

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

- 9.1.1 Community services include healthcare, social services, education, libraries, fire protection, police and community halls. In terms of community service provision, it is desirable that the widest possible range of facilities are locally available and readily accessible to create balanced communities and reduce the need to travel. It is thus important to ensure the provision of necessary facilities within new development schemes, and to safeguard existing facilities, which are providing a valuable local service.
- 9.1.2 This chapter also deals with the provision of utilities, which are necessary to support development. Utilities include gas, electricity, water supply, land drainage, sewerage, wastewater treatment and telecommunications. It is important to make efficient use of utilities in order to minimise the need for additional investment. New development must be capable of being readily served by the necessary utilities.

9.2 CURRENT SITUATION

- 9.2.1 Healthcare services for the local plan area are currently provided by a number of authorities. The Medway NHS Trust based in Medway, is the provider of acute services (such as surgical and medical services) whereas community mental health and elderly services are provided by Thames Gateway Healthcare NHS Trust based in Sittingbourne. The West Kent Health Authority, based at Aylesford near Maidstone, is the purchasing agency for healthcare services and is responsible for assessing the healthcare needs of local people. It is also responsible for administering contracts with independent professional service providers such as general practitioners, dentists, pharmacists and opticians.
- 9.2.2 The Medway NHS Trust provides its services from the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham, and St Bartholomew's Hospital in Rochester, but the latter will shortly transfer to the Thames Gateway NHS Trust.
- 9.2.3 This Trust provides its community mental health and elderly services in the Medway area from leased parts of Medway Hospital. It also runs a nursing home, health centres, clinics and a hospice across the Medway towns and some services are provided within gp's surgeries.
- 9.2.4 Since April 1998, provision of social services has been the responsibility of Medway Council. The basis of social services provision is contained in the Council's community care plan and children's services plan for 1998-2001. It aims to shape services and infrastructure in communities that enable people to live as independently as possible. Examples include enhancing accessibility to local amenities and public facilities, provision of accommodation through adaptation or new build, encouraging local work opportunities for all sectors of society and taking action on the needs of deprived communities. This approach is also supported by the community development initiatives of the Council. Social services are currently delivered through four local offices providing a range of services for older people, people with disabilities or mental health problems and children and their families.

- 9.2.5 Social Services is committed to continuing a reallocation of resources from residential to community care. Social services provision will often overlap with healthcare and housing needs, and consequently there is close liaison between these services.
- 9.2.6 Services may be commissioned from both social services itself and from other outside provider organisations. Whilst social services is responsible for registering all residential care homes, those which provide nursing care must also be registered with the West Kent Health Authority.
- 9.2.7 There are currently 89 primary, 20 secondary and 3 special state schools in the Medway area. The schools standards and framework act comes into effect from September 1999 and Medway schools will be organised as follows:
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|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 83 community schools | (72 primary, 11 secondary) |
| 8 voluntary controlled | (7 primary, 1 secondary) |
| 11 voluntary aided | (10 primary, 1 secondary) |
| 7 foundation | (7 secondary) |
- 9.2.8 Further education facilities are provided at the Mid Kent College of Further Education at City Way and Horsted and at the Kent Institute of Art and Design, New Road, Rochester. In Chatham historic dockyard the former clock tower building is now the bridge warden's college, a postgraduate and professional development education centre run by the University of Kent.
- 9.2.9 The University of Greenwich has relocated its schools of earth sciences, environmental sciences and engineering to Chatham Maritime. It has incorporated the Natural Resources Institute, which was a government research organisation. The campus also includes a variety of student support facilities, including purpose-built accommodation.
- 9.2.10 Although not responsible for further education, the Council sees considerable advantage in developing a highly skilled and trained workforce locally. It is one of the Council's core aims to develop Further Education within Medway.
- 9.2.11 In April 1998, the provision of library and information services became the responsibility of Medway Council. The basis of this provision is contained in the Library Plan, which is submitted to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for approval and assessment. The main objectives are to enable as many people as possible to have access through libraries to recreational, cultural, educational and life-long learning opportunities. The library service is provided from 17 static service points and one mobile library. Static service points vary in size from the smallest in Grain and Hempstead to the largest town centres at Chatham, Gillingham and Strood.
- 9.2.12 There is currently an under provision of cemeteries with 4 active cemeteries, located in Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester and Strood. There are no crematoria in Medway itself, but the Council operates the Medway crematorium at Bluebell Hill in Tonbridge and Malling Borough, close to junction 3 of the M2 motorway.
- 9.2.13 The police divisional headquarters for Medway is situated at Rochester police station. Sub-divisional police stations are located at Chatham and Rainham, covering the Chatham and Gillingham areas respectively.

- 9.2.14 The divisional fire headquarters for Rochester, Gillingham, Swale, Dartford and Gravesham is situated at Watling Street, Chatham. This is also the only whole time staffed station on the east side of the River Medway, the equivalent on the west side being at Gravesend Road in Strood. There are also unstaffed fire stations at New Cut, Chatham; Green Street; Gillingham; Rainham; Halling; Cliffe; Hoo and Grain.
- 9.2.15 British Gas Transco has responsibility for gas transmission. Three pressure reducing stations at Rochester Riverside, Gillingham Holder Station and the Grain Refinery convert main grid pressure gas to a medium pressure network, which extends into the main residential areas. A medium pressure pipeline also extends out into the Hoo Peninsula running south of High Halstow and close to Lower Stoke. Gas for domestic and most commercial purposes is taken from the low pressure network. The gas system has been extended to many rural communities although not all areas are covered.
- 9.2.16 At Grain, British Gas has an existing liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage facility and also has plans to build a LNG importation terminal. This terminal is designed to supplement domestic supplies to meet an anticipated surge in demand, including that arising from the new network of gas fired power stations.
- 9.2.17 Seeboard plc has responsibility for the local transmission of electricity. Powergen plc operates two electricity-generating power stations at Kingsnorth and Grain, supplying electricity into the national grid. A combined cycle gas turbine power generation station has been operating at Grain for 2 years and another is under construction at Kingsnorth. The Council has resolved to grant planning permission for an additional gas fired power station at Grain. However, this requires a licence from the dti before construction can proceed, and the DTI has imposed an embargo on the development of new gas fired power stations.
- 9.2.18 Water supply for Medway is the responsibility of Southern Water plc, except for the Halling area, which is supplied by Mid-Kent Water plc. Both companies anticipate that the majority of locations for development within the local plan area can be readily supplied from existing water mains. The Environment Agency has a responsibility for managing water resources. Extraction of water from chalk aquifers is restricted as part of its North Kent Water Resource Management Scheme.
- 9.2.19 Land drainage is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board. There are large areas within Medway which are low lying and may be susceptible to a 1000 year surge tide.
- 9.2.20 Sewage and wastewater treatment facilities are provided throughout Medway by Southern Water plc. They are making progress with the upgrading of the waste water and sewage sludge treatment works at Motney Hill, Rainham to comply with the European Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. Considerable highway and amenity issues are involved, particularly during the construction period, and the site adjoins the Medway Marshes which have international importance for wildlife conservation.

9.3 POLICY CONTEXT

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

- 9.3.1 Central government advice relating to planning for facilities is set out in planning policy guidance notes (PPGs). PPG 1 (1997) "*General Policy and Principles*", PPG 3 (1992) "*Housing*" and PPG 12 (1992) "*Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance*" emphasise the need for the planning system to ensure that major new developments are provided with infrastructure including community facilities. The pattern of development proposed in local plans should take account of infrastructure limitations or alternatively, should provide those responsible for infrastructure with a measure of certainty, to enable them to plan for future needs. Local plans should include policies setting out the local authorities' requirements for planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. These requirements should accord with Circular 1/97 and the policies should indicate the facilities or utilities to be provided and whether a contribution towards their provision is required.
- 9.3.2 PPG 22 (1993) "*Renewable Energy*" reiterates government policy to stimulate the exploitation and development of renewable energy sources that have prospects of being both economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. In the UK, this includes wind power, hydropower, bio-fuels, waste incineration and active solar power. It is the government's view that the renewable sources will provide diversity and security of energy supply. The environmental benefits associated with renewable energy derive from reduced air pollutants from the burning of fossil fuels, that is, less carbon dioxide which contributes to 'global warming' and fewer acidic deposits from sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxides. PPG 22 also states that commercial energy generated from the incineration of waste may alleviate some of the problems associated with the disposal and treatment of waste.
- 9.3.3 Telecommunications relates to all forms of communication by electrical or optical wire and cables and radio signals. Their associated development includes radio masts or towers, antennae, radio equipment housing, telephone boxes, cabinets and junction boxes, poles and overhead wires. PPG 8 (1992) "*Telecommunications*" emphasises that the telecommunications industry and technology is demand led: it is government policy to encourage the growth of the industry and a choice of service providers to the benefit of local communities and the national economy. The PPG also advises Local Planning Authorities to protect established telecommunications networks from built development that may cause interference.

REGIONAL GUIDANCE

- 9.3.4 "*Regional Planning Guidance For The South East 1994*" (RPG9) emphasises the vital role of South East England in the development of the UK economy as a whole. It provides a framework for the future development of the South East. This guidance embodies a number of objectives that should be pursued concurrently and requires an appropriate balance to be struck. Planning policies should be directed towards enhancing economic performance; sustainable development and environmental improvement; opportunity and choice.
- 9.3.5 The "*Thames Gateway planning framework*" 1995 (RPG9a) amplifies the policies of RPG9. One of the main principles is the importance of achieving the right mix of development on the major opportunity sites, in order to create sustainable and vibrant communities, where

the relationship between homes and place of work, commerce, relaxation and leisure are more sustainable.

KENT STRUCTURE PLAN 1996

9.3.6 Policy S9 of the Kent Structure Plan states:

“in preparing local plans and considering development proposals, local authorities will have regard to the need for community facilities and services, including education, health and cultural facilities, local shopping facilities, transport infrastructure and public utilities. Provision will be made for the development of further and higher education, including academic and student accommodation. Planning authorities will not normally permit development unless the infrastructure which is directly required to service the development can be made available at the appropriate time.”

9.3.7 This highlights the importance of synchronising development and related community facilities or infrastructure with public and private sector capital investment programmes so that development does not overload infrastructure capacity. It also prevents the waste of scarce resources on infrastructure not warranted by the development strategy.

GOOD PRACTICE ON PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

9.3.8 The Kent Association of Local Authorities (KALA) has produced a Good Practice Guide on Developer Contributions. This emphasises the importance of developers building high quality, balanced communities with locally available facilities. The key to this is developers being encouraged to make contributions to community facilities, as set out in Circular 1/97. The Good Practice Guide has been adopted by the Council for development control purposes and sets the context for the type and appropriateness of contributions from various developments, detailing the range of facilities relevant to developer contributions.

9.4 OBJECTIVES

9.4.1 The following objectives are identified in relation to community service provision in Medway:

- (i) to ensure that a wide range of community services and facilities are available, convenient and readily accessible to the population of Medway; and
- (ii) to build local communities with local facilities of a high quality by ensuring the provision of community services where new development takes place.

9.4.2 The objectives relating to utilities are :

- (i) to ensure that the most efficient use of existing utilities is made and;
- (ii) to ensure that suitable and adequate utilities are in place to meet local demands including the provision of adequate infrastructure where new development takes place.

9.5 POLICIES AND REASONED JUSTIFICATION

EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 9.5.1 There is a need to protect existing community facilities, such as community halls, unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist where it would be beneficial to redevelop sites. Proposals that would result in the loss, without replacement, of community facilities should clearly demonstrate that those facilities are no longer needed. Where redevelopment, involving replacement is proposed, the replacement facilities should be of a similar scale and kind, be easily accessible, particularly by public transport, and reduce the need to travel. The accessibility of the proposed replacement will be assessed in terms of pedestrian and cyclist accessibility and the proximity of the proposal to the main road network and public transport routes.

POLICY CF1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Development which would result in the loss of existing community facilities will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist such that it would be beneficial to redevelop sites.

Replacement facilities of a similar scale and kind will be sought. They should be easily accessible by the local population by a variety of means of transport, including public transport, cycling and walking.

NEW DEVELOPMENT AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 9.5.2 New development should be readily served by necessary physical infrastructure. A key tenet is that developments should bear their own costs and not be a charge on the public purse. Adequate infrastructure planning is required in order to avoid the need for retrospective works. Medway Council will seek to secure the provision of necessary infrastructure by the negotiation of planning obligations, where appropriate, in accordance with the principles of Circular 1/97. This is covered by Policy S6 in the Strategy Chapter.

NEW DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 9.5.3 The co-operation of developers in the financing and provision of new capital infrastructure works will be sought for services which are made necessary by new development e.g. Education, health or recreation facilities in accordance with Policy S6. Policies H1 and H2 specifically identify the need for relevant facilities on allocated housing sites, in order that the costs of provision can be taken into account at an early stage by landowners and developers. The need for facilities generated by other windfall sites, will be assessed at the submission of planning applications subject to the principles of 1/97, the KALA guide and Policy S6.
- 9.5.4 New community facilities may also be required within existing developed areas. The type of

facility may be anything from a community hall to changing rooms at a playing field. Provision of these facilities must be of an appropriate scale, have minimal impact on neighbouring amenity and be accessible by a variety of means of transport.

POLICY CF2: NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES

New community facilities will be permitted subject to:

- (i) the size and scale of development being appropriate to the site; and***
- (ii) the development having no detrimental impact on the countryside, residential amenity, landscape or ecology; and***
- (iii) accessibility to the local population by a variety of means of transport, including public transport, cycling and walking.***

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

- 9.5.5 The Medway NHS Trust has now centralised acute hospital services at the Medway Maritime Hospital site, which has resulted in the closure of acute service provision at All Saints Hospital. These changes may result in some loss of accessibility to acute healthcare services for a proportion of residents in Medway. However, the centralisation in services coincided with the completion of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road which offers enhanced accessibility to the Gillingham site, both by private vehicles and bus services. Facilities for enhanced pedestrian and cycle access, a resident's parking scheme and localised traffic management all form parts of the redevelopment. Some staff residential units will be displaced from the hospital site and will be replaced in the locality.
- 9.5.6 The objective of the Thames Gateway Healthcare NHS Trust is to provide a strategic network of Community Hospitals throughout its district. Saint Bartholomew's is to become a Community Hospital. A site was identified at Wainscott for a community hospital in the 1992 Local Plan. However, the Trust has now stated that this site is no longer required and it has therefore been deleted. In the longer term the Trust has identified the need for a community hospital in Gillingham, but due to financial constraints, no firm proposals are likely to come forward during the period of this Plan.

LOCAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

- 9.5.7 The West Kent Health Authority bases its service provision on the principle of accessibility to a choice of healthcare facilities. It suggests that patients in urban areas should need to travel no more than 3 miles, and those in rural areas no more than 8 miles. There should also be an

acceptable distribution of facilities that are accessible by wheelchair. The Council has supported these objectives insofar as doctors' surgeries have been provided within major residential schemes and a number of new build surgeries and conversions have been granted planning permission.

9.5.8 However, in Gillingham in particular, there remains an identified need for an upgrading of facilities to meet modern standards. The Council endorses the principle of GP surgeries and associated healthcare facilities at 3 locations to meet this requirement. Two sites, at Castlemaine and at the Sunlight Centre in Gillingham, will also include other community and leisure facilities.

9.5.9 A surgery to serve the new Wainscott housing areas is needed and funding will be required to achieve this. The Council proposes to seek contributions from the allocated housing developments in that area to this end. A further facility will be provided as part of the neighbourhood centre at St. Mary's Island, Chatham Maritime.

POLICY CF3: SITES FOR LOCAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

General practice surgeries and associated health care facilities will be permitted at the following locations, as defined on the Proposals Map :

- (i) Castlemaine Community Site, Gillingham (in conjunction with other community and leisure facilities);***
- (ii) Builders Yard, Ingram Road, Gillingham;***
- (iii) Sunlight Centre, Richmond Road, Gillingham (in conjunction with community and other facilities);***
- (iv) Wainscott ;***
- (v) St Mary's Island, Chatham Maritime (in conjunction with neighbourhood centre).***

9.5.10 The conversion of properties to doctors surgeries and the expansion of existing surgeries to provide a wider range of healthcare services raises important issues. The Council supports the objective of local provision of high quality primary healthcare facilities, as this will reduce the need to travel by car and be more convenient for the public (thus a recognised deficiency in provision will be a material consideration in the assessment of such proposals). But, there is a need to balance the need for such proposals with the impact that they have on local amenity (largely due to increased traffic flows and parking). Where proposals are otherwise

acceptable on amenity grounds, the requirement to meet the Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards will be judged on the individual merits of each case, having regard to the proposal's catchment area, convenience of public transport and local (i.e. Ward) car ownership levels.

POLICY CF4: PRIMARY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

New or improved primary healthcare facilities will be permitted in areas where there is a deficiency in the quality of existing provision, subject to there being no undue loss of amenity to neighbouring residents.

Adequate on-site parking will be required in accordance with policies T12 and T13, unless it can be demonstrated that circumstances exist to justify a reduction in this standard.

SOCIAL SERVICES: NURSING AND SPECIAL CARE

- 9.5.11 The Council has granted planning permission for a number of new and expanded residential care homes and nursing homes in recent years. Analysis of demographic changes indicates continuing significant growth in the over 75 and over 85 age groups, with a corresponding likelihood that demand for residential care homes and nursing homes will increase. Community Care Plans indicate service shortfalls for these facilities.
- 9.5.12 The Council's Social Services Directorate considers that local needs should be met by local facilities. These should cater for people in the locality with which they are familiar. Thus, premises should be small scale and located and designed to respect the amenities of future residents. Non nursing care or special care residential homes will be considered against Policy H9 of the Housing chapter.

POLICY CF5: NURSING AND SPECIAL CARE

Accommodation providing nursing or special care to meet needs arising in local neighbourhoods will be permitted, subject to there being no undue loss of amenity to neighbouring residents. Proposals should be of a size, design and location that will provide a satisfactory environment for future residents.

SOCIAL SERVICES: CHILDCARE FACILITIES

- 9.5.13 There is a range of available childcare facilities including creches, day nurseries, playgroups and childminding carried out within residential properties. They provide a useful community service, particularly for working and/or single parents. Nationally it is becoming recognised that children who have good quality pre-school experience, make more significant progress in formal education. Local research indicates that in certain parts of Medway, in particular central Chatham, there is an under-provision of affordable pre-school facilities, such as play schools, especially for children with special needs.
- 9.5.14 Generally, childcare facilities can be provided in non-residential institutions (such as church halls and public halls) without planning permission. Childminding may be carried out in residential properties provided that the vehicular traffic, noise, activity and disturbance do not materially alter the character of the property. Where planning permission is required for childminding, the applications will be considered against the policy relating to businesses in residential areas (Policy ED10).

EDUCATION: SCHOOLS

- 9.5.15 Many Medway schools are currently operating at, or near, capacity. The additional housing proposed in the plan will add to that pressure and it may be necessary to either provide new primary schools or expand existing ones. Several sites are reserved to meet the anticipated demand for new primary school facilities:

The existing schools in North Rochester are close to, or at, capacity. New housing development, principally on the Riverside, will create further demand for places. To cater for this, sites have been identified for new primary schools at the Esplanade and within the Rochester Riverside Action Area (Policy S7). Housing development on the Riverside will be expected to contribute towards the new facilities in accordance with Policy S7.

- Existing schools in the Frindsbury/Wainscott area have limited capacity. There is substantial new housing development proposed for this locality. Two initiatives are proposed to ensure satisfactory primary school provision is made in this part of the conurbation. A site on the existing Temple School site is allocated for a new one-form entry primary school, which is close to the new housing area. Additionally, it may be necessary to enlarge Wainscott Primary School to two-form entry. This will mean the loss of part of the playing field, which will be replaced by additional land to the south, which is allocated for this purpose.
- Substantial housing development is proposed at Bells Lane Hoo. As a consequence it may be necessary to extend Hoo St. Werburgh Primary School to accommodate the possible demand for places.
- The development of the All Saints Hospital site (Policy H1, ME 371) will put pressure on schools in the Luton area, some of which are nearing capacity and cannot be easily extended. The Council as Education Authority is currently investigating the potential of the Medway Community College site to accommodate a new primary school.
- A site at Grange Farm, Gillingham will be required to meet the demand created by the housing allocation for the area in Policy H1.
- A further site for a primary school at Hillyfields, Gillingham, is intended to meet primary

education needs in the longer term in the North Gillingham area. It is on land already in the Council's ownership.

- Finally, a site is allocated for a two-form entry primary school within the proposed Neighbourhood Centre at St Mary's Island, Chatham Maritime (see Policies S8 and R8). This will meet the needs of this new residential community.

9.5.16

In accordance with Policy S2 the Council will assess the effect of new residential development on educational provision. Where justified by the scale of the proposal, contributions will be sought towards new or improved facilities. The Council may choose to seek provision of shared or dual-purpose facilities (such as sports halls or libraries) when negotiating educational provision, to enable use by the general public as well as by pupils. It is acknowledged that many School Managers prefer sole use sites for security and insurance purposes, and their views on the potential for dual-use will be sought at an early stage.

POLICY CF6: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Land at the following locations, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for new primary school provision. Development that would prejudice the implementation of these proposals will not be permitted:

- (i) Rochester Riverside Action Area;***
- (ii) The Esplanade;***
- (iii) Grange Farm, Gillingham;***
- (iv) Hillyfields, Gillingham;***
- (v) St. Mary's Island, Chatham Maritime.***

Land will be safeguarded within the existing grounds of the following sites for the development of primary schools:

- (vi) Temple School;***
- (vii) Medway Community College.***

In order to provide for additional facilities a number of schools may be expanded, including:

- (viii) Wainscott Primary School;***
- (ix) Hoo St. Werburgh Primary School.***

FURTHER, HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION

- 9.5.17 The Council supports the expansion of Further Education facilities locally in recognition of the advantages of a skilled and well educated workforce and the unique business opportunities that will arise from the close association of core research and academic activities. The Council will strongly encourage the expansion of Further Education as one of its key corporate aims. The existing Greenwich University campus at Chatham Maritime offers opportunities for expansion, whilst the nearby World Naval Base may also offer opportunities. Further education is a major people attractor, producing substantial levels of traffic. It is important therefore, for it to be accessible and to accord with the sequential tests of PPGs 6 and 13. Therefore major Further or Higher Educational centres should be provided in readily accessible locations such as the town centres and preferably related to Chatham as Medway's "city" centre.
- 9.5.18 The Council's own Adult Education Service provides a wide range of services to the community, helping those with learning difficulties, those returning to work and many other client groups. Services are provided from a network of centres across Medway, including dedicated sites and others affiliated to local schools. The Council's Library Service has, as one of its core objectives, the creation of a framework for life-long learning. This comprises support to formal schooling, further education and higher education, together with provision for access by individuals to knowledge for self-development, scholarship or increased skills.

POLICY CF7: FURTHER, HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION

Further, Higher and Adult Education facilities will be permitted on appropriate sites in Chatham town centre or other town centres which are accessible by a variety of means, including public transport, cycling and walking.

Expansion of the existing campuses at Chatham Maritime and World Naval Base, Chatham will be permitted.

CEMETERIES

- 9.5.19 There is a need for further provision of land for cemetery use in the Gillingham area. A site has therefore been reserved, adjacent to the existing cemetery at Woodlands Road, Gillingham.

POLICY CF8: CEMETERY EXTENSION

Land at Cornwallis Avenue, Gillingham, as defined on the Proposals Map, is allocated for an extension to the existing cemetery.

LIBRARIES

- 9.5.20 Most people in the Medway area now have reasonable access to a library service and these are generally well used. The central library in Chatham is poorly located in relation to the centre, and is housed in inferior quality buildings that the Council is committed to replacing as a high priority. The proposed redevelopment of the library should release land for open space and for a mixed use development which could include residential, retail, commercial and leisure uses. A replacement site for the library facility is currently being sought. Further decisions in relation to other libraries, e.g. Rochester, may be necessary when the site, size and timescale have been determined for a replacement central library and resource centre in Chatham.
- 9.5.21 The substantial housing development proposed within the plan may require consideration of expansion of existing library facilities, to meet community needs, perhaps co-located with other new community facilities.

ELECTRICITY

- 9.5.22 The Kent Waste Local Plan identifies two sites with potential for waste to energy plants in Halling and at Kingsnorth. An application for the latter site was submitted to Kent County Council in late 1996, but was subsequently withdrawn.
- 9.5.23 The Council would be concerned about proposals for further energy plants in the Local Plan area for a number of reasons. There are already four power stations with a fifth in prospect. This represents a significant concentration. There are also concerns about the possible effect on the image of the area caused by such uses and the effects of cumulative air pollution. This accords with the Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG9a) which advocates the need to enhance the environmental image of the area. Power stations often require large areas of land but generate very low levels of employment.
- 9.5.24 If Medway is to play its full, proper role in Thames Gateway, it needs to reserve its employment land stock for employment intensive uses. For these reasons, the Council considers it inappropriate to permit further energy plants except in very exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that a clear and specific local need exists.

POLICY CF9: POWER STATIONS

Further power stations will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that a clear and specific local need exists.

- 9.5.25 The visual impact of electricity pylons and supply lines can be significant, both when individual lines cross areas of landscape value and when a profusion of lines creates a visually unattractive clutter. Wherever possible the routing of overhead lines should avoid residential areas. The Council will oppose proposals for lines, particularly high voltage lines that would, by virtue of loss of amenity, have an unacceptable effect on existing or proposed residential development. The Council therefore encourages new lines and existing lines to be placed underground in residential and sensitive areas whenever practicable.

POLICY CF10: OVERHEAD SUPPLY LINES

New or replacement electricity supply lines which cannot be re-routed should, whenever practicable, be placed underground.

This policy will particularly apply in existing or proposed residential areas, AONB's, Special Landscape Areas, Nature Reserves and Ramsar sites, except where this would have a detrimental impact on fauna and flora.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- 9.5.26 The Council supports the principle of small-scale renewable energy schemes. A stimulus for commercial exploitation of renewable energy schemes is the subsidy provided by the Non Fossil Fuels Obligation. The Department of Trade and Industry and Seeboard plc carried out a joint study into the potential of renewable energy in the South East, which was published in 1996. It contains no site specific proposals that require consideration in this Local Plan.
- 9.5.27 There are often considerable environmental constraints on renewable energy schemes that will need to be taken into account. There may be a detrimental visual amenity impact from apparatus and grid connections in areas of landscape importance. Many types of renewable energy schemes may mean significant problems of traffic generation that would need to be adequately addressed. There may be a detrimental impact on amenity in terms of nature conservation, particularly in the RAMSAR sites.
- 9.5.28 Locational constraints can arise since, in many cases, the resource can only be harnessed where it occurs. For example, there is scope to generate heat and electricity from the bacterial digestion of sewage sludge at Motney Hill wastewater treatment works, which could make the site self sufficient in energy.

POLICY CF11: RENEWABLE ENERGY

Small scale renewable energy schemes for the local generation and consumption of electricity will be permitted when the location, scale and design of the apparatus and associated infrastructure are not detrimental to nature conservation or landscape concerns and present no significant loss of residential or countryside amenity.

WATER SUPPLY

- 9.5.29 The Council will consult the water supply companies and the Environment Agency to ensure the availability of water resources for new development which is not allocated in this Plan. New development should not negate efforts to secure the conservation of water resources by, for example, the creation of large impermeable areas or the rationalisation of drainage systems which can reduce the effective replenishment of water resources. Damage to water resources may occur due to physical disturbance of aquifers and groundwater flows through quarrying, road construction, new mineral workings, infill of old mineral workings etc or through contamination by waste disposal on land, industrial processes, disturbance of existing contaminated land.
- 9.5.30 Development proposals must ensure that adequate measures are undertaken to protect surface and groundwater resources. The Council will consult the Environment Agency on development that has drainage implications within the Aquifer Protection Zone 1 Areas.

POLICY CF12: WATER SUPPLY

Development will not be permitted where:

- (i) it would have a detrimental effect on the quality or yield of water supply; or***
- (ii) it would prevent or reduce replenishment of groundwater aquifers; or,***
- (iii) it would have an adverse impact on the flora, fauna (including fisheries interests) and amenity of water courses.***

LAND DRAINAGE

- 9.5.31 There are large areas within Medway which are low lying and may be susceptible to a 1000 year surge tide. In the long term, defensive barriers and walls may need to be raised to cope with rising sea levels. Low-lying areas may be at risk of tidal flooding should the sea defences, where they exist, be breached or overtopped. Developers need to take this into account by not locating habitable rooms at ground floor level. In some cases, the risk of tidal flooding may rule out development or require the raising of ground levels or other special measures to overcome the problem, ideally limiting the depth of flooding to no more than 1.2 metres (approximately 4 feet).
- 9.5.32 Broadly speaking, the Council is assured that the current land drainage network is capable of meeting the scale of additional demand from future development. Areas susceptible to floodrisk include Halling and Cuxton Marshes, the Hogmarsh Valley, Rochester and Strood riverside and the Riverside area of Gillingham.

- 9.5.33 The Environment Agency generally advises that development, including the intensification of development, should be resisted in identified flood plains or areas at unacceptable risk from flooding. Where it is decided that nonetheless, such development should be permitted, the Council will take account of advice from the Environment Agency. Such advice will encompass whether to attach conditions to secure flood protection and/or mitigation measures (including the setting of particular slab levels for buildings and measures to restore floodplain or provide adequate water storage as part of the development). Within the built-up area of Medway, flood defences already exist but may in certain cases have to be strengthened.
- 9.5.34 New development or redevelopment can increase the rate and volume of surface water runoff, potentially exceeding the capacity of watercourses. Development that could increase the risk of flooding must include appropriate surface water runoff attenuation or mitigation measures. This is in accordance with policy NR5 of the adopted Kent Structure Plan. All residential allocations proposed in this Plan have been assessed as acceptable in flood risk terms, but appropriate mitigation measures will be required in certain instances. The Environment Agency will be consulted in all such cases.

POLICY CF13: TIDAL FLOOD RISK AREAS

Built development will not be permitted within the tidal flood risk areas as defined on the Proposals Map, unless the site is allocated in the Development Plan.

SEWERAGE AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT

- 9.5.35 Development that would overload the sewerage system may require off site sewers to be requisitioned. All sewerage systems should be connected to the main drainage system and constructed to adoptable standards. Southern Water Plc anticipates that development at the urban riverside can be provided for in sewers already existing or proposed, but elsewhere connections to sewers may be needed. The Council will expect developers to negotiate with Southern Water Plc to resolve any sewerage and waste water issues.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- 9.5.36 Many aspects of telecommunication development are exempt from planning controls. Those developments that do require planning permission, or are subject to prior notification regulations, will need to avoid environmental impact. The operators' technical requirements will need to be balanced against the considerations that the Council, as Local Planning Authority, would usually apply. Telecommunications operators are, therefore, strongly encouraged to liaise with the Council at an early stage to ensure that proposals can be accommodated and that constraints are identified.
- 9.5.37 Telecommunications development can be very intrusive and can impinge on open landscape. Consequently it is important that location and siting is carefully controlled. In urban locations aerials should be attached to existing buildings where possible. In order to

avoid an unnecessary proliferation of telecommunications towers, the sharing of apparatus or the attachment of antennae to existing structures will be encouraged, where this would minimise harm to visual amenity. The removal of obsolete telecommunications equipment will be sought and the siting of antennae on buildings or structures should minimise their visual impact.

- 9.5.38 Large physical structures can cause disruption and interference to telecommunication networks. The Council will need to be satisfied that the potential for interference has been taken into account in the siting and design of such developments. Where the potential for interference is expected, co-ordination with the Radio-communications Agency will be required and their advice taken into account.
- 9.5.39 In assessing designs for new high masts, the Council will seek a mast capable of allowing the sharing of space with other operators at critical sites (such as prominent hilltops or in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Operators will be expected to show sound technical reasons of an exceptional nature why this cannot be done if they wish to erect high masts for their sole use.

POLICY CF14: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Established telecommunications networks will be protected from built development which may cause interference. Telecommunications development will be permitted subject to:

- (i) the applicant demonstrating that there is no spare capacity on existing masts in the locality, or that technical difficulties preclude sharing and that alternative site options have been explored and found to be unsuitable; and***
- (ii) the site being the best available in environmental terms within technical and legal constraints and mitigation measures are included to limit visual/environmental impact; and***
- (iii) new high masts being of a design that allows the sharing of aerial space with other operators at critical sites.***

9.6 ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

- 9.6.1 In accordance with the guidance contained at paragraphs. 5.52 and 6.24/5 of PPG 12 “Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance” the policies in this chapter have been subject to environmental appraisal. The policies broadly support sustainable principles. They encourage the provision of, and access to, community facilities, for instance by insisting that new school facilities must be sustainable in location and accessible from public transport routes. These policies also protect against detrimental impact upon landscape and the loss of visual amenity.
- 9.6.2 Overall, the policies have little impact in terms of global sustainability and natural resources, but where utilities or services development may have a detrimental impact, habitats and species are protected and safeguarded against contamination.

9.7 MONITORING MEASURES

- 9.7.1 The performance of the Local Plan in meeting its aims with regard to the provision of community facilities will be judged against the following criteria:
- (i) The number and extent of services and utilities provided in/by new development schemes;
 - (ii) The implementation of the GP Surgery proposals at Gillingham, Wainscott and St Mary’s Island;
 - (iii) The number and extent of new school developments undertaken by the service providers on sites allocated or safeguarded for the purpose;
 - (iv) The development of additional Further Education facilities;
 - (v) The length of electricity supply lines placed underground;
 - (vi) The number of, and visual intrusion of, telecommunications masts permitted.