virtue of regularly supporting over 20000 waterfowl with an average peak count of 53900 birds recorded in the five winter period 1986/87 to 1990/91 This total includes internationally or nationally important wintering population of the following migratory waterfowl (figures given are average peak counts for the five winter period 1986/87 to 1990/91): 4130 dark-bellied brent geese (*Branta bernicla bernicla*, 2.4% of the world population, 4.6% of the British wintering population), 5900 shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*, 2.3% of the north west European population, 7.9% of British), 980 pintail, (*Anas acuta*, 1.4% of the North West European wintering, 3.9% British), 740 ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*, 1.4% of the east Atlantic flyway population, 3.2% of British), 4810 grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*, 3.2% of EAF, 22.9% of British), 3690 knot (*Calidris canutus*, 1.0% of EAF, 1.6% of British), 22900 dunlin (*Calidris alpina* (1.6% of the EAF, 5.3% of British), 4180 redshank (*Tringa totanus* (2.7% of the EAF, 5.5% of British), 250 great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*, 2.5% of British), 5200 wigeon (*Anas Penelope*, 2.0% of British), 2400 teal (*Anas crecca*, 2.4% of British), 150 shoveler (*Anas clypeata*, 1.7% of British), 3300 oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*, 1.1% of British), 390 black tailed godwit (*Numenius arquata* (2.1% of British), 17 spotted redhank (*Tringa erythropus*, 8.5% of British), 12 greenshank (*Tringa nebulria*, 3.0% of British) and 630 turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*, 1.4% of British).

The Site also qualifies under Article 4.2 by virtue of regularly supporting in summer a diverse assemblage of breeding migratory waterfowl including oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*), shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Teal (*Anas Penelope*), shoeveler (*Anas clypeata*), Pochard (*Aythya farina*) and common tern (*Strna hirundo*).

The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 by virtue of regularly supporting in winter a diverse assemblage of wintering species including red throated diver (*Gavia stellate*), great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), teal (*Anas crecca*), Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Pochard (*Aythya farina*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), dunlin (*Calidris alpine*) and redshank (*Tinga totanus* and also the following Annex 1 species: Bewick's swan (*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*), hen harrier (*Circs cyaneus*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*) golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), short eared owl (*Asio flammeus*) and kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).

Environmental Pressures

Coastal Squeeze

Public access/disturbance

Invasive species

Changes in species distribution

Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Vehicles: illicit

Air pollution

Conservation Objectives

“Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features*
- *The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely*

- *The population of each of the qualifying features, and,*
- *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.”*

North Down Woodlands SAC

Introduction

This site consists of mature Beech forests and Yew woods on steep slopes. The stands lie within a mosaic of scrub and other woodland types and are the most easterly of the Beech woodland sites selected. Parts of the woods were affected by the storm of 1987. Small areas of unimproved chalk grassland are also present.

Reason for Designation

This site consists of mature beech *Fagus sylvatica* forests and yew *Taxus baccata* woods on steep slopes. The stands lie within a mosaic of scrub, other woodland types and areas of unimproved grassland on thin chalk soils.

The beech and yew woodland is on thin chalk soils and where the ground flora is not shaded dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* predominates. Associated with it is stinking iris *Iris foetidissima* and several very scarce species such as lady orchid *Orchis purpurea* and stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*.

The chalk grassland, on warm south-facing slopes, is dominated by upright brome *Bromopsis erecta* and sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* but supports many other plants which are characteristic of unimproved downland, including the nationally rare ground pine *Ajuga chamaepitys*.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. (Yew-dominated woodland)*
- Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests. (Beech forests on neutral to rich soils)
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*FestucoBrometalia*). (Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

Environmental Pressures

Public access/disturbance

Forestry and woodland management

Invasive species

Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen

Conservation Objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats, and,
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely

Peters Pit SAC

Introduction

Peter's Pit is an old chalk quarry with adjoining soil-stripped fields on the North Downs, with scattered ponds situated amongst grassland, scrub and woodland. The ponds have widely fluctuating water levels and support large breeding populations of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*.

Reason for Designation

The site has an undulating terrain in which many rain fed ponds, of various sizes, have developed. Those which dry up early in the season are of less interest, but five ponds are sufficiently large to support very substantial populations of amphibians, particularly the great crested newt. The value of the site for newts is enhanced by the presence, around the edges and between the ponds, of areas of scrub with loose rock which serve as day and winter refuges. Aquatic vegetation provides shelter in the pond environment.

Qualifying species: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

Environmental Pressures

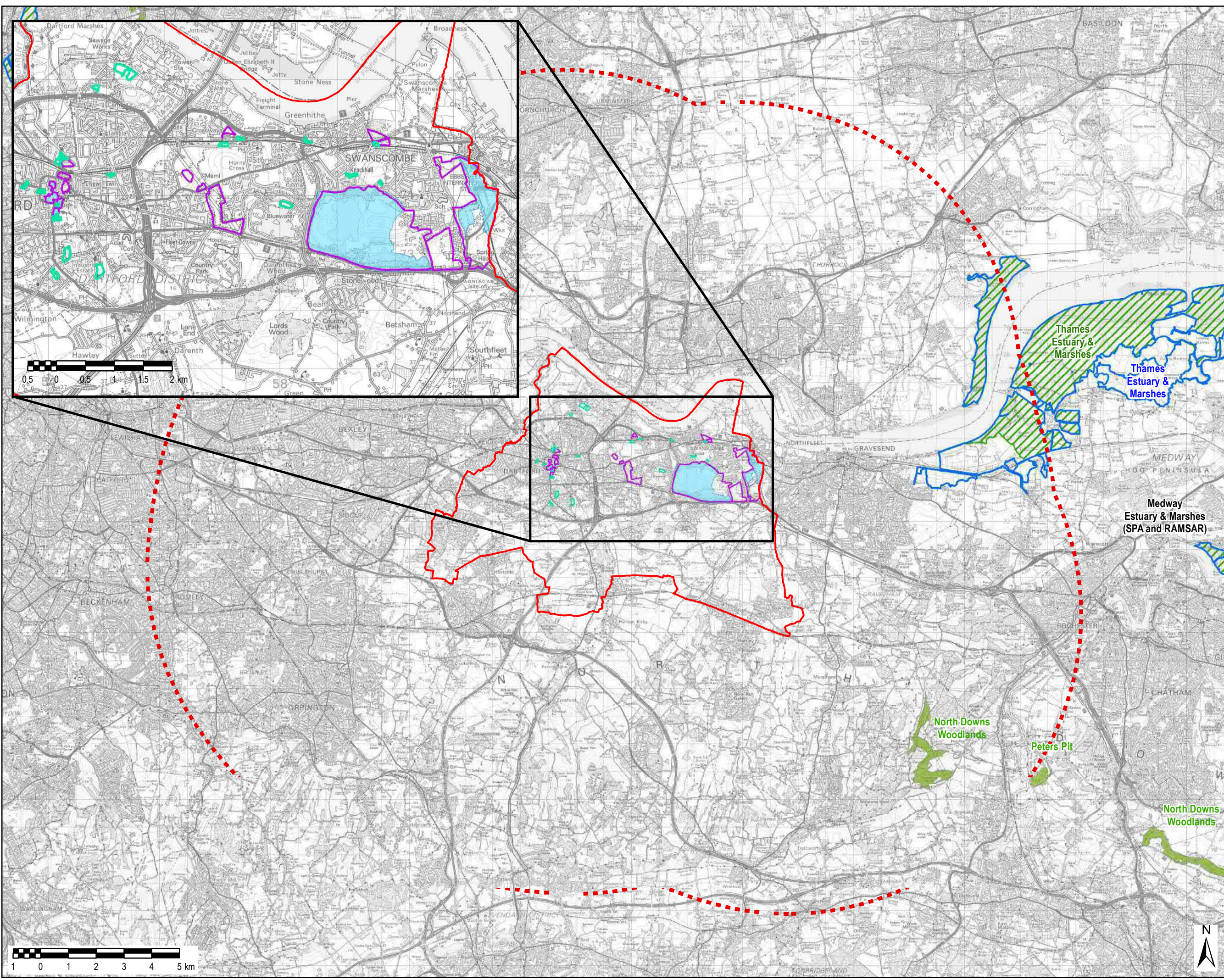
None

Conservation Objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site

File Name: \\na.aecomnet.com\is\EMEA\Basingstoke\UKBAS\Legacy\UKBAS\PPFL\W001\4400 - Management Services\5004 - Information Systems\60648080_Dartford_Borough_Council\02_Maps\Figure 2 - DDC Housing Allocations and European sites.mxd



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

- LEGEND**
- Dartford Borough Boundary
 - Dartford Borough Boundary 10km Buffer
 - Dartford Site Allocation
 - Ramsar
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Trajectory Sites 16-99 Inclusive
 - Trajectory Sites 99 and Over

Copyright
 Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown Copyright and database right 2021
 Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2021. All rights reserved. Licence number 0100031673
 © Natural England material is reproduced with the permission of Natural England 2021

Purpose of Issue **DRAFT**

Client **DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Project Title **DARTFORD BOROUGH HRA**

Drawing Title **EUROPEAN SITES AROUND DARTFORD**

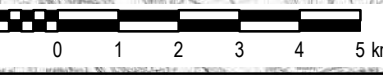
Drawn AW	Checked CN	Approved JR	Date 02/07/2021
AECOM Internal Project No. 60648080		Scale @ A3 1:125,000	

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED PURSUANT TO AND SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF AECOM'S APPOINTMENT BY ITS CLIENT. AECOM ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY USE OF THIS DOCUMENT OTHER THAN BY ITS ORIGINAL CLIENT OR FOLLOWING AECOM'S EXPRESS AGREEMENT TO SUCH USE AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS PREPARED AND PROVIDED.

AECOM
 Scott House
 Alençon Link, Basingstoke
 Hampshire, RG21 7PP
 Telephone (01256) 310200
 Fax (01256) 310201
 www.aecom.com



Drawing Number **FIGURE 2** Rev **01**



Appendix B Policy Specific Impacts for European Sites

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
S1 - Borough Spatial Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable development will occur at planned locations in the Borough to meet assessed needs, securing new infrastructure provision and brownfield land re-use, creating neighbourhoods resilient and adaptive to climate change. Development should provide a diverse and complementary balance of uses and services within settlements, and minimise the necessity to travel by private vehicles. 2. Growth will be located at strategic allocations, identified sites in the planned housing land supply and in line with the economic strategy. Development is directed to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) brownfield land not within the Green Belt; and b) sites with good access by public transport and walking/ cycling to a range of local supporting services/ infrastructure. 3. The overriding priority for development in the Borough is at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Central Dartford; and b) Ebbsfleet Garden City <p>These growth locations will be regenerated with the provision of new and improved infrastructure and strategic mixed use development.</p> 4. Heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. 5. Designated sites of biodiversity value will be protected, and improvement of ecological sites and networks maximised. <p><u>Urban Area Principles</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The Urban Area is defined as the area to the north of the A2 and outside the Green Belt. Within this area, complementary to strategic growth at central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City, developments with permission will be completed and additional development will occur at the Urban Area neighbourhoods of Dartford, Stone, Greenhithe and Swanscombe. This will include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Residential development at sites identified in the housing land supply; b) Provision of infrastructure, including for education and health facilities, and improvements to walking and cycling links, railway stations and the bus/ Fastrack networks; c) Provision or enhancement of Green and Blue Infrastructure and Green Grid links; d) Protection of shops and services at identified district and local centres and improvement of the quality of their environment where opportunities arise; and 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This policy does not relate directly to development allocations, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>e) Enhancements to the Rivers Thames and Darent for outdoor recreation, small- scale river related leisure uses, walking and cycling, and ecology where possible.</p> <p><u>Economic Strategy</u></p> <p>7. Significant jobs, major commercial activity and new employment premises will be prioritised within Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City. Economic development will occur at locations elsewhere in the urban area where this is consistent with sustainable growth patterns and provides suitable improvement and expansion/ intensification of commercial locations. Economic growth will be based on a strategy of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) supporting the growth of existing local businesses within the Borough, and encouraging start-ups and small/ medium sized enterprises; b) promoting enhanced productivity, targeting growth sectors, and clusters of high technology, or creative, industries; and c) increasing professional and managerial employment. <p>8. Economic development and jobs growth will be delivered principally through supporting development opportunities to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planned strategic expansions at, or additional floorspace within, the identified employment areas. b) Redevelopment for modern retail/ leisure premises and community facilities within the retail centres. The network of retail centres comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Dartford Town Centre, which will attract a wide range of new businesses; ii) Bluewater, which will continue its regional economic contribution; iii) District Centres at Dartford, Ebbsfleet, Swanscombe and Longfield; and iv) Local Centres in the urban area and at villages. <p><u>Non-Urban Area Principles</u></p> <p>9. The openness and permanence of the Metropolitan Green Belt in the south of the Borough and at Dartford Marshes will be maintained. Development will only occur where in full accordance with Green Belt policies.</p> <p>10. Any residential or other development within the Borough’s villages will be of proportionate scale and on non-Green Belt land.</p>	
S2: Infrastructure Planning Strategy	<p>1. Borough development will be plan-led, and major proposals masterplanned and phased, in order to ensure the co-ordinated delivery of new infrastructure, and that demand is managed to remain within capacity as far as possible until necessary new infrastructure is provided. New services and facilities will be provided to meet Dartford’s needs, with land retained within applicable large development for essential community, travel, flood defence and green infrastructure uses.</p> <p>2. Community uses, including education, health, sports facilities, cultural services, and local shops, will be retained, and new facilities delivered. Development will ensure communities have good quality and sustainable access to the day-to-day facilities they need including local services and jobs. Overall community infrastructure needs and growth will be regularly reviewed to ensure a flow of sufficient new facilities are secured in appropriate locations.</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This policy does not specify site allocations and refers mainly to infrastructure management, nor does it provide any</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>3. New development will be located where well served by public transport, and within easy walking distance of local facilities and jobs (for new homes, or the labour force / primary catchment, as applicable for other developments). All major development will feature significant measures to provide improved safe and secure active travel routes integrated with the surrounding area. Large and trip generating developments should support public transport use and new infrastructure. Focussing on sustainable locations/ transport provisions should support minimising pollution in Air Quality Management Areas and elsewhere.</p> <p>4. Opportunities to achieve transport upgrades will be maximised. This includes promoting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New and improved rail services and replacement or enhanced train stations. b) New and improved Fastrack and other bus services/routes, including addressing non-dedicated sections of Fastrack routes which are vulnerable to general traffic congestion, and bus priority at junctions where possible. c) Further highway and junction upgrades. Additional investment will be supported, dependent on further assessment by Highways England, Kent County Council, Dartford Borough Council and partners. d) Exploring the use of rivers for the sustainable transport of goods and passengers as part of proposals for strategic scale development. <p>5. Physical and other infrastructure necessary to serve development, including beyond the plan period, will be co-ordinated with the relevant agencies, service providers and utility companies (including liaison between them and the developer where appropriate). Space for strategic infrastructure provision, and access to it, will be reserved as required, including for flood defences and waste planning. New high quality and advanced communications infrastructure developments will occur in line with national policy to support the Borough's needs.</p> <p>6. The Borough's Green Grid network will continue to be upgraded and expanded to a finer grain, including through improving existing green and blue infrastructure such as open spaces and water bodies, achieving appropriate new multi-functional greenspaces, and enhancing biodiversity. Development will also contribute proportionately to green infrastructure, with larger developments making significant provision on-site.</p> <p>7. Dartford's infrastructure planning documents will set out the Council's priorities for infrastructure, and be a principal basis for working with partners on infrastructure delivery. Development will contribute to infrastructure provision as necessary in line with national policy, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Contributions via Dartford's Community Infrastructure Levy, and/or b) Planning obligations secured by Section 106 legal agreements, where applicable, for affordable housing or site specific infrastructure, and/or c) Provision in-kind, or d) Any successor developer contribution scheme. 	<p>locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
<p>S3: Climate Change Strategy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development will be well located, and innovatively designed and constructed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Development in the Borough should contribute to minimising carbon emissions from properties and processes, and reducing the need for unsustainable travel; avoiding vulnerability and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change by a package of bespoke measures integrated within development at an early stage of design and planning, including the measures set out below. 2. The use of sustainable and active travel modes will be embedded into developments; designing for walking/ cycling (particularly at locations which benefit the Green Grid), public transport and low carbon motorised personal transport (including for future electric vehicle charging points/ cabling needs). This should be designed to be adaptable to allow for future changes to technology and transport methods. <p><u>Green and Blue Infrastructure</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Existing green spaces, habitats, and tree coverage will be protected and enhanced, and new provision will be made, to absorb carbon dioxide, support biodiversity and reduce surface water runoff. The biodiversity mitigation hierarchy (avoid, reduce, mitigate, compensate) will apply, with the priority being to protect, enhance and integrate existing features of biodiversity interest. Achieving biodiversity net gain will play an important part in delivering this strategy. <p><u>Flood risk management</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Development will be sequentially located in areas at lower risk of flooding unless the development demonstrably provides specific wider sustainability benefits and will be safe for its lifetime. Planned development in flood risk areas will fully mitigate flood risk impacts. 5. Development will be planned to deliver/ maintain existing and future local and strategic flood defences, and major development will provide sustainable drainage systems which reduce surface water flood risk and benefit the green infrastructure network. <p><u>Sustainable design and technology</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Development will efficiently manage and re-use natural resources and waste, including through the use of water efficiency measures. 7. The design, location and construction of development will minimise energy consumption, regulate internal temperatures, provide appropriate natural shading on buildings, at street level and in open spaces, and incorporate renewable or low/zero carbon energy sources and allow for other new sustainable technologies to be provided or readily incorporated in the future. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This policy does not specify site allocations and relates to climate change and sustainability, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>S4: Borough</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decisions on planning applications will ensure that levels of future development delivery are sufficient to provide for assessed housing needs and other development requirements, including for economic regeneration, and take account of infrastructure 	<p>HRA implications</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
Development Levels	<p>provision.</p> <p>2. Large developments should be delivered at a phased rate in accordance with agreed masterplanning to provide a flow and complementary range of development, facilities and infrastructure. Achieving genuine variety within residential developments, through differentiation of housing tenures and types/ design will create vibrant places, and also help maintain rates of new home delivery and Borough housing supply as planned.</p> <p><u>Housing requirement</u></p> <p>3. New homes are required to be delivered at a rate of 790 per annum (on average), with planning permissions and delivery closely monitored and managed. Decisions will be based on this requirement and the identified housing land supply in order to ensure a steady availability of deliverable land, and achievement of the planned supply at sustainable locations supported by infrastructure.</p> <p>4. Planning decisions will have close regard to the target for 80% of the Borough's new homes in the plan period to be located on brownfield land.</p> <p>5. A rolling five year deliverable supply of housing land will be maintained, including the applicable supply buffer (brought forward from within the Plan period, to the level as required in the Housing Delivery Test).</p> <p><u>Town Centre, Community and Employment development</u></p> <p>6. Supporting the delivery of sustainable development aims and Dartford's economic strategy and regeneration areas, planning decisions will take account of the desirability of providing as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a balanced mix of land uses in the Borough and within neighbourhoods; b) approximately 22,000sqm per annum of new commercial, business and services uses, and community and learning uses (including offices, health facilities and schools); and c) approximately 25,000sqm per annum of new industrial/ distribution premises. 	<p>This policy allocates dwellings at a rate of 790 per annum over the planning period.</p> <p>This could cause an increase in recreational pressure on European Sites.</p>
D1: Central Dartford Strategy	<p>1. The high quality transformation of central Dartford is actively supported: as a destination to invest, be productive and creative, visit for shopping, leisure and services, and as a place to call home. Valued, good quality buildings and spaces will be repurposed, enhanced and better used. Development in and around the town centre will bring an expanded range of activities and services to the town (including cultural and creative facilities), increasing economic vitality and the choice of jobs, providing new infrastructure, and will grow the resident community. In this respect, the following will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Current projects and strategic plans will continue to advance, leading to completion of: the sympathetic refurbishment of the town centre's key streets, public spaces and historic buildings; transport and movement improvements; the renewal of Lowfield Street/ Brewery Square (Market Street)/ High Street; and the successful redevelopment of the Westgate and Priory Centre sites. b) There will be significant further progress in and on the edge of the town centre. It will change, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. improving links across central Dartford, removing some of the barriers to movement that have been 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>created by large sites, and making existing routes attractive and safe;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. facilitating, and connecting with, an enhanced Dartford railway station/ public transport interchange; and iii. opening up and creating safe links/ spaces to and along the River Darent, with a more natural river channel and setting. <p>2. The Council and partners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote redevelopment of large/ unappealing buildings and under-used land/ buildings where they are no longer contributing positively to Dartford’s environment or commercial or cultural offer. Appropriate short-term meanwhile use of vacant premises and/ or land is encouraged. b) Support the strong contribution made by the Orchard Theatre, street market and independent traders, to retain Dartford’s identity and vitality. c) Plan ahead with providers and landowners to reserve land for public/ community service provision in advance of occupation of new dwellings. d) Further enhance the public realm and connectivity, and the setting of heritage assets, with refurbished streets and green routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This will feature public spaces, squares or pocket parks as focal points for the town centre, with a high class street scene, public art and new riverside environment, and hard/ soft landscaping and shelter – including new trees. e) Encourage access between the River Darent, the railway station and the town centre, particularly through wayfinding, upgrading of public spaces and currently unappealing environments, and overcoming severances to pedestrian and cycle movement created by the ring road (Home Gardens/ Westgate Street) and the railway embankment. f) Secure major transport investment to: mitigate the current adverse impacts of traffic congestion; increase public transport capacity and services (reducing dependency on car travel); and enhance walking and cycling. The Council will seek full integration of rail, bus and Fastrack services, particularly at a new railway station and with new rail services for Dartford. g) Seek parking that is flexible to use and promotes multi-purpose town centre visits. The Council will undertake a review of the parking strategy, looking at changing usage and the requirements of current and future residents, employees and visitors for short/ long stay vehicle parking. 	<p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>D2: Central Dartford Development Principles</p>	<p>1. Development proposals in central Dartford should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Accord with Diagram 5 and the overall vision for Central Dartford, including by ensuring that development will not prejudice reasonable prospects for adjacent or nearby sites to come forward by virtue of overlooking or other outcomes, and contribute as required to local transport, public realm improvements (including public art reflecting local character and heritage), green infrastructure and social infrastructure requirements. b) Support the town centre’s role in providing jobs, retail/ leisure, cultural facilities and other local services, securing a wide mix of uses in the town centre. Proposals must seek to retain or promote market town features for the future, such as affordable space for independent traders, arts/ cultural industries, and new food and beverage uses/ other local businesses. Major development in the town centre should wherever possible provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. flexible commercial premises, with space designed for local growth sectors, or businesses that will grow local professional/ managerial or high technology level employment; or 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. suitable new retail/ leisure facilities complementing current successful activities, or strategic visitor/ shopper attractions (for example a cinema/ other significant cultural or day and evening uses); or iii. community/ public facilities and local services to accommodate the requirements of Central Dartford's growing population, unless a lack of need is demonstrated. c) Support the creation of a neighbourhood community with a mix of residential types and tenures. d) Ensure integration of the scheme into the wider setting and movement patterns, including creating safe public/ open spaces and/ or new pedestrian friendly streets. The sense of security of spaces and streets must be ensured, including for converted/ extended buildings where features such providing front doors onto safe spaces and streets are expected. e) Assess the heritage significance of the area and respond positively to local character and history, conserving and taking opportunities to enhance the significance of heritage assets. f) Deliver a development that improves air quality and grows the proportion of journeys made by active and public transport modes. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the integration, layout and design of development having safe and direct non-vehicular routes through the town centre as well as through provision of suitable infrastructure; and ii. parking arrangements with flexibility for changing needs and technology, and good cycle parking provision. g) Fully mitigate flood risk and ensure that the development is safe for the lifetime of the development, where located within an area at risk of flooding. 	<p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>D3: The mix of uses in Dartford Town centre</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A diverse mix of ground floor uses is expected in Dartford Town Centre. The Core Frontage identifies the Town Centre's street that should be characterised by an active mix of uses at ground floor, high levels of daytime pedestrian activity, and a clear sense of history, all befitting a bustling market town. In this respect, the following will apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In the Core Frontage, changes of use, or redevelopment consistent with Conservation Area and other design/ heritage principles, for retail, leisure, services and other uses in Class E will be permitted where an active window display to the frontage is maintained if possible. b) Elsewhere in the town centre, and at vacant units in the Core Frontage where sufficient effective marketing for Class E use has occurred, other main town centre uses, businesses and services will also be permitted, including food and drink uses, hotels, cultural, local community uses and other uses within Class F. 2. It is expected that residential development will occur principally through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) strategic allocations identified in Policies D4, D5 and D6; b) high quality conversion/ extension of upper floors or under-used buildings; and c) new residential developments in the housing land supply, located in accordance with Policy D7, or sites demonstrated to be suitable in the town centre. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>D4: Westgate Allocation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development at Westgate should provide a mix of uses and enhance Dartford's leisure, visitor and mid-evening economy and/ or health and wellbeing offer. 2. Proposals should demonstrate through masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that it: 	<p>HRA Implications</p> <p>This policy allocates 120+ dwellings which</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) retains the former Co-op façade on Spital Street; b) includes active uses on existing street frontages and ensures safe public and private areas; c) reconnects historic roads/ routes, ensuring an east-west pedestrian route across the site; and d) features a new public square. <p>3. Development is expected to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a cinema/ strategic leisure facility, or cultural, visitor, wellbeing/ community service/ shopping anchor use of equal significance; b) 5,000sqm or more of Class E, other main town centre uses, and/ or C1 hotel; and c) 120 dwellings or more. 	<p>could increase recreational pressure on European Sites</p>
<p>D5: East of Lowfield Street Allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development at Lowfield Street should continue to create vibrancy and an attractive environment in the south of Dartford town centre, and provide a clear, modern and appealing sense of entry to the town centre. 2. Proposals should demonstrate through integrated masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) achieves the co-ordinated and comprehensive physical regeneration of the East of Lowfield Street, and permeability through to Central Park; b) delivers significant good quality residential development; c) provides active ground floor uses, with modern retail/ leisure units to the north, and new community use premises at the southern end; d) enhances routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and improves the existing pedestrian environment along Lowfield Street; e) avoids traffic needing to travel through Market Street to access the site; f) provides a good quality multi-functional public realm which links to Central Park, with an appropriate boundary to the park where appropriate; and g) respects the adjacent Listed Buildings and Conservation Area. 3. Development is expected to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 700 dwellings or more; b) 1,500sqm or more of retail/ leisure floorspace (Class E); and c) new community premises at the southern end (Class F) 	<p>HRA Implications</p> <p>This policy allocates 700+ dwellings which could increase recreational pressure on European Sites</p>
<p>D6: Priory Centre Allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development at the Priory Centre and adjoining land should provide a genuine mix of town centre and other uses, and create new open streets, public spaces and attractive pedestrian linkages from Spital Street to and along Instone Road and Lowfield Street. 2. Proposals should demonstrate through integrated masterplanning, appropriate layout, form, design, massing and use that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) achieves the co-ordinated and integrated redevelopment of the Priory Centre/ Instone Road and adjoining land, and one or more feature town centres square(s), complements adjoining and adjacent listed buildings, and 	<p>HRA Implications</p> <p>This policy allocates 400+ dwellings which could increase recreational pressure on</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>enhances the High Street/ Spital Street part of the Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) provides significant active ground floor uses animating Spital Street and Lowfield Street as well as Instone Road and routes through the site, with viable new retail and leisure premises, including retention of large retailing anchors and space for independent traders; c) includes visitor accommodation or a new activity forming a major town centre attraction; d) delivers a mix of good quality new houses and flatted development, and necessary land/ facilities/ contributions towards community service needs that arise from the development; e) provides high quality public realm/ spaces, well landscaped with a variety of open functions and ensures that all public and private spaces and routes are safe and overlooked; f) makes use of existing levels and ensures that the development works with adjacent levels and land given over to the car park; and g) respects neighbouring houses. <p>3. Development is expected to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 400 dwellings or more; b) 10,000sqm or more of retail/ leisure/ office floorspace (Class E), including large and small retail units; and c) a Hotel (Class C1) and/ or 4,000sqm or more town centre attraction. 	<p>European Sites</p>
<p>D7: Station Surrounds / River Darent Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West of Central Road and Overy Street, and including the northern part of the Town Centre (shown on Diagram 9), is an area containing highly accessible brownfield sites with significant future potential for creating new neighbourhoods, facilities, links and environmental enhancements. Development in this area will be supported where it integrates with, and maximises the potential for, sustainable regeneration of Central Dartford. 2. Development will be permitted where it includes the following key elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Transforming the Riverside environment into an attractive, safe, vibrant and resilient place, promoting outdoor leisure and onwads connections wherever possible. Applicable sites shall deliver high quality pedestrian routes along both sides of the River Darent, new landscaped public spaces, and seek to naturalise the River and its banks, where providing flood risk and ecological benefits, and, where appropriate, should include commercial uses which activate these spaces. b) Improving Dartford railway station or access to it, and respecting safeguarded railway land. All opportunities for beneficial station relocation and/ or new railway tracks or infrastructure for additional services, and enhancing interchange with Fastrack/ bus services, should be fully explored. Development at or delivering a new railway station will be supported and should include new active uses supported by the high footfall. c) Providing modern commercial facilities as part of mixed use redevelopment unless demonstrated to be unviable, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Any redevelopment of large footprint shopping centre buildings (e.g. shopping centres) where they are no longer viable in their current form should feature appropriate new active uses and be of a layout and design that provides permeability, with pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces, and greener links; or ii. Complementing cultural and leisure uses at the Orchard Theatre/ Westgate allocation; or iii. Meeting needs for flexible commercial floorspace, including co- working space and serviced offices. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Providing community facilities and alternative forms and tenures of new housing, additional to residential development under construction/ recently completed. e) Contributing to new or improved pedestrian/ cycle routes across the ring road (Homes Gardens and Westgate Road) and across the railway line/ access to Dartford Railway station, with attractive direct access routes to the High Street and Westgate allocation. f) Providing sufficient quality pocket parks and other greenspace, clear walkable routes to existing open spaces and significant contribution to the green grid. g) Ensuring that development is well and sensitively designed in proposing the efficient use of land, reflecting the town's character and heritage, and respecting other existing environmental assets and existing local residents. 	
<p>E1: Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe Strategy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 21st century garden city at Ebbsfleet will continue to be created, sensitively integrated into its environment and surroundings, providing high quality new greenspace, infrastructure, homes and business investment, and ensuring climate resilience. This will be achieved by the co-ordinated delivery of integrated and accessible sustainable transport, and well-designed and well-served mixed neighbourhoods. These will include workplaces, schools, health facilities and centres which serve and are well linked to neighbouring communities and towns, encourage walking and cycling, and are connected by modern public transport systems. It will become an important destination for recreation and leisure uses. 2. The creation of a new urban heart at Ebbsfleet Central around a transport hub focussed on Ebbsfleet International Station, and plans for new neighbourhoods at Alkerden and Ashmere will be implemented. The neighbourhoods at Ebbsfleet Green, Castle Hill, and north west of Swanscombe will be completed. Further development may come forward at suitable land north of London Road, Swanscombe. 3. The ecological and geological interest of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be conserved and enhanced. In addition, biodiversity and geodiversity value will not be adversely affected by development. Opportunities will be taken to enhance the SSSI for the benefit of wildlife and people as part of the wider Green Grid network. All development will avoid impacts on the SSSI, supporting and complementing the ecological features of the SSSI. There will be substantial improvements to natural and open spaces across the Garden City and at Swanscombe as part of the wider Green Grid network, including at Craylands Gorge, Eastern Quarry Lakes and the River Ebbsfleet. 4. The existing settlement of Swanscombe will remain distinct, retaining its character whilst seeking opportunities to improve its overall environment. Development in Ebbsfleet Garden City should ensure wherever possible that Swanscombe benefits from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) access to better facilities and public transport, including upgrades to the accessibility of, and services from, Swanscombe railway station (or a new station); and b) improvements to existing connections and the delivery of new green walking/ cycling connections, in particular linking in to improvements towards the River Thames and Ebbsfleet International Station. 5. At Bean Triangle, opportunities to improve environmental and landscape quality and walking and cycling connections to the wider area will be pursued consistent with Green Belt principles. 	<p>HRA implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy that continues to support the delivery of a garden city at Ebbsfleet. Nonetheless, it protects the biodiversity value in the Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI.</p> <p>The garden city could have recreational pressure effects on European sites (although the exact quantum of homes in not provided).</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>6. Opportunities for providing pitches or plots for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople within Ebbsfleet Garden City will be actively explored to help meet the needs of the Borough.</p>	
<p>E2: Ebbsfleet Garden City Development Principles</p>	<p>1. Development proposals in Ebbsfleet Garden City should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Offer a genuine variety of types and tenures of homes that allows people from all communities to live in the area; b) Provide accessible and attractive new District and Local Centres at planned locations; and community and public facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods. Facilities and open spaces provided as part of development will be protected to ensure that well-served communities endure; c) Encourage an enterprising and inclusive local economy, supporting local businesses by retaining existing appropriate commercial uses with a viable future, and providing additional opportunities for locally-based economic growth to provide jobs for residents; d) Deliver open space and ecological enhancements as part of the Green Grid network which are consistent with conserving and enhancing the ecological and geological interest of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest and to achieve healthy linked neighbourhoods. Development must support active lifestyles, including the provision of attractive opportunities for sports, exercise and to grow food, and help deliver a strong network of waterscapes and green corridors as defining features; and e) Ensure no direct or indirect impacts on the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), including near the boundary of the SSSI. Where it is necessary to avoid impacts, buffers will be created in-between developments and the SSSI. <p>2. Proposals in the Garden City should be designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be of the highest quality, including beautifully and imaginatively designed homes and buildings which combine the best of town and country and exemplar developments; b) Demonstrate how the location and layout of development contributes to the scale, legibility and walkability of the Garden City. Development should contribute and connect to the street hierarchy, enhance the public realm and enable walkability and cycling, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of travel; c) Comply with the principles set out in the Ebbsfleet Implementation Framework, the Design for Ebbsfleet Guide, the Ebbsfleet Public Realm Strategy and the Sustainable Travel Strategy. Proper regard will be had to subsequent masterplans and design guidance documents; d) Aim for zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience in all developments, with exemplar design and sustainable construction methods and/or development (large or small) shown to be surpassing or in line with policy M3 objectives; e) Include public art which reflects local character and heritage, following local public input; f) Allow the provision of temporary meanwhile uses that enhance the character and vitality of the area where there are empty buildings or cleared sites with no current prospects of being quickly brought into use/ construction; and g) Ensure that appropriate long-term stewardship arrangements are put in place for all spaces and facilities used by the public and allow the community to engage and shape their area in a meaningful way. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
E3: Swanscombe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swanscombe will retain and improve its distinct identity and positive characteristics, including the popular residential core, generous sized open spaces and approaches, and the local High Street. 2. The following principles will apply: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Facilities, including at the well-established High Street District Centre and other locations within Swanscombe, will be retained/ improved; b) Environmental and infrastructure enhancements, including to upgrade public transport and walking/ cycling connections, will be sought; and c) Existing single family dwellings will be retained, and proportionate redevelopment for new family homes will be supported at small brownfield sites. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
E4: Ebbsfleet Central Allocation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of Ebbsfleet Central will be supported where it delivers a high quality, comprehensively planned, strategic Garden City hub. Within Dartford Borough, this will feature a full mix of activities including: employment; health/ education; residential development; new open and public spaces; and major new transport and community infrastructure; all well integrated in the wider area. The main focus will be development with an urban character close to Ebbsfleet International Station. 2. Proposals should be designed to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide at least 30% as open space, including varied and well equipped parklands befitting a Garden City; b) ensure that there are no direct or indirect impacts on the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and that the ecological and geological interest of the SSSI is conserved and enhanced; c) secure significant zero-carbon and energy-positive technology; d) provide a new public transport hub with ease of interchange between rail services at Ebbsfleet International and other local rail stations, Fastrack and local buses; e) secure the direct Fastrack route through the site linking Ebbsfleet International station eastwards and westwards via Alkerden and other developments to Bluewater; f) integrate developments, and deliver major new green, safe and attractive walking and cycling connections to both existing and new communities, connecting both sides of Ebbsfleet International station; g) ensure that appropriate car parking is provided for Ebbsfleet International station; and h) not preclude achievement of new/ enhanced rail services in north Kent, including to Dartford (or direct to Abbey Wood). 3. At land by the east of the railway station, large scale commercial activity and infrastructure will be delivered providing good quality businesses and jobs, strategic health and community facilities, a hotel, homes and a new District Centre. A first class public realm, urban greenspace and a public park along the River Ebbsfleet, which protects and enhances its ecological interest and creates a naturalised river and banks, will be created. 	<p>HRA Implications</p> <p>This policy allocates 2,000+ dwellings, which could increase recreational pressure on European Sites</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>4. At land to the west of the railway station, proposals will be well linked to development by the east of the station and elsewhere in the Garden City, and ensure that there are no direct or indirect adverse impacts on the adjoining Site of Special Scientific Interest. Major mixed use development should include homes and community facilities, forming a connected and well served new neighbourhood.</p> <p>5. Development within Dartford Borough is expected to deliver the following within the plan period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approximately 2,000 dwellings; b) Approximately 100,000sqm Class E floorspace (predominantly offices/ flexible workspace, and a maximum 20% retail); and c) Substantial education, health and community facilities. 	
<p>E5: Alkerden and Ashmere Allocation</p>	<p>1. Alkerden and Ashmere will form sustainable, active and well integrated neighbourhoods set in significant green infrastructure. The fulfilment of strategic Garden City development by prompt completion of mixed use centres and infrastructure will be supported, complemented by new diverse residential neighbourhoods.</p> <p>2. Proposals should be designed to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A direct Fastrack route through to Bluewater/ Ebbsfleet Central; b) Mixed residential neighbourhoods supported by the provision of centres with community facilities and local services. Alkerden will be a significant local hub for the Garden City with a District Centre which will include an education campus and medical/ healthcare provision. At Ashmere, a Local Centre will be provided; c) Provision of significant custom/ self-build dwellings, and other forms of residential and specialist accommodation (including for older people) well located to the Centres, to diversify housing supply and provide inclusive communities in the Garden City; d) A fully connected pedestrian and cycle network, linked to Ebbsfleet Central/ Castle Hill, the surrounding areas and Bluewater, and the enhancement of connections to Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Stone and the countryside to the south of the A2; and e) High quality new strategic and local greenspace, including at Craylands Gorge and other north-south ecological corridors, a major park between Alkerden and Ashmere. <p>3. Development is expected to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 4,700 dwellings or more; b) Specialist residential accommodation; and c) Approximately 10,000sqm Class E floorspace, plus significant community uses, focused on a District Centre, and Local Centre. 	<p>HRA Implications</p> <p>This policy allocates 4,700+ dwellings, which could increase recreational pressure on European Sites</p>
<p>E6: Area North of London Road, Swanscombe</p>	<p>1. Land north of London Road and off Manor Way has potential for regeneration. Development on this land will be supported where it sustainably makes efficient use of underused land to benefit the wider area or improves the identified employment area. Any proposals will be subject to further investigation in relation to the suitability of the area for development and compliance with the requirements set out in criterion 2.</p> <p>2. Any development in this area will need to:</p>	<p>HRA implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>a) ensure that the ecological and geological interest of the adjacent Site of Special Scientific Interest is conserved and enhanced;</p> <p>b) ensure no direct or indirect impacts on the adjacent Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Buffers will be created in-between developments and the SSSI;</p> <p>c) demonstrate suitably located and designed proposed uses, such as recreation, commercial uses or residential development, at an appropriate density;</p> <p>d) be sensitively designed and achieve a good quality public realm to appropriately connect to its surrounds and the Garden City;</p> <p>e) take account of and mitigate impacts in relation to: flood risk; land contamination; noise; air quality; minerals safeguarding; groundwater quality; and surface water drainage;</p> <p>f) provide a high quality network of links to the wider area including: improved pedestrian and cycle access to Swanscombe, the River Thames and Ingress Park (Greenhithe); and</p> <p>g) be designed in a way which respects the local landscape, including views to the area from the north across the marshes and views of the roofscape from London Road.</p> <p>3. In the event that consent is given to the proposed international scale resort and a Local Plan Review is triggered, it will consider the need to revise this and other policies in the Plan in response to projected impacts.</p>	<p>directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum. However, it does clearly promote development on land north of Swanscombe which could result in effects on European sites.</p>
<p>M1: Good Design for Dartford</p>	<p>1. Development must demonstrate that it is designed in line with the National Design Guide, considers the principles of Kent Design, and satisfies all of the following locally specific criteria for good design in the Borough:</p> <p>a) Responding to, reinforcing and enhancing positive aspects of the locality. Opportunities to create appropriately distinctive high quality places should be taken, particularly using and enhancing prominent physical attributes (including the Borough's distinctive riverside environments, extensive open spaces, biodiversity assets, landscape and tree coverage);</p> <p>b) Ensuring appropriate regard is had to heritage assets and that the character of historic towns and villages and Areas of Special Character are respected;</p> <p>c) Facilitating a sense of place, with social interaction, a physical environment encouraging health/ wellbeing, attractive active environments and travel options, and secure, inclusive and integrated neighbourhoods; through a mix of uses and careful design and layout that ensures that commercial and public facilities are well integrated within the site and the wider locality;</p> <p>d) Providing permeability for the site to sufficiently connect to its surrounds and for the public to traverse the site, through clear pedestrian and cycle linkages, and, where appropriate, active frontages, open streets, and a fine grain mix of buildings and spaces;</p> <p>e) Reinforcing and enhancing good design by integrating new development with the public realm/ open space; and providing biodiversity gain, and natural features including rivers and lakes/ ponds; and</p> <p>f) Meeting the requirements set out in any supplementary local design guidelines which will be produced after public consultation consistent with these principles and national requirements, to be adopted as formal Supplementary Planning Documents or design codes.</p> <p>2. Development must be shown to be suitable in terms of the height, mass, form, scale, orientation, siting, access, overlooking, overshadowing, articulation, detailing, roof form, and landscaping relative to neighbouring buildings and the wider locality.</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>Materials must support a sense of place and relate well to the local character. Outstanding or innovative design which helps raise design standards in the wider area will be supported on appropriate sites which are not closely related to sensitive areas or assets.</p> <p>3. The appropriate scale and density of development at a site should be the outcome of securing high quality development through a design-led process and demonstrated by agreed masterplans on large sites, having proper regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the current built environment context including heritage assets; b) the location of the site in the Borough and its characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Assessment of development potential using locally specific design or conservation guidance documents, and fulfilling applicable Plan objectives for the area. ii) Outside the urban area, design should, in particular, be sympathetic to local landscape and townscape character; c) providing spacious, green and good quality developments including clearly meeting or exceeding nationally described size standards for new homes, and fulfilling policy for amenity space and green infrastructure provision; and d) the principle of securing a mix of uses and residential types, achieving efficient re-use of land where appropriate, and delivering regeneration at urban locations well served by public transport and services.. <p>4. Public spaces in and outside buildings and all accommodation must be designed to be inclusive, safe and accessible for all Dartford's communities, including young, elderly, disabled and less mobile people. The design of buildings, open space and the private and public realm must be in accordance with active design principles and reduce the fear of, and opportunities for, crime.</p> <p>5. Signage and advertisements must be of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the building and locality, particularly in the designated Area of Special Advertisement Control, and must not have a negative impact on visual amenity, public safety or the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.</p>	
M2: Environmental and Amenity Protection	<p>1. Development must demonstrate that it does not result in unacceptable material impacts, individually or cumulatively, on neighbouring uses, the Borough's environment or public health. Particular consideration must be given to the design of proposals in areas and subjects of potential sensitivity in the built and natural environment (including as highlighted on the Policies Map), and other potential amenity/ safety factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) air quality, in particular potential impacts within or immediately adjacent to air quality management areas; b) water quality, including groundwater source protection zones; c) intensity of use, including hours of operation; d) anti-social behaviour and littering; e) traffic, access, and parking; f) noise disturbance or vibration; g) odour; h) light pollution; i) overshadowing, overlooking and privacy; j) electrical and telecommunication interference; 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>k) HSE land use consultation zones; l) land instability; and m) ground contamination and gassing.</p> <p>2. Development must not materially impede the continuation of lawfully existing uses. Where impacts cannot be adequately mitigated, planning applications are likely to be refused.</p> <p>3. Planning applications on or in the immediate vicinity of landfill sites must be accompanied by a full technical analysis of the site and its surroundings, in accordance with Environmental Health and Environment Agency requirements. Analysis must establish that landfill gas will not represent a hazard on development of the site or that development will not cause adverse impacts on groundwater. Development must clearly demonstrate that it can be safely, satisfactorily and fully achieved, including: a) avoidance of risks to neighbouring uses/ the wider area; and b) design quality, infrastructure provision, affordable housing and other policy requirements are not compromised as a result of high remediation costs or to allow for delivery uncertainties.</p>	
<p>M3: Sustainable Technology, Construction and Performance</p>	<p>1. The design, construction and lifecycle of development must contribute to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change. This includes, but is not limited to, reducing embodied and operational carbon emissions, improving energy performance and preserving water. The use of recognised assessment tools or aiming for quality/ exemplar standards is expected unless clearly not possible.</p> <p><u>Preserving Resources:</u></p> <p>2. All residential development must demonstrate delivery of the water efficiency requirement level of 110 litres per person per day for all dwellings created. In order to demonstrate high levels of energy performance and water efficiency, non-residential development over 1,000sqm must achieve the BREEAM excellent standard (showing available water credits have been maximised).</p> <p>3. Development needs to aim to increase a building's length of life and its adaptability for future uses.</p> <p>4. Development should be designed with consideration of the choice of materials in order to reduce embodied carbon and reduce/ prevent waste in all development. Materials for construction should be recycled or re-used from within the site, or sourced locally, where possible.</p> <p>5. All development should achieve a layout and design that enables re-use, recycling and composting for the future occupiers. Convenient and suitable arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials must be made.</p> <p><u>Energy and Carbon</u></p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>6. All residential development should incorporate passive design in order to optimise solar and daylight access and reduce the risk of overheating and the need for cooling.</p> <p>7. Major residential development must achieve a minimum on-site reduction in regulated carbon emissions of at least 19 per cent beyond Part L of the Building Regulations, unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is not feasible. This will be required until such time that amendments are made to national legislation/ policy which have the effect of surpassing this level of performance.</p> <p>8. Large residential development of 100 dwellings or more should be demonstrated to feature additional significant zero and/or low carbon or sustainable technology features across the site. This should include for example, use of grey-water recycling and/ or a combined heat and power connection/ networks wherever consistent with development scale and feasibility.</p> <p>9. At applicable sites, the appropriate technology and systems should be deployed to minimise impact on heritage and character.</p> <p><u>Developments for Energy Generation and Storage</u></p> <p>10. In determining applications for energy storage or small and large scale low/ zero carbon technology and installations, the economic and environmental benefits of the proposal will be weighed against the individual and cumulative impact of the development. Development will only be permitted in line with national policy and where the following factors have been satisfactorily taken into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Minimising landscape impacts, and impacts on ecology and agriculture (where applicable); b) Shadow flicker and glare (if relevant); c) Electronic and telecommunication interference/ navigation and aviation issues (if relevant); and d) Ensuring installations are removed when no longer in use and land is then restored. 	
M4: Flood Risk and Riverside Design	<p>1. Development with a frontage along the Rivers Thames or Darent will be expected to fully explore the potential for improving: the riparian landscape; biodiversity; access and appeal for pedestrians and cyclists; and opportunities for river-based recreation. This should be planned along with securing any flood defence infrastructure that may be required under criterion 2 below.</p> <p>2. Development which is proposed on sites which fall partly or wholly within the tidal flood defence raising zone must not constrain the future management, maintenance and upgrading of flood defences and, where feasible, development must seek to contribute to the delivery of the Thames Estuary 2100 plan.</p> <p>3. Planning permission for development will only be granted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It can be demonstrated that the site is safe from all types of flooding, now and for the lifetime of the development, taking into account the effects of climate change; and b) It does not materially displace flood water or worsen flood risk elsewhere. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>4. Where development is within an area at risk of flooding, it will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Locate the most vulnerable development in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons for not doing so; b) Include measures which reduce the overall level of flood risk at the site, where possible; c) Provide a safe means of access and egress; and d) Incorporate flood protection and resilience measures. <p>5. Development which is proposed on sites with a riverside frontage or providing access to flood defences must make sufficient space for the defences and for future river levels available where necessary, and provision for the future management, maintenance and upgrading of the defences.</p> <p>6. All major development must incorporate multifunctional Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce surface water run-off and ensure that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Infiltration SuDS will only be acceptable where they will not lead to deterioration of groundwater quality in Groundwater Source Protection Zones. Where possible, SuDS should be multi-functional and deliver benefits to green infrastructure.</p>	
<p>M5: Designated Heritage Assets</p>	<p>1. Designated heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Any harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification.</p> <p>2. In determining planning applications, the local planning authority will pay close regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the significance of the heritage asset; b) the desirability of maintaining and, where possible, enhancing significance; and c) the desirability of ensuring viable uses are found for heritage assets, consistent with their conservation. <p>3. Where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, permission will be refused unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the development is necessary for substantial public benefits to be achieved that will outweigh the harm or loss.</p> <p>4. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.</p> <p><u>Listed Buildings</u></p> <p>5. Development proposals affecting statutorily listed buildings must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Loss of or harm to a statutorily listed building or its setting will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in line with criteria 3 and 4 above.</p> <p><u>Conservation Areas</u></p> <p>6. Development proposals affecting a conservation area must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Proposals that would result in harm or loss of significance will be determined in line with criteria 3 and 4 above.</p> <p>7. The demolition of any building in a conservation area will only be permitted where it is clear that it will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, and suitable re-development or landscaping/restoration of the site is secured.</p> <p><u>Scheduled Monuments</u></p> <p>8. Development proposals affecting Scheduled Monuments will only be permitted where they clearly conserve the asset or enhance its significance. Proposals resulting in loss or harm will only be permitted on a wholly exceptional basis and in line with criteria 3 and 4 above.</p> <p><u>Geoarchaeological Sites</u></p> <p>9. Sites designated for their geoarchaeological interests, including the Swanscombe Skull SSSI and Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI, are irreplaceable and therefore will be protected and conserved.</p>	
M6: Historic Environment Strategy	<p>1. Development must contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of the Borough's historic environment. The local planning authority will work with developers on strategies to realise this in the context of site heritage opportunities and constraints.</p> <p>2. Where heritage may be at risk, landowners will be expected to work proactively with the local planning authority in bringing forward proposals to preserve or enhance these assets, to facilitate their successful rehabilitation and seek their viable re-use consistent with their heritage value and special interest.</p> <p>3. Development proposals which may affect the significance of heritage assets (both designated and non-designated) or their setting must demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved or enhanced as appropriate. Proposals must aim to reflect and interpret the historic character of a site and conserve its most significant historical and/ or architectural aspects.</p> <p><u>Non-Designated Heritage Assets</u></p> <p>4. The Borough's non-designated heritage assets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Archaeological sites, including sites holding an interest as defined in the NPPF; b) Applicable sites within Areas of Special Character; c) Sites with significant industrial heritage; d) Land with historic landscape character; e) Historic open space, parks and gardens; and f) Assets that may be designated through a local list, produced after public consultation. <p>5. Development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets must establish the asset's significance. Development must</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>conserve or enhance those aspects that have been identified as significant and should seek to better reveal an asset's significance.</p> <p>6. In determining planning applications affecting non-designated assets, the effect of the proposal on the asset's significance will be taken into account. A balanced judgement will be taken having regard to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of any harm or loss of significance. Development resulting in a total loss of significance normally be refused.</p>	
M7: Affordable Housing	<p>1. Residential development should aim for a genuine mix of housing to support inclusive neighbourhoods, with a range of rental and ownership options to meet local needs. Affordable housing should be provided in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In the urban area, at developments proposing a gain of 15 dwellings or more, or b) South of the A2 and/ or in the Green Belt, at developments proposing a gain of 10 dwellings or more, or c) At residential development in the Borough of 0.5ha in size or more. d) Any site proposed and justified in principle on the basis of delivering dwellings that are all rented affordable housing meeting priority local requirements will be supported where it is sustainable in location and appropriate in scale. <p>2. Where residential developments are required to provide affordable housing in accordance with criterion 1, these should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a mix of affordable housing tenures, with a target for 35% or more of all dwellings to be defined as affordable housing (except in central Dartford where the target is 20%). b) Ensure that design layouts and facilities are not segregated, with no barriers to access or differences in appearance between different tenures; and c) Make provision on-site. In exceptional circumstances where it can be justified that this would not be viable or practical, or where off-site provision would result in public benefits, provision on an alternative site in the Borough or a commuted sum may be considered. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M8: Housing Mix	<p>1. All developments should provide an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes to create vibrant and mixed communities which meet the accommodation needs of the local population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The majority of dwellings on all developments should provide 2 or more bedrooms (for specialist accommodation, a higher proportion of smaller units may be justifiable). b) Major developments should include provision for 3 and 4 bedroom homes (except in central Dartford, where sites of 100 or more dwellings will be required to make provision). <p>2. All new build dwellings should meet the requirement M4(2): Category 2 – Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings. A limited proportion of dwellings to meet the requirement M4(3): Category 3 – Wheelchair User Dwellings is sought on sites of 100 or more dwellings. Only where it can be robustly demonstrated why it is not possible to contribute to these requirements will applicable developments be exempted.</p> <p>3. The local planning authority supports, as part of mixed neighbourhoods, the provision of specialist accommodation for specific groups (such as age restricted dwellings) and care homes (use class C2) suitable for older and vulnerable people, where sustainably located and need is demonstrated.</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	4. Major developments should make proportionate provision of plots for self-build or custom-build dwellings based on site size and the number of entries on the self-build register, where appropriate to the character and form of the development.	
M9: Sustainable Housing Locations	<p>1. Sites located in accordance with the Central Dartford or Ebbsfleet and Swanscombe policies, or in the identified housing land supply (where the proposed number of dwellings is broadly in line with the projected site capacity), will be permitted for residential development.</p> <p>2. At other locations, residential development will be supported where the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disbenefits, including the sustainability of the site's location. Unplanned windfall Class C3 development involving a net gain of five or more dwellings should also show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is located on brownfield land (unless it has been demonstrated that the site is necessary to rectify a lack of five year supply of deliverable housing land); b) It is within easy walking distance of a range of community facilities including schools, shops, leisure and recreation services, and is well located with respect to walking/ cycling and good public transport to a choice of employment opportunities; and c) In the case of major development, it is also shown to be sufficiently served by infrastructure, after allowing for the infrastructure requirements of the sites identified in the housing land supply. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M10: Residential Amenity Space	<p>1. Residential development must provide sufficient and high quality amenity space to meet the health, recreation and functional needs of occupants and to contribute to good design, wellbeing and wider environmental objectives. Sites should be laid out to contribute to multi-functional green infrastructure and the provision of private amenity space, where possible.</p> <p>2. The design of all private and communal amenity types and spaces must be attractive, enable maximum functionality for the end users and be suitable to the location and character of the development. In this respect, the applicant must demonstrate how the following, as a minimum, have been taken into consideration and provided within the design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Good sunlight and fresh air; b) Leisure and recreation space; c) Children's play needs; d) Storage space sufficient for the needs of likely occupiers; e) Relative privacy and tranquillity as appropriate to the setting; f) Opportunity for food growing where possible; and g) Accessible and secure entrances. <p>3. To achieve this aim, all new build residential development must provide a quantity of private amenity space that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Clearly ample for each house in a development. This should be predominantly a single area, provided through an attached (preferably spacious rear) garden; or b) sufficient and highly usable in the form of a balcony, winter garden, terrace or garden for each flat in a development. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M11: Extensions, New Dwellings and Garden	1. Development must maintain a range of dwelling sizes and sufficient garden land, retain or enhance the character, local environment and amenity of established residential areas, and achieve satisfactory quality of development.	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
Land	<p>2. Development which results in an unacceptable loss of residential garden land will be refused. Proposals must demonstrate that they would not result in harm, individually or cumulatively, arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) loss of diversity in the stock of housing in the Borough; or b) erosion of the local character; or c) significant loss of residential garden land serving the health, recreation and/or functional needs of the occupiers. <p>3. The extension of dwellings or the creation of new dwellings by infill or conversion must also ensure that they meet the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the historical pattern and form of development is preserved, and the design proposed is not visually obtrusive, with existing significant landscape features retained and/ or any loss is mitigated; b) access into the development is safe and facilitates ease of pedestrian movement; c) access into the development does not create an undue disruption to the character and appearance of an existing road frontage or unacceptable disturbance to adjacent properties; and d) the proposal does not materially harm existing residential amenity, including through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of daylight/ sunlight, visual impact, noise, increased level of activity and disturbance, or increased on-street parking. <p>4. The conversion of a single dwelling house of 120sqm or less original net internal floor space into two or more units and the conversion of terraced houses will not normally be permitted.</p>	<p>development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M12: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation	<p>1. Dartford will meet needs and maintain a Five Year Supply, with deliverable land to meet identified requirements for 35 gypsy and traveller pitches and 1 travelling showpeople plot to 2026. This will occur through a range of actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Realising the potential for additional accommodation within existing authorised and tolerated sites, where needs arise; b) Allocating land for additional pitches at: Tennis Courts Sutton at Hone and Salinas Darenth Wood Road; c) Actively seeking to identify deliverable non Green Belt sites within Ebbsfleet Garden City; and d) Determining planning applications expeditiously in line with national policy and the development management criteria set out in criterion 2 below. <p>2. Planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots will be assessed against relevant local and national policy requirements. Proposals located in the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with the balancing exercise set out in national policy, taking into account impacts on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, and having regard to relevant material considerations. All proposals must demonstrate that the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is of a scale to accommodate, and has the potential to provide the facilities required, for future occupants in terms of amenity and in meeting site licensing requirements; b) Is of a scale appropriate to the ability of the surrounding community to accommodate the development without significant detriment to neighbouring residential amenity, taking account of existing population size and density; c) Is not in an area liable to flooding; and suitable drainage can be installed that does not lead to unacceptable risks to groundwater and/or localised flooding d) Is located reasonably close to a range of services and facilities; 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Has the ability to provide appropriate safe vehicular access to the site and provides suitable parking and amenity areas; and f) Is screened and visually integrated into the local and wider landscape, with careful siting within the site (including of any day rooms). 	
M13: Green belt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dartford's Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map, and its essential characteristics are its openness and permanence. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will be resisted in accordance with national planning policy. 2. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and will only be approved in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. 3. In assessing other harm, the local planning authority will use the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The extent of intensification of the use of the site; b) The impact of an increase in activity and disturbance resulting from the development, both on and off the site, including traffic movement and parking, light pollution and noise; c) The impact on biodiversity and wildlife; d) The impact on visual amenity or character taking into account the extent of screening required; e) Impacts arising from infrastructure required by the development. 4. Where developments are considered not inappropriate in line with national planning policy, they will be supported where they contribute to the objective of conserving the Green Belt as a recreational, ecological and agricultural resource. Such developments will also be assessed against the following criteria where applicable. <p><u>Re-use of Buildings</u></p> 5. Applications for re-use of buildings must relate to lawful permanent buildings of substantial construction. The change of use of the curtilage to the building, any extension required to facilitate the change of use, and the impacts of such changes in use on the purposes of the Green Belt will be taken into account. The lack of demand for the existing lawful use will need to be demonstrated. In circumstances where character and scale are important to the local setting, excessive external alterations and additions will not be permitted. <p><u>Replacement Buildings</u></p> 6. The replacement of a building will be permitted where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The replacement building remains in the same use; and b) The replacement building will not be materially larger than the existing building it replaces, taking into account bulk, height, massing and scale. As a replacement, the building should be limited to an expansion of no more than 30% volume of the original building*. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p><u>Extensions to Buildings</u></p> <p>7. Extensions to buildings remaining in the same use will be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They are proportionate and subservient in appearance, bulk, massing and scale of the original building; and b) The proposal would not result in a disproportionate addition to the original building. The extension must constitute no more than a 30% volumetric increase over and above the original building*, and maximising the volume of the building to 30% will not be appropriate in every circumstance. <p><u>Infilling or Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites</u></p> <p>8. Proposals must not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. Developments that lead to over-intensification of the site will not be permitted.</p> <p><u>Changes of Use</u></p> <p>9. Changes of use of land must not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing use. Consideration will be given to the impacts on the Green Belt in terms of other harms set out in criterion 3 and of the impacts of associated works.</p> <p><u>Agricultural Development</u></p> <p>10. Development must not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, disturb or damage soils of high environmental value, or impede the continuation of a lawfully existing agricultural development and/ or land use.</p> <p>11. Proposals for farm diversification, including shops, processing, workshops or sports and recreation, must be ancillary to the existing main use. It must be demonstrated that the activity is related to the main farm use and that the proposal will not create the need for new buildings or supporting infrastructure and facilities that may harm rural character.</p> <p><u>Equine Development</u></p> <p>12. Proposals for the use of land for horses or for the erection of stables and associated facilities and/ or operational development will be carefully considered. Assessment will include the location/ layout of all structures, the need for the size of structures and buildings proposed to serve the use of the land, and quality of the provision and landscaping proposed. Structures, engineering works and buildings serving equine uses should be removed from the site when they are no longer in use and are no longer required to serve the equine use of the land.</p> <p><u>Development for Outdoor Sport and Recreation</u></p>	

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>13. Proposals for outdoor sport and recreation must not adversely impact on the character and amenity of the locality or result in the deterioration of the land, landscape or biodiversity. The scale, siting, design, use and level of activity of built recreation development together with the supporting infrastructure and services will be taken into account when assessing the impact of a proposal.</p> <p>14. Supporting infrastructure and facilities must not unacceptably harm local character. They must be directly associated with the main use and be of a scale, quality and design to minimise their impact</p> <p>* Original building means a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 where it was built before that date, and as it was built when initially built after that date, and in the same lawful use.</p>	
<p>M14: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space Provision</p>	<p>1. New development will be required to contribute to the Green and Blue Infrastructure network as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites of 20ha and over: at least 30% of the site area • Sites of between 2ha and 20ha: at least 20% of the site area • Sites of less than 2ha will be considered on a site by site basis for a proportionate contribution <p>This should include multi-functional land, providing opportunities for formal and informal recreation, habitats and corridors for wildlife, native trees/ landscaping, and other measures to reduce the impacts of climate change. On-going maintenance and management of such areas will need to be demonstrated.</p> <p>Where the provision of on-site Green and Blue Infrastructure or public realm open space is not appropriate or feasible, contributions may be sought for off-site improvements of open space in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>2. Protected Local Green Spaces will be protected and enhanced to maintain their openness and special local role. They must continue to provide high quality informal spaces to support attractive, distinctive and sustainable neighbourhoods. Development of Protected Local Green Spaces will be refused unless very special circumstances apply, considering national and Dartford Green Belt policy (particularly Policy M13:1-3 and M13:13-14).</p> <p>3. Borough Open Spaces will maintain their overall green environmental value. Development on Borough Open Space will not be permitted unless it is clearly demonstrated that one of the following criteria is satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where the space will be retained in its current primary function, with development limited to a small proportion of land, the proposal must support or enhance the existing space in this overall green infrastructure role. The proposal must not lead to any significant loss or deterioration in quantity and level of open space provision. b) Where development will result in a significant loss in the quantity of open space, like for like re-provision must be delivered within easy, safe and secure walking distance of the site, unless it is clearly demonstrated that the existing provision is surplus to current and future requirements for biodiversity and/or the amenity and health/wellbeing of residents. The replacement must be shown to be of an equivalent type and of equal or greater 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>quantity and quality to that being lost.</p> <p>4. Development of other public amenity space will only be permitted where a convincing justification is made. This must take account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the quality, quantity and function of the space relative to alternative provision in the locality; and b) the benefits/ disbenefits arising from the proposed development. 	
<p>M15: Biodiversity and Landscape</p>	<p>1. Development on sites designated for their biodiversity value will not be granted planning permission unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the biodiversity value will not be adversely affected by the proposals. Proposed development located on or in close proximity to designated sites, priority or other irreplaceable habitats or priority species, or with potential effects on them, must demonstrate that it will not adversely impact on the biodiversity value or ecological pathways. Residential developments of more than 15 dwellings located within 10km of the North Kent Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites will be subject to screening and, if necessary, assessment under the Habitats Regulations. This may require the implementation of mitigation measures to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the protected features of those sites.</p> <p>2. Developments will be expected to protect and enhance biodiversity. In the event that development adversely affects any existing habitats, this must be replaced by compensatory habitat of a similar type, size and condition in close proximity to that which is being lost. The new national biodiversity net gain requirements will apply to all applicable developments. Local delivery of net gains should preferably be made by enhancing existing habitats and/or creating new habitats on-site or, in cases where this is not achievable, off-site within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. These will need to be informed by and link to the Dartford Green Grid network and any Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>3. All new developments should be designed and laid out in a way which is sympathetic to their landscape setting. Major developments will be expected to deliver a landscaping scheme that is visually attractive, enhances biodiversity, uses native species, incorporates sustainable drainage measures, and is resilient to climate change. This will need to incorporate the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New trees and other landscape features should be used to create attractive new streets and provide appropriate natural shading on buildings, at street level and on open spaces. b) Planting of particular species should be considered to reduce the impact of air pollution. c) Management of the landscape for the lifetime of the development will be required to ensure that landscape and biodiversity features are maintained. <p>4. In all development proposals, including works to trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order, existing tree coverage, hedgerows and other landscape features should be retained wherever possible. If retention is demonstrated not to be feasible and/or removal is justified, replacement provision should be of an appropriate native tree species or landscape feature which reflects the maturity, canopy cover and/ or location of that being replaced.</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>M16: Management</p> <p>Travel</p>	<p>1. Development must be appropriately located and make suitable provision to minimise and manage transport impacts which arise. Proposals must also include appropriate vehicular access arrangements to the new development, and measures for active and sustainable travel. A Transport Assessment will be required on applicable proposals.</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>2. Localised residual impacts on the highway network that are forecast to occur after on-site mitigations should be addressed by well-designed off-site deliverable transport measures. Development will not be permitted where the localised residual impacts from the development on its own, or in combination with other planned developments in the area, result in severe impacts on one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) road traffic congestion; b) air quality; c) safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road-users; d) excessive pressure for on-street parking. <p><u>Public transport</u></p> <p>3. New major development sites should include layouts that allow for routes into and dedicated routes within the site for Fastrack, buses and taxis. These should ensure good connections to make community services and jobs easily accessible to all users/employees, and assist the feasible and efficient operation of transport services. In this respect, the following will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Large developments at applicable locations must make early provisions for Fastrack, through extension or improvement within or outside the site, where consistent with additional potential demand and to benefit the existing and planned Fastrack network. b) Where appropriate, major developments will be required to facilitate new or extended conventional bus services if required to address demand that would arise. <p>4. Land required for potential improved rail connectivity between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet International is safeguarded and development which will prejudice this will not be permitted. In the event of delivery of a significant rail infrastructure intervention to provide Elizabeth Line services or to directly facilitate better access to Abbey Wood, a Local Plan review will ensure that sustainable regeneration and transport network integration opportunities are maximised. Any re-provision of railway stations on the North Kent line should enhance the capacity, quality and safety of the stations, and promote sustainable modes of onward travel through integrating ticketing/facilities supporting all public and active transport modes.</p> <p><u>Rivers</u></p> <p>5. Proposals should capitalise on all feasible opportunities to promote enhanced movement on and alongside rivers, including travel for passengers, products and the transportation of construction materials and waste. Development must not unacceptably adversely affect the operation of safeguarded wharves. Proposals for alternative development at existing non-safeguarded wharves will not be supported unless that facility is no longer viable or capable of being made viable for waterborne transport.</p>	<p>development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M17: Active Travel, Access and Parking	<p>1. Development must be of a design and layout to promote walking, cycling and public transport use through provision of attractive and safe routes which address the needs of users. Segregated cycle routes should be considered where possible. Guidance set out in Manual for Streets, or any future equivalent, must also be applied. Bespoke access and transport</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>approaches may be agreed at large regeneration sites, where forming a suitable alternative.</p> <p>2. Transport assessments and travel plans must take account of applicable guidance by Kent County Council. A travel plan will be required where there are anticipated significant/negative impacts of transport movement arising from a development. In this respect, the following will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Travel plans should set deliverable actions for the promotion and delivery of safe and attractive active travel and public transport measures to increase their uptake, and reduce demand for less sustainable/efficient forms of transport. b) An effective and robust travel plan should feature clear measures and actions to enable objectives to be met, including on-going monitoring/review with additional measures applied where outcomes are not being achieved, taking into account the operational characteristics of a development, and be capable of applying over a prolonged period as necessary. <p>3. Development must ensure that the following requirements are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provision is made for safe and convenient access to footpaths and cycle routes, with public rights of way protected including, where opportunities exist, delivering new or upgraded routes between key facilities, the Green Grid network, and to existing neighbourhoods. Urban area and village footpaths/cycleways must be safe, overlooked and well lit. b) Supporting facilities for cyclists, including secure cycle parking/storage and lockers, are provided; and in major developments which attract significant numbers of people (such as schools and large scale employment, retail and leisure developments), changing areas and showers should be included c) Design features are provided for people with mobility and sensory difficulties, especially at road crossing points, public transport stops and changes in level on walking routes. <p>4. Adverse effects from the travel and movement issues associated with any development, including on amenity or the environment, must be minimised. Development will be supported where the layout and siting of all forms of access is acceptable in terms of residential amenity, highway capacity and safety, free flow of traffic, cycle and pedestrian provision, and visual impact. Provision should be made at applicable developments for loading, unloading and the turning of service vehicles to ensure highway and pedestrian safety.</p> <p>5. Development must provide an appropriate level and form of vehicle parking provision, taking into account any existing provision as relevant to the development, and in full accordance with applicable Parking Standards SPD policy. In this respect, the following will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Electric vehicle charging points must be provided for all new residential properties with dedicated/allocated parking spaces, and for a proportion of parking spaces provided as part of new employment, leisure and retail development. Charging points or cabling to allow their future installation must be provided for all shared car parking spaces provided on new residential developments. b) The conversion of front gardens for car parking is only allowed where it includes provision of a vehicle crossover and only where the garden is capable of accommodating a parking space in accordance with the parking bay minimum standards set out in the SPD, plus space for soft landscaping; and with unobstructed pedestrian access 	<p>development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	to the dwelling. New car parking must make use of appropriate permeable paving materials, in line with the SPD, and water quality protection objectives (where applicable).	
M18: Community Uses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New community facilities will be supported where they are in an appropriate location and of a type, scale and design to reflect the needs of the existing and emerging communities they will serve. In this respect, the following will apply: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) New services should be sited close to the population they will serve, with reference to access routes for active and other forms of travel, and a suitably locally based catchment for the facility provided. b) Wherever possible, new facilities must be provided and designed in a way that allows benefits to be shared by existing and new communities, and to be operated flexibly by a variety of users. c) Strategic developments must normally provide social and community facilities, with access to required facilities at an appropriately early stage. Land will be secured until a facility is in operation as set out in criterion 3 below. Where permanent provision is not possible from the outset, temporary provision will be sought for first occupants. d) Large scale new community uses that attract the majority of users travelling in from outside the Borough must demonstrate the local need for the scale of the proposal, unless delivering an essential public sector service or shown to be required to serve the neighbourhood community. 2. Development of existing community facilities/land for non-community purposes will be refused unless there is clear evidence that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the facility is not needed by the existing and future community; and b) all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve a community use, including exploration of appropriate solutions to retain the facility with operators/service providers and, where appropriate, the local community. Consideration should include any potential future demand arising from new development located within the catchment area of the facility/use. 3. Specific land that has been earmarked for community facilities through planning obligations, other formal agreements, approved planning permissions (or identified in Dartford's published infrastructure planning documentation) will be safeguarded until a community facility is delivered or agreement is reached that land for a community use will not be required. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M19: Sustainable Economic Locations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New business and services in Classes B and E will be supported where appropriately located and designed, with major developments to be accessible by good public and active transport, at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Central Dartford and Ebbsfleet Garden City; or b) Identified Employment Areas; or c) The network of Retail Centres (Table 7). 2. Outside the network of Retail Centres, and where not in accordance with Identified Employment Area policies, developments classified as Main Town Centre uses must be accompanied by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) a sequential assessment b) an impact test for developments of 280sqm gross or more. 3. Strategic investment proposals for large new research and development facilities, offices, or high technology industrial premises, of a form not already provided in the Borough, will be supported where sustainably located at Central Dartford, 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>Ebbsfleet Garden City or at/ adjacent to Identified Employment Areas. If there is no prospect of accommodating the development at these locations, such uses may exceptionally be considered elsewhere where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) it is robustly evidenced that clear substantial local benefits are secured, including through the scale and type of new employment opportunities generated, improved sustainable transport provisions; and b) there is a demonstrable extraordinary economic need for the development in the Borough. 	<p>pathways present.</p>
<p>M20: Provision for Local Business and Skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large proposals for offices, industrial/ distribution, retail/ leisure and other uses in Classes B and E, exceeding 20,000sqm gross should contribute to the accommodation needs of local businesses and training needs of the Borough's workforce. Applicable developments will be permitted where they: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) include a mix of premises/ commercial land commensurate with total site size, which deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a proportionately significant number of small units or premises designed to provide for local start up/ 'move on' business accommodation; or • premises/ land that is shown to be constructed for, or targeted to, the needs of Borough small/ medium sized enterprises, including through premises available to rent or buy at a discount, or employment land premises delivered in a form to secure local businesses (for instance land predominantly for open storage); and b) secure the delivery of local skills training or apprenticeships and work placements within the completed development itself or through construction/ the supply chain. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
<p>M21: Identified Employment Areas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identified Employment Areas will be maintained and developed for additional high quality, accessible and affordable commercial premises, and a more diverse range of new jobs in line with the Plan's economic strategy, with improved transport provision and environmental benefits achieved. Additional business floorspace will be supported where proposals meet criteria 2 or 3 below. <p><u>Industrial development proposals</u></p> 2. Development for industrial or distribution uses are supported where improving the commercial quality, functional operation and environment of sites. Proposals will be expected to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Be designed to be of a form to reduce adverse impacts through new suitably scaled and designed buildings and layouts, landscaped buffers, and other environmental improvement or physical regeneration measures across the site; and b) Achieve better management of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Harmful or nuisance creating activities, including from dust, paint or other chemical over-spray, glare or light spill; or ii. Goods vehicles access, parking, waiting (including for loading and unloading) on amenity, safety and congestion, as applicable. <p><u>Services business development</u></p> 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
	<p>3. Development for other service based business premises are supported where enhancing and sustainably intensifying employment sites in line with the economic strategy. Proposals will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) For major development for office or research and development, be located within easy walking distance of a railway station or Fastrack, or, failing this, the Travel Plan should achieve measures that demonstrate significant reductions per job in private vehicle movements during peak hours. b) For supporting businesses for visitors, be located and designed for use by employees of other businesses in the Identified Employment Area, and not individually or cumulatively undermine the operation and status of the employment area or nearby centres in the retail network. <p><u>Other proposals at Identified Employment Areas</u></p> <p>4. Where a need from businesses in the vicinity is shown, hotels will be supported if the proposal supports sustainable transport, and the sequential test is passed in relation to alternative in centre and edge of centre locations. Non job generating development will not be permitted within Identified Employment Areas.</p>	
M22: Bluewater	<p>1. The appropriate evolution of Bluewater, to maintain its economic contribution, quality and distinctiveness as a contemporary regional centre, will be supported subject to assessment of local and regional implications as set out in criteria 2 and 3 below.</p> <p>2. Development for activities including those in use classes C1, E and F at Bluewater will be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Proposals do not individually or cumulatively undermine its role as a regional shopping centre, and are shown to be necessary to maintain or enhance its quality and performance relative to other regional centres/ competitors; b) Impact on the highway network is minimised, and improved access by and to public and active transport is secured where appropriate. Measures to be featured in a robust Travel Plan should include high quality/ expanded interchange facilities, support for further Fastrack services (where feasible), segregated and safe walking and cycling routes, and secure cycle parking. Particular focus should be given to measures to increase uptake of sustainable travel by employees and nearby communities; c) The original design integrity of the centre is maintained; and d) The parkland setting is maintained and enhanced as a recreational and biodiversity resource and as flood risk mitigation; <p>3. Development for retail or leisure use also needs to demonstrate the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is of a use and form demonstrated to be consistent with Bluewater's role (Table 7), and it offers activities and premises that creates an overall experience that is distinct from that of nearby town centres; and b) Is acceptable after evaluation: through impact assessment for retail/ leisure proposals over 2,500sqm (gross), and sequential testing for indoor leisure, which will take into account neighbouring town centres and regional implications. Assessment/ testing shall be carried out in consultation with neighbouring local and strategic authorities. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>

Policy	Description	HRA Screening Outcome
M23: District and Local Centres	<p>1. Mixed use development within District and Local Centres will be acceptable where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) At ground floor level, one or more viable modern commercial/ community units are provided for suitable active uses in line with criterion 2 or 3 as applicable below, and is of proportionate scale and form to the vitality and purpose of the centre (see Table 7); and b) It is demonstrated to improve the local environment of the centre. <p><u>District Centres</u></p> <p>2. Change of use for Class E, F or service sui generis use will be permitted at District Centres where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) more than 50% of the ground floor units are currently in Class E and F use; or b) the existing unit is vacant and has been demonstrated to be not viable for Class E, F or service sui generis use through sufficient effective marketing. <p><u>Local Centres</u></p> <p>3. Change of use will be acceptable where two or more units within Class E or F2 are to be retained within the Centre and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the prospective activity is not already provided within the centre, and is non-residential; or b) the existing unit is vacant and has been demonstrated to be not viable for any Class E use through sufficient effective marketing. 	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>
M24: Food and Drink Establishments	<p>1. Hot food takeaways, nightclubs, bars and public houses will only be acceptable where the following criteria are met, taking account of potential cumulative impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there will be no material detrimental effects on the residential amenity of neighbours; b) there will be no material detrimental effects on the local environmental quality as a result of noise, vibration and smells; and c) access, servicing and parking arrangements for the proposal do not result in an adverse material impact on the safety and traffic flows or cause unacceptable increases to traffic and parking. <p>2. The local planning authority will seek to prevent the inappropriate location or clustering of takeaway premises. Hot food takeaways will normally be acceptable only within the designated network of retail centres, and will normally be refused adjacent to an existing or approved hot food takeaway unit (other than at Bluewater).</p> <p>3. The proposed loss of public houses in the Borough will only be acceptable where sufficient effective marketing of the premises has been carried out which demonstrates that it is not viable as a public house or for local community (Class F2) use.</p>	<p>No implications</p> <p>This is a development management policy and does not relate directly to development, nor does it provide any locations or quantum.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways present.</p>