
REPRESENTATIONS TO MEDWAY COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN
2012 – 2035

Development Options
Consultation Document

Submitted on Behalf of
The Landowners

April 2017

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| Prepared by: | Joshua Mellor |
| Checked by: | Andrew Wilford |
| Authorised by: | Andrew Wilford |

Barton Willmore LLP
The Observatory
Southfleet Road
Ebbsfleet
Dartford
Kent
DA10 0DF

Tel: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These representations are submitted on behalf of the Landowner (Mr Santok Gill) in response to Medway Council's Local Plan 2012 – 2035 Development Options Consultation Document (MCD OCD) published in January 2017.
- 1.2 These representations focus on the promotion of a site known as 'Land south of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton' (The Site). A Site Location Plan is included at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The Site comprises a single fallow field, redundant structures and single detached residential property, including associated hardstanding. Intermittent boundary vegetation, in the form of trees and hedgerows, runs along the northern boundary of the Site with the A228. The field is bound to the south by marshland and the Medway Valley railway line and to the west by a further field and an area of allotments. Residential dwellings bound the site to the north and east.
- 1.4 The Site forms part of a wider SLAA (Strategic Land Availability Assessment) site reference 1068 (South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton) as identified in the Medway SLAA 2015 and 2017. The SLAA 2017 concludes that the site is unsuitable for allocation.
- 1.5 Notwithstanding our Clients' specific land interests, these representations have been prepared in objective terms and in recognition of prevailing planning policy – in particular Government guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] (March 2012) and National Planning Practice Guidance [NPPG] (March 2014).
- 1.6 The MCD OCD forms the first formal stage in the Local Plan's preparation (under Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations).
- 1.7 These representations focus on relevant matters relating to the release of the Site for residential dwellings and address the following:
- Section 2 – National Planning Policy
 - Section 3 – Vision and Strategic Objectives
 - Section 4 – Delivering Sustainable Development - Options
 - Section 5 – Land south of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton

- 1.8 These representations are supported by an accompanying Accessibility Appraisal, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Landscape and Visual Appraisal which have been produced to demonstrate there are no overriding accessibility, ecological or landscape constraints which preclude the allocation of the Site for residential purposes, as detailed in Section 5.

2.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

i) National Policy & Plan Making

2.1 The NPPF (March 2012) places a strong 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' in all planning related matters and places a responsibility on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to encourage and support sustainable growth and to plan positively for new development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development in relation to the planning system as outlined in the NPPF. These include:-

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

(Para. 8)

2.2 The presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF should be seen as a golden thread, running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that:

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;

Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless: – any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or – specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. (Para. 14)

2.3 LPAs should 'submit a plan for examination which it considers is "sound" – namely that is:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
 - **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and:
 - **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.
- (Para. 182).

2.4 The NPPF considers that Local Plans should:

- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
- be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
- be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;
- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
- identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
- identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified. (Para. 157).

2.5 The NPPF directs that LPAs should use a proportionate evidence base in plan-making. LPAs should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. LPAs should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals. (Para. 158).

ii) National Policy & Housing Need

- 2.6 The NPPF (para 47) requires LPAs to use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, 'Objectively Assessed Needs' (OAN) for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the Plan period.
- 2.7 LPAs should plan for a housing mix which takes into account "housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this demand." Household and population projections should also be a key consideration, taking into account of migration and demographic change. (Para. 159).
- 2.8 With regards to the methodology of assessing housing need and establishing a future housing requirement, the PPG (March 2014) states the following:

Household projections published by the Department for Communities and Local Government should provide the starting point estimate of overall housing need.

(Reference ID: 2a-015-20140306)

- 2.9 Although the official CLG household projections should therefore be considered, they only represent the starting point for assessing need. This is due to a number of reasons as the PPG explains:

The household projections are trend based, i.e. they provide the household levels and structures that would result if the assumptions based on previous demographic trends in the population and rates of household formation were to be realised in practice. They do not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour.

(Reference ID: 2a-015-20140306)

- 2.10 The recent Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' (February, 2017) reaffirms the Government's commitment to significantly increase levels of housing delivery to meet widely recognised acute housing shortfall.

iii) Duty to Co-operate

- 2.11 The 'Duty to Co-operate' between LPAs is a clear requirement of National planning policy, ensuring a proactive approach is taken to enable a collaborative way forward with plan-making. The NPPF directs that public bodies should work together to address planning issues that cross

administrative boundaries, particularly such issues that relate to 'strategic priorities' as set out in para. 156. (Para. 178).

- 2.12 In addition, para. 179 requires LPAs to practice joint working to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas. Consideration should be given to producing joint planning policies on strategic matters and informal strategies such as joint infrastructure and investment plans. Collaborative working between LPAs and private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers to deliver sustainable development with regards to strategic planning priorities is also encouraged. (Para. 180). LPAs are required to demonstrate how they have met the requirements of the 'Duty to Co-operate during the plan-making process. (Para. 181).

iv) The Housing White Paper - Fixing our Broken Housing Market (February 2017)

- 2.13 The recent Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' (February 2017) reaffirms the Government's commitment to significantly increase levels of housing delivery to meet widely recognised acute housing shortfall.
- 2.14 Paragraph 1.29 states that plans should put in place policies to allow a good mix of sites to come forward for development to support small and medium sized sites, and thriving rural communities. Ensuring there is choice for consumers and that places can grow in ways that are sustainable.
- 2.15 Furthermore, paragraph 1.33 confirms the Government are seeking to amend the NPPF to expect local planning authorities to identify opportunities for villages to thrive.

3.0 VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Section 2 of the MCDOCD sets out the context within the Local Plan will operate, identifying a projected 20% population increase in the District over the life of the plan. Paragraph 2.8 notes that a key task for the Local Plan is to manage growth to achieve development which delivers benefits for local people, including housing, new services and facilities.
- 3.2 As confirmed by paragraph 2.31 of the MCDOCD the Local Plan is an opportunity to establish a positive strategy to guide Medway's development over the next 18 years. The MCDOCD sets out a vision for 2035 which identifies, among other points, that new development in Medway's towns and villages will have responded positively to the character of the surrounding environment and the needs of existing communities.
- 3.3 Paragraph 2.39 identifies the Strategic Objectives underpinning the Local Plan to deliver the development and infrastructure needs of the District, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, including to provide for the housing needs of Medway's communities, that meets the range of size, type and affordability the area needs. Furthermore, the objectives seek to strengthen the role of Medway's town, neighbourhood and village centres to secure a range of accessible services and facilities for local communities.
- 3.4 We **support** the vision and strategic objectives identified by the Council.
- 3.5 The MCDOCD acknowledges that the plan needs to achieve a balanced development strategy, meeting the needs of different sectors of the population looking for homes in Medway, including in rural areas (paragraph 3.25). Paragraph 10.15 identifies that around 12% of Medway's population lives in the rural area and the Council recognises rural communities are particularly vulnerable to the loss of community facilities. Growth will therefore be required in rural areas to maintain the vitality and viability of villages and their existing services and facilities. Furthermore, this is supported by the NPPF which recognises the support of thriving rural communities as a core planning principle.
- 3.6 The North Kent Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (November 2015) identifies Cuxton as being one of the key settlements outside of the urban area. However, there is extremely limited capacity for growth, with the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Green Belt surrounding the village north, west and south, and areas of high flood risk to the east of the village. The Site, at Land south of Sundridge Hill, is located outside of these constraints, and therefore represents a significant opportunity for residential development which will help maintain and enhance the vitality of the village.

4.0 DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - OPTIONS

i) Objectively Assessed Need

- 4.1 The North Kent Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (SHENA, March 2015), jointly produced between Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council, identifies a need for 29,463 homes in Medway Council area over the plan period (or 1,281 dwellings per annum), as acknowledged in Section 3 of the MCD OCD.
- 4.2 The SHENA derives an OAN of 1,281 dwellings per annum based on a starting point of the 2012-based CLG household projections. However, no revised OAN has been calculated based on the updated 2014-based CLG household projects which identify an increase in household projects by approximately 5.4% from the 2012-based projections.
- 4.3 Therefore, we **do not** consider that the assessed housing need, as calculated by Medway Council is “sound” or in line with National planning policy. The Council will need to address this and ensure there are sufficient housing sites allocated to meet the full OAN.

ii) Identified Supply of Development Land

- 4.4 Paragraph 3.7 of the MCD OCD sets out the Council’s current anticipated supply of development land, as shown below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Medway’s Current Supply of Development Land

| | Status | Number of Dwellings |
|----------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| A | Completions 2012-2016 | 2,180 |
| B | Sites with planning permission | 6,251 |
| C | Medway Local Plan 2003 Allocations | 356 |
| D | SLAA Pipeline sites | 8,813 |
| E | Windfalls (Years 3-5 only) | 606 |
| | | |
| F | Total | 18,206 |

- 4.5 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2016 (Volume 2, Section 8) provides the list of SLAA residential pipeline sites, totalling 8,813 units for the Plan period. This list includes a number of Medway Local Plan 2003 Allocations, which are however listed as a separate source of supply above (Row C). As a result, it appears that such sites (i.e. Medway Local Plan 2003 Allocations) are accounted for as both a separate source of supply and a SLAA pipeline site i.e. have been double counted in the overall supply (Row F).

- 4.6 It is recommended that the Council revisits the inclusion of Medway Local Plan 2003 Allocations to ensure such sites are only accounted for once, to ensure MC's position is robust.
- 4.7 It is also noted that the January 2017 SLAA only identifies a potential capacity of 5,980 dwellings on sites deemed to be suitable, available and achievable for residential development; thereby conflicting with MC's figure of 8,813 units (Row D), published in the MCD OCD at the same time of the SLAA's release.
- 4.8 The 2016 AMR list of SLAA pipeline sites also includes Lodge Hill for 5,000 dwellings in the Plan period. This conflicts with the MCD OCD position (para 3.39) in which the development site is phased in the second half of the Plan period (2025-2035) given the present uncertainty. This will allow for consideration of the outcome of the Public Inquiry and allow time for alternative sources of land supply to be planned, if required.
- 4.9 The reliance of Lodge Hill for 5,000 units in the Plan period (in Row D) is not considered to be appropriate or realistic. It is contrary to the content and intentions of the MCD OCD to address future uncertainties by phasing development later in the Plan period. Notwithstanding the site's continued uncertainty, it is also wholly unrealistic to anticipate 5,000 dwellings to be delivered in 2025-2035, which would require 500 dwellings to be built per annum.
- 4.10 The total supply of SLAA pipeline sites should be amended to be in accordance with the MCD OCD's position, which will significantly reduce the total supply of current development land in Medway. Additional land is therefore required to provide an identified supply of land to meet the development needs of circa 30,000 dwellings for the Plan period.
- 4.11 Furthermore, additional sources of supply may be required to address the potential exclusion of Lodge Hill.

iii) Options for Growth

- 4.12 The Council acknowledge, in paragraph 3.9, that it is unlikely the full range of development needs will be met solely in identified regeneration areas on brownfield land. Therefore, greenfield sites in the suburban and rural areas may have to form a part of the Local Plan development strategy. However, the greenfield land should be free from environmental constraints, of lesser value for landscape and agricultural purposes, and well related to services and infrastructure. We **support** this position in Principle.

- 4.13 A considerable area of Medway is covered by environmental designations where development should be restricted, including wide swathes of the Hoo Peninsula, covered by Ramsar, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest designations. Furthermore, land in the Medway Valley and to the south of the urban area is in the Kent Downs Area of Natural Beauty. The MCD OCD acknowledges these constraints, as well as acknowledging the high risk of flooding across parts of the district, where inappropriate development, including housing, should be avoided.
- 4.14 The Medway Integrated Growth Needs Assessment (November 2015) identifies that while there is a need to reinvigorate town centres and deliver sustainable development in locations that maximise existing infrastructure, the results of the Housing Needs Survey have indicated a desire for access to housing in rural areas. Furthermore, rural areas should be allowed to grow and diversify, through the provision of a range of property types, including some smaller units, helping to underpin their wider offer. The North Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (November 2015) identifies that the main rural wards in Medway are Cuxton, Halling, Peninsula and Strood Rural. Growth in these main rural wards should be supported.
- 4.15 The MCD OCD identifies a range of scenarios demonstrating potential development patterns for the district, seeking to ensure sustainable growth, including offering access to services and facilities, while respecting the different aspects of the areas' environment.
- 4.16 All 4 No. potential scenarios include incremental expansions of the villages, as shown on the maps included in Appendix 1B-1E of the MCD OCD, including Cuxton, Halling, Cliffe Woods, Cliffe, High Halstow, Allhallows, Grain and Lower Stoke. We support the recognition that the villages should be supported with development growth in order to maintain their vitality and viability.
- 4.17 Scenario 1 (Maximising the potential of urban regeneration) seeks to maximise development on brownfield sites, including redevelopment of employment sites at Medway City Estate and Chatham Docks. Appendix 1B of the MCD OCD identifies that there would be challenges associated with the delivery of large scale regeneration, including land assembly and impacts on transport networks. The scenario also identifies up to 7,000 dwellings being delivered across suburban and rural growth areas.
- 4.18 Scenario 2 (Suburban expansion) includes potential urban extensions around Rainham, Capstone and Strood, as well as the delivery of up to 3,000 dwellings at Lodge Hill and 2,000 dwellings at Hoo St Werburgh. Appendix 1C of the MCD OCD identifies that for this option a particular issue is the consideration of the review of the Green Belt boundary to bring forward development land. Furthermore, it notes that the consultation and ongoing work will determine

if there is a need to release land in the Green Belt or if provision for development needs can be met in other areas. The scenario identifies growth of villages to deliver 900 homes.

- 4.19 Scenario 3 (Rural focus) identifies potential for significant expansion of Hoo St Werburgh into a small town, including development of up to 6,500 dwellings, alongside up to 3,000 dwellings at Lodge Hill and 2,600 dwellings across the villages of Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, High Halstow, Lower Stoke, Allhallows and Grain. As noted in Appendix 1D, the scale of growth proposed in this scenario would require significant infrastructure investment. The scenario also identifies wider rural development to provide for a choice of sites, including 180 dwellings in the Medway Valley.
- 4.20 Scenario 4 (Urban regeneration and rural town) also identifies potential for significant growth in Hoo St Werburgh, for up to 6,500 dwellings, alongside the urban regeneration at Chatham Docks, Medway City Estate, Chatham and Strood waterfront and central areas, Mill Hill, and estate renewal in Tywdall to deliver 6,500 dwellings. The issues identified in Scenario 1 and 3 relating to the delivery of large scale regeneration and significant infrastructure investment are re-iterated for this scenario. The scenario identifies the provision of 650 dwellings across villages through incremental growth.
- 4.21 Paragraph 4.5 of the MCD OCD confirms that further work and supporting technical studies will be undertaken to help determine the capacity for areas to accommodate development and the most sustainable locations for growth. However, given the constraints to development within Medway Council area, and the identified shortfall between housing requirements and identified supply, we consider that a combination of the proposed scenarios will need to be considered to meet the growth requirements.
- 4.22 Any strategy for growth will need increase access to housing in rural areas, which should be allowed to grow and diversify. The final growth strategy for Medway will include the growth of villages, including those in the Medway Valley, to meet the identified range of development needs for the district.
- 4.23 As detailed in Section 5, the Site, at Land south of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton, represents a sustainable and appropriate site for residential development which would support the growth of Cuxton, a sustainable rural village identified for incremental growth in all 4 No. scenarios set out in the MCD OCD. As noted in Section 3, Cuxton is a constrained location to deliver development, however it is important that it does accommodate growth to ensure its needs are met and the vitality of the village is maintained. As such, the Site is put forward for allocation for residential development to help deliver Medway's housing need.

5.0 LAND SOUTH OF SUNDRIDGE HILL, CUXTON

- 5.1 The Site at Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton, forms part of a site put forward to Medway Council's 'call for sites' Strategic Land Availability Assessment in May 2014 (SLAA site reference 1068, South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton).
- 5.2 The SLAA 2015, and subsequent 2017 update, set out to identify sites with development potential for potential allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan. As part of the SLAA 2015, the methodology undertaken enabled Medway Council to carry out Stage 1 (Site Identification) and Stage 2 (Site Assessment) of the Planning Policy Guidance methodology. The Stage 1 process enabled a number of sites to be excluded for further assessment should they be constrained by a restrictive designation, as identified within the NPPF (Footnote 9), the Site is not covered by any of these constraints and therefore continued to Stage 2 assessment.
- 5.3 Stage 2 (Site Assessment) of the SLAA 2015 identified the overall suitability of sites based on a number of criteria, including facilities and service accessibility, site access and landscape. As part of the Stage 2 process the site was identified as an unsuitable site.
- 5.4 As part of the SLAA Stage 2 process the Council released Site Assessment Proforma (November 2015) which provided an assessment of each site's suitability utilising a 'traffic light' methodology, with Green equating to unconstrained, Yellow being constraints that can be resolved and Red equalling unresolvable constraints. A copy of the Proforma for the Site is included in **Appendix 2**.
- 5.5 The Site was identified as scoring 'Red' on the following suitability criteria:
- Facilities and Services Accessibility;
 - Landscape;
 - Site Developability; and
 - Overall suitability for housing, employment or mixed-use development.
- 5.6 The Site was identified as scoring 'Yellow' on the following suitability criteria:
- Public Transport Accessibility;
 - Highway Network Capacity;
 - Site Access;
 - Ecological Potential;
 - Designated Habitats;

- Air Quality;
- Agricultural Land;
- Flood Risk;
- Noise; and
- Amenity/Overlooking.

5.7 Table 5.1 provides an overview of the SLAA 2015 conclusions alongside our assessment on the site in regard to the criteria listed above.

Table 5.1 – SLAA 2015 and Site Assessment Comparison

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Facilities & Services Accessibility | Site has poor access to services and facilities. | <p>The SLAA 2015 bases the assessment of accessibility based on a site's proximity to typical services that might be used by residents. Given the rural location of Cuxton, a number of these services are beyond the distances considered acceptable. For example, the nearest dental surgery to Cuxton is located in Strood, beyond the 2km distance identified as accessible.</p> <p>Cuxton is still well serviced by existing facilities including a Medical Centre, shops (including a post office), Co-op supermarket, Infant and Junior school, public house, train station (located on the Medway Valley line) and existing sports and recreational facilities. The Site is located in close proximity to these, with the majority within the accessibility distances identified in the SLAA as identified in the accompanying Accessibility Appraisal (Appendix 3).</p> <p>The Site therefore has good access to the range of services required to meet local community needs and adequate access to all services overall, given the close proximity of the Site to public transport links.</p> |

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Public Transport Accessibility | Site has moderate access to public transport opportunities | <p>As detailed in the accompanying Accessibility Appraisal (Appendix 3) existing bus stops are located within 2 minutes walking distance, offering services between Chatham and Kings Hill (2 per hour), and within 8 minutes walking distance of Cuxton Railway Station offering service between Strood, Maidstone West and Tonbridge (4 per hour).</p> <p>The SLAA identifies that moderate access equates to 3 or 4 services an hour, whereas high frequency equates to five or more services an hour. As such, the Site is located within a High Frequency Catchment and should therefore be identified as 'Green'.</p> |
| Highway Network Capacity | <p>Access to the strategic highway network (M2/A2), and around the Medway urban distributor network generally, is likely to be constrained by a number of identified congestion hotspots.</p> <p>Whilst it is possible that strategic infrastructure upgrades may address these congestion issues, improving capacity on the network, there are no upgrades planned or identified at present.</p> | <p>The Site is in an accessible location, in close proximity to the strategic highway network, with the M2 located approximately 700 metres north of the Site.</p> <p>No assessment of highways impact arising from development have been undertaken at this stage, however it is unlikely the proposed development would have a significant impact upon infrastructure that would preclude development.</p> <p>The SLAA conclusion therefore remains correct at this time.</p> |

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|-------------|--|---|
| | <p>Further detailed assessment would need to be undertaken (as part of the Local Plan or development management process) to demonstrate how traffic generated by the development could be accommodated on the network.</p> <p>Developer contributions may be required to fund any infrastructure upgrades necessary to address network capacity constraints.</p> | |
| Site Access | <p>It is likely a suitable vehicular access could be created on to A228, which is directly adjacent to the site.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the suitability of the prospective access would need to be further investigated through the Development Management Process.</p> | <p>The accompanying Accessibility Appraisal confirms that a suitable access from the A228 is achievable in the form of a simple priority junction.</p> <p>The Site does not have an existing suitable access to be identified as a 'Green' rating, however suitable access is achievable.</p> |

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Ecological Potential | <p>An ecological survey of the site has not been investigated as part of this high-level assessment and as such the presence or absence of protected species and/or habitats cannot be established at this stage.</p> <p>Further assessment would therefore need to be undertaken through the Local Plan or Development Management process, before development could be supported or rejected.</p> | <p>A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been produced (Appendix 4) which concludes there are no further surveys considered necessary to support the promotion of the Site for allocation. However, there exists some potential for protected and otherwise notable species on the Site, and therefore further surveys are recommended to be undertaken in advance of any future planning application.</p> |
| Designated Habitats | <p>Natural England guidance (Impact Risk Zones) indicates that development of this site poses a potential risk to a SSSI.</p> <p>Further assessment of the potential impacts of development upon designated habitats would therefore need to be undertaken through the Local Plan or Development Management process,</p> | <p>The Site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, as identified by the SLAA, however, as confirmed by the accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, residential development is not listed as being a category for which the Council should consult Natural England. Therefore it is concluded the development is unlikely to pose any risk to nearby SSSI. As such, the Site should be identified as a 'Green' rating for this criteria.</p> |

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|-------------|---|--|
| | before development could be supported or rejected | |
| Landscape | <p>The site is situated outside of the built up area, with an area of locally valued landscape of the Cuxton Scarp Foot, which is considered sensitive to change.</p> <p>Development is thereby likely to have a detrimental impact upon locally valued local landscapes.</p> | <p>A Landscape and Visual Appraisal of the Site has been prepared and supports these representations (Appendix 5). This concludes that the Site is located in an area of very poor quality landscape and development would be viewed as a minor element set back against and within the context of neighbouring residential, industrial and employment uses within the lower valley sides.</p> <p>The Site is located within the Cuxton Brickfields Areas of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI) and Strategic Gap but performs limited function to these designations. Development within the Site would not cause the settlement edge to extend further east or south than is currently the case, nor would it bring the settlement edge of Cuxton closer to Rochester or Strood.</p> <p>A number of opportunities and constraints are identified within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal which would be considered within any future development proposals.</p> <p>Therefore, it is considered as the Site is able to accommodate change with appropriate landscaping and mitigation and the SLAA has incorrectly identified the Site as being 'Red' for this criteria and should instead be identified as 'Yellow'.</p> |
| Air Quality | Site may be constrained by air pollution but mitigation is likely to be deliverable. | At this stage the level of air pollution is unknown however it is not thought to be a constraint to development of the Site for residential development. As such, the SLAA conclusions are correct until further air quality work is undertaken. |

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Site Developability | The site has steep gradients that would make the site difficult to develop. | <p>The village of Cuxton is located on the southern slopes of the Kent Downs AONB (albeit the village is outside of the AONB) with existing properties in the northern half of the village being located on this slope, inclined towards the River Medway. The Site forms part of this slope and therefore would not represent an uncharacteristic location for residential development.</p> <p>Residential development on the Site is developable and achievable within the parameters of the site, as such the Site should not be considered 'Red' for this criteria and should instead be identified as 'Yellow'.</p> |
| Agricultural Land | <p>Whilst the site is situated on agricultural land, it is understood to be Grade 3 or less.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above further assessment of the agricultural land quality would need to be undertaken through the Local Plan or Development Management process, before development could be supported or rejected.</p> | The Site consists of a single fallow field which has not recently been used for agricultural purposes. However, the field is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land on the agricultural land classification maps and therefore the SLAA conclusions are correct. |

| Criteria | SLAA 2015 | Site Assessment |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Flood Risk | Level of flood risk on the site is considered acceptable. | The Site is in Flood Zone 1 with only a small area of low surface water flood risk. As such, the Site is at low risk of flooding and should be 'Green' for Flood Risk. |
| Noise | Noise pollution may affect the site, but it is likely that this could be mitigated. | The Site is not located in close proximity to any significant sources of noise pollution. Therefore, the Site should be 'Green' for Noise. |
| Amenity/Overlooking | <p>The site has the potential to impact upon amenity of nearby residential properties.</p> <p>Whilst this is likely to be resolvable through sensitive design, it is likely this would have implications for site capacity.</p> | <p>The Site is located on the lower slopes of the valley with the nearest residential properties being located on the opposite side of the A228, these properties are on a higher topography than the site and will continue to experience un-interrupted views over the River Medway and opposite valley following development of the Site.</p> <p>The Site would therefore not impact upon amenity of nearby residential properties and should score 'Green' for Amenity/Overlooking.</p> |

i) Site Suitability - Overall

- 5.8 The SLAA 2015 notes that a site is considered suitable for development on the basis that no unresolvable constraints in respect to any of the individual criteria have been identified. As identified above there are no criteria where the Site can be shown to have unresolvable constraints. As such, the site is suitable and should be moved forward to the next stage of SLAA process.
- 5.9 The development would meet the three elements of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF (para 7). Enabling residential development would support economic growth in Medway and surrounding areas, providing employment opportunities through the construction phase. The Site has deliverable potential to contribute towards much needed housing within rural Medway and would deliver a mix of housing types, including an element of affordable housing.
- 5.10 Furthermore, the development would help to enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural community of Cuxton, in line with Paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Paragraph 10.15 of the MCDODC acknowledges that this is particular issue, with rural communities being particularly vulnerable to the loss of community facilities.

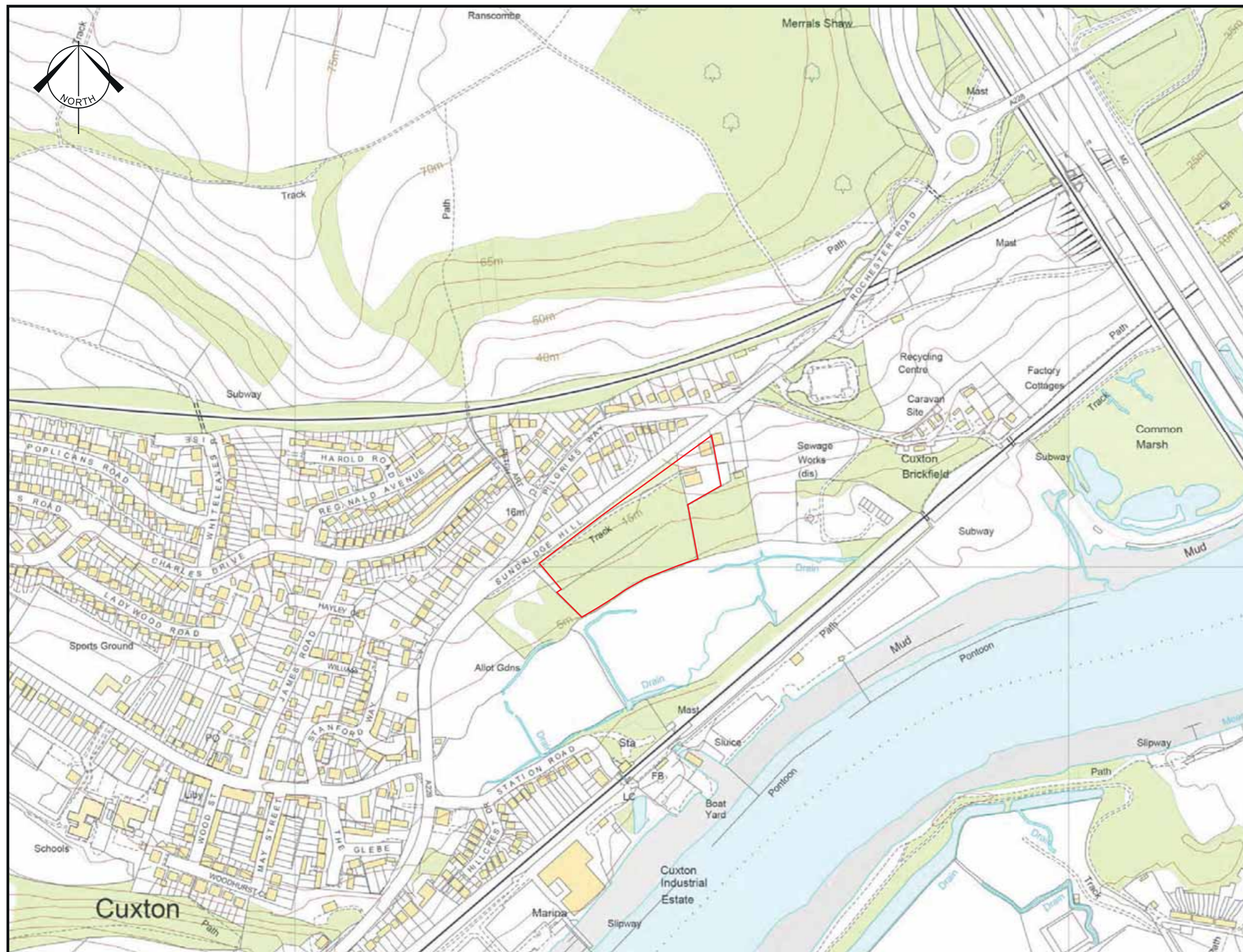
- 5.11 The Site is considered 'deliverable' in that it meets the requirements of footnote 11 of the NPPF and it has been demonstrated that the Site is currently available for development, will offer a suitable location for development and has a realistic prospect of housing being delivered on the Site within five years and that development of the Site is viable.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 These representations are submitted on behalf of the Landowner focusing on promoting the Site known as 'Land south of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton'.
- 6.2 We consider that there is further work to be done in order to ensure Medway Council is working towards a "sound" Local Plan. Notably, we do not consider that the OAN target of 1,281dpa is sound. This matter should be addressed by the Council who need to ensure that there are sufficient housing sites allocated to meet the full OAN.
- 6.3 It is considered that a combination of 4no. development scenarios explored in the consultation document will need to be taken forward to meet Medway's development needs in full. All development scenarios include incremental expansion of the villages. We support the recognition that the villages should be supported with development growth in order to maintain their vitality and viability.
- 6.4 We consider the Site at Sundridge Hill, Cuxton represents an appropriate location for residential development, adjacent to the existing village of Cuxton. As identified in Section 5, there are no unresolvable constraints in respect to any of the SLAA criteria which preclude development of the Site.
- 6.5 The accompanying Accessibility Appraisal, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Landscape and Visual Appraisal confirm there are no overriding accessibility, ecological or landscape constraints which preclude the allocation of the Site for residential purposes.
- 6.6 Development of the Site would meet the three elements of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF (para 7) and would help to enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural community of Cuxton. Accordingly, the Site should be allocated in the new Local Plan.

APPENDIX 1

Sundridge Hill, Cuxton Location Plan



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The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

| Revision | Date | Drn | Ckd |
|----------|------|-----|-----|
| | | | |

KEY:
— Site Area = 2.354 ha.

Project
SUNDRIDGE HILL, CUXTON

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

| | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| Date | Scale | Drawn by | Check by |
| 24/02/2017 | 1:5000@A3 | GS | GW |
| Project No | Drawing No | Revision | |
| 25969 | P1 | A | |

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APPENDIX 2

SLAA Extract

**Land south of Sundridge Hill – Site Proforma
(Medway Council, November 2015)**

| Site | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Reference | 1068 |
| Address | South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton |
| Description | Very steeply sloping down from the main road. Some tree coverage on parts of the site. Sensitive landscape and green corridor. Vehicular access issues, realignment of road may well be necessary (new mini roundabout?). Also new footpath along frontage would be required. Main road is a major barrier, crossing to reach village facilities. |
| Size (ha) | 3.1 |
| Relevant policy guidance | |
| Location Plan |  |

| Development Potential | | |
|---|------------|--------|
| Residential (units) | 90 | |
| Employment (m ²) | Office | 30,955 |
| | Industrial | 12,380 |
| | Storage | 12,380 |
| Main Town Centre Uses (m ²) | | |
| Other Uses | | |

| Suitability - General | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Facilities & Services Accessibility | Site has poor access to services and facilities. | |
| Public Transport Accessibility | Site has moderate access to public transport opportunities. | |
| Highway Network Capacity | Access to the strategic highway network (M2/A2), and around the Medway urban distributor network generally, is likely to be constrained by a number of identified congestion hotspots. Whilst it is possible that strategic | |

| Suitability - General | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| | <p>infrastructure upgrades may address these congestion issues, improving capacity on the network, there are no upgrades planned or identified at present.</p> <p>Further detailed assessment would need to be undertaken (as part of the Local Plan or development management process) to demonstrate how traffic generated by the development could be accommodated on the network.</p> <p>Developer contributions may be required to fund any infrastructure upgrades necessary to address network capacity constraints.</p> | |
| Site Access | <p>It is likely a suitable vehicular access could be created on to A228, which is directly adjacent to the site.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the suitability of the prospective access would need to be further investigated through the Development Management Process.</p> | |
| Ecological Potential | <p>An ecological survey of the site has not been investigated as part of this high level assessment and as such the presence or absence of protected species and/or habitats cannot be established at this stage.</p> <p>Further assessment would therefore need to be undertaken through the Local Plan or Development Management process, before development could be supported or rejected.</p> | |
| Designated Habitats | <p>Natural England guidance (Impact Risk Zones) indicates that development of this site poses a potential risk to a SSSI.</p> <p>Further assessment of the potential impacts of development upon designated habitats would therefore need to be undertaken through the Local Plan or Development Management process, before development could be supported or rejected.</p> | |

| Suitability - General | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Landscape | <p>The site is situated outside of the built up area, with an area of locally valued landscape of the Cuxton Scarp Foot, which is considered sensitive to change.</p> <p>Development is thereby likely to have a detrimental impact upon locally valued local landscapes.</p> | |
| Heritage | Development is unlikely to have an impact upon any designated heritage assets. | |
| Air Quality | Site may be constrained by air pollution but mitigation is likely to be deliverable. | |
| Contamination | Contamination is not suspected on the site. | |
| Site Developability | The site has steep gradients that would make the site difficult to develop. | |
| Agricultural Land | <p>Whilst the site is situated on agricultural land, it is understood to be Grade 3 or less.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above further assessment of the agricultural land quality would need to be undertaken through the Local Plan or Development Management process, before development could be supported or rejected.</p> | |
| Open Space | Site is not designated open space. | |

| Suitability – Housing | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Flood Risk | Level of flood risk on the site is considered acceptable. | |
| Noise | Noise pollution may affect the site, but it is likely that this could be mitigated. | |
| Amenity/Overlooking | <p>The site has the potential to impact upon amenity of nearby residential properties.</p> <p>Whilst this is likely to be resolvable through sensitive design, it is likely this would have implications for site capacity.</p> | |
| Employment Land | Site is not designated employment land. | |
| Overall | The site is considered unsuitable for development unless identified constraints can be addressed. | |

| Suitability – Economic Development | | |
|---|--|--|
| Flood Risk | Site is at low risk of flooding. | |
| Noise | Noise pollution may affect the site, but it is | |

| | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| | likely that this could be mitigated for commercial uses. | |
| Amenity | Mixed commercial and residential area. | |
| Overall | Site is unsuitable for employment uses. | |

Suitability – Mixed Use

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Overall | The site is considered unsuitable for development unless identified constraints can be addressed. | |
|----------------|---|--|

Availability

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Landowner is actively promoting the site for redevelopment through call for sites - housing | | |
|---|--|--|

APPENDIX 3

Accessibility Appraisal (dha transport, March 2017)

ACCESSIBILITY APPRAISAL

Site: Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton

Client: Mr S Gill

Prepared by: DHA Transport
Eclipse House
Eclipse Park
Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone ME14 3EN

Date: March 2017

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Technical Note (TN) has been prepared on behalf of Mr S Gill to accompany a representation to the Medway Local Plan consultation in respect to Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton. The TN considers the sustainability and accessibility of the site in order to demonstrate its suitability to accommodate residential development in highways and access terms.

1.2 Location

- 1.2.1 The site presently comprises of an open agricultural field, which is bound to the south by marshland and the Medway Valley railway line and to the west by a further field and an area of allotments. Residential dwellings bound the site to the north and east. Figure 0-1 below identifies the site location in its local context.



Figure 0-1: Site Location (courtesy of Google Maps)

1.3 Access

- 1.3.1 It is proposed that access to the site will be achieved from the A228 Sundridge Hill in the form of a simple priority junction; an outline design of which is included at **Appendix A**. The access will be developed with an initial carriageway width of 5.5 metres, narrowing to 4.8 metres within the site confines. Kerb radii of 6.0 metres will be provided.
- 1.3.2 A footway will be provided on the western side of the proposed access road, measuring 1.8 metres in width. This footway will continue along the A228 frontage to the western site boundary. At this location, a pedestrian refuge island will be provided within the centre of the carriageway, accompanied by a dropped kerb, tactile paving arrangement. A new section of footway will be provided on the northern side of the A228, ceasing at the A228/Pilgrims Way junction, where an existing footway link to Cuxton village centre is available.
- 1.3.3 In accordance with the posted 40mph speed restriction along the site frontage, visibility splays from the site access of 2.4m by 120m are required. The proposed access design can accommodate for these splays, thereby ensuring sufficient visibility for egressing vehicles.
- 1.3.4 The existing central island on the A228 will be relocated to the east of its existing location. An informal right turn lane will be provided, to ensure vehicles entering the site do not obstruct following vehicles on the A228.

1.4 Accessibility

Walking and Cycle Infrastructure

- 1.4.1 As has been noted, an existing footway is provided on the northern side of Sundridge Hill to the west of the site, measuring approximately 2.0 metres in width. This footway provides a

continuous link to Cuxton village centre, where a range of services and facilities can be accessed.

- 1.4.2 In addition, a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are located within the vicinity of the site, as shown in Figure 0-2 below. PRoW RS206 to the south of the site allows for connectivity with Strood and Rochester alongside the River Medway.

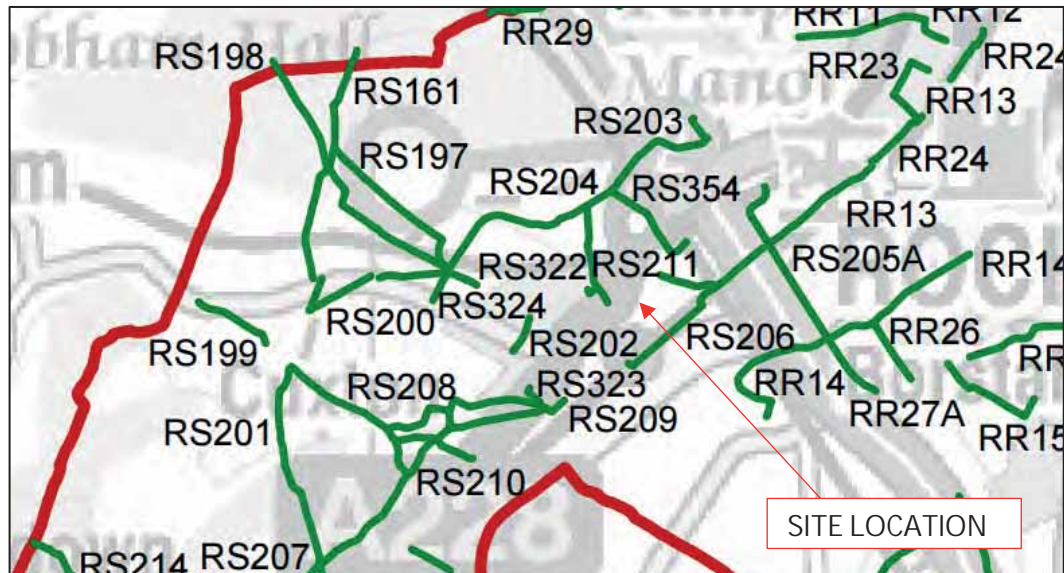


Figure 0-2: PRoW Network (courtesy of Medway Council)

- 1.4.3 The site is also well located in terms of cycle infrastructure, as shown in Figure 0-3 below. Regional Route 17, a short distance to the north east of the site, runs for 42 miles across Kent to the south coast and also provides connectivity to the Medway Towns.



Figure 0-3: Local Cycle Network (courtesy of Sustrans)

Public Transport Facilities

- 1.4.4 The closest bus stops to the site are located on the A228, approximately 120 metres from the proposed site access, taking approximately 1.5 minutes on foot. From these stops, access to a number of bus services can be gained, a summary of which is provided in Table 0-1 below. The full timetables for these services are included at **Appendix B**.

| Service No. | Route | Weekday Frequency |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 149 | Chatham – Cuxton – Halling – Snodland – Kings Hill | School |
| Medway Valley Links 151 | Chatham – Strood – Cuxton – Halling – Snodland – Kings Hill | Hourly |
| 652 | St Mary's Island – Wainscott – Strood – Cuxton – Strood Academy | School |
| 653 | Halling – Cuxton – Cookham Wood Schools – Huntsman Corner | School |
| 703 | Maidstone – Larkfield – Halling – Cuxton – Bluewater | 1 to 2 journeys* |
| E | Earl Estate – Cuxton – Holmesdale Technology College | School |

Table 0-1: Summary of Bus Services and Frequencies

* Wednesdays and Saturdays only

- 1.4.5 Cuxton Railway Station is located approximately 700 metres from the site, taking 8 minutes on foot. This station is situated on the Medway Valley Line, which routes between Strood, Maidstone West and Tonbridge. On average, four services per hour operate from this

station, at a broadly half-hourly frequency in each direction. From Strood, London St Pancras is accessible via Southeastern High Speed services in 35 minutes.

Services and Amenities

- 1.4.6 A wide range of local services and facilities are located within an acceptable walking distance of the site. A summary of the walk distances to these destinations, as measured along walking routes and not taken 'as the crow flies', is provided in Table 0-2 below.

| Facility | Walk Distance (m) | Walk Time (Minutes) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Bus Stop | 120m | 1.5 |
| Auto Services | 190m | 2 |
| White Hart Public House | 400m | 5 |
| Mini Market and Takeaway Restaurants | 650m | 8 |
| Cuxton Railway Station | 700m | 8 |
| Cuxton Library | 700m | 8 |
| Co-operative Food | 750m | 9 |
| Cuxton Infant/Junior School | 750m | 9 |
| Place of worship | 750m | 9 |

Table 0-2: Local Services and Amenities

- 1.4.7 The walk times provided above are based on a walk speed of 80m per minute, a figure which is widely used to estimate walk times and used within the London Based Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) analysis. It aims to provide a typical average value that estimates it takes 5 minutes to walk 400m, 10 minutes to walk 800m and so on.
- 1.4.8 The range of services available within Cuxton, together with the proximity of frequent public transport links, has the potential to reduce future residents' reliance on private vehicles, in accordance with national and local planning policy.

1.5 Trip Distribution

- 1.5.1 Whilst a number of everyday facilities can be accessed on foot, it is acknowledged that vehicle usage will remain a significant mode of travel, given the proximity of the site to the strategic road network. With this in mind, a review of the likely trip distribution for car drivers in Middle Super Area Output Medway 028 – in which the site is situated – has been undertaken and is shown in Figure 0-4 below.

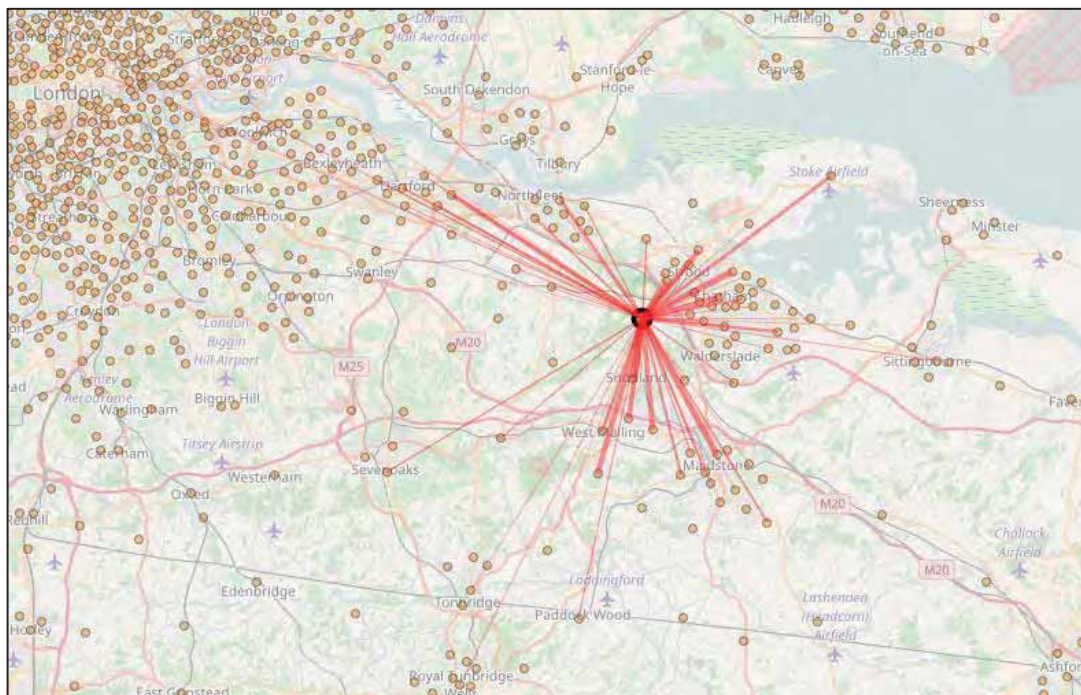


Figure 0-4: 2011 Census Journey to Work Data - Car Driver (courtesy of Datashine)

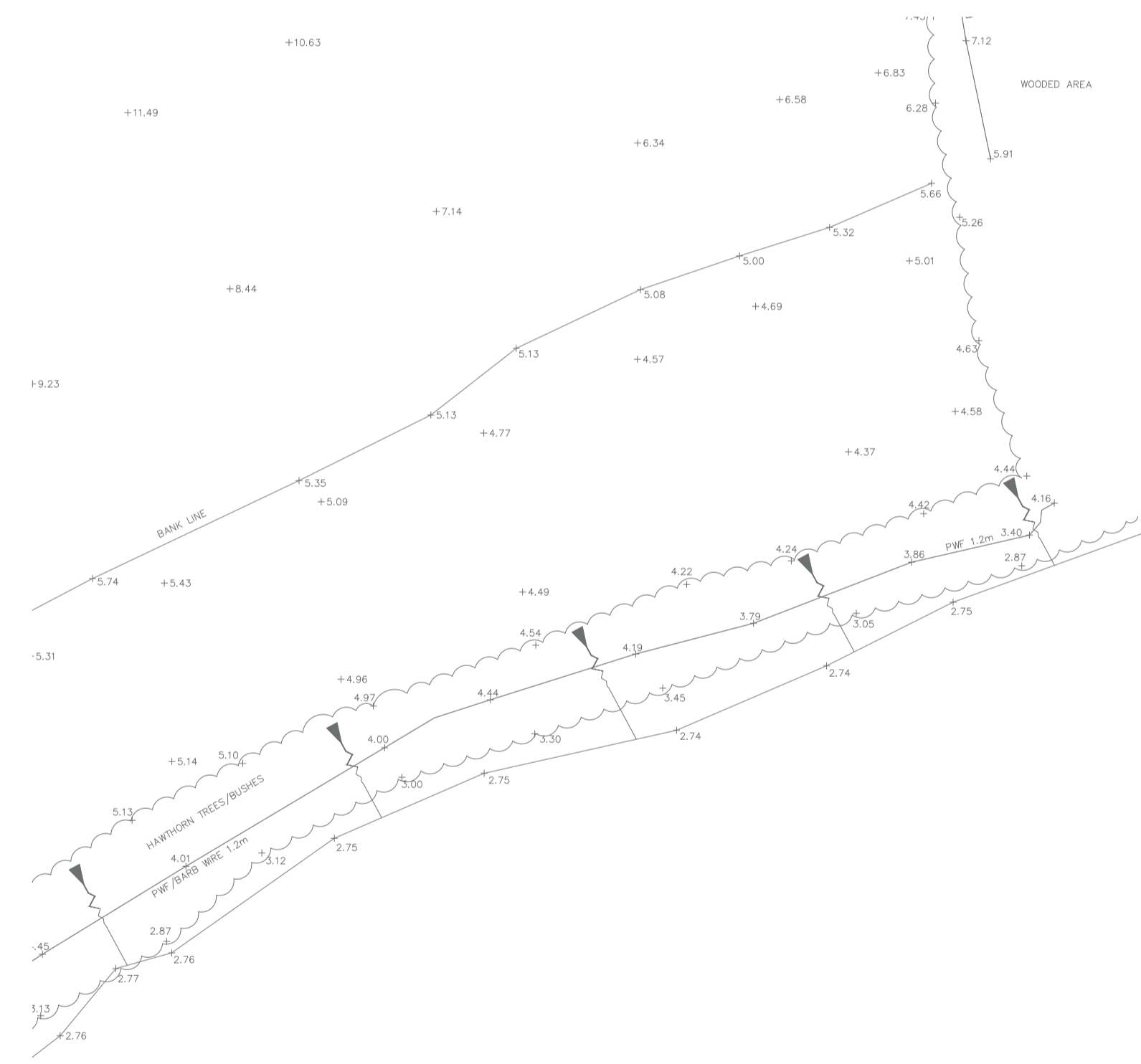
- 1.5.2 It is noted that the majority of vehicle movements are relatively short-distance in nature; predominantly to the Medway Towns, Maidstone and Dartford, and that many of these journeys can be viably undertaken by public transport.

1.6 Conclusion

- 1.6.1 This Technical Note (TN) has been prepared on behalf of Mr S Gill to accompany a representation to the Medway Local Plan consultation in respect to Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton. It has been demonstrated that a residential development in this location would be accessible and sustainable in highways and access terms, offering residents viable opportunities to access everyday services and facilities by non-car modes. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site from the A228 Sundridge Hill is considered to be feasible and can be provided in accordance with all relevant highway design standards.

Appendix A

Access Design



| | | | |
|--|-------------|----------|------------|
| | | | |
| P1 | FIRST ISSUE | 02/03/17 | CS |
| REV | AMENDMENTS | DATE | CHK |
| Client | | | |
| MR S GILL | | | |
| Project | | | |
| SUNDRIDGE HILL, CUXTON | | | |
| Title | | | |
| PROPOSED ACCESS DESIGN | | | |
| Drwg | Rev | Scale | Date |
| 12203-T-01 | P1 | 1:500 | 02.03.2017 |
|  | | | |
| Eclipse House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road Maidstone, Kent. ME14 3EN t: 01622 776226 f: 01622 776227 e: info@dhaplanning.co.uk w: www.dhatransport.co.uk | | | |
| CAD Reference: | | | A1 |

Appendix B

Bus Timetables



Medway Valley Links

Bus 149 & 151 times

Linking Malling with Medway



Mondays to Fridays

Buses 77/149 times are shown for guidance only and cannot be guaranteed.

| Code | Bus Operator | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | TU-F SD | | | | NSD | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V |

EXPLANATION OF CODES ON THIS PAGE

SD School days only

N-V Journey operated by Nu-Venture

AK Journey operated by Arriva

NSD Not schooldays

TU-F SD Tuesdays to Fridays schooldays only; starts inside Holmesdale School grounds

R Calls on request to set down only for passengers boarding at/before Halling Station

Bus may run up to 8 minutes later at this point if Upper Halling has been served on request

Chatham - Cuxton - Halling - Snodland - West Malling - Kings Hill

BUS 149 & 151

| Mondays to Fridays | | | | | | | | | | Buses 77/149 times are shown for guidance only and cannot be guaranteed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|---|
| Code | | SD | | SD | | NSD | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | |
| Bus Operator | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | N-V | | |
| Service number | | 151 | | 149 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | 151 | | |
| ST MARY'S ISLAND Goldcrest Drive | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CHATHAM MARITIME Docksider Outlet | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CHATHAM | | Waterfront Bus Station A5 | | 0550 | - | 0709 | 0720 | 0846 | 0950 | 1050 | 1150 | 1250 | 1350 | 1505 | 1552 | 1713 | 1826 | 1910 | 2023 | 2128 | 2218 | 2316 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Chatham Rail Stn Bus Stop A | | 0552 | - | 0711 | 0722 | 0848 | 0952 | 1052 | 1152 | 1252 | 1352 | 1507 | 1554 | 1715 | 1828 | 1913 | 2026 | 2131 | 2221 | 2326 | 2326 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| opp Rochester Railway Station | | 0556 | - | 0715 | 0726 | 0852 | 0956 | 1056 | 1156 | 1256 | 1356 | 1512 | 1559 | 1720 | 1832 | 1916 | 2029 | 2134 | 2224 | 2329 | 2329 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| STROOD Morrisons | | 0600 | - | 0719 | 0730 | 0856 | 1002 | 1102 | 1202 | 1302 | 1402 | 1518 | 1606 | 1727 | 1836 | 1919 | 2032 | 2137 | 2227 | 2332 | 2332 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Medway Valley Park Cinema | | 0605 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Cuxton Charles Drive opp Whiteleaves | | - | - | 0729 | 0740 | 0906 | - | 1112 | - | 1312 | 1412 | - | 1618 | R | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Cuxton opp Scout Hut | | - | - | 0732 | 0743 | 0909 | - | 1115 | - | 1315 | 1415 | - | 1621 | R | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| A228 Cuxton White Hart | | 0611 | - | - | - | - | - | 1010 | - | 1210 | - | - | 1526 | - | 1735 | 1844 | - | 2042 | - | 2237 | 2342 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| A228 St Andrews Park | | 0613 | - | 0735 | 0746 | 0912 | 1012 | 1118 | 1212 | 1318 | 1418 | 1528 | 1624 | 1738 | 1846 | - | 2044 | - | 2239 | 2344 | 2344 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| UPPER HALLING Brownlens Road | | - | - | 0742 | 0753 | 0919 | 1019 | - | 1219 | - | 1425 | - | - | R | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Halling Station | | 0615 | - | 0748 | 0759 | 0925 | 1025 | 1121 | 1225 | 1321 | 1431 | 1531 | 1627 | 1741 | 1848 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Halling Church | | 0616 | - | 0749 | 0800 | 0926 | 1026 | 1122 | 1226 | 1322 | 1432 | 1532 | 1628 | 1742 | 1849 | - | 2047 | - | 2242 | 2347 | 2347 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Halling Howlsmere Close | | 0617 | - | 0750 | 0801 | 0927 | 1027 | 1123 | 1227 | 1323 | 1433 | 1533 | 1629 | 1743 | 1850 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| SNODLAND opp The Bull | | 0621 | 0735 | 0755 | 0805 | 0931 | 1031 | 1127 | 1231 | 1327 | 1437 | 1537 | 1633 | 1747 | 1854 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| St. Benedict Road Freeland's Road | | 0623 | DIRECT | 0758 | 0807 | 0933 | 1033 | 1129 | 1233 | 1329 | 1439 | DIRECT | 1635 | 1749 | 1856 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ham Hill Freemasons Arms | | 0628 | 0741 | 0805 | 0812 | 0938 | 1038 | 1134 | 1238 | 1334 | 1444 | 1542 | 1640 | 1754 | 1901 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| opp Leybourne Church | | 0632 | 0745 | 0809 | 0816 | 0942 | 1042 | 1138 | 1242 | 1338 | 1448 | 1546 | 1644 | 1758 | 1905 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| The Malling School | | - | 0754 | 0818 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| West Malling Station | | 0638 | - | - | 0822 | 0948 | 1048 | 1144 | 1248 | 1344 | 1454 | 1552 | 1650 | 1804 | 1911 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| West Malling High Street Tesco | | 0640 | 0800 | 0824 | 0824 | 0950 | 1050 | 1146 | 1250 | 1346 | 1456 | 1554 | 1652 | 1806 | 1913 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill OPPOSITE ASDA | | 0646 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1502 | 1600 | 1658 | - | 1919 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill opp CAF | | - | - | 0830 | 0830 | 0956 | 1056 | 1152 | 1256 | 1352 | - | - | - | - | 1812 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill Discovery Drive | | - | - | 0832 | 0832 | 0958 | 1058 | 1154 | 1258 | 1354 | - | - | - | - | 1814 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill Boverde Avenue | | - | - | 0834 | 0834 | 1000 | 1100 | 1156 | 1300 | 1356 | - | - | - | - | 1816 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill ADJACENT ASDA | | - | - | 0836 | 0836 | 1002 | 1102 | 1158 | 1302 | 1358 | - | - | - | - | 1818 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Bus 77 to T Wells dep Asda | | 0658 | - | 0907 | 0907 | 1007 | 1107 | 1207 | 1307 | 1407 | 1507 | - | 1711 | 1847 | 2031 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

EXPLANATION OF CODES ON THIS PAGE

SD School days only

N-V Journey operated by Nu-Venture

R Calls on request to set down only for passengers boarding at/before Sundridge Hill

AK Journey operated by Arriva

Y Bus may run up to 11 mins later at this point if Cuxton and/or Upper Halling have been served on request

NSD Not schooldays

| Saturdays | | Buses 77/149 times are shown for guidance only and cannot be guaranteed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Bus Operator | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V | N-V |
| Service number | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 | 151 |
| Bus 77 from T Wells, arr Asda | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kings Hill OPPOSITE ASDA | - | - | 0905 | 1005 | 1105 | 1205 | 1305 | 1405 | 1505 | 1605 | 1705 | - | 1905 | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill Boverde Ave | - | - | 0910 | 1010 | 1110 | 1210 | 1310 | 1410 | 1510 | 1610 | 1710 | - | 1926 | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill Forest Way | - | - | 0911 | 1011 | 1111 | 1211 | 1311 | 1411 | 1511 | 1611 | 1711 | - | 1928 | - | - | - | - |
| Kings Hill CAF | - | - | 0913 | 1013 | 1113 | 1213 | 1313 | 1413 | 1513 | 1613 | 1712 | - | 1930 | - | - | - | - |
| West Malling High Street opp Tesco | - | 0736 | 0920 | 1020 | 1120 | 1220 | 1320 | 1420 | 1520 | 1620 | 1720 | - | 1932 | - | - | - | - |
| West Malling Station | - | 0738 | 0922 | 1022 | 1122 | 1222 | 1322 | 1422 | 1522 | 1622 | 1722 | - | 1939 | - | - | - | - |
| Leybourne Church | - | 0741 | 0925 | 1025 | 1125 | 1225 | 1325 | 1425 | 1525 | 1625 | 1725 | - | 1942 | - | - | - | - |
| Ham Hill opp Freemasons Arms | 0716 | 0748 | 0932 | 1032 | 1132 | 1232 | 1332 | 1432 | 1532 | 1632 | 1732 | - | 1948 | - | - | - | - |
| Snodland St Benedict Rd | - | 0753 | 0937 | 1037 | 1137 | 1237 | 1337 | 1437 | 1537 | 1637 | 1737 | - | 1953 | - | - | - | - |
| SNODLAND Bull | 0720 | 0756 | 0940 | 1040 | 1140 | 1240 | 1340 | 1440 | 1540 | 1640 | 1740 | - | 1956 | - | - | - | - |
| Halling Howlsmere Close | 0724 | 0800 | 0944 | 1044 | 1144 | 1244 | 1344 | 1444 | 1544 | 1644 | 1744 | - | 2000 | - | - | - | - |
| Halling New Bell Inn | 0725 | 0801 | 0945 | 1045 | 1145 | 1245 | 1345 | 1445 | 1545 | 1645 | 1745 | - | 2001 | 2048 | - | 2243 | - |
| Halling opp Station | 0726 | 0802 | 0946 | 1046 | 1146 | 1246 | 1346 | 1446 | 1546 | 1646 | 1746 | - | 2002 | 2049 | - | 2244 | - |
| UPPER HALLING Brownlens Road | 0732 | 0808 | 0952 | - | 1152 | - | 1352 | - | 1552 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| A228 St Andrews Park | 0739 | 0815 | 0959 | 1049 | 1159 | 1249 | 1359 | 1449 | 1559 | 1649 | 1749 | - | 2005 | 2051 | - | 2246 | - |
| A228 Cuxton opp White Hart | 0741 | 0817 | 1001 | 1051 | 1201 | 1251 | 1401 | 1451 | 1601 | 1651 | 1751 | - | 2007 | 2053 | - | 2248 | - |
| Cuxton Charles Drive opp Whiteleaves | - | 0820 | - | 1054 | - | 1254 | - | 1454 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Cuxton opp Scout Hut | - | 0823 | - | 1057 | - | 1257 | - | 1457 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Medway Valley Park Cinema | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1935 | - | 2058 | 2143 | 2253 |
| STROOD Canal Rd, Bus Stop D | 0748 | 0831 | 1009 | 1105 | 1209 | 1305 | 1409 | 1505 | 1609 | 1658 | 1758 | 1941 | 2014 | 2104 | 2149 | 2259 | - |
| Rochester Railway Station | 0750 | 0833 | 1011 | 1107 | 1211 | 1307 | 1411 | 1507 | 1611 | 1700 | 1800 | 1943 | 2016 | 2106 | 2151 | 2301 | - |
| Chatham Stn New Cut Fire Stn | 0754 | 0837 | 1015 | 1111 | 1215 | 1311 | 1415 | 1511 | 1615 | 1704 | 1804 | - | 2020 | - | - | - | - |
| CHATHAM Waterfront Bus Station | 0756 | 0839 | 1018 | 1114 | 1218 | 1314 | 1418 | 1514 | 1618 | 1707 | 1807 | 1950 | 2023 | 2113 | 2158 | 2308 | - |
| Chatham Maritime Ship & Trades | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1955 | - | 2118 | 2203 | 2312 |
| ST MARY'S ISLAND Goldcrest Drive | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1957 | - | 2120 | 2205 | 2315 |

EXPLANATION OF CODES ON THIS PAGE

N-V Journey operated by Nu-Venture

AK Journey operated by Arriva

| Saturdays | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Buses 77/149 times are shown for guidance only and cannot be guaranteed. |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|
| Bus Operator Service number | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | |
| ST MARY'S ISLAND Goldcrest Drive | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1901 2014 2121 2211 2316 |
| CHATHAM MARITIME Docksider Outlet | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| CHATHAM Waterfront Bus Station A5 | 0804 | 0844 | 0950 | 1050 | 1150 | 1250 | 1350 | 1450 | 1550 | 1713 | 1824 | 1910 | 2023 | 2128 | 2218 | 2323 | |
| Chatham Rail Stn Bus Stop A | 0806 | 0846 | 0952 | 1052 | 1152 | 1252 | 1352 | 1452 | 1552 | 1715 | 1826 | 1913 | 2026 | 2131 | 2221 | 2326 | |
| opp Rochester Railway Station | 0810 | 0850 | 0956 | 1056 | 1156 | 1256 | 1356 | 1456 | 1556 | 1718 | 1830 | 1916 | 2029 | 2134 | 2224 | 2329 | |
| STROOD Morrisons | 0814 | 0856 | 1002 | 1102 | 1202 | 1302 | 1402 | 1502 | 1602 | 1724 | 1835 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Medway Valley Park | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1924 | 2037 | 2142 | 2232 | 2337 |
| Cuxton Charles Drive opp Whiteleaves | - | 0906 | - | 1112 | - | 1312 | - | 1512 | - | R | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Cuxton opp Scout Hut | - | 0909 | - | 1115 | - | 1315 | - | 1515 | - | R | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| A228 Cuxton White Hart | 0821 | - | 1010 | - | 1210 | - | 1410 | - | 1610 | 1734 | 1843 | - | 2042 | - | 2237 | 2342 | |
| A228 St Andrews Park | 0823 | 0912 | 1012 | 1118 | 1212 | 1318 | 1412 | 1518 | 1612 | 1736 | 1845 | - | 2044 | - | 2239 | 2344 | |
| UPPER HALLING Brownlens Road | - | 0919 | 1019 | - | 1219 | - | 1419 | - | 1619 | R | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Halling Station | 0825 | 0925 | 1025 | 1121 | 1225 | 1321 | 1425 | 1521 | 1625 | 17Y39 | 1848 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Halling Church | 0826 | 0926 | 1026 | 1122 | 1226 | 1322 | 1426 | 1522 | 1626 | 17Y40 | 1849 | - | 2047 | - | 2242 | 2347 | |
| Halling Howismere Close | 0827 | 0927 | 1027 | 1123 | 1227 | 1323 | 1427 | 1523 | 1627 | 17Y41 | 1850 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| SNODLAND opp The Bull | 0831 | 0931 | 1031 | 1127 | 1231 | 1327 | 1431 | 1527 | 1631 | 17Y45 | 1854 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| St. Benedict Road Frelands Road | 0833 | 0933 | 1033 | 1129 | 1233 | 1329 | 1433 | 1529 | 1633 | 17Y47 | 1856 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Harm Hill Freemasons Arms | 0838 | 0938 | 1038 | 1134 | 1238 | 1334 | 1438 | 1534 | 1638 | 17Y51 | 1901 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| opp Leybourne Church | 0842 | 0942 | 1042 | 1138 | 1242 | 1338 | 1442 | 1538 | 1642 | 17Y55 | 1905 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| West Malling Station | 0848 | 0948 | 1048 | 1144 | 1248 | 1344 | 1448 | 1544 | 1648 | 18Y01 | 1911 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| West Malling High Street Tesco | 0850 | 0950 | 1050 | 1146 | 1250 | 1346 | 1450 | 1546 | 1650 | 18Y03 | 1913 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Kings Hill opp ASDA | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Kings Hill opp CAF | 0856 | 0956 | 1056 | 1152 | 1256 | 1352 | 1456 | 1552 | 1656 | 18Y09 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Kings Hill Discovery Drive | 0858 | 0958 | 1058 | 1154 | 1258 | 1354 | 1458 | 1554 | 1658 | 18Y11 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Kings Hill Boverde Avenue | 0900 | 1000 | 1100 | 1156 | 1300 | 1356 | 1500 | 1556 | 1700 | 18Y13 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Kings Hill ADJACENT ASDA | 0902 | 1002 | 1102 | 1158 | 1302 | 1358 | 1502 | 1558 | 1702 | 18Y15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Bus 77 to T Wells dep Asda | 0907 | 1007 | 1107 | 1207 | 1307 | 1407 | 1507 | 1607 | 1707 | 1830 | 2031 | - | - | - | - | - | |

EXPLANATION OF CODES ON THIS PAGE

N-V Journey operated by Nu-Venture

R Calls on request to set down only for passengers boarding at/before Sundridge Hill

AK Journey operated by Arriva

Y Bus may run up to 11 mins later at this point if Cuxton and/or Upper Halling have been served on request

West Malling - Snodland - Halling - Cuxton - Medway Valley Park Chatham - St Mary's Island

BUS 151

Sundays - also Bank, National & Public Holidays. Not 25/26 December

| Bus Operator Service number | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| WEST MALLING <i>High St opp TESCO*</i> | - | 0957* | 1202* | 1402* | 1602 | 1802 |
| West Malling Station* | - | 0959* | 1204* | 1404* | 1604 | 1804 |
| Leybourne Church | - | 1002 | 1207 | 1407 | 1607 | 1807 |
| HAM HILL <i>opp Freemasons Arms</i> | - | 1009 | 1214 | 1414 | 1614 | 1814 |
| Snodland <i>St Benedict Rd</i> | - | 1013 | 1218 | 1418 | 1618 | 1818 |
| SNODLAND <i>The Bull</i> | - | 1016 | 1221 | 1421 | 1621 | 1821 |
| Halling <i>Howlsmere Close</i> | - | 1019 | 1224 | 1424 | 1624 | 1824 |
| Halling <i>New Bell Inn</i> | - | 1020 | 1225 | 1425 | 1625 | 1825 |
| Halling <i>opp Station</i> | - | 1021 | 1226 | 1426 | 1626 | 1826 |
| A228 St Andrews Park | - | 1023 | 1228 | 1428 | 1628 | 1828 |
| A228 Cuxton <i>opp White Hart</i> | - | 1026 | 1231 | 1431 | 1631 | 1831 |
| Medway Valley Park | - | 1032 | 1237 | 1437 | 1637 | 1837 |
| STROOD <i>Canal Rd, Bus Stop D</i> | - | 1039 | 1244 | 1444 | 1644 | 1844 |
| Rochester Railway Station | - | 1041 | 1246 | 1446 | 1646 | 1846 |
| CHATHAM STATION <i>New Cut, Fire Stn</i> | - | - | 1250 | 1450 | 1650 | - |
| Chatham Rail Stn, <i>Bus Stop B</i> | 0845 | 1045 | - | - | - | 1850 |
| CHATHAM <i>Waterfront Bus Station</i> | 0847 | 1047 | 1253 | 1453 | 1653 | 1852 |
| Chatham Maritime <i>Ship & Trades</i> | 0851 | 1051 | - | - | - | 1856 |
| ST MARY'S ISLAND <i>Goldcrest Drive</i> | 0853 | 1053 | - | - | - | 1858 |

St Mary's Island - Chatham - Medway Valley Park - Cuxton - Halling Snodland - West Malling

BUS 151

Sundays - also Bank, National & Public Holidays. Not 25/26 December

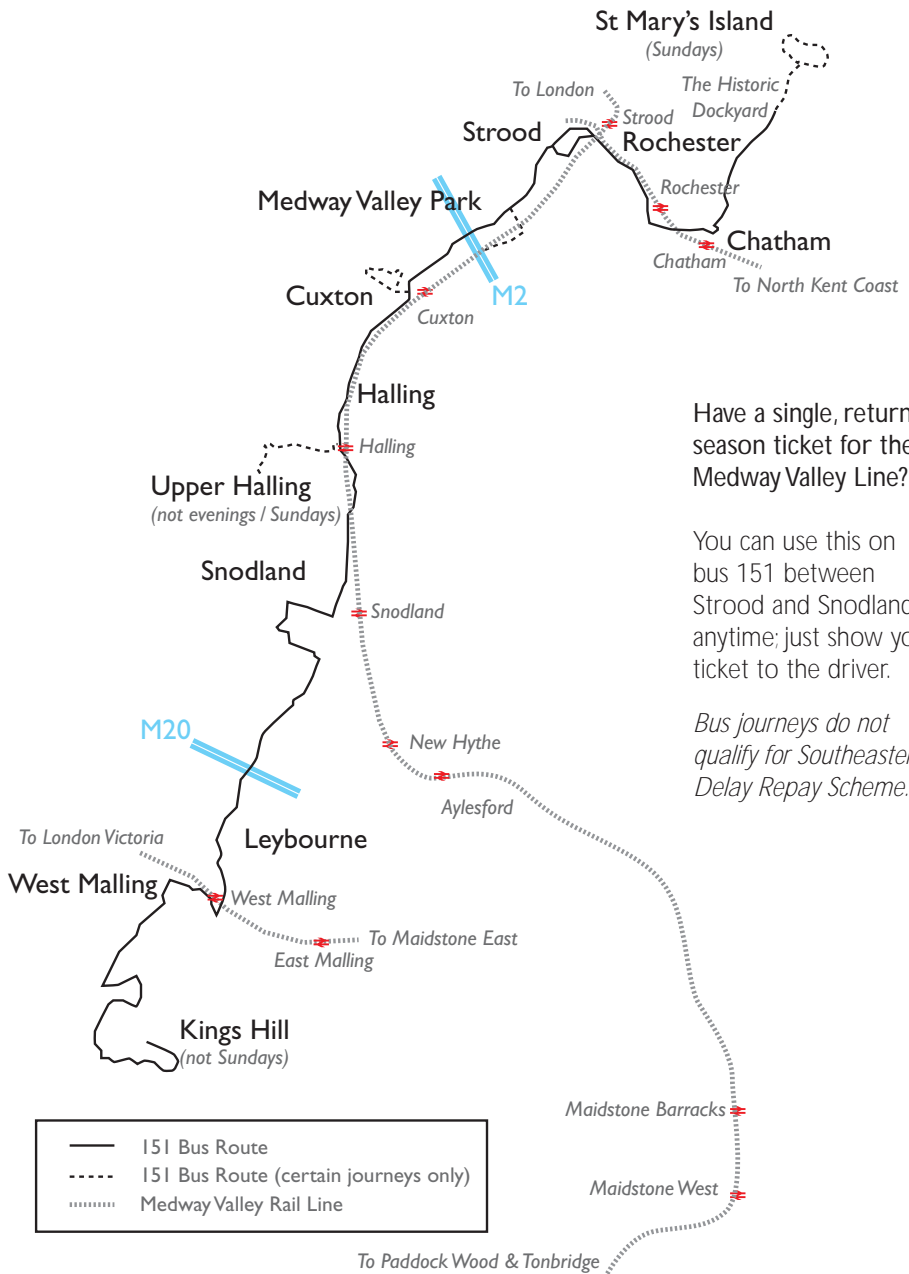
| Bus Operator Service number | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 | N-V 151 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| ST MARY'S ISLAND <i>Goldcrest Drive</i> | 0853 | 1053 | - | - | - | 1859 |
| CHATHAM MARITIME <i>opp Ship & Trades</i> | 0856 | 1056 | - | - | - | 1902 |
| CHATHAM <i>Waterfront Bus Station A5</i> | 0900 | 1100 | 1300 | 1500 | 1700 | 1906 |
| Chatham Rail Stn <i>Bus Stop A</i> | 0902 | 1102 | 1302 | 1502 | 1702 | 1908 |
| opp Rochester Railway Station | 0906 | 1106 | 1306 | 1506 | 1706 | 1912 |
| Strood Town Centre <i>opp Canal Road</i> | 0908 | 1108 | 1308 | 1508 | 1708 | 1914 |
| STROOD <i>Morrisons</i> | 0911 | 1111 | 1311 | 1511 | 1711 | 1917 |
| Medway Valley Park | 0917 | 1117 | 1317 | 1517 | 1717 | - |
| CUXTON A228 <i>White Hart</i> | 0923 | 1123 | 1323 | 1523 | 1723 | 1925 |
| A228 St Andrews Park | 0925 | 1125 | 1325 | 1525 | 1725 | 1927 |
| Halling Station | 0927 | 1127 | 1327 | 1527 | 1727 | 1929 |
| Halling Church | 0928 | 1128 | 1328 | 1528 | 1728 | 1930 |
| Halling <i>Howlsmere Close</i> | 0929 | 1129 | 1329 | 1529 | 1729 | 1931 |
| SNODLAND <i>opp The Bull</i> | 0934 | 1134 | 1334 | 1534 | 1734 | 1936 |
| St Benedict Road | 0936 | 1136 | 1336 | 1536 | 1736 | - |
| HAM HILL <i>Freemasons Arms</i> | 0941 | 1141 | 1341 | 1541 | 1741 | 1939 |
| Leybourne <i>opp Church</i> | 0945 | 1145 | 1345 | 1545 | 1745 | - |
| West Malling Station* | 0951* | 1151* | 1351* | 1551 | 1751 | - |
| WEST MALLING <i>High St TESCO*</i> | 0953* | 1153* | 1353* | 1553 | 1753 | - |

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Generally on the 4th Sunday of each month, a Farmers Market takes place in West Malling High Street. On such occasions, journeys shown* terminate/restart at A20 Town Hill, and do NOT serve West Malling High Street/Station.



Medway Valley Links



Have a single, return or season ticket for the Medway Valley Line?

You can use this on bus 151 between Strood and Snodland at anytime; just show your ticket to the driver.

Bus journeys do not qualify for Southeastern Delay Repay Scheme.

Kent County Council

Public Transport

PO Box 441

Aylesford

Kent ME6 9HJ

public.transport@kent.gov.uk

Medway Council

Integrated Transport

Gun Wharf

Dock Road

Chatham

Kent ME4 4TR

www.medway.gov.uk/buses

customer.first@medway.gov.uk

for bus fares & running information

Nu-Venture

Unit 2F

Deacon Trading Estate

Forstal Road

Aylesford

Kent ME20 7SP

01622 882288

www.nu-venture.co.uk



traveline
public transport info

www.traveline.info

0871 200 22 33
calls from landlines cost
10p per minute

**652****St Marys Island - Cuxton - Strood Academy**

ASD Coaches

The information on this timetable is expected to be valid until at least 29th March 2017. Where we know of variations, before or after this date, then we show these at the top of each affected column in the table.

Direction of stops: where shown (eg: W-bound) this is the compass direction towards which the bus is pointing when it stops

Mondays to Fridays

| | |
|---|------|
| Service Restrictions | 1 |
| Notes | SDO |
| St Mary's Island, adj Haven Way | 0738 |
| Wainscott, adj The Walk | 0746 |
| Strood, St Mary's Road (Stop C) | 0753 |
| Strood, Matalan (Stop F) | 0755 |
| Cuxton, opp Scout Hut | 0805 |
| Medway Valley Park, opp Ballard Business Park | 0810 |
| Strood, o/s Strood Academy | 0815 |

Saturdays

no service

Sundays

no service

Service Restrictions: 1 - to 21.7.17, not 3.4.17 to 13.4., 30.5. to 2.6.

Notes: SDO - Schooldays only

**652****Strood Academy - St Marys Island - Cuxton**

ASD Coaches

The information on this timetable is expected to be valid until at least 29th March 2017. Where we know of variations, before or after this date, then we show these at the top of each affected column in the table.

Direction of stops: where shown (eg: W-bound) this is the compass direction towards which the bus is pointing when it stops

Mondays to Fridays

| Service Restrictions | 1 |
|---|------|
| Notes | SDO |
| Strood, o/s Strood Academy | 1515 |
| Wainscott, opp The Walk | 1524 |
| St Mary's Island, adj Haven Way | 1532 |
| Medway City Estate, Neptune Business Park (S-bound) | 1536 |
| Strood, opp Railway Station | 1540 |
| Strood, Canal Road (Stop E) | 1542 |
| Strood, Matalan (Stop F) | 1543 |
| Medway Valley Park, adj Ballard Business Park | 1546 |
| Cuxton, adj Scout Hut | 1551 |

Saturdays

no service

Sundays

no service

Service Restrictions: 1 - to 21.7.17, not 3.4.17 to 13.4., 30.5. to 2.6.

Notes: SDO - Schooldays only



For times of the next departures from a particular stop you can use **traveline-txt** - by sending the SMS code to **84268**. Add the service number after the code if you just want a specific service - eg: **buctdgt 60**. The return message from **traveline-txt** will show the next three departures, and it currently costs 25p plus any message sending charge. Departure times will be real-time predictions where available, or scheduled departure times if not.

You can also get the same information by using the SMS code at www.nextbuses.mobi (only normal browsing charges apply) or through several iPhone or Android apps that offer access to **NextBuses**.

NOTE: SMS codes are different in each direction. Make sure you choose the right direction from these lists.

| SMS Code | Stop Name | Street | ATCO Code |
|----------|---|--------------------|--------------|
| chadmfw | St Mary's Island, adj Haven Way | Island Way East | 249000000126 |
| chadmgi | Chatham Maritime, opp Ship and Trades | Maritime Way | 249000000122 |
| chadwaj | Wainscott, opp Post Office | Wainscott Road | 249000000290 |
| chadwam | Wainscott, adj The Walk | Wainscott Road | 249000000291 |
| chamjaw | Wainscott, opp Higham Road | Hollywood Lane | 2490105995 |
| chajpdw | Wainscott, opp Greenfields Close | Hollywood Lane | 249000000932 |
| chamjap | Wainscott, adj Jarrett Avenue | Hollywood Lane | 2490105991 |
| chamjai | Wainscott, Hollywood Lane Middle (W-bound) | Hollywood Lane | 2490105987 |
| chajmgw | Frindsbury, adj Cooling Road | Hollywood Lane | 249000000870 |
| chadtpw | Frindsbury, opp Lower Rochester Road | Brompton Farm Road | 249000000280 |
| chadtpm | Frindsbury, Cliffe Road Top (S-bound) | Cliffe Road | 249000000278 |
| chadwdp | Frindsbury, opp King Arthur's Drive | Cliffe Road | 249000000299 |
| chamgta | Frindsbury, opp Clarendon Drive | Cliffe Road | 2490101163 |
| chadwdg | Frindsbury, opp Slatin Road | Cliffe Road | 249000000296 |
| chadjad | Strood, St Mary's Road (Stop C) | North Street | 249000000054 |
| chadgam | Strood, Matalan (Stop F) | Commercial Road | 249000000007 |
| chamamp | Strood, adj Morrisons | Priority Road | 249099325 |
| chajmjp | Strood, Priority Road (NW-bound) | Priority Road | 249000000876 |
| chadgap | Strood, Darnley Arch (S-bound) | Cuxton Road | 249000000008 |
| chadmjd | Strood, opp Hawthorn Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000128 |
| chadmjg | Strood, opp Poplar Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000129 |
| chadmjt | Medway Valley Park, adj Ballard Business Park | Cuxton Road | 249000000132 |
| chamjgt | Sundridge Hill, opp Ranscombe Farm | Sundridge Hill | 2490101177 |
| chajmjw | Sundridge Hill, opp Pilgrims Way | Sundridge Hill | 249000000879 |
| chajtpa | Cuxton, Sundridge Hill Bottom (SW-bound) | Sundridge Hill | 249096565 |
| chadmpj | Cuxton, adj White Hart | Sundridge Hill | 249000000137 |
| chadmpw | Cuxton, opp Scout Hut | Bush Road | 249000000140 |
| chajpmg | Cuxton, Sundridge Hill Bottom (NE-bound) | Sundridge Hill | 249000000967 |
| chajmjt | Sundridge Hill, adj Pilgrims Way | Sundridge Hill | 249000000878 |
| chamjgp | Sundridge Hill, adj Ranscombe Farm | Rochester Road | 2490101176 |
| chadmjp | Medway Valley Park, opp Ballard Business Park | Cuxton Road | 249000000131 |
| chadmjm | Strood, adj Poplar Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000130 |
| chadmja | Strood, adj Hawthorn Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000127 |
| chadgat | Strood, Darnley Arch (N-bound) | Cuxton Road | 249000000009 |
| chadgwm | Strood, adj Downside | London Road | 249000000051 |
| chadgwj | Strood, o/s Sports Centre | Watling Street | 249000000050 |
| chadgwa | Earl Estate, opp Chapter Road | Watling Street | 249000000047 |
| chadgtp | Earl Estate, adj Lancelot Avenue | Watling Street | 249000000045 |
| chamgwj | Earl Estate, Salters Cross (W-bound) | Watling Street | 2490105969 |
| chadgtm | Earl Estate, adj Carnation Road | Watling Street | 249000000044 |
| chajwdp | Strood, o/s Strood Academy | Watling Street | 2490103130 |



652

Strood Academy - St Marys Island - Cuxton

ASD Coaches

For times of the next departures from a particular stop you can use **traveline-txt** - by sending the SMS code to **84268**. Add the service number after the code if you just want a specific service - eg: **buctdgt 60**. The return message from **traveline-txt** will show the next three departures, and it currently costs 25p plus any message sending charge. Departure times will be real-time predictions where available, or scheduled departure times if not.

You can also get the same information by using the SMS code at www.nextbuses.mobi (only normal browsing charges apply) or through several iPhone or Android apps that offer access to **NextBuses**.

NOTE: SMS codes are different in each direction. Make sure you choose the right direction from these lists.

| SMS Code | Stop Name | Street | ATCO Code |
|----------|---|--------------------|--------------|
| chajwdp | Strood, o/s Strood Academy | Watling Street | 2490103130 |
| kntjmptw | Strood, opp Old Watling Street | Watling Street | 2400104007 |
| kntadatj | Strood, adj Old Watling Street | Watling Street | 240075026 |
| chadpdp | Earl Estate, opp Linwood Avenue | Rede Court Road | 249000000172 |
| chadpdt | Frindsbury, adj Burleigh Close | Rede Court Road | 249000000173 |
| chadpga | Frindsbury, adj Strood Fire Station | Rede Court Road | 249000000175 |
| chajwda | Frindsbury, adj Harlech Close | Brompton Farm Road | 2490103003 |
| chamgwm | Frindsbury, opp Farm Hill Avenue | Brompton Farm Road | 2490105977 |
| chadtpd | Frindsbury, opp Hyperion Drive | Brompton Farm Road | 249000000275 |
| chadtpj | Frindsbury, opp Lynette Avenue | Brompton Farm Road | 249000000277 |
| chamgwt | Frindsbury, adj Stonehorse Lane | Brompton Farm Road | 2490105981 |
| chajmta | Frindsbury, adj Lower Rochester Road | Brompton Farm Road | 249000000890 |
| chamdmd | Wainscott, opp Povey Avenue | Hollywood Lane | 2490101118 |
| chamjad | Wainscott, Hollywood Lane Middle (E-bound) | Hollywood Lane | 2490105985 |
| chamjam | Wainscott, opp Jarrett Avenue | Hollywood Lane | 2490105989 |
| chajpga | Wainscott, adj Greenfields Close | Hollywood Lane | 249000000933 |
| chamjat | Wainscott, adj Higham Road | Hollywood Lane | 2490105993 |
| chadwap | Wainscott, opp The Walk | Wainscott Road | 249000000292 |
| chadwag | Wainscott, adj Post Office | Wainscott Road | 249000000289 |
| chadmgm | Chatham Maritime, adj Ship and Trades | Maritime Way | 249000000123 |
| chadmgy | St Mary's Island, adj Haven Way | Island Way East | 249000000126 |
| chadmgi | Chatham Maritime, opp Ship and Trades | Maritime Way | 249000000122 |
| chajdam | Medway City Estate, opp Enterprise Close | Anthony Way | 249000000749 |
| chajdaj | Medway City Estate, opp Chaucer Close | Anthony Way | 249000000748 |
| chajdad | Medway City Estate, Neptune Business Park (S-bound) | Anthony Way | 249000000746 |
| chamapj | Medway City Estate, adj Whitewall Way | Whitewall Road | 2490101095 |
| chamapd | Medway City Estate, adj Cliffe Construction | Whitewall Road | 2490101091 |
| chamamw | Strood, opp Whitewall Road | Commissioners Road | 2490101090 |
| chamadn | Strood, Wingrove Drive (SW-bound) | Wingrove Drive | 2490101054 |
| chamdap | Strood, opp Railway Station | Canal Road | 2490101050 |
| chadawp | Strood, Canal Road (Stop E) | High Street | 249000000002 |
| chadgam | Strood, Matalan (Stop F) | Commercial Road | 249000000007 |
| chamamp | Strood, adj Morrisons | Priory Road | 249099325 |
| chajmjp | Strood, Priory Road (NW-bound) | Priory Road | 249000000876 |
| chadgap | Strood, Darnley Arch (S-bound) | Cuxton Road | 249000000008 |
| chadmjd | Strood, opp Hawthorn Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000128 |
| chadmjg | Strood, opp Poplar Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000129 |
| chadmjt | Medway Valley Park, adj Ballard Business Park | Cuxton Road | 249000000132 |
| chamjgt | Sundridge Hill, opp Ranscombe Farm | Sundridge Hill | 2490101177 |
| chajmjw | Sundridge Hill, opp Pilgrims Way | Sundridge Hill | 249000000879 |
| chajtpa | Cuxton, Sundridge Hill Bottom (SW-bound) | Sundridge Hill | 249096565 |
| chadmpt | Cuxton, adj Scout Hut | Bush Road | 249000000139 |

**653****Halling - Cuxton - Cookham Wood Schools - Huntsman Corner**

Arriva Kent & Surrey

The information on this timetable is expected to be valid until at least 29th March 2017. Where we know of variations, before or after this date, then we show these at the top of each affected column in the table.

Direction of stops: where shown (eg: W-bound) this is the compass direction towards which the bus is pointing when it stops

Mondays to Fridays

| Service Restrictions | 1 |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Notes | SDO |
| Halling, opp Marsh Road | 0657 |
| Upper Halling, at Browndens Road | 0710 |
| Cuxton, opp White Hart | 0721 |
| Cuxton, opp Whiteleaves Rise | 0727 |
| Strood, Canal Road (Stop D) | 0743 |
| Rochester, o/s Grammar Schools | arr 0753 |
| Rochester, o/s Grammar Schools | dep 0756 |
| Warren Wood, o/s Primary Academy | 0800 |
| Chatham, Huntsmans Corner (N-bound) | 0805 |

Saturdays

no service

Sundays

no service

Service Restrictions: 1 - to 21.7.17, not 3.4.17 to 13.4., 30.5. to 2.6.

Notes: SDO - Schooldays only

**653****Rochester & Chatham Grammar Schools - Cuxton - Halling**

Arriva Kent & Surrey

The information on this timetable is expected to be valid until at least 29th March 2017. Where we know of variations, before or after this date, then we show these at the top of each affected column in the table.

Direction of stops: where shown (eg: W-bound) this is the compass direction towards which the bus is pointing when it stops

Mondays to Fridays

| Service Restrictions | 1 |
|---|------|
| Notes | SDO |
| Rochester, o/s Grammar Schools | 1525 |
| Warren Wood, o/s Primary Academy | 1530 |
| Chatham, Huntsmans Corner (N-bound) | 1537 |
| Chatham, Chatham Railway Station (Stop B) | 1542 |
| Rochester, Star Hill (Stop K) | 1546 |
| Strood, Canal Road (Stop E) | 1555 |
| Cuxton, opp Whiteleaves Rise | 1611 |
| Cuxton, opp Scout Hut | 1614 |
| Upper Halling, at Browndens Road | 1624 |
| Halling, adj Marsh Road | 1635 |

Saturdays

no service

Sundays

no service

Service Restrictions: 1 - to 21.7.17, not 3.4.17 to 13.4., 30.5. to 2.6.

Notes: SDO - Schooldays only



For times of the next departures from a particular stop you can use **traveline-txt** - by sending the SMS code to **84268**. Add the service number after the code if you just want a specific service - eg: **buctdgt 60**. The return message from **traveline-txt** will show the next three departures, and it currently costs 25p plus any message sending charge. Departure times will be real-time predictions where available, or scheduled departure times if not.

You can also get the same information by using the SMS code at www.nextbuses.mobi (only normal browsing charges apply) or through several iPhone or Android apps that offer access to **NextBuses**.

NOTE: SMS codes are different in each direction. Make sure you choose the right direction from these lists.

| SMS Code | Stop Name | Street | ATCO Code |
|----------|--|--------------------|--------------|
| chamgdw | Halling, opp Marsh Road | Low Meadow | 2490101140 |
| chadpag | Halling, opp The Five Bells | High Street | 249000000156 |
| chadpap | Halling, opp Britannia Close | High Street | 249000000159 |
| chadpat | Halling, adj Howlsmere Close | High Street | 249000000160 |
| chadmwp | North Halling, adj Jade Hill | Kent Road | 249000000153 |
| chadpda | Halling, adj Fire Station | Vicarage Road | 249000000162 |
| chajppj | Halling, o/s 19 Vicarage Road | Vicarage Road | 249000000945 |
| chadpdj | Upper Halling, at Browdens Road | Browdens Road | 249000000169 |
| chadpdg | Upper Halling, adj Pilgrims Road | Vicarage Road | 249000000168 |
| chadmwm | North Halling, opp Jade Hill | Kent Road | 249000000152 |
| chadmwj | North Halling, St Andrews Park (N-bound) | Formby Road | 249000000151 |
| chadmwd | North Halling, opp Cuxton Marina | Formby Road | 249000000149 |
| chamamj | North Halling, adj Pilgrims Way | Rochester Road | 2490102808 |
| chamdgp | Cuxton, o/s St Michael's Church | Rochester Road | 2490101037 |
| chadmpm | Cuxton, opp White Hart | Rochester Road | 249000000138 |
| chadmpt | Cuxton, adj Scout Hut | Bush Road | 249000000139 |
| chadmta | Cuxton, o/s 26 James Road | James Road | 249000000141 |
| chamjta | Cuxton, opp Reginald Avenue | Charles Drive | 2490101174 |
| chadmta | Cuxton, opp Whiteleaves Rise | Charles Drive | 249000000142 |
| chadmtg | Cuxton, opp Nine Acres Road | Charles Drive | 249000000143 |
| chadmtj | Cuxton, o/s 111 Charles Drive | Charles Drive | 249000000144 |
| chadmtm | Cuxton, opp Junior School | Bush Road | 249000000145 |
| chadmpw | Cuxton, opp Scout Hut | Bush Road | 249000000140 |
| chajpmg | Cuxton, Sundridge Hill Bottom (NE-bound) | Sundridge Hill | 249000000967 |
| chajmjt | Sundridge Hill, adj Pilgrims Way | Sundridge Hill | 249000000878 |
| chajmjp | Sundridge Hill, adj Ranscombe Farm | Rochester Road | 2490101176 |
| chadmjp | Medway Valley Park, opp Ballard Business Park | Cuxton Road | 249000000131 |
| chadmjm | Strood, adj Poplar Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000130 |
| chadmja | Strood, adj Hawthorn Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000127 |
| chadgat | Strood, Damley Arch (N-bound) | Cuxton Road | 249000000009 |
| chadgag | Strood, St Nicholas Church (Stop A) | High Street | 249000000005 |
| chadawt | Strood, Canal Road (Stop D) | High Street | 249000000003 |
| chagamg | Rochester, Rochester Guildhall Museum (Stop A) | Corporation Street | 249000000360 |
| chagamp | Rochester, Railway Station (Stop D) | Corporation Street | 249000000362 |
| chagamt | Rochester, Rochester Community Hub (Stop C) | Corporation Street | 249000000363 |
| chagadw | Rochester, East Row (Stop L) | East Row | 249000000343 |
| chagagj | Rochester, opp Watts Avenue | Maidstone Road | 249000000346 |
| chagaga | Rochester, adj Longley Road | Maidstone Road | 249000000344 |
| chagajg | Rochester, adj St Margaret's Cemetery | Maidstone Road | 249000000353 |
| chajmdj | Rochester, adj Warden Road | Maidstone Road | 249000000859 |
| chadwjd | Rochester, opp Priestfields | Maidstone Road | 249000000310 |
| chadwjj | Rochester, o/s Grammar Schools | Maidstone Road | 249000000311 |
| chadwgj | Rochester, opp Hawser Road | The Tideway | 249000000304 |
| chadwpt | Warren Wood, o/s Primary Academy | Arethusa Road | 249000000328 |
| chagwmj | Rochester, opp Cloisterham Road | City Way | 249000000673 |
| chagwmg | Rochester, opp Jiniwin Road | City Way | 249000000672 |
| chagwmp | Rochester, Horsted Way (NE-bound) | Horsted Way | 249000000674 |
| chagwmw | Chatham, opp The Ridgeway | Horsted Way | 249000000676 |
| chagwpa | Chatham, adj Wallace Road | Maidstone Road | 249000000677 |
| chajajg | Chatham, Huntsmans Corner (N-bound) | Maidstone Road | 249000000712 |



For times of the next departures from a particular stop you can use **traveline-txt** - by sending the SMS code to **84268**. Add the service number after the code if you just want a specific service - eg: **buctdgt 60**. The return message from **traveline-txt** will show the next three departures, and it currently costs 25p plus any message sending charge. Departure times will be real-time predictions where available, or scheduled departure times if not.

You can also get the same information by using the SMS code at www.nextbuses.mobi (only normal browsing charges apply) or through several iPhone or Android apps that offer access to **NextBuses**.

NOTE: SMS codes are different in each direction. Make sure you choose the right direction from these lists.

| SMS Code | Stop Name | Street | ATCO Code |
|----------|--|------------------------------|--------------|
| chadwjg | Rochester, o/s Grammar Schools | Maidstone Road | 249000000311 |
| chadwgj | Rochester, opp Hawser Road | The Tideway | 249000000304 |
| chadwpt | Warren Wood, o/s Primary Academy | Arethusa Road | 249000000328 |
| chagwmj | Rochester, opp Cloisterham Road | City Way | 249000000673 |
| chagwmg | Rochester, opp Jiniwin Road | City Way | 249000000672 |
| chagwmp | Rochester, Horsted Way (NE-bound) | Horsted Way | 249000000674 |
| chagwmw | Chatham, opp The Ridgeway | Horsted Way | 249000000676 |
| chagwpa | Chatham, adj Wallace Road | Maidstone Road | 249000000677 |
| chajajg | Chatham, Huntsmans Corner (N-bound) | Maidstone Road | 249000000712 |
| chajajd | Chatham, opp Letchworth Avenue | Maidstone Road | 249000000711 |
| chajagw | Chatham, opp Football Ground | Maidstone Road | 249000000709 |
| chajagt | Chatham, opp Cemetery | Maidstone Road | 249000000708 |
| chajajj | Chatham, adj Gladstone Road | Maidstone Road | 249000000705 |
| chajagd | Chatham, opp Westmount Avenue | Maidstone Road | 249000000704 |
| chadamj | Chatham, Chatham Railway Station (Stop B) | Chatham bus/rail interchange | 249000000700 |
| chagwdg | Chatham, opp St Bart's Hospital | New Road | 249000000655 |
| chagwdw | Rochester, adj Jacksons Fields | New Road | 249000000653 |
| chagapa | Rochester, Star Hill (Stop K) | Star Hill | 249000000365 |
| chagamw | Rochester, Rochester Community Hub (Stop N) | Corporation Street | 249000000364 |
| champap | Rochester, Railway Station (Stop E) | Corporation Street | 2490101195 |
| chagamj | Rochester, Rochester Guildhall Museum (Stop P) | Corporation Street | 249000000361 |
| chadawp | Strood, Canal Road (Stop E) | High Street | 249000000002 |
| chadgam | Strood, Matalan (Stop F) | Commercial Road | 249000000007 |
| chamamp | Strood, adj Morrisons | Priority Road | 249099325 |
| chajmjp | Strood, Priority Road (NW-bound) | Priority Road | 249000000876 |
| chadgap | Strood, Darnley Arch (S-bound) | Cuxton Road | 249000000008 |
| chadmjd | Strood, opp Hawthorn Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000128 |
| chadmjg | Strood, opp Poplar Road | Cuxton Road | 249000000129 |
| chadmjt | Medway Valley Park, adj Ballard Business Park | Cuxton Road | 249000000132 |
| chamjgt | Sundridge Hill, opp Ranscombe Farm | Sundridge Hill | 2490101177 |
| chajmjw | Sundridge Hill, opp Pilgrims Way | Sundridge Hill | 249000000879 |
| chajtpa | Cuxton, Sundridge Hill Bottom (SW-bound) | Sundridge Hill | 249096565 |
| chadmpj | Cuxton, adj White Hart | Sundridge Hill | 249000000137 |
| chadmpt | Cuxton, adj Scout Hut | Bush Road | 249000000139 |
| chadmta | Cuxton, o/s 26 James Road | James Road | 249000000141 |
| chamjta | Cuxton, opp Reginald Avenue | Charles Drive | 2490101174 |
| chadmtg | Cuxton, opp Whiteleaves Rise | Charles Drive | 249000000142 |
| chadmtg | Cuxton, opp Nine Acres Road | Charles Drive | 249000000143 |
| chadmtj | Cuxton, o/s 111 Charles Drive | Charles Drive | 249000000144 |
| chadmtm | Cuxton, opp Junior School | Bush Road | 249000000145 |
| chadmpw | Cuxton, opp Scout Hut | Bush Road | 249000000140 |
| chadmtp | Cuxton, opp St Michael's Church | Rochester Road | 249000000146 |
| chadmtw | North Halling, opp Pilgrims Way | Rochester Road | 249000000147 |
| chadmwa | North Halling, adj Cuxton Marina | Formby Road | 249000000148 |
| chadmwg | North Halling, St Andrews Park (S-bound) | Formby Road | 249000000150 |
| chadmwp | North Halling, adj Jade Hill | Kent Road | 249000000153 |
| chadpda | Halling, adj Fire Station | Vicarage Road | 249000000162 |
| chajppj | Halling, o/s 19 Vicarage Road | Vicarage Road | 249000000945 |
| chadpdj | Upper Halling, at Browndens Road | Browndens Road | 249000000169 |
| chadpdg | Upper Halling, adj Pilgrims Road | Vicarage Road | 249000000168 |
| chadmwm | North Halling, opp Jade Hill | Kent Road | 249000000152 |
| chadpaw | Halling, opp Howlsmere Close | High Street | 249000000161 |
| chadpam | Halling, adj Britannia Close | High Street | 249000000158 |
| chadpaj | Halling, adj The Five Bells | High Street | 249000000157 |
| chamgdt | Halling, adj Marsh Road | Low Meadow | 2490101139 |

Route 703: Maidstone-Allington-Larkfield-Lunsford Park-Snodland-Halling-Cuxton-Bluewater

Wednesdays

| | |
|---|-------|
| Maidstone, Chequers Bus Station (Stop H2) | 09:45 |
| Maidstone West, Railway Station | 09:50 |
| Allington, Allington Way | 09:55 |
| Aylesford, Retail Park | 09:59 |
| Larkfield, Wealden Hall | 10:04 |
| Lunsford Park, Tesco (Chaucer Way) | 10:11 |
| Ham Hill, Freemasons Arms | 10:14 |
| Snodland, Midsummer Road | 10:17 |
| Snodland, Bull | 10:19 |
| Halling, Five Bells | 10:23 |
| Cuxton, White Hart | 10:27 |
| Bluewater, Bus Station | 10:45 |

| | Code | SDO | NSD |
|------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Bluewater, Bus Station (Bay 8) | | 13:30 | 15:30 |
| Cuxton, White Hart | | 13:48 | 15:48 |
| Halling, Five Bells | | 13:52 | 15:52 |
| Snodland, Bull | | 13:56 | 15:56 |
| Snodland, Midsummer Road | | 13:58 | 15:58 |
| Ham Hill, Freemasons Arms | | 14:01 | 16:01 |
| Lunsford Park, Tesco (Chaucer Way) | | 14:04 | 16:04 |
| Larkfield, Wealden Hall | | 14:11 | 16:11 |
| Aylesford, Retail Park | | 14:16 | 16:16 |
| Allington, Allington Way | | 14:20 | 16:20 |
| Maidstone West, Rocky Hill | | 14:25 | 16:25 |
| Maidstone, Chequers Bus Station | | 14:30 | 16:30 |

Notes

SDO = This journey operates on Schooldays Only

NSD = This journey operates on Non-Schooldays Only

↓* = This journey operates direct via the M20 & the A228 between the Coldharbour Roundabout & Ham Hill

↓# = This journey operates direct via the full length of Malling Road

NO SERVICE ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS OR OTHER DAYS OF THE WEEK

Saturdays

valid from 16th January 2016

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Maidstone, Chequers Bus Station (Stop H2) | 09:30 | 12:30 |
| Maidstone West, Railway Station | 09:35 | 12:35 |
| Allington, Allington Way | 09:40 | 12:40 |
| Aylesford, Retail Park | 09:44 | ↓* |
| Larkfield, Wealden Hall | 09:49 | ↓* |
| Lunsford Park, Tesco (Chaucer Way) | 09:56 | ↓* |
| Ham Hill, Freemasons Arms | 09:59 | 12:51 |
| Snodland, Midsummer Road | 10:02 | ↓# |
| Snodland, Bull | 10:04 | 12:54 |
| Halling, Five Bells | 10:08 | 12:58 |
| Cuxton, White Hart | 10:12 | 13:02 |
| Bluewater, Bus Station | 10:30 | 13:20 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Bluewater, Bus Station (Bay 8) | 14:00 | 17:00 |
| Cuxton, White Hart | 14:18 | 17:18 |
| Halling, Five Bells | 14:22 | 17:22 |
| Snodland, Bull | 14:26 | 17:26 |
| Snodland, Midsummer Road | ↓# | 17:28 |
| Ham Hill, Freemasons Arms | 14:29 | 17:31 |
| Lunsford Park, Tesco (Chaucer Way) | ↓* | 17:34 |
| Larkfield, Wealden Hall | ↓* | 17:41 |
| Aylesford, Retail Park | ↓* | 17:46 |
| Allington, Allington Way | 14:40 | 17:50 |
| Maidstone West, Rocky Hill | 14:45 | 17:55 |
| Maidstone, Chequers Bus Station | 14:50 | 18:00 |



- 01732 445 004
- connect-buses.co.uk
- info@connect-buses.co.uk



Bus times Commencing - 5th September 2016

Route E

Strood & Cuxton to Snodland

Morning:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Watling Street, Strood Academy | 08:02 |
| Bligh Way shops | 08:05 |
| Darnley Road shops | 08:11 |
| Cuxton, Sundridge Hill | 08:15 |
| Halling, junction A228 | 08:20 |
| Snodland, Holmesdale school | 08:30 |

Afternoon:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Snodland, Holmesdale school | 15:25 |
| Halling, junction A228 | 15:32 |
| Cuxton, Sundridge Hill | 15:36 |
| Darnley Road shops | 15:39 |
| Bligh Way shops | 15:43 |
| Watling Street, Strood Academy | 15:46 |

Fares

| <i>To Holmesdale from:</i> | <i>Single</i> | <i>Return</i> | <i>Autumn term</i> | <i>Spring term</i> | <i>Summer term</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Strood | £2.70 | £3.80 | £233 | £189 | £189 |
| Cuxton onwards | £2.20 | £3.20 | £186 | £151 | £151 |

Passes accepted:

Kent Young Person's Travel Pass for journeys within Kent or starting/finishing in Kent
English National Concession Travel Pass (afternoon trip only)

Unit E, Port Werburgh, Vicarage Lane, Hoo, Rochester, Kent. ME3 9LB

Tel: 01634 254000

info@farleighcoaches.com www.farleighcoaches.com

APPENDIX 4

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (KB Ecology, March 2017)

Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton, Kent

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

17th March 2017 / Ref No 2016/11/06

Client: Mr S Gill



Prepared by Katia Bresso CEnv MCIEEM
Trading as 'KB Ecology Ltd' (Reg 7595382)
42, Douglas Road
Lenham, Kent
ME17 2QP
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

KB Ecology Ltd has been commissioned to undertake a baseline ecological survey and a preliminary ecological appraisal with regards to a proposed development at Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton, Kent, ME2 1LF, to support representations in response to Medway Council's Local Plan 2012 - 2035 Development Options Consultation Document.

The extent of site to be surveyed is shown on the map below, as sent by the client:



1.2 Survey Location/Area

The site is located at approximately TQ 714 670. The location of the site is shown on Figure 1 and Figure 2.

1.3 Survey Objectives

The purpose of this survey is to provide a scoping assessment and to assist in demonstrating compliance with wildlife legislation and planning policy objectives.

The key objectives are as follows:

- Identify all relevant statutory and non-statutory designated sites and features of ecological significance within the site and its surroundings.
- Assess the potential for the presence of protected species and species of principal conservation importance, important habitats or other biodiversity features within the site and its surroundings.
- Provide recommendations for further surveys where assessed as necessary and suggest potential enhancements.
- Present the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.
- Provide an early indication of potential ecological mitigation and compensation requirements necessary as part of any development proposals.

A summary of wildlife legislation and policy has been included in Appendix A.

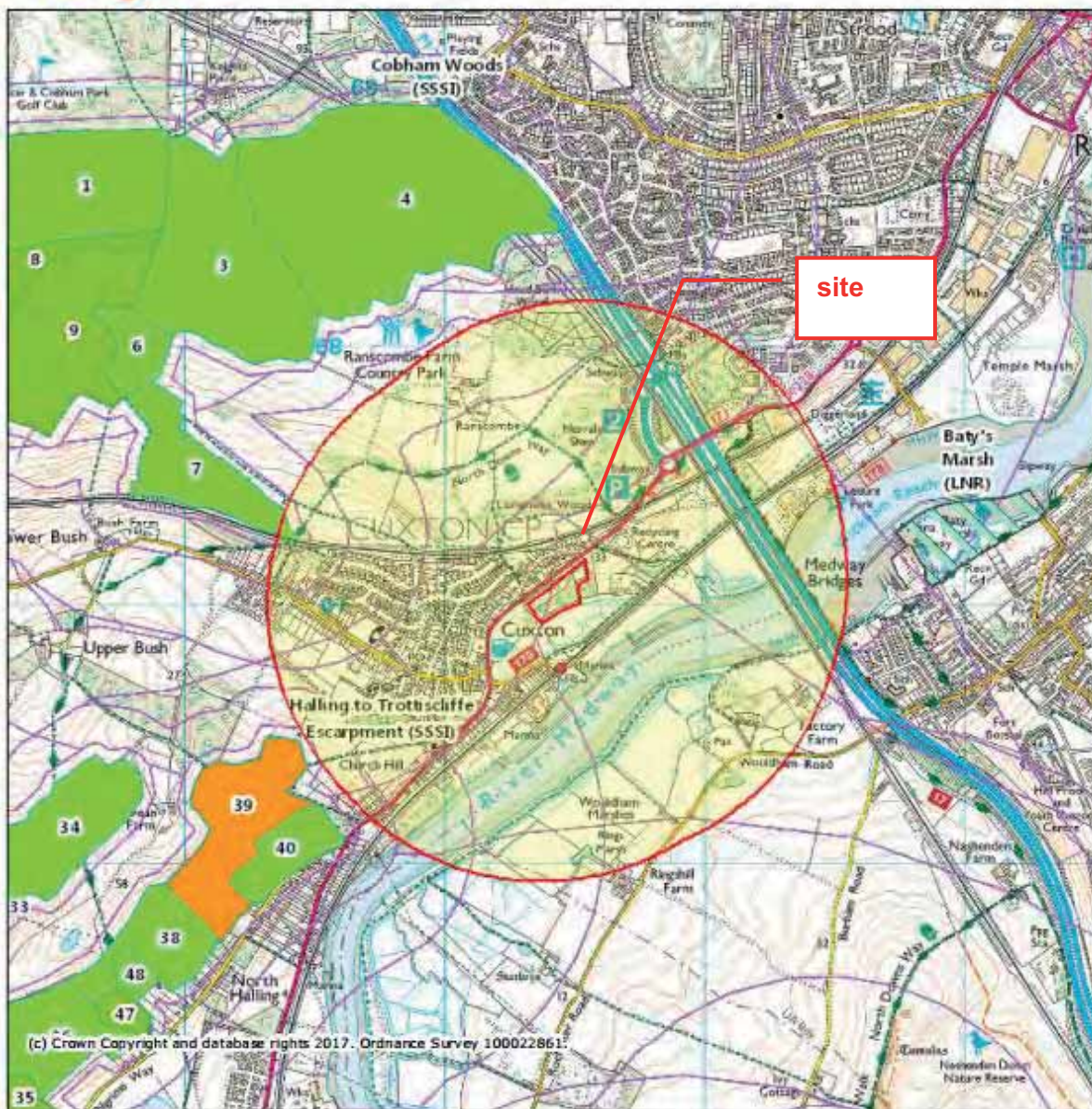
1.4 Limitations

This report aims to provide general advice on ecological constraints associated with any development of the site and includes recommendations for further survey; it is not intended that this report should be submitted with a planning application for development of the site, unless supported by the results of further surveys and a detailed assessment of the effects of the proposed development.

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct and the opinions expressed are true and professional bona fide opinions. It records the potential for flora and fauna evident on the days of the site visits. It does not record any flora or fauna that may appear at other times of the year and, as such, were not evident at the time of visit.

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of a qualified ecologist and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited in this document.

Figure 1



Legend

- ☒ Limestone Pavement Orders (England)
- ☒ Local Nature Reserves (England)
- ☐ Moorland Line (England)
- ☐ National Nature Reserves (England)
- ☐ National Nature Reserves (Scotland)
- ☐ National Nature Reserves (Wales)
- ☐ National Parks (England)
- ☐ Ramsar Sites (England)
- ☐ Ramsar Sites (Scotland)

Projection = OSG836

xmin = 567800

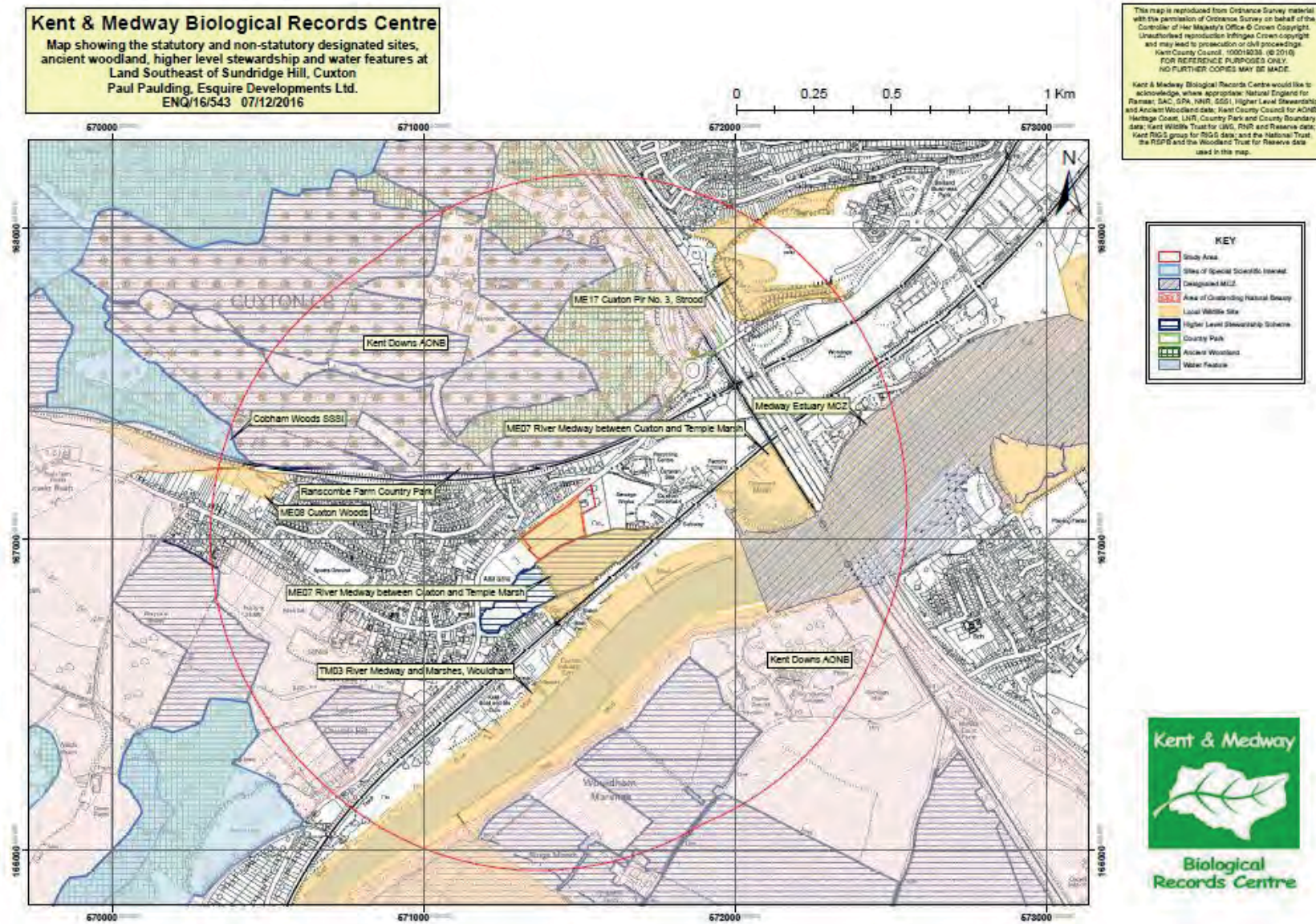
ymin = 164600

xmax = 575100

ymax = 169700

Map produced by MAGiC on 13 March, 2017.

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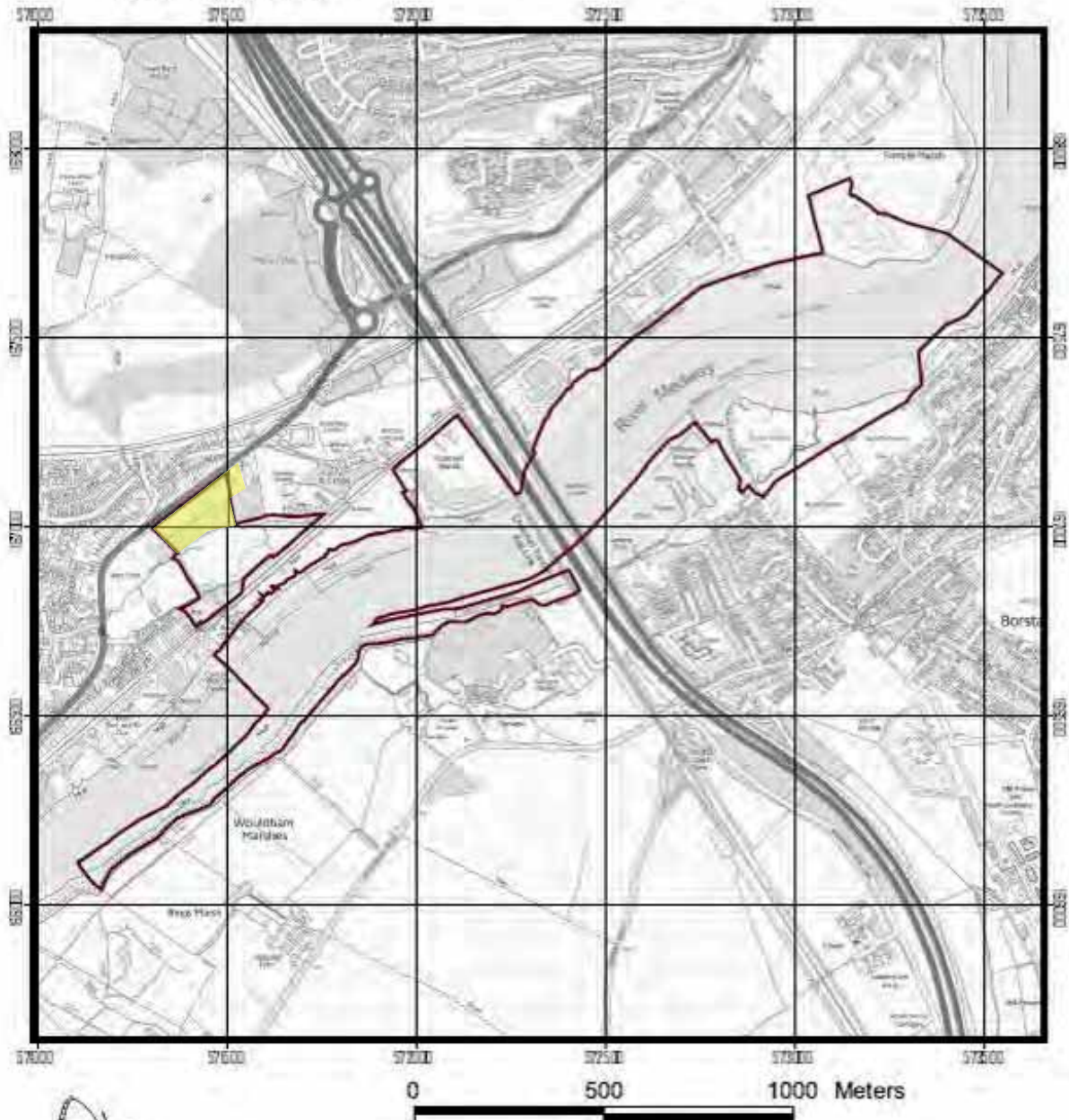


KENT LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE

Site Ref No: **ME07**

Site: **RIVER MEDWAY BETWEEN CUXTON AND
TEMPLE MARSH**

Map ref: TQ 725671



Kent Wildlife Trust © 2014

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FIGURE 2



Scale 1:5,000

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Map Dated: 13 Mar 2017

Figure 3: indicates location of ponds from Krag data search



2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

Internet-based resources were consulted to identify designated nature conservation sites within 1km of the site and habitats of potentially high ecological importance and sensitivity within 500m of the site (e.g. ancient woodlands, ponds).

A data search was carried out with the Kent and Medway Biological Record Centre KMBRC¹.

2.2 Scoping Survey

The site and its immediate surroundings were considered in terms of habitats, protected species and species of principal conservation importance during a walkover survey undertaken on 1st December 2016 by Katia Bresso CEnv MCIEEM, a qualified professional consultant ecologist with over 15 years of experience², licensed bat surveyor (Class Survey Licence Registration Number 2015-11917-CLS-CLS (CL15 Bat Roost Visitor Level 1), 2015-11918-CLS-CLS (CL18 Bat Survey Level 2) and 2016-27133-CLS-CLS (WML-A34 - Level 3 Class Licence) and Registered Consultant of the Bat Low Impact Class Licence WML-CL21 with Natural England (since May 2015), licensed dormouse surveyor (Class Survey Licences Registration Number 2016-22060-CLS-CLS) and licensed great crested newt surveyor (Class Survey Licences Registration Number Level 1 2015-16268-CLS-CLS and Class Survey Licences Registration Number Level 2 2016-23313-SCI-SCI). Evidence of the use of the site by species was recorded (i.e. field signs).

The habitat survey was undertaken in general accordance with Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2010), i.e. within the survey area every parcel of land is classified, recorded and mapped in accordance with a list of ninety specified habitat types using standard colour codes to allow rapid visual assessment of the extent and distribution of different habitat types.

The survey and report aim at following the guidance and recommendations in the British Standard Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BS 42020: 2013)³.

The buildings were not accessed internally but they were checked and assessed for bat roosting potential externally.

2.3 Bats in trees assessment

The survey entailed a preliminary ground level roost assessment, i.e. an external inspection of all trees present within the survey area, looking at potential to support bats and looking for actual signs of bats, using an endoscope, high powered torch and binoculars where needed (from the ground only).

The features of trees that can be used as bat roosts include:

- Natural holes, woodpecker holes, rot cavities that orient upwards from the entrance,
- Cracks/splits in major limbs

¹ Please note that absence of records should not be taken as confirmation that a species is absent from the search area.

² Katia Bresso is a Suitably Qualified Ecologist with regards to Code for Sustainable Homes assessment and BREEAM

- Loose bark
- Behind dense, thick-stemmed ivy
- Hollows/cavities
- Within dense epicormic growth
- Bird and bat boxes

Each tree was classified as follows:

| Suitability | Description Roosting habitats |
|-------------|--|
| Negligible | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. |
| Low | <p>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions^a and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation^b).</p> <p>A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.^c</p> |
| Moderate | A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed). |
| High | A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat. |

No climbing inspections of trees and no emergence or dawn surveys were undertaken as part of this work.

3 Baseline Ecological Conditions

3.1 Designated Nature Conservation Sites

The site is not part of, nor directly adjacent to, any statutory designated sites. Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are present near-by:

- Cobham Woods SSSI, present 900m to the North:

This woodland and old parkland is representative of woods in North Kent which occur in part on acidic Thanet Sands and in part on chalk soils. One nationally rare plant species occurs in the arable land close to the wood. An outstanding assemblage of plants is present at this site which is also of importance for its breeding birds.

- Halling to Trottiscliffe Escarpment SSSI, present 1.05km to the West:

This site consists of an extensive area of the North Downs west of the Medway Gap. The site is representative of Chalk grassland in west Kent and beech woodland on the chalk. Outstanding assemblages of plants and invertebrates are present.

The site is not identified in the Medway Adopted Local Plan (2003) as a Local Wildlife Site. However, the KMBRC data search indicates that the site forms part of a local wildlife site: ME07 River Medway between Cuxton and Temple Marsh. Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are identified and selected for their local nature conservation value. LWSs protect threatened species and habitats acting as buffers, stepping stones and corridors between nationally-designated wildlife sites³. The citation (see appendix A) does not specifically mention the site itself, other than stating: *'Chalk scrub on the slope above the low-lying pasture, dominated by hawthorn, dogwood and wayfaring tree, adds diversity to the site'*. The area at Sundridge Hill was added to the LWS at the 2001 revision.

3.2 Habitats

The site is surrounded by grazing marsh to the South, a small wood to the West, residential areas to the North and a refuse tip to the East.

The Integrated Habitat System (IHS) classification in the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 describes the site as:

- GNZ - *Semi-improved neutral grassland*
- GN31 - *Coarse neutral grassland*
- WB2 - *Scrub woodland*

However, historical aerial maps show that the main part of the site away from the buildings was a single field in the 1940's to 1960's, then the bottom half was scrubbed over in 1990 and 2003 but the scrub was cleared circa 2007 and kept under control to the present day.

³ In Kent, there are over 460 Local Wildlife Sites, covering a total area of over 27,500 hectares, (roughly 7% of the county). They range from a 0.13 hectares churchyard important for its orchids, to grazing marsh sites of over 1,000 hectares.





At the time of site visit, the site consisted of an access drive with dwelling and outbuildings, a small vegetable patch and a large field to the West, surrounded by a line of trees along the

East, South and West boundaries and a road embankment covered in scrub along the North boundary. Horses are said to graze there occasionally.







The trees present included ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, cherry *Prunus* sp, silver birch *Betula pendula*, wayfaring-tree *Viburnum lantana* and *rosa* sp. Stands of dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and traveller's joy *Clematis vitalba* were present too.

The field comprised the following species at the time of site visit: bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg, bristly oxtongue *Picris echioides*, common nettles *Urtica dioica*, lesser burdock *Arctium minus*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, alexanders *Smyrniololus atratum*, mallow *Malva* sp, great mullein *Verbascum Thapsus*, common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, dock *Rumex* sp. Some areas also had perforate St John's wort *Hypericum perforatum*, weld *Reseda luteola* and marjoram *Origanum vulgare*, indicating a chalk character to the site.

Large stands of nettles were present as were piles of brash and rubble.

Plates are present in Appendix B. Figure 4 below shows the location of the habitats.

Legend of Phase 1 habitat survey map hereafter:

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Site boundary |
|  | Hard standing |
|  | Building |
|  | Scrub |
|  | Grassland (neutral to calcareous in places) |
|  | Tall ruderal (nettles) |





3.3 Amphibians

The data search carried out with the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group (Enquiry No: CES/16/482) revealed that the closest recorded Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* site is a historical record located at Cuxton Pit, 1 km to the NE (record id: 682).

Great crested newts favour areas of high pond density and occupancy levels can exceed 40% of ponds when conditions are favourable. There are only three ponds within 1km of the site, as per Krag's pond database. Its risk assessment indicates that the likelihood of presence of great crested newts *in the overall area* is 'Possible'⁴.

No ponds were present on site or within 100m, with the nearest pond being 245m to the South (aerial photos suggest that this pond has been dry for a number of years), the next nearest pond being a swimming pool at Cuxton School and the third being on the other side of the river Medway.

⁴ Likelihood of Presence Scores are described using the following categories:
 Unlikely<Possible<Likely<High
 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 Sundridge Hill, Cuxton, Rochester
 KB Ecology Ltd- March 2017

Due to the distance to the nearest pond and very low number of ponds in the area, it is judged unlikely that great crested newts would be present on site. However other amphibians such as frogs may be present

Common amphibian species are afforded limited legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The great crested newt is afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and are therefore a European Protected Species (EPS). Great crested newts and common toads are also listed as species of principal conservation importance (See Appendix A).

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/great-crested-newts-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.4 Reptiles

The Krag datasearch revealed that the closest recorded reptile is Slow-worm, located at Ranscombe Farm, 0.32 km to the N (record id: 66009). The likelihood of reptiles to be present in the overall area is judged as per table below:

| Reptiles | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| | Likelihood of Presence | |
| | Score | Dist (km) |
| Viviparous Lizard: | Likely | 0.80 |
| Slow-worm: | HIGH | 0.32 |
| Sand Lizard: | <i>unlikely</i> | <i>63.90</i> |
| Grass Snake: | HIGH | 0.67 |
| Adder: | Possible | 3.36 |
| Smooth Snake: | n/a | n/a |

Reptile survey effort in local area is considered to be relatively high.

The site offers good potential habitat for reptiles, being mainly unmanaged with areas of scrub, on a south facing slope.

Common reptiles are afforded limited legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed as species of principal conservation importance (See Appendix A).

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/reptiles-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.5 Birds

The KMBRC data search did not hold any bird records from within the site itself.

It is considered that the site has high potential to support breeding birds within the hedges and scrub. Ground nesting birds such as skylark could be present in the field. No signs of barn owl *Tyto alba* were found during the external/internal survey of the outbuildings. No white droppings, black/grey pellets or white/buff feathers (specific signs of barn owls) were found.

All species of bird whilst actively nesting are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1. Some species are also listed as species of principal conservation importance, including sky lark, common cuckoo, house sparrow, tree sparrow and song thrush (See Appendix A).

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/wild-birds-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.6 Hazel Dormouse

It is considered that the site has no potential to support the hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* due to lack of connection to suitable woodlands (the KMBRC data search indicates that they are known to be present in Merralls shaw wood but this wood is on the other side of the busy A228, thus disconnected from the site).

3.7 Badger

The KMBRC data search did not hold any badger records from within the site itself.

A number of excavations are present along the line of trees along the South boundary, including a number of rabbit burrows. During the initial site visit, it was not possible to assess whether these/some were badger setts. No other signs of badgers (such as latrines) were found.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 was introduced in recognition of the additional threats that badgers face from illegal badger digging and baiting. Under the Act, it is an offence *inter alia* to:

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or to attempt to do so;
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger; or
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by (a) damaging a sett or any part of one; (b) destroying a sett; (c) obstructing access to or any entrance of a sett; (d) causing a dog to enter a sett; or (e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a sett.

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/badgers-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.8 Bats

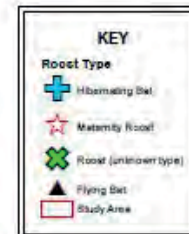
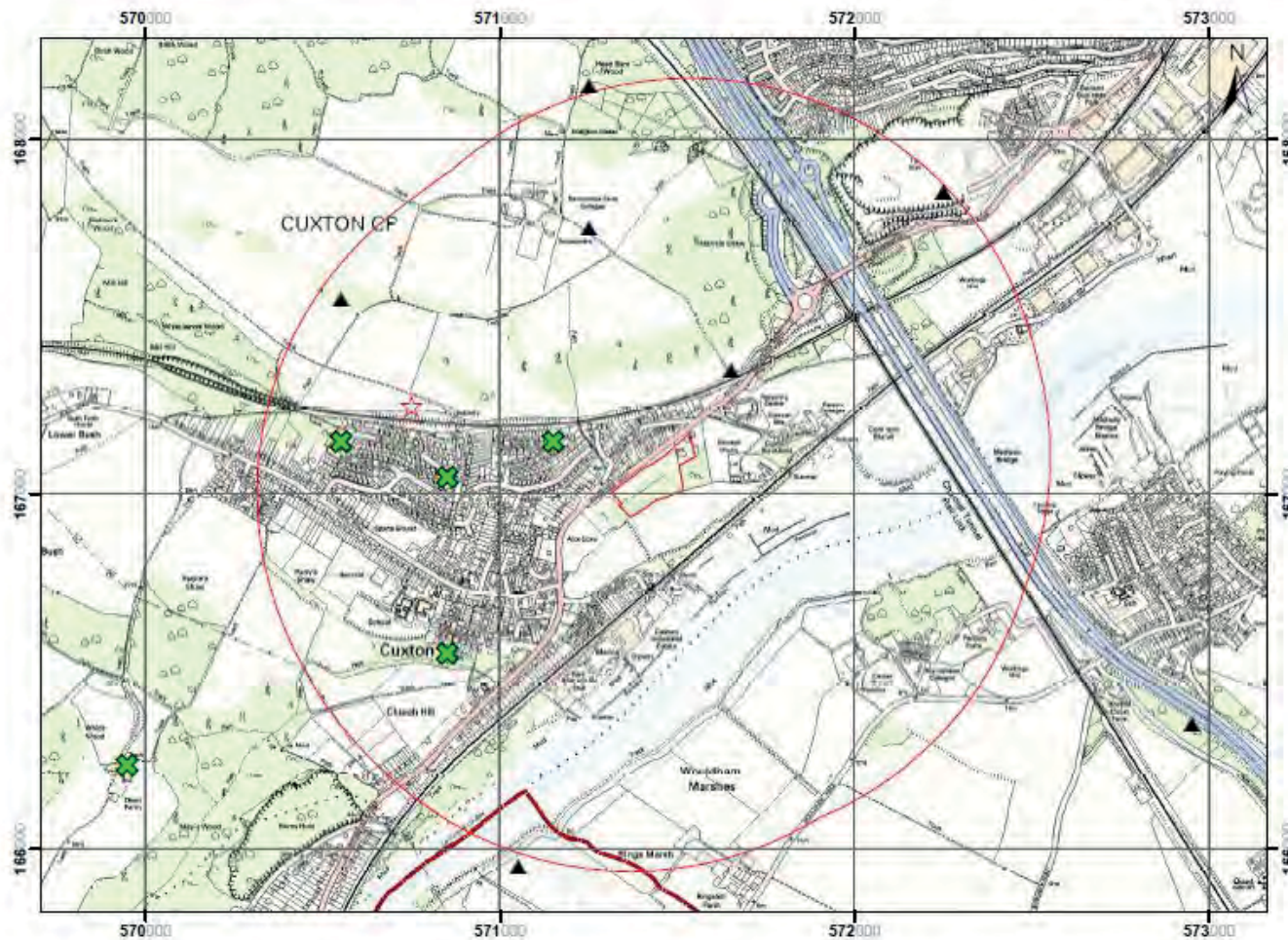
The KMBRC data search indicated that ten species of bat, of the 15 species recorded in Kent, have been recorded in this area, but no records within the site itself.

Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre

Known Bat Roost Locations at
Land Southeast of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton
Paul Paulding, Esquire Developments Ltd.
ENQ/16/543 07/12/2016

0 0.25 0.5 1 Kilometres

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This map should be used in conjunction with the accompanying bat records report.

To convert from the eastings and northings grid shown to a standard OS grid reference, use the first digit from the easting to determine the 10km square: a 5 corresponds to TQ and a 6 to TR. The second and third digits from the easting and northing give the rest of the grid reference for the 1km square.

For example, coordinates (602000,158000) tell you the grid square is TR0258.



No bats nor signs of bats were found during the internal/external inspection of the buildings inspected. The dwelling was not inspected internally but its concrete interlocking tiles show some gaps which could be used by crevice dwelling bats. One of the outbuildings is a timber structure with a roof made of wood planks over felt which could be used by crevice dwelling bats too. The larger outbuilding was judged as offering negligible potential for roosting bats, having a single skin corrugated roof over a metal structure.

None of the trees present on site offered potential for roosting bats. But the site is likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats.

Table 4.1 Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

| Suitability | Description Roosting habitats | Commuting and foraging habitats |
|-------------|--|---|
| Negligible | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats. |
| Low | <p>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions^a and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation^b).</p> <p>A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.^c</p> | <p>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.</p> <p>Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.</p> |
| Moderate | A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed). | <p>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.</p> <p>Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.</p> |
| High | A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^a and surrounding habitat. | <p>Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.</p> <p>High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.</p> <p>Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</p> |

^a For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

^b Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2015). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in large buildings in highly urbanised environments.

^c This system of categorisation aligns with BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland (BSI, 2015).

Table from Bat Conservation Trust (2012). *Bat Surveys - Good Practice Guidelines – 2nd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

All species of bat are afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and are therefore a “European Protected Species” (EPS). Some species of bats (noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, barbastelle) are also listed as species of principal conservation importance.

Bats rarely use the same roosting place all year round as they need different conditions for breeding and hibernating. But bats are creatures of habit and tend to return to the same sites at the same time year after year. For this reason, roosts are legally protected even if bats don't seem to be living there at certain times of year.

The legislation makes it a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.9 Other Species

It is considered that the site has potential to support hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*), which are a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2008 updated list).

Common mammal species such as rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), mole (*Talpa europea*), field vole (*Microtus agrestis*) and fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) are likely to be present on site.

All mammals are afforded protection against unnecessary suffering by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (see Appendix A).

4 Ecological constraints and opportunities, recommendations for mitigation, compensation and further survey

The details of the proposed development were not known at the time of writing this report.

Should the scope of the proposed works be amended following the completion of this scoping survey, or be deferred for an extended period of time, there may be a requirement to update this scoping report and its recommendations.

4.1 Designated Nature Conservation Sites

A site check report was generated for the site using the Impact Risk Zones on the Magic website⁵:

13/03/2017
Site Check Report generated on Mon Mar 13 2017
You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: TQ713670
The following features have been found in your search area:

SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England)

| 1. DOES PLANNING PROPOSAL FALL INTO ONE OR MORE OF THE CATEGORIES BELOW? | 2. IF YES, CHECK THE CORRESPONDING DESCRIPTION(S) BELOW. LPA SHOULD CONSULT NATURAL ENGLAND ON LIKELY RISKS FROM THE FOLLOWING: |
|--|---|
| All Planning Applications | |
| Infrastructure | Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals, Wind turbines. |
| Wind & Solar Energy | |
| Minerals, Oil & Gas | |
| Rural Non Residential | |
| Residential | |
| Rural Residential | |
| Air Pollution | |
| Combustion | Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (incl: industrial processes, pig & poultry units, slurry lagoons > 200m ³ & manure stores > 250t). General combustion processes >20MW energy input. Incl: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/ combustion. |
| Waste | Landfill. Incl: inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill. |
| Composting | Any composting proposal with more than 500 tonnes maximum annual operational throughput. Incl: open windrow composting, in-vessel composting, anaerobic digestion, other waste management. |
| Discharges | Any discharge of water or liquid waste that is more than 20m ³ /day. The water needs to either be discharged to ground (ie to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream. Discharges to mains sewer are excluded. |
| Water Supply | |

GUIDANCE – How to use the Impact Risk Zones [Metadata for Impact/SSSI IRZ User Guidance MAGIC.pdf](#)

The type of development proposed is not listed as being a category for which the LPA should consult Natural England. The proposal is not judged detrimental to the near-by protected sites.

⁵ The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) dataset is a GIS tool which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and specifies the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts.

Natural England uses the IRZs to make an initial assessment of the likely risk of impacts on SSSIs and to quickly determine which consultations are unlikely to pose risks and which require more detailed consideration. Publishing the IRZs will allow LPAs, developers and other partners to make use of this key evidence tool.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/impactriskzonesgistoolfeature.aspx>

4.2 Habitats

It is recommended to carry out a botanical survey. This should follow the National Vegetation Classification method (NVC)⁶, informed by quadrat sample data, and giving descriptions of the vegetation types present and their relative importance to confirm their extent and value to assess whether the development of the site can be mitigated appropriately, and help identify areas of key plant interest in order that they could be avoided.

Habitats present outside the works footprint should be suitably protected against any damages during works. Trees to be retained should be protected during any construction work and guidance is given in the BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations' document. This standard requires a tree protection plan to be developed which involves erecting physical barriers to prevent damage to existing trees, with an exclusion area around the trees. It also looks at defining a root protection area and requires consideration when compulsory work is carried out within the root protection area.

It is recommended that a minimum of a 5 metre wide buffer zone alongside the South boundary remains free from built development including lighting, domestic gardens and formal landscaping.

4.3 Amphibians

There are a number of development activities which can affect great crested newts, which should be fully considered at the application stage. Great crested newts can migrate more than 500 metres from their breeding ponds in areas of suitable terrestrial habitat. However, generally the scale of potential impacts will decrease as the distance from the breeding pond increases. Impacts on great crested newts could include:

| | If GCN are present, would it be the case for this project? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Habitat loss | Both the loss of breeding ponds and terrestrial habitat can have significant impacts upon great crested newts since newts live on land for the majority of their lives. Populations can be reduced or even go extinct where there is a major loss of habitat due to reduced foraging, breeding and refuge opportunities. Consequently, the mitigation strategy must ensure that there is no net loss of habitat (be it breeding ponds or terrestrial habitat) for newts. | No |
| Habitat modification | Although some development may not replace newt habitat with built land, it can be made less suitable. For example, changing an area of rough grassland used by newts as terrestrial habitat into amenity grassland could have a negative impact on the population. Therefore the mitigation strategy should ensure that there is no net loss in quantity and quality of habitat. | No |
| Habitat fragmentation and isolation | Habitat fragmentation and isolation of great crested newt populations can be caused when development imposes barriers to newt dispersal. These barriers can include built land, fast flowing water bodies or extreme landforms. Isolation of great crested newts can result in population number declines | No |

⁶ the botanical survey should take place between April and September, this will require several site visit throughout the flowering season

| | If GCN are present, would it be the case for this project? | |
|---------------|---|-----------|
| | and a decrease in genetic viability. Therefore the mitigation strategy should include measures to maintain habitat linkages and preferably reconnect fragmented areas. | |
| Miscellaneous | Other more indirect impacts caused by development also need to be fully considered, such as increased shading and siltation of ponds, water table alteration and potential for increased chemical run-off into waterbodies. Great crested newts can also be impacted by interference following a development, such as the introduction of fish to breeding ponds which will predate the young life stages of newts. | No |

Although it is known that great crested newts can disperse up to 500 metres through suitable terrestrial habitat from their breeding pond, it is widely accepted that they tend to utilise suitable terrestrial habitat within a much closer distance. Activity is usually concentrated within 100 metres of breeding ponds and key habitat is located within 50 metres (termed by Natural England as core habitat).

In a document published by English Nature in 2004, it is stated that, regarding great crested newts, *the most comprehensive mitigation, in relation to avoiding disturbance, killing or injury is appropriate within 50m of a breeding pond. It will also almost always be necessary to actively capture newts 50-100m away. However, at distances greater than 100m, there should be careful consideration as to whether attempts to capture newts are necessary or the most effective option to avoid incidental mortality. At distances greater than 200-250m, capture operations will hardly ever be appropriate.* =

A number of ponds are present within 500m of the proposed development site. Although no surveys have been undertaken of these ponds, it is judged highly unlikely that any great crested newts be present on site and therefore no further survey work or mitigation works are proposed with regards to this species.

4.4 Reptiles

Although no further surveys are considered necessary to support the promotion of the Site for allocation within the Local Plan, specific reptile surveys are recommended to support any future application, looking at presence/absence and, if present, population size.

The survey would consist of placing artificial refuges (i.e. 0.5 m² tins or roofing felt) in areas of suitable reptile habitat and leaving them in place for at least 1 week prior to the survey commencing. The refuges would be checked on seven separate occasions, over four weeks at least, to establish presence / likely absence during suitable weather conditions (i.e. cool weather with no heavy rain but sunny intervals between showers, and ambient air temperatures between 10-20°C). Should reptiles be recorded during the presence / absence survey, further visits may be recommended to establish relative population size. In addition, log piles, rock piles and building debris can also be searched under for the presence of reptiles.

Reptile surveys can be undertaken between March and October, the optimal months being April, May, June and September. Mid-summer temperatures and general activity levels are usually too high for refuges to be successfully used (surveys are highly weather dependent).

Should the presence of reptiles be confirmed through further surveys, mitigation may involve the installation of reptile exclusion fencing, and the trapping and translocation of reptiles during suitable weather conditions. Captured animals should be released into a receptor habitat made suitable beforehand. Such animal translocation exercises should only take place once planning permission has been granted.

Mitigation may also require the enhancement, replacement or creation of additional reptile habitats. These works may be necessary in advance and/or after the construction works.

4.5 Birds

As the site is part of LWS ME07 River Medway between Cuxton and Temple Marsh which is said to be important for wintering birds and nightingale and where warblers, green woodpecker, yellow wagtail, turtle dove and kingfisher are probable breeding species, breeding bird surveys are recommended: they are best conducted with a methodology based on the BTO Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), for which the site would be visited on a minimum of four occasions, each visit commencing at dawn, to record the numbers and species present.

4.6 Hazel Dormouse

No further work is recommended with regards to dormice.

4.7 Badger

Although no further surveys are considered necessary to support the promotion of the Site for allocation within the Local Plan, specific surveys of the holes present along the southern boundary are recommended to support any future application, to confirm whether they are used by badgers and to what extent. Indeed, badger tunnels can extend to 20m from the entrance holes and are located between 0.2 and several metres deep, depending on the soil and topography. Excavation work and heavy machinery should be kept well away from where it could result in damage to the sett or disturbance to any badger occupying the sett. Also an assessment of the loss of foraging habitat should be done, should badgers indeed be present.

4.8 Bats

Although no further surveys are considered necessary to support the promotion of the Site for allocation within the Local Plan, specific bat surveys are recommended to support any future application.

The Bat Conservation Trust's guidelines provide a table stating the minimum number of presence/absence survey visits required to provide confidence in negative preliminary roost assessment from buildings, built structures and trees in summer.

Table 7.3 Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).

| Low roost suitability | Moderate roost suitability | High roost suitability |
|---|--|---|
| One survey visit. One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees). | Two separate survey visits. One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. ^b | Three separate survey visits. At least one dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey. The third visit could be either dusk or dawn. ^b |

^a Structures that have been categorised as low potential can be problematic and the number of surveys required should be judged on a case-by-case basis (see Section 5.2.9). If there is a possibility that quiet calling, late-emerging species are present then a dawn survey may be more appropriate, providing weather conditions are suitable. In some cases, more than one survey may be needed, particularly where there are several buildings in this category.

^b Multiple survey visits should be spread out to sample as much of the recommended survey period (see Table 7.1) as possible; it is recommended that surveys are spaced at least two weeks apart, preferably more. A dawn survey immediately after a dusk one is considered only one visit.

Table 7.1 Recommended timings for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).

| Low roost suitability | Moderate roost suitability | High roost suitability |
|---|--|--|
| May to August (structures) No further surveys required (trees) | May to September ^a with at least one of surveys between May and August ^b | May to September ^a with at least two of surveys between May and August ^b |

It is therefore recommended that one night-time survey is undertaken between May and August for the dwelling and outbuilding.

The vegetation of the site is likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats. The Bat Conservation Trust's guidelines provide a table stating the number of bat activity surveys recommended to achieve a reasonable survey effort in relation to habitat suitability.

Table 8.3 Guidelines on the number of bat activity surveys recommended to achieve a reasonable survey effort in relation to habitat suitability.

| Survey type | Low suitability habitat for bats ^a | Moderate suitability habitat for bats | High suitability habitat for bats |
|--|---|--|---|
| Transect/spot count/timed search surveys | One survey visit ^b per season (spring – April/May, summer – June/July/August, autumn – September/October) ^c in appropriate weather conditions for bats. Further surveys may be required if these survey visits reveal higher levels of bat activity than predicted by habitat alone. | One survey visit ^b per month (April to October) ^c in appropriate weather conditions for bats. At least one of the surveys should comprise dusk and pre-dawn (or dusk to dawn) within one 24-hour period. | Up to two survey visits ^b per month (April to October) ^c in appropriate weather conditions for bats. At least one of the surveys should comprise dusk and pre-dawn (or dusk to dawn) within one 24-hour period. |
| AND | | | |
| Automated/static bat detector surveys ^d | One location per transect, data to be collected on five consecutive nights per season (spring – April/May, summer – June/July/August, autumn – September/October) ^c in appropriate weather conditions for bats. | Two locations per transect, data to be collected on five consecutive nights per month (April to October) ^c in appropriate weather conditions for bats. | Three locations per transect, data to be collected on five consecutive nights per month (April to October) ^c in appropriate weather conditions for bats. |

It is therefore recommended to carry out three bat activity surveys and static detector survey (two detectors), as per above.

Besides, as lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats⁷, the recommendations from the Bat Conservation Trust, titled Bats and Lighting in the UK, should be considered, when designing any lighting scheme for the proposed development (see Appendix C).

4.9 Other Species

No further surveys are considered necessary to support the promotion of the Site for allocation within the Local Plan.

4.10 Additional Recommendations: Enhancements

Ecological enhancements should where possible be incorporated into the proposed development to contribute towards the objectives of planning legislation below:

On 27 March 2012, the UK Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged (Para 118).

The design and implementation of habitat enhancements could also be used to contribute towards the 'Home Quality Mark' or similar accreditation, should this be a consideration for this site.

The site is present within the Medway Gap & North Kent Downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). The BOA maps can be seen as a spatial reflection of the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan. The BOA statement documents will provide guidance on the conservation priorities which should be adopted in each area.

The Targets of the Medway Gap & North Kent Downs BOA are:

- 1 *Maintain and enhance existing and recently created chalk grassland. Enhance at least 40ha of chalk grassland to bring it to UK BAP priority habitat quality. Pursue opportunities for:*
 - *Additional chalk grassland creation where this would contribute to the county-wide target of 232ha by 2020; and*
 - *Additional chalk grassland restoration to meet the county-wide target of 464ha by 2020.*
- 2 *Enhance or reinstate woodland management, and restore plantations on ancient woodland sites to native woodland; extend and reconnect fragmented woodlands where this would not conflict with grassland conservation and enhancement*
- 3 *Pursue opportunities for the restoration and enhancement of grazing marsh, fen and reedbed habitats within the floodplain of the River Medway, including restoration of at least 50ha of grazing marsh in the Medway Valley between Rochester and New Hythe, to contribute to county-wide targets of 500ha.*
- 4 *Secure and maintain appropriate management of key brownfield sites, particularly where these support UK BAP priority species .*
- 5 *Continue to conserve and enhance key populations of arable weeds, and maintain, enhance and extend the area of cereal field margins being positively managed for arable weeds.*
- 6 *Pursue opportunities for creation of species-rich neutral grassland where this would contribute to the county-wide target of creating 37ha on new lowland meadow in blocks of at least 2ha by 2020. Enhance at least 15ha of species-rich neutral grassland to bring it to UK BAP priority habitat Lowland Meadow quality.*

⁷ http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_lighting.html and <http://www.batsandlighting.co.uk/index.html> for more information

7 Where appropriate, encourage and enhance public access, particularly from the Medway Towns.

8 Action for naturally widely dispersed habitats (ponds, traditional orchards), wildlife associated with arable.

Biodiversity enhancements for the site could include the following:

- Provision of hedgehog nesting boxes⁸.
- Provision of 12cm square gaps under any new fencing to allow hedgehogs access onto all garden areas.
- Provision of ready-made bird boxes (sparrow terrace timber boxes or house martin nests for instance⁹ or mix of open-fronted and hole-nesting boxes and constructed from woodcrete)¹⁰.
- Provision of bat roosting spaces within the new buildings (examples can be found in: Williams, C (2010). *Biodiversity for Low and Zero Carbon Buildings: A Technical Guide for New Build*. RIBA) or installation of ready-made bat boxes (such as Kent Bat Box¹¹, Habibat¹², EcoSurv Bat Box or Schwegler Bat tube¹³)¹⁴.
- Provision of owl boxes in trees¹⁵.
- Provision of reptile / amphibian hibernacula (as stand alone or within new walls by creating recesses into wall structures)¹⁶.
- Provision of log piles for invertebrates (including stag beetles¹⁷), reptiles and amphibians¹⁸.
- Tree / shrub/ hedgerow planting (native species to be used only).
- Establish climbing plants on walls and other vertical structures¹⁹.
- Establish wildflower plug/bulb planting in amenity grassland and private gardens²⁰.

⁸ <http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/pages/hedgehog-homes.html>

⁹ to benefit these declining urban bird species

¹⁰ In order not to damage trees, free-hanging nesting boxes can be hung from a loop or hook over a branch. This method avoids the use of nails. It is also helpful to avoid predation.

¹¹ http://www.teach-organic.org.uk/uploadedfiles/CMS/pdf/bat_box.pdf

¹² Habibat is a large, solid bat box made of concrete with an internal roost space, which can be incorporated into the fabric of a building <http://www.habibat.co.uk/>

¹³ http://www.bats.org.uk/publications_download.php/1109/BCT_BatBoxProductList_v4a.pdf
http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/accommodating_bats_in_buildings.html <http://www.habibat.co.uk/about-habibat>

¹⁴ It is highly recommended to install bird boxes near bat boxes to avoid birds from using the bat boxes to the detriment to bats.

¹⁵ More information can be found here <http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/infopage.html?id=56>

¹⁶ http://www.rspb.org.uk/advice/gardening/reptiles_amphibians/hibernacula.aspx

¹⁷ <http://ptes.org/get-involved/wildlife-action/help-stag-beetles/> for more information

¹⁸ Brash and log piles will be at least one meter high and two metres in diameter. They will comprise a mix of large and small diameter material. The centre of the pile will be compacted, but the outer part will be un-compacted. They will be located in sunny positions. They will be topped up periodically (for example every five years) with further material.

¹⁹ More information can be found here: <http://www.greenblueurban.com/climbing-plant-guide.php> and <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/urban-space/parks-green-spaces/green-roofs-walls>

²⁰ Spring flowering bulbs and plugs of nectar rich flowering plants should be embedded into amenity grassland to increase the biodiversity and amenity value of the grassland and to provide early sources of nectar for insects. Suitable bulbs include Snake's head fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, Ramsons *Allium*

- Establish nectar flower mixtures (essential food sources for a range of nectar-feeding insects, including butterflies and bumblebees)^{21 2223}
- Integration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)²⁴.
- Integration of green or grey roofs^{25, 26, 27}.
- Consider using grid mesh system (or Ground Reinforcement Grids) with topsoil and seeding with a wildflower species mix, to car parking areas and new access drives to retain some vegetation as well as drainage, or Gravel turf²⁸.
- Planting of community orchards²⁹.
- Development of a full Biodiversity Management Plan of any retained areas of semi-natural habitat.

Priority should be given to species present on the Kent BAP species list, which include great crested newt, common toad, viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake, adder, house sparrow, tree sparrow, hedgehog, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, brown hare, water vole, harvest mouse, dormouse, otter as well as many more species (see <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/habitats-and-species/priority-species/>).

ursinum, Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*, Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, Lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*

²¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/32005?category=42003>

²² <http://www.bumblebeereintroduction.org/how-to-help/gardening-for-bumblebees/>

²³ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators>

²⁴ <http://www.ciria.org.uk/suds/index.html> for more information

²⁵ <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/91967.aspx>,

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/urban-space/parks-green-spaces/green-roofs-walls>

and <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31036> for more information

²⁶ An example of a company with extensive experience in designing biodiverse roofs in Central London: the Green Roof Consultancy <http://www.greenroofconsultancy.com>

²⁷ 'Creating green roofs for invertebrates – a best practice guide' by Buglife

http://www.kentbap.org.uk/images/uploads/Creating_Green_Roofs_for_Invertebrates_Best_practice_guidance.pdf

²⁸ http://www.schotterrasen.at/e_index.htm

²⁹ <http://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/content/case-study-planting-orchard> for more information

5 References and Bibliography

- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2003). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.³⁰

Websites Visited:

- <http://www.archnature.eu/mapping-tools.html>
- <http://bbowt-extra.org.uk/KWTWebMap/>
- <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

With kind permission from Google Earth Brand

³⁰ http://www.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/pub90_HandbookforPhase1HabitatSurveyA5.pdf

Appendix A – CITATION FOR ME07 – River Medway between Cuxton and Temple Marsh

KENT WILDLIFE SITE

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------|
| Local Wildlife Site | | Site Ref. No: | ME07 |
| Site: | River Medway between Cuxton and Temple Marsh | Central Grid Ref: | TQ 725671 |
| LPA: | Medway | Natural Area: | North Downs |
| Parish: | Cuxton | AONB: | No |
| Owner: | Private | SLA: | No |
| Category: | Saltmarsh, running water, standing water, grassland, scrub, spoil | TPO: | No |
| | | Protected species: | Yes |
| Area: | 94.65 ha | | |
| First notified: | 1987 | | |
| Last revised: | November 2001 | | |

DESCRIPTION

A mosaic of grass and scrub habitats with river, saltmarsh and mudflats, along both shores of the River Medway between Cuxton Station and Temple Marsh, has considerable avifauna interest in addition to an interesting flora.

The grazing marsh north of the railway is low-lying and brackish, with standing water in winter and several pools and dykes. This, and the grassland south of the railway, is rather species-poor, but the abundant hairy buttercup *Ranunculus sardous*, together with greater sea-spurrey *Spergularia media* and sea-milkwort *Glaux maritima* indicate their salinity. Sea clover ¹*Trifolium squamosum* has been recorded here in the past and is likely still to be present. Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* is frequent in drier areas. Meadow barley *Hordeum secalinum*, fern-grass *Catapodium rigidum* and a range of other grasses occur. Water plants include thread-leaved water-crowfoot *Ranunculus trichophyllus*, fennel pondweed *Potamogeton pectinatus* and sea club-rush *Bolboschoenus maritimus*. Marsh mallow ²*Althaea officinalis* is occasional near the sea wall.

Saltmarsh occurs as a narrow strip on the north side near the creek and in patches along the shore and more extensively on Borstal Marsh and Wouldham Marsh on the southern side. It is dominated by common saltmarsh-grass *Puccinellia maritima* with abundant sea-milkwort. Other typical saltmarsh plants include sea club-rush, sea aster *Aster tripolium*, sea arrowgrass *Triglochin maritima*, annual sea-blite *Suaeda maritima*, English scurvy-grass *Cochlearia anglica* and a small colony of glasswort *Salicornia* sp. More marsh mallow ² occurs on Wouldham Marsh, while sea barley ² *Hordeum marinum* is locally abundant on the track beside the sea wall. Sea lavender *Limonium vulgare* has been recorded on Borstal Marsh. Reedbeds on the southern side form an important habitat for birds.



On the north side, a new lagoon has been created and two more are planned to relocate the rare tentacled lagoon-worm ^{3,10} *Alkamaria romijini* which was present in a lagoon now almost entirely obliterated by the new railway bridge.

Between the new river walk and the leisure complex is a bank rich in flowering plants, including yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, musk mallow *Malva moschata* and bird's-foot- trefoil.

On the north side of the Medway, east of the motorway bridge, there is a derelict cement works, with very uneven ground, heaps of chalk spoil and low cliffs. This is mostly clothed in chalk scrub and tall ruderals, but open areas support chalk-loving plants such as viper's bugloss *Echium vulgare* and marjoram *Origanum vulgare*. Slender thistle *Carduus tenuiflorus* and a good colony of milk thistle *Silybum marianum* occur here. Plants such as kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria*, yellow-wort *Blackstonia perfoliata*, slender centaury *Centaureum pulchellum* and common centaury *Centaureum erythraea* may re-occur in areas currently scuffed bare by cyclists. Good numbers of common butterflies and grasshoppers can be seen in this area and it is full of birdsong.

A small strip of saltmarsh below the river bank here supports abundant sea aster, sea- purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*, English scurvy-grass, sea arrowgrass and sea-milkwort.

Chalk scrub on the slope above the low-lying pasture, dominated by hawthorn, dogwood and wayfaring tree, adds diversity to the site.

The site is important for wintering birds and nightingale ^{4,5}. Warblers, green wood-pecker ⁴, yellow wagtail ^{4,6}, turtle dove ^{6,7,8,9} and kingfisher ^{3,4} are probable breeding species.

- ¹ County Scarce. Atlas of Kent Flora. Philp. 1982.
- ² Nationally Scarce. Scarce Plants in Britain. JNCC. 1994.
- ³ Protected under Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.
- ⁴ Amber List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007.
- ⁵ Kent Red Data Book Status 3. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000.
- ⁶ Rapid Decline. BTO Breeding Birds Report. 2000.
- ⁷ Priority Species, UK Biodiversity Action Plan. 1998.
- ⁸ Kent Red Data Book Status 2. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000.
- ⁹ Red List. Birds of Conservation Concern 2002-2007.
- ¹⁰ Kent Red Data Book Status K. A. Waite (Ed.) 2000.



Appendix B – Wildlife Legislation & Policy

The following is a summary of wildlife legislation and planning policy which affords protection to plants and animals and seeks to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity. This section is provided for general guidance only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, this section should not be relied upon as a definitive statement of the law.

For further information, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-biodiversity-and-ecosystems-at-home-and-abroad/supporting-pages/species-protection>

Commonly encountered protected species

Many species of plants, invertebrates and animals receive protection under the legislation detailed above. However, of these, the following are the most likely to be affected by development in the southeast:

| Species | Legislation |
|--|--|
| Bats (all species) Dormice Great crested newts Otters Sand lizards and smooth snakes | <p>The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) & The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These make it an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliberately or recklessly capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species• Deliberately or recklessly disturb wild animals of any such species• Damage or destroy their breeding site or resting place• Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from these species. <p>Disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to impair their ability:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or- in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate;• to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong. |
| Breeding birds (in particular | The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird and to take, |

| Species | Legislation |
|---|---|
| barn owls) | damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs. |
| Adders, grass snakes, common lizards and slow worms | The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (intentional killing and injuring only). This makes it illegal to kill or injure these animals. |
| Water voles | The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it illegal to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection; it is also an offence to intentionally disturb water voles while they are using these places. |
| White clawed crayfish | The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> intentionally, or recklessly, kill or injure any of the above species, and/or; sell, or attempt to sell, any part of the species, alive or dead. Advertises that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell. |
| Badgers | The Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This makes it an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willfully killing, injures or takes, or attempts to kill, injure or take, a badger. Cruelly ill-treating a badger, digging for badgers, using badger tongs, using a firearm other than the type specified under the exceptions within the Act. Interfering with a badger sett by damaging, destroying, obstructing, causing dog a dog to enter a sett, disturbing an occupied sett - either by intent or by negligence. Selling or offering for sale a live badger, having possession or control of a live badger. Marking a badger or attaching any ring, tag, or other marking device to a badger. |

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) implements the Birds Directive (1979) and the Berne Convention (1979) into national legislation. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) includes a number of Schedules which are reviewed (usually every five years) on which details of the protected species, and their level of protection, are detailed. A detailed summary of the sections of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, along with the protection afforded under them can be found within Paragraphs 118-122 of ODPM Circular 06/2005 (Circular06/2005)

Full details of the legislation can be found at www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3614 and details of the species listed on the Schedules can be found at:

- Birds www.jncc.gov.uk/PDF/waca1981_schedule1.pdf
- Animals www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1815
- Plants www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1816

There are no licensing functions within the Wildlife and Countryside Act for development activities which may affect a species protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and works need to proceed following good practice and if appropriate rely on the 'incidental result of an otherwise lawful operation defence'. However, with regards to the water vole, where translocation of animals is proposed, Natural England does not feel this could be considered the incidental result of other activities and so would not be covered by the defence in the legislation. If there is no alternative to translocation, Natural England may be able to issue a licence to trap and translocate the water voles for the purpose of conservation.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW Act) in 2000. The CRoW Act strengthened the protection afforded to species listed within the Schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act by adding 'reckless' to several of the offences and increased the penalties for wildlife offences.

In addition, Section 74 of the CRoW Act introduced a new duty on Government Ministers and Department to further the conservation of biodiversity for habitats and species of principal importance. This was superseded by Sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act of 2006. Section 40 provides that every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Details of the lists of habitats and species provided for at Section 41 of the NERC act can be found at www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/news/details.asp?X=45. The ODPM Circular 06/2005 ([Circular06/2005](#)) place a clear responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to further the conservation of habitats and species of principal importance where a planning proposal may adversely affect them.

Full details of the legislation contained within the Countryside and Rights of Way Act can be found at www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000037_en_1.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The legislation affording protection to badgers is primarily concerned with animal welfare and the need to protect badgers from activities such as baiting and deliberate harm. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so;
- To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett (this includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it).

As with The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), there are several defences to prosecution in the legislation and the text should be consulted for details of these. Penalties for offences include fines up to £5,000, plus up to six months imprisonment for each illegal sett interference, or badger death or injury.

Full Details of the legislation can be found at
www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1992/ukpga_19920051_en_1.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/490) came into force (the "2010 Regulations").

From 1st April 2010, these are now the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales. This updates and consolidates all the amendments to the Regulations since they were first made in 1994.

The 2010 Regulations implement the European Habitats Directive into national legislation. Details of those species (often referred to as European protected species or EPS) which receive protection under these regulations can be found in Schedule 2 of the 2010 Regulations.

Full details of the legislation can be found at
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100490_en_1

The Regulations state that:

Part 3 - 41.—

(1) A person who:

- (a) deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
- (c) deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

is guilty of an offence.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely:

(a) to impair their ability:

- (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
- (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate;

Or

(b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

(3) It is an offence for any person:

- (a) to be in possession of, or to control,
- (b) to transport,
- (c) to sell or exchange, or
- (d) to offer for sale or exchange, anything to which this paragraph applies.

(4) Paragraph (3) applies to—

- (a) any live or dead animal or part of an animal—
 - (i) which has been taken from the wild, and
 - (ii) which is of a species or subspecies listed in Annex IV(a) to the Habitats Directive; and

(b) anything derived from such an animal or any part of such an animal.

(5) Paragraphs (1) and (3) apply regardless of the stage of the life of the animal in question.

(6) Unless the contrary is shown, in any proceedings for an offence under paragraph (1) the animal in question is presumed to have been a wild animal.

(7) In any proceedings for an offence under paragraph (3), where it is alleged that an animal or a part of an animal was taken from the wild, it is presumed, unless the contrary is shown, that that animal or part of an animal was taken from the wild.

(8) A person guilty of an offence under this regulation is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or to both.

(9) Guidance as to the application of the offences in paragraph (1)(b) or (d) in relation to particular species of animals or particular activities may be published by—

- (a) the appropriate authority; or
- (b) the appropriate nature conservation body, with the approval of the appropriate authority.

(10) In proceedings for an offence under paragraph (1)(b) or (d), a court must take into account any relevant guidance published under paragraph (9).

(11) In deciding upon the sentence for a person convicted of an offence under paragraph (1)(d), the court must in particular have regard to whether that person could reasonably have avoided the damage to or destruction of the breeding site or resting place concerned.

Licences may be obtained to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful, but they can only be granted for certain purposes. Those purposes include that of preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment (Regulation 42(10)). It is the imperative reasons of overriding public interest element of this that is relied upon by those seeking to carry out development where those activities affect a European protected species or their places used for shelter or protection. Even where that purpose is met, however a licence may only be granted where:

- There is ~~no~~ "satisfactory alternative"; and
- The action authorised ~~will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range~~

Natural England issues licences for this purposes under Regulation 44(2)(e).

It is not the responsibility of Natural England staff to decide when a licence is required/recommended. This decision is down to the proposer of the operation who should consider whether, on balance and usually with the assistance of an ecological consultant, the operation would be reasonably likely to result in the commission of an offence under these Regulations. This view should be formed in the light of survey information and specialist knowledge. A licence simply permits an action that is otherwise unlawful. A licence should be applied for if, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge, it is considered that the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence (killing, breeding site destruction, etc – see above).

It should be noted that the protection afforded to species under the UK and EU legislation referred to here is in addition to that provided by the planning system and the applicant must

ensure that any activity they undertake on the application site (regardless of whether or not planning permission has been obtained) complies with the appropriate wildlife legislation. Failure to do so may result in fines and, potentially, a custodial sentence.

Biodiversity Action Plans

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPS) set out actions for the conservation and enhancement of biological diversity at various spatial scales. They consist of both Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs).

The UK BAP was the UK's response to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity in Rio de Janeiro. Following a review in 2007 a list of 1149 priority species and 65 priority habitats has been adopted, which are given a statutory basis for planning consideration under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006.

The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework was published on 17 July 2012. It covers the period from 2011 to 2020, and was developed in response to two main drivers: the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 5 strategic goals and 20 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets', published in October 2010; and the EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBS), released in May 2011. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189>

Further information about Kent BAP can be found here: <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/habitats-and-species/priority-species/>

Red Data Books

British Red Data Books (RDB) are an additional method for classifying the rarity of species, and are often seen as a natural progression from Biodiversity Action Plans.

RDB species have no automatic legal protection (unless they are protected under any of the legislation previously mentioned). Instead they provide a means of assessing rarity and highlight areas where resources may be targeted. Various categories of RDB species are recorded, based on the IUCN criteria and the UK national criteria based on presence within certain numbers of 10x10km grid-squares (see <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3425>). As with Biodiversity Action Plans, where possible, steps should be taken to conserve RDB species which are to be affected by development.

Appendix B – Plates



IMG_6930



IMG_6931



IMG_6932



IMG_6933



IMG_6934



IMG_6935



IMG_6936



IMG_6937



IMG_6938



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Appendix C - Bats and Lighting in the UK

Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Engineers Summary of requirements

The two most important features of street and security lighting with respect to bats are:

1. **The UV component.** Low or zero UV installations are preferred to reduce attraction of insects to lighting and therefore to reduce the attraction of foraging bats to these areas.
2. **Restriction of the area illuminated.** Lighting must be shielded to maintain dark areas, particularly above lighting installations, and in many cases, land adjacent to the areas illuminated. The aim is to maintain dark commuting corridors for foraging and commuting bats. Bats avoid well lit areas, and these create barriers for flying bats between roosting and feeding areas.

UV characteristics:

Low

- Low pressure Sodium Lamps (SOX) emit a minimal UV component.
- High pressure Sodium Lamps (SON) emit a small UV component.
- White SON, though low in UV, emit more than regular SON.

High

- Metal Halide lamps emit more UV than SON lamps, but less than Mercury lamps
- Mercury lamps (MBF) emit a high UV component.
- Tungsten Halogen, if unfiltered, emit a high UV component
- Compact Fluorescent (CFL), if unfiltered, emit a high UV component.

Variable

- Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) have a range of UV outputs. Variants are available with low or minimal UV output.

Glass glazing and UV filtering lenses are recommended to reduce UV output.

Street lighting

Low-pressure sodium or high-pressure sodium must be used instead of mercury or metal halide lamps. LEDs must be specified as low UV. Tungsten halogen and CFL sources must have appropriate UV filtering to reduce UV to low levels.

Lighting must be directed to where it is needed and light spillage avoided. Hoods must be used on each lamp to direct light and contain spillage. Light leakage into hedgerows and trees must be avoided.

If possible, the times during which the lighting is on overnight must be limited to provide some dark periods. If the light is fitted with a timer this must be adjusted to reduce the amount of 'lit time' and provide dark periods.

Security and domestic external lighting

The above recommendations concerning UV output and direction apply. In addition:

Lighting should illuminate only ground floor areas. Light should not leak upwards to illuminate first floor and higher levels.

Lamps of greater than 2000 lumens (150 W) must not be used.

Movement or similar sensors must be used. They must be carefully installed and aimed, to reduce the amount of time a light is on each night.

Light must illuminate only the immediate area required, by using as sharp a downward angle as possible. Light must not be directed at or close to bat roost access points or flight paths from the roost. A shield or hood can be used to control or restrict the area to be lit.

Wide angle illumination must be avoided as this will be more disturbing to foraging and commuting bats as well as people and other wildlife.
Lighting must not illuminate any bat bricks and boxes placed on buildings, trees or other nearby locations.

APPENDIX 5

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (Barton Willmore, March 2017)

Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton: Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of the Landowners

April 2017

Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton: Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of The Landowner

| | |
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| Authorised by: | MDC |

Barton Willmore LLP
7 Soho Square
London
W1D 3QB

Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure 2: Topographic Features Plan

Figure 3: Landscape Character Areas

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan

Site Appraisal Photographs

Site Context Photographs

APPENDICES

Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Landscape Character Assessments

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) were commissioned by the Landowner, Mr Santok Gill in February 2017 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for land south of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton ('the Site') to support the submission of representations to the Medway Council Local Plan 2012 – 2035 Development Options Consultation Document.
- 1.2 The objectives of the LVA are to assess the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings and to consider the landscape and visual qualities of the Site, its function in and contribution to the wider landscape. The work undertaken includes an assessment of the landscape policy, published landscape character assessment, existing landscape features, together with a visual appraisal of the Site and its context.
- 1.3 The LVA is used to inform the design evolution of the Proposed Development and to highlight likely landscape and visual receptors that may be susceptible to the development proposed. The written appraisal is supported by the illustrative material listed on the contents page.
- 1.4 The document is supported by the following illustrative information:
- Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan;
 - Figure 2: Topographical Features Plan;
 - Figure 3: Site Appraisal Plan;
 - Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan;
 - Site Appraisal Photographs; and
 - Site Context Photographs.
- 1.5 Land use along the north-western side of the River Medway within the vicinity of the Site and Cuxton is mixed, and includes industrial buildings, marinas, and residential development. The A228 (north of the Site) provide connectivity to the residential settlements and various land uses along the valley. Beyond this to the west, land rises more steeply, forming a backdrop that is primarily wooded with exposed chalk scarps.
- 1.6 Land use on the south-eastern side of the River Medway is less urbanised, and comprises primarily agricultural fields and scattered farmsteads. This land is within the Kent Downs AONB.
- 1.7 The Site is adjoined by residential properties on two sides; namely to the north and east, accessed from either the A228 or Pilgrims Way.

- 1.8 The Site is approximately 2.3 hectares in area. The Site is an area of unmanaged, sloping land which falls from 35m AOD in the north to 5m AOD in the south. It comprises a pastoral field which has been left ungrazed and which is, therefore, returning to scrub, a single storey dwelling, covered stock yard and miscellaneous single storey agricultural structures. There are a number of derelict agricultural buildings in the north-eastern corner of the Site, including an open stock pen with corrugated metal roof and a single storey brick stable building. A single storey residential dwelling and a parking platform are located within the northern corner of the Site.
- 1.9 With regards to relevant landscape and planning policy designations, the Site and / or the surroundings are subject to the following:
- The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends east-west across Kent, however, the River Medway and the urbanised land to the west of the River Medway (which includes Cuxton and the Site) are excluded from the Kent Downs AONB. As such, the AONB is located to both the north and south of the Site;
 - The River Medway and the land south of the A228 are designated Strategic Gap. The Site is included within this designation;
 - Much of the woodland within Ranscombe Farm Country Park, which occupied the higher ground to the north of the Site and Cuxton, is designated as ancient woodland. There are no areas of ancient woodland within the Site;
 - The Site is within a the Cuxton Brickfields Area of Local Landscape Importance as identified within the Medway Local Plan 2003;
 - There are no listed buildings within the Site or adjoining the Site; and
 - There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site or adjoining the Site.
- 1.10 There are no Public Rights of Way within the Site.
- 1.11 As demonstrated by the above, the Site is located within an urbanised area situated on the lower slopes of the western side of the valley of the River Medway. The Site is within the Area of Local Landscape Importance and the Strategic Gap.

2.0 METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 2.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition¹ (GLVIA3).
- 2.2 A desktop review of the study area was undertaken, including a review of the relevant landscape and visual policy, published landscape character information, topography, landscape features, and landscape designations. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Site, and a site visit was undertaken in November 2016.
- 2.3 To determine the extent of visual influence, a visual appraisal was undertaken of the Site to consider the nature of existing views from publicly accessible viewpoints including roads, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public open space. Views were considered from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to represent the potential views obtained towards the Site. The **Site Context Photographs** are included within the illustrative material accompanying this document and the locations of the representative viewpoints are shown on **Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan**.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Third Edition

3.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING BASELINE

National Landscape Policy - NPPF

- 3.1 The NPPF aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.
- 3.2 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as **“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”**, and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan and policies set out in the NPPF, including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas.
- 3.3 Paragraph 14 describes the key theme throughout the Framework is that of ‘Achieving Sustainable Development’ and confirms that the **“presumption in favour of sustainable development”** should be seen as a **“golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking”**.

“For decision – taking this means:

(i) “Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and

(ii) Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:

- *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

- 3.4 In respect of the latter, footnote 9 within the Framework identifies the types of areas where development should be restricted and lists sites protected by the Birds and Habitats Directive and/or designated as SSSI's; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.
- 3.5 The site is not subject to any Footnote 9 criteria.
- 3.6 Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out at Paragraph 17, of which the following are relevant to landscape and visual matters, stating that planning should:
 - *“not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*

- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;*
- *promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage or food production); and*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."*

3.7 The NPPF then identifies thirteen aspects which should be considered in developing local plans and reviewing planning applications. Those of relevance to the landscape and visual considerations of the Site and proposed development include Section 7: Requiring good design. Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments, inter alia:

*"...Establish a strong sense of place...
respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings...
are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping."*

3.8 Paragraph 61 states that:

"planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

3.9 Section 11: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment notes in paragraph 109 that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by inter alia *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils"*.

3.10 Paragraph 110 sets out that the aim, in preparing plans for development, should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

3.11 Paragraph 113 states that:

"Local planning authorities should set criteria based on policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting... landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks."

3.12 Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, local planning authorities should:

"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure."

3.13 Paragraph 125 states that:

"By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (March 2014)²

- 3.14 Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Landscape, paragraph 001, PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identifying the features that give it a sense of place as a means to informing, planning and managing change. PPG makes reference to Natural England guidance on landscape character assessment.
- 3.15 Paragraphs 002 to 005 address Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and how these inform the strategic context for development.
- 3.16 Under the heading of Natural Environment, sub-heading Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure, paragraph 15, PPG supports positive planning for networks of multi-functional green space, both urban and rural, which deliver a range of benefits for local communities and makes reference to Natural England guidance on Green Infrastructure.
- 3.17 In addition, National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) on Noise describes the factors that are relevant to identifying areas that should be protected for its tranquillity. Although there are no precise rules, an area should be relatively undisturbed by noise from human caused sources that undermine the intrinsic character of the area and the area should already be valued for

² Department for Communities and Local Government (2014) *National Planning Practice Guidance*

its tranquillity, including *“the ability to perceive and enjoy the natural soundscape”* and are likely to be seen as special for other reasons, including their landscape.

Local Landscape Policy – Saved Policies of the Medway Local Plan 2003³

- 3.18 The Site is located within the bounds of the Medway Unitary Authority and is subject to the development plan produced by Medway. Medway Council is part way through the development of its new Local Plan and has completed a consultation version of the Development Options Document. The parts of the current development plan relevant to the Site comprise the saved policies of the Medway local Plan 2003 (May 2003).
- 3.19 One of the key objectives outlined within the Medway Local Plan is *“developing an integrated approach to the conversion, development and use of land to secure improvements to the built and natural environment”*.
- 3.20 Within the strategic objectives set out within the plan, the document states: *“The development of greenfield sites should be restricted to those well related to the structure of the urban area and avoiding visual intrusion into the surrounding countryside, particularly the valuable urban fringe”* (Strategic objective ii).
- 3.21 Strategic objective viii states that there should be *“Firm protection for the Green Belt, the best and most versatile agricultural land, sites of international, national and other strategic importance for nature conservation and landscape”*.
- 3.22 The following saved policies of the Local Plan are of relevance to the Site:
- Policy S1: Development Strategy states that *“The development strategy for the plan area is to prioritise re- investment in the urban fabric. This will include the redevelopment and recycling of under-used and derelict land within the urban area...
In recognition of their particular quality and character, long-term protection will be afforded to:*
 - i) areas of international, national or other strategic importance for nature conservation and landscape;*
 - Policy S4: Landscape and Urban Design states that *“A high quality of built environment will be sought from new development, with landscape mitigation*

³ Medway Council (2003) *Medway Local Plan Saved Policies Saved 2007*

where appropriate. Development should respond appropriately to its context, reflecting a distinct local character."

3.23 In relation to the Built and Natural Environment, the Local Plan states the following:

- *"The objectives underlining the policies in this chapter are:*
 - ii) to protect and enhance the character, diversity and distinctiveness of the countryside, built and natural environments, with particular emphasis on identifiable assets such as:*
 - a) the Metropolitan Green Belt and strategically and locally important gaps between settlements;*
 - b) areas of strategic and local landscape importance;*
 - c) nature conservation and geological sites of international, county or local importance;*
 - d) areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land;*
and
 - e) conservation areas, ancient monuments and listed buildings;*
 - iii) to sustain and diversify the rural economy and to make allowance for necessary change in the countryside and natural environment;*
 - iv) to ensure that development takes into account its environmental consequences, being suitably located and well designed, respecting environmental assets and taking the opportunity to enhance current environmental conditions;*
 - v) to improve the built environment by seeking a high standard of design in new development or alterations to existing buildings;*
 - vii) to enhance the environment by seeking to remove eyesores and restore and improve the appearance of areas of poor townscape, particularly in high profile areas such as the riverside and along strategic routes;*
 - viii) to promote imaginative site planning and landscape design to achieve quality open space on development sites."*
- Policy BNE1: General Principles for Built Development – *"The design of development... should be appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment by:*
 - i) being satisfactory in terms of use, scale, mass, proportion, details, materials, layout and siting; and*

- ii) *respecting the scale, appearance and location of buildings, spaces and the visual amenity of the surrounding area; and*
 - iii) *where appropriate, providing well structured, practical and attractive areas of open space."*
- Policy BNE5: Lighting – *"External lighting schemes should demonstrate that they are the minimum necessary for security, safety or working purposes. Development should seek to minimise the loss of amenity from light glare and spillage, particularly that affecting residential areas, areas of nature conservation interest and the landscape qualities of countryside areas."*
- Policy BNE6: Landscape Design – *"Major developments should include a structural landscaping scheme to enhance the character of the locality. Detailed landscaping schemes should be submitted before development commences and should have regard to the following factors:*
 - iv) *provide a structured, robust, attractive, long term, easily maintainable environment including quality open spaces, vistas and views;*
 - v) *include planting of a size, scale and form appropriate to the location and landform, taking account of underground and overground services;*
 - iv) *retain important existing landscape features, including trees and hedgerows, and be well related to open space features in the locality;*
 - v) *support wildlife by the creation or enhancement of semi-natural habitats and the use of indigenous plant material where appropriate; and*
 - vi) *include an existing site survey, maintenance and management regimes and a timetable for implementation."*
- Policy BNE22 Environmental Enhancement – *"Development leading to the protection and improvement of the appearance and environment of existing and proposed areas of development, transport corridors, open spaces and areas adjacent to the River Medway will be permitted."*
- Policy BNE25: Development in The Countryside – *"Development in the countryside will only be permitted if:*
 - i) *it maintains, and wherever possible enhances, the character, amenity and functioning of the countryside, including the river environment of the Medway and Thames, it offers a realistic chance of access by a range of transport modes...*

The countryside is defined as that land outside the urban and rural settlement boundaries defined on the proposals map."

- Policy BNE31: Strategic Gap – *"Within the strategic gap, as defined on the proposals map, development will only be permitted when it does not:*
 - i) result in a significant expansion of the built confines of existing settlements; or*
 - ii) significantly degrade the open character or separating function of the strategic gap."*
- Policy BNE34: Areas of Local Landscape Importance – *"Within the Areas of Local Landscape Importance defined on the Proposals Map, development will only be permitted if:*
 - i) it does not materially harm the landscape character and function of the area; or*
 - ii) the economic and social benefits are so important that they outweigh the local priority to conserve the area's landscape.*

Development within an Area of Local Landscape importance should be sited, designed and landscaped to minimise harm to the area's landscape character and function."

- Policy BNE42: Hedgerow Retention – *"Important hedgerows will be retained and protected."*
- Policy BNE43: Trees on Development Sites – *"Development should seek to retain trees, woodlands, hedgerows and other landscape features that provide a valuable contribution to local character."*
- Policy L10: Public Rights of Way – *"Development which would prejudice the amenity, or result in the diversion or closure, of existing public rights of way will not be permitted, unless an acceptable alternative route with comparable or improved amenity can be provided."*

Local Landscape Policy – Medway Council Local Plan 2013-2035: Development Options Regulation 18 Consultation Report (January 2017)⁴

- 3.24 The Consultation Report does not include policies but outlines 'policy approaches'. Extracts from the text and the policy approaches highlights the Council's requirements to protect and

⁴ Medway Council (January 2017) *Local Plan 2013-2035: Development Options Regulation 18 Consultation Report*

enhance the natural environment, respond to the landscape context and promote the creation of Green Infrastructure.

- 3.25 The reports states that the aim of the new local plan is *“to ensure that Medway grows sustainably, and to provide land for the homes, jobs and services that people need, whilst protecting and enhancing the qualities of the area’s environment and heritage”* outlining from the beginning that the quality of the environment is a priority.

- 3.26 As part of its developing vision for 2035, the report states:

“By 2035 Medway will be a leading waterfront University city...noted for...its stunning natural and historic assets and countryside...”

Medway will have secured the best of its intrinsic heritage and landscapes alongside high quality development to strengthen the area’s distinctive character...

The distinct towns and villages that make up Medway will be connected through effective ... green infrastructure links supporting nature and healthy communities...

Medway will be defined by development that respects the character, functions and qualities of the natural and historic environments...to ensure that important wildlife and heritage assets are protected and opportunities are realised to enhance their condition and connectivity.”

- 3.27 Paragraph 2.37 states the importance of the landscape to Medway:

“The natural and historic environment will continue to inform how Medway looks and functions. The river and estuary of the Medway have defined the history of its urban and rural areas. They are also central to the vision for Medway’s future growth...”

- 3.28 Under the heading of ‘Strategic Objectives’, the report outlines a number of strategic objective, of which the following are of relevance to the Proposed Development:

“A riverside city connected to its natural surroundings

- *To secure a strong green infrastructure network that protects the assets of the natural and historic environments in urban and rural Medway, and informs the design and sustainability of new development.*

Ambitious in attracting investment and successful in place-making

- *To deliver sustainable development, meeting the needs of Medway’s communities, respecting the natural and historic environment, and directing growth to the most suitable locations that can enhance Medway’s economic, social and environmental characteristics...*

- *To establish quality design in all new development, respecting the character of the local environment and seeking opportunities to boost quality and improve the accessibility and design of the public realm... "*

3.29 The document makes reference to the geography, stating:

"This complex geography demands that any development that comes forward in greenfield areas must be of high quality and sensitive to the natural environment, as well as addressing needs for services and infrastructure. In planning for Medway's future development, the council wants to safeguard and establish strategic green spaces and corridors, to protect wildlife features and provide healthy and attractive places for people to live and work."

3.30 Paragraph 7.3 states that, during the consultation on the 'Issues and Options' stage, *"there was much support for the protection of green spaces (both urban and rural) and the important features of the area's natural and historic environment... There were varying views on the approaches to reconciling development needs with protecting the environment, but recognition that well designed, sustainable development, located sensitively, could provide opportunities to invest in enhancements in the environment and improve connectivity for people and wildlife."*

3.31 Paragraph 7.4 recognises *"the extent of areas that are designated of international or national importance for their biodiversity and landscape value"*.

3.32 Paragraph 7.14 highlights the importance and desire for Green Infrastructure:

"Working at a landscape scale, a green infrastructure network of parks and paths, watercourses, and farmed, forested and natural environments will seek to embed connectivity for people and wildlife."

3.33 Under the Policy Approach: Securing strong Green Infrastructure, the report states:

"The council will protect the network of green infrastructure across rural and urban Medway... Wider components of the green infrastructure network will be protected in line with the analysis and strategy set out in the emerging Green Infrastructure Framework. This will include open space assets, landscape buffers and green infrastructure zones. New development should provide for green infrastructure that supports the successful integration of development into the landscape, and contributes to improved connectivity and public access, biodiversity, landscape conservation, design, management of heritage features, recreation and seeks opportunities to strengthen the resilience of the natural environment."

The council will promote the extension of the green infrastructure network through setting criteria for the establishment and maintenance of Local Green Spaces. Opportunities will be sought to promote and enhance the public rights of way network, including footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes, in particular to address existing gaps in connectivity and extend appropriate access along the riverside."

3.34 Under the Policy Approach: Landscape, the report states:

"The highest protection will be given to the Kent Downs AONB to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, including the consideration of potential impact on its setting...The council will expect development to respect the character and qualities of the surrounding landscape. An updated Medway Landscape Character Assessment and Green Infrastructure Framework will provide a basis for determining the acceptability of development proposals and areas and features that need to be protected and enhanced."

3.35 Under Policy approach: Design, the report states that new development in Medway:

"will be expected to be of high quality design that makes a positive contribution appropriate to the character and appearance of its surroundings. Fundamental considerations of development proposals will include:

- *The scale and form of development is appropriate to its surrounding context and is characteristic of Medway*
- *How the proposal relates to and/or reinforces the local distinctiveness and character through the use of high quality materials, landscaping and building detailing*
- *Responds appropriately to the character of the area, interprets respectfully the prevailing pattern of plot size, plot layout and building siting, roofscapes, mass, bulk and height, and views into and out of the site...*
- *High quality landscaping making use of or retaining features considered relevant/important by the Council and demonstrating linkages/contribution toward green infrastructure assets and networks.*
- *Achieves a transition from urban to rural where appropriate"*

Issues Arising from the Policy Baseline

3.36 National and local development policy seeks to protect and enhance the character of the built and natural landscape, including the protection of landscape features and the creation of green infrastructure. Special mention is made to the protection of important trees and hedgerows and their contribution to the wider landscape character.

- 3.37 The protection of the AONB and its setting is a key theme and, although the Site is not within the AONB, it is within the setting and its impacts on views to and from the AONB must be considered.
- 3.38 The protection and enhancement of the corridor of the River Medway is a key theme with the desire expressed to improve visual and physical access to the river.
- 3.39 The protection of the amenity of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) is stated. Although no PRoW pass through the Site and will not, therefore, be physically impacted upon by the proposals, views from the local PRoW must be considered.
- 3.40 The Site is located within the Strategic Gap and within the Cuxton Fields Area of Local Landscape Importance. The contribution that the Site makes to those designations must be considered along with the impact of any development on them.

4.0 PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1 The landscape character assessment approach is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 4.2 The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management. The extent of published landscape character areas in the vicinity of the Site are illustrated on **Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan** and extracts from the relevant landscape character assessments are included within Appendix A.1.

National Character Areas - Natural England's National Character Area Profile 119: North Downs

- 4.3 The Site lies within the North Downs Landscape Character Area (LCA), which are described within the character assessment as comprising a line of chalk hills running from Surrey to the White Cliffs of Dover.
- 4.4 Key characteristics identified on page 8 include:
- *"... A distinctive chalk downland ridge...*
 - *... Chalk soils are predominant across the NCA...*
 - *The area is cut by the deep valleys of the Stour, Medway, Darent, Wey and Mole... which contrast with the steep scarp slope...*
 - *Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes... Well wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing strongly to a wooded character...*
 - *Small, nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads including oasts and barns form the settlement pattern... "*

County Character Areas - Kent Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.5 The Site falls within the Kent character area: Medway Valley Lower within the Greensand Belt in the Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004)⁵.
- 4.6 The Medway Valley Lower is described as:

"Essentially a flat landscape developed on the valley alluviums around the meandering river Medway between the tidal lock at Allington on the Maidstone outskirts to Halling downstream..."

⁵ Jacobs Babbie (2004) The Landscape Assessment of Kent Maidstone: Kent County Council

Much of the landscape is a rather untidy sprawl of settlements and industry ... that have developed along the river's flanks, most particularly in the west of the valley. It is distinguished by dramatic mineral sites associated with gravel and clay extraction, either still working ... or reclaimed ... Amongst the enterprises that traditionally used the river, some remain. Many of these are of an industrial nature, such as scrap metal yards, which inevitably detract from the visual quality of the riverside."

4.7 The river is described as...

"an important and distinctive feature within the character area"

4.8 ...and the areas of emergent planting at the margins

"contrast strongly with the more industrialised areas to the south..."

"On the west bank, the landscape is dominated by housing, industry, pylons and arable farming...Allowance should be made for vegetated buffer zones adjacent to the river, to enhance its aquatic habitats and amenity value...Much of the east bank remains a tranquil although degraded landscape...The area's current relative isolation is likely to be affected by these [development] proposals" which are also described as being "likely to be highly visible from the Kent Downs AONB".

4.9 Characteristic features of the area are described as:

- *"Tidal river with well-developed meanders.*
- *Residual unimproved grasslands and reedbeds forming important areas for nature conservation.*
- *Well-developed industrial mineral and urban sites particularly on the west bank."*

4.10 The condition of the character area is described as *"Very Poor"* for the following reasons:

Visual unity is incoherent and there are many detracting features. Views are contained by the surrounding Downs but the wide tidal river valley landscape is fragmented by extensive industrial works, floodplain management structures, new riverside residential developments and valley side quarries. Clusters of habitat include wet pasture reed beds and regenerative scrub, but industrial, residential and quarrying activities fragment the ecological interest overall. Aylesford Priory ragstone and flint churches and historic floodbanks are important heritage features, but field boundaries and tree cover are in poor condition. The built development generally detracts from the landscape, with massive industrial complexes, dramatic chimneys and high density residential areas in highly coloured brick. Overall, this is a landscape in very poor condition."

4.11 The sensitivity of the landscape is described as *"Moderate"* for the following reasons:

“The strength of character is weak with a lack of local distinctiveness and, in many areas, only a relatively recent time depth. Landform is an apparent element and the lack of significant tree cover creates a highly visible landscape.”

District Level Landscape Character Assessment

4.12 The Site falls within local landscape character area 36: Cuxton Scarp Foot within the North Downs and Medway Valley Landscape Area, according to the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011)⁶.

4.13 The key characteristics of the Medway Valley are described as:

- *Mixture of lower scarp slope and valley floor mixed farmland; fragmented by several disused and inaccessible quarries with regenerating woodland edges that help to screen visual impacts*
- *Pockets of grazed marshland with flood defence walls and reed beds; boundary treatments in variable condition; areas generally retain rural character but with rural fringe intrusions and some detracting features*
- *Landscape heavily fragmented by historic land uses associated with chalk extraction industries; includes quarries; railway lines; busy roads; settlements; old wharfs; marinas, mobile homes, industrial areas etc.*

4.14 Principle issues for the Landscape Area are described as:

- *“On-going threat of landscape fragmentation with loss of rural character and local distinctiveness caused by the intrusion of inappropriate urban fringe activities – particularly threatened and damaged areas are on western side of river and include Cuxton Scarp Foot, Halling Quarries, Halling and Holborough Marshes*
- *Medway Valley – the disused pits offer regeneration opportunities for development, recreation and biodiversity improvements*
- *Industrial heritage within Medway Valley forms part of local distinctiveness of area*
- *Current regeneration proposals include a new development scheme for the Halling Cement Works site and proposals for new road and bridge across Lafarge Cement Works site at Holborough; forms link to Tonbridge and Malling’s Peter’s Pit development within the Local Plan) are located on fringes of urban areas at Walderslade; these extend into larger green spaces within neighbouring districts and are not identified as distinct character areas within this study.”*

⁶ Medway Council (2011) [Medway Landscape Character Assessment](#)

4.15 The Cuxton Scarp Foot is described as a 'rural-fringe' type landscape and as the 'rural-urban fringe with urban/industrial influences' landscape sub-type. This area is described as being location to the north of the River Medway and to the west of the M2 motorway. The key characteristics of this area are as follows:

- *"Visually prominent area rising from marshes alongside River Medway up to Kent Downs AONB*
- *Prominent in views from many directions (including A228, M2, CTRL, Medway Valley Railway and the Medway River); has significant potential as an inviting 'gateway' into the urban areas of Medway*
- *Includes farmland to north along scarp foot and lower lying marshland to south*
- *Includes land affected by M2/CTRL works; adverse impacts persist in areas adjacent to this development*
- *Lagoons in marshland area to south-east created as part of mitigation for CTRL works*
- *Area has fragmented character from urban fringe land uses, motorway and railway line; land uses include rough grazing pasture; marshland; woodland; site of nature conservation interest; sewage works; landfill/waste site; derelict land; caravan site*
- *Railway line creates strong severance – restricts accessibility to marshland and marina*
- *Mixed containment (footpath link and woodland) and openness (marshland and farmland)*
- *Strong urban fringe intrusion with overall degraded condition, includes areas of fly-tipping*
- *Openness maintains separation between urban areas, M2 and CTRL and Cuxton Village; helps to retain local identity and enhance village setting*
- *Provides visual link and balance with Kent Downs AONB on adjacent side of river"*

4.16 The condition of the area is described as "**Very Poor**" with an incoherent pattern of landscape, many distracting features and a fragmented visual unity. The sensitivity of the landscape is described as "**Moderate**" with an action to "**Restore and Create**".

4.17 Key issues within the character area are as follows:

- *"Managing urban fringe intrusion/activities including fly-tipping*
- *Restricted access beyond main footpath link*
- *Main footpath unattractive and intimidating*
- *Off-road cycle path opportunity*
- *Severance of M2; weak and unattractive pedestrian/cycle links into urban areas to north*
- *Opportunity to enhance 'Gateway' potential of area*
- *Marina site has been built up with imported materials; developed character not in sympathy with marshland context."*

Guidelines for Future Change

4.18 There are four Statements of Environmental Opportunity for the character area, of which the following are relevant:

- *“SEO 1: Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs, including the long-established settlement pattern, ancient routeways and traditional buildings. Protect the tranquillity of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area’s rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations.*
- *SEO 2: Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs, for their internationally and nationally important habitats and species, cultural heritage and recreational value and to help to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Seek opportunities to establish local markets for timber and biomass to support the active management of local woods, while recognising their contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquillity.*
- *SEO 4: Plan to deliver integrated, well-managed multi-functional green space in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness, particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the North Downs.”*

4.19 Key Landscape opportunities within NCA Profile 119 identified on page 54 include:

- *“Protect, conserve, an appropriately manage the highly distinctive chalk cliff coastline...*
- *Protect, conserve and enhance the character of much of the downland landscape devoid of development and urban intrusions...*
- *...restoring, significantly expanding and relinking the wetland habitats of the Medway Gap...*
- *Manage, conserve, enhance and restore the characteristic pattern of thick well-treed hedgerows and shaws, forming a predominantly irregular field pattern.”*

County – Medway Valley Lower

4.20 The guidance for the Medway Valley landscape character area is to *“Restore and Create”*.

“Restoration and creation of unimproved pastures and reed beds should be used to increase the nature conservation potential and naturalistic landscape qualities of the river floodplain. Tree planting proposals need careful consideration to avoid destroying the open character of the landscape. Scrub and hedges may be more appropriate in integrating the built developments into the valley.

Where they are in a manageable context, existing hedgelines should be gapped up and properly maintained. New hedgerow proposals should aim to link existing remnant hedgerows. Where appropriate, new developments should be sensitively sited and designed to reflect the riverside context."

Local – Cuxton Foot Scarp

4.21 The guidance for the Cuxton Foot Scarp landscape character area is to *"Restore and Create"*.

- *"Review cycle path opportunities linking urban areas to countryside*
- *Improve path network and pedestrian links through area, onto valley sides and into urban areas to north*
- *Restore and improve chalk grassland areas to north*
- *Improve boundary treatment to eyesores – including screen to sewage works entrance; replace galvanised steel palisade boundary fencing with more sympathetic style and finish of security fencing; screen with native planting where possible*
- *Protect and enhance natural marshland character along river edges as appropriate setting for adjacent river and AONB*
- *Restore and actively manage hedgerows along field, path and road boundaries and strengthen woodland blocks*
- *Resist development and urban fringe activities that could lead to further degradation of condition, accessibility and rural character of area*
- *Seek to develop 'gateway' potential of area; landscape enhancements to M2/A228 roundabout and approach roads could achieve step change in arrival experience of visitors into Medway".*

Issues Arising from the Landscape Character Assessments

- 4.22 The national landscape character assessment identifies the wider area which comprises the Kent Downs AONB, an area of distinct landscapes, historic depth and ancient vegetation. The regional and local character assessments, being at a finer grain, identify the contrasting character of the development along the River Medway, in which the Site is located, and its divergence from the character of the higher land within the AONB.
- 4.23 The regional and local landscape character assessments identify that the areas including the Site comprise areas of landscape that are in *Very Poor* condition and that there is an action to *Restore and Create*.
- 4.24 Guidance within the landscape character assessments identifies the importance of vegetation within developments to soften the massing of the built form and to aid the sensitive integration of development into the surrounding landscape when seen in views. This includes the restoration and replacement of native hedgerows and the planting of scrub and trees.

5.0 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The location of the Site is shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan** and a more detailed illustration of the map is shown on **Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan**. The character of the Site is demonstrated within the series of **Site Appraisal Photographs**, the locations of which are demonstrated on **Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan**.

Site and its Location

- 5.2 The Site is located in Cuxton on the northern side of the valley of the River Medway. It is located at the foot of the South Downs close to the boundary with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Site comprises a pastoral field, which has been left ungrazed and which is returning to scrub, a single storey dwelling, a covered stock area and a number of agricultural sheds and stables.
- 5.3 The north-western boundary is formed by the A228 Sundridge Hill which is located on higher ground than the main body of the Site, resulting in a steep slope into the edge of the Site. There is a row of coniferous trees, which have been planted as a hedgerow and left unmanaged, at the eastern end of this boundary with an unmanaged hedgerow, which has been left to become gappy, and trees along the remainder of the boundary. To the north of the A228 is the built edge of Cuxton. The western boundary is marked by a remnant post and wire fence and a line of trees. Beyond the boundary is a pastoral field, grazed by ponies, and areas of shrub and tree planting. The southern boundary is marked by an unmanaged hedgerow which has become overgrown and gappy with some small trees. To the south is an area of marsh and further south is the railway line and the River Medway. The eastern boundary comprises a mix of overgrown hedgerow and the curtilage of properties at Rainbow's End. Further east is an area of pastoral farmland.

Local Land Use

- 5.4 The area to the north comprises residential development within Cuxton and the fields to the east and west are pastoral with an area of marshy ground to the south. Along the river valley to the south area marinas and associated boatyards, part of the general industrial and fringe character of the northern bank of the river. Further to the east is a recycling centre and a Travellers' site. Approximately 900m to the north-east lies the built edge of Strood and Rochester.
- 5.5 The land to the north of the Southern Railway Line, approximately 120m to the north, and to the south of the River Medway, approximately 450m to the south-east, comprises countryside within the Kent Downs AONB.

Access and Rights of Way

- 5.6 Access into the Site is from the A228 Sundridge Hill which also serves the south and east of Cuxton. There are two railway lines in close proximity to the Site, 114m to the north (HS1) and 150m to the south (Medway Valley line). Cuxton Station is located approximately 210m to the south. The M2 motorway is located 600m to the north-east of the Site.
- 5.7 The North Downs Way runs approximately east to west through the northern part of the study area, approximately 550m to the north of the Site. A further network of Public Rights of Way extends through the AONB to the north, connecting into Ranscombe Farm Country Park to the north.

Topography and Hydrology

- 5.8 The Site ranges from approximately 10mAOD along the south-eastern boundary to approximately 30mAOD in the northern corner. The Site is located on the northern bank of the River Medway as it rises up to the Kent Downs to over 130mAOD (metres above Ordnance Datum) at William's Hill approximately 2.4km to the north-west. The area of marsh to the immediate south is located at approximately sea level. The area to the south comprises the Wouldham Marshes before the land rises again to the Kent Downs to the south.

Vegetation

- 5.9 There are the remnants of an unmanaged hedgerow running along the north-western boundary of the Site, spreading down the slope into the Site. There is a line of trees along the western boundary. The southern boundary is marked by a line of trees and shrubs which were originally part of a wider area of planting in the southern part of the Site which has since been cleared.
- 5.10 In the wider area, the land to the south of the river is generally unvegetated whereas the land in the AONB and Country Park to the north of the Site contains large areas of Ancient Woodland, as shown on Figure 1: Site Context Plan.

Designations

Landscape Designations

- 5.11 The Kent Downs AONB is located approximately 150m away to the north and approximately 500m away to the south-east. As such, the Site can be considered to be within the setting of the AONB. Views from the AONB are considered within the visual appraisal and are shown to be limited by vegetation and topography with glimpsed views possible from the PRow on the southern edge of the Ranscombe Farm Country Park.

- 5.12 The Site is located within the Cuxton Brickfields Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI). The Medway Local Plan includes the following information about the Cuxton Brickfields ALLI:

“Visually prominent area rising from marshes along River Medway up to the Kent Downs AONB. Includes former Cuxton Chalk Pits 1 and 2 now landscaped. Adjacent land affected by M2/CTRL works will take time to recover, so protection of this landscape is important...

Maintains the separation between Strood and Cuxton, helping to retain individual identity. Contributes towards the setting of Cuxton Village. Extremely prominent from A228, M2, CTRL, Medway valley railway and the river – when approaching or passing through the borough. Forms a gateway to the urban area to be preserved and enhanced. Forms a green backdrop to Medway Valley Park from across the river in Borstal and Rochester. 94 Creates a visual link and balance with the Kent Downs AONB on the other side of the river.”

- 5.13 Effects on the character of the ALLI should be considered within any future scheme. However, development within the Site will not reduce the perception of the gap between Strood and Cuxton as the development will not extend further east than the development to the north and already contains and neighbours development on the eastern boundary. The Site is visible from the area to the south of the river but, from these locations, it forms a minor element viewed set back against and within the context of the existing residential and industrial development. The existing planting within the Site should be retained where practicable and new areas of planting established to reinforce the green edge to the AONB.

Historic Designations

- 5.14 The Grade II* Cobham Hall Registered Parkland is located 2km to the north-west of the Site. Cuxton Palaeolithic Schedule Monument is located approximately 450m to the south-west. The closest Listed Building is the Grade II White Hart House, located 250m to the south-west. Development within the Site will not physically affect any of these designations.

Planning Policy

- 5.15 The Site is located within the Strategic Gap between Cuxton and Rochester. The Medway Local Plan states in Policy BNE31: Strategic Gap:

Within the strategic gap, as defined on the proposals map, development will only be permitted when it does not:

- ii) result in a significant expansion of the built confines of existing settlements; or*
- iii) significantly degrade the open character or separating function of the strategic gap.*

- 5.16 Development within the Site will not extend further east than the existing development to the north on Pilgrims Way or further south than the residential development to the west. As such, it will not result in the reduction of the gap between Cuxton and Strood/Rochester. Development within the Site will be viewed as set back against or within the context of the neighbouring residential development and therefore will not 'significantly degrade the open character' of the Strategic Gap.
- 5.17 The Site is located outside of the Green Belt and separated from it by the intervening Medway Valley Railway Line.

Issues Arising from the Landscape Appraisal

- 5.18 The Site is an unmanaged area of pastoral land containing a number of derelict or semi-derelict agricultural structures, a single storey residential dwelling and an elevated car platform. It is located on rising ground on the northern edge of the valley of the River Medway and is seen set back against and within the context of the surrounding residential development and within the context of boatyards, the Travellers' site and industrial areas along the course of the river.
- 5.19 The Site is located within the Cuxton Brickfields ALLI which is described as a visually prominent area maintaining the separation between Cuxton and Strood and forming a green backdrop to the river and a green edge to the AONB. It is also located within the Strategic Gap between Cuxton and Rochester in which development is not permitted if it will reduce the separation of the settlements or degrade the open character of the Strategic Gap.
- 5.20 The Site does not form the functions of the ALLI and will not be contrary to the purposes of the Strategic Gap as set out within the planning policies identified above as it does not extend further east or south than the neighbouring existing residential development and contains some built structures. It is visible from the southern side of the river but forms a minor element within the view, set back against and viewed within the context of existing residential development to the north and east, and to industrial and employment uses to the south and east.

6.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Available views towards the Site are represented by **Site Context Photographs**, the location of which are shown on **Figure 1: Site Context Plan**.

Visual Baseline

- 6.2 The Site is located on the northern edge of the valley of the River Medway surrounding by rising land to the north, south-east and south. Views from the higher ground to the north towards the Site are generally screened by the intervening landform, vegetation and the railway embankment, as seen on Site Context Photograph 3. From the south, the Site is viewed set against the backdrop of the AONB but within the context of the neighbouring built form of Cuxton (which sits between the site and the AONB), as shown in Site Context Photographs 4, 5 and 6.

Representative Views Towards the Site

- 6.3 Views are possible from the A228 Sundridge Road which offer elevated views across the Site towards the high land to the south within the Kent Downs AONB as shown in Site Context Photographs 1 and 2. It is possible to see the sharp fall in landform between the road and the north-western boundary of the Site. Buildings will be seen within these views and will obstruct some of the views towards the south across the river valley.
- 6.4 Views from many of the PRoW within the AONB to the north are obscured by the large areas of woodland planting. Views towards the Site from the North Downs Way are screened by the woodland planting north of Site Context Photograph 3. Views from PRoW RS371 where it passes through the Ranscombe Farm Country Park, approximately 560m to the north of the Site, are possible but, from this location, the Site is obscured behind the fall in the land and the intervening housing, (See Site Context Photograph 3).
- 6.5 The Site is visible within views from the AONB to the south of the River Medway, as shown on Site Context Photographs 4, 5 and 6. It is possible to see the raised car platform in the northern corner of the Site and the covered stock yard. From these viewpoints, the Site is viewed set back against and within the context of the adjacent residential development of Cuxton and above the marinas and boatyards.

Issues Arising from the Visual Appraisal

- 6.6 Views from the AONB to the north, including the Ranscombe Farm Country Park and the North Downs Way are generally obscured by the intervening landform and vegetation. The tops of development within the Site would be visible from limited locations in the south of the AONB

but, from these locations, the development would be visible set back behind and within the context of the existing residential development.

- 6.7 Views towards the Site are possible from the AONB to the south of the river but, from these locations, the Site forms a minor element within the view and is seen set back against and within the context of the neighbouring residential development to the north and east and behind the industrial and employment uses to the south and east.

7.0 SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Views towards the Site are possible from the AONB to the south and from the A228 to the immediate north. In addition, glimpsed elevated views are possible from PRoW within the AONB to the north. From the AONB to the north and south, the Site is visible set within the context of the neighbouring built form of Cuxton, nearby industrial and employment uses, and the boatyards along the river.
- 7.2 In order to break up the mass of built form within views and to aid its sensitive integration into the surrounding landscape, particularly when seen from the AONB to the south, the following key elements and issues should be considered within any future masterplan proposal:
- There is an opportunity to enhance the amenity of the A228 Sundridge Hill through the improved management of the existing vegetation, the planting of new street trees and the incorporation of the footway.
 - A wide and robust new vegetation structure should be established along the southern edge to reinforce existing trees and shrubs. This planting would provide a new edge and definition to the Strategic Gap and provide separation from the nature reserves to the south.
 - Development should be set back from the southern boundary to further reduce the impact of development within the views from the south.
 - Sufficient space should be allowed within the development to incorporate tree planting along the contours. This will break up the mass of the built form and will soften the impact of the development on views from the AONB to the north and from long distance views from the AONB to the south. This planting within the development will also aid the sensitive integration of the development into the landscape of the river valley.

8.0 SUMMARY

Issues Arising from the Policy Baseline

- 8.1 National and local development policy seeks to protect and enhance the character of the built and natural landscape, including the protection of landscape features and the creation of green infrastructure. Special mention is made to the protection of important trees and hedgerows and their contribution to the wider landscape character.
- 8.2 The protection of the AONB and its setting is a key theme and, although the Site is not within the AONB, it is within the setting and its impacts on views to and from the AONB must be considered.
- 8.3 The protection and enhancement of the corridor of the River Medway is a key theme with the desire expressed to improve visual and physical access to the river.
- 8.4 The protection of the amenity of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) is stated. Although no PRoW pass through the Site and will not, therefore, be physically impacted upon by the proposals, views from the local PRoW must be considered.
- 8.5 The Site is located within the Strategic Gap and within the Cuxton Fields Area of Local Landscape Importance. The contribution that the Site makes to those designations must be considered along with the impact of any development on them.

Issues Arising from the Landscape Character Assessments

- 8.6 The national landscape character assessment identifies the wider area which comprises the Kent Downs AONB, an area of distinct landscapes, historic depth and ancient vegetation. The regional and local character assessments, being at a finer grain, identify the contrasting character of the development along the River Medway, in which the Site is located, and its divergence from the character of the higher land within the AONB.
- 8.7 The regional and local landscape character assessments identify that the areas including the Site comprise areas of landscape that are in *Very Poor* condition and that there is an action to *Restore and Create*.
- 8.8 Guidance within the landscape character assessments identifies the importance of vegetation within developments to soften the massing of the built form and to aid the sensitive integration of development into the surrounding landscape when seen in views. This includes the restoration and replacement of native hedgerows and the planting of scrub and trees.

Issues Arising from the Landscape Appraisal

- 8.9 The Site is an unmanaged area of pastoral land containing a number of derelict or semi-derelict agricultural structures, a single storey residential dwelling and an elevated car platform. It is located on rising ground on the northern edge of the valley of the River Medway and is seen set back against and within the context of the surrounding residential development and within the context of boatyards, the Travellers' site and industrial areas along the course of the river.
- 8.10 The Site is located within the Cuxton Brickfields ALLI which is described as a visually prominent area maintaining the separation between Cuxton and Strood and forming a green backdrop to the river and a green edge to the AONB. It is also located within the Strategic Gap between Cuxton and Rochester in which development is not permitted if it will reduce the separation of the settlements or degrade the open character of the Strategic Gap.
- 8.11 The Site does not form the functions of the ALLI and will not be contrary to the purposes of the Strategic Gap as set out within the planning policies identified above as it does not extend further east or south than the neighbouring existing residential development and contains some built structures. It is visible from the southern side of the river but forms a minor element within the view, set back against and viewed within the context of existing residential development to the north and east, and to industrial and employment uses to the south and east.

Issues Arising from the Visual Appraisal

- 8.12 Views from the AONB to the north, including the Ranscombe Farm Country Park and the North Downs Way are generally obscured by the intervening landform and vegetation. The tops of development within the Site would be visible from limited locations in the south of the AONB but, from these locations, the development would be visible set back behind and within the context of the existing residential development.
- 8.13 Views towards the Site are possible from the AONB to the south of the river but, from these locations, the Site forms a minor element within the view and is seen set back against and within the context of the neighbouring residential development to the north and east and behind the industrial and employment uses to the south and east.

Conclusion

- 8.14 The Site is located in an area of very poor quality landscape, comprising industrial, employment and residential development, which creates the character of an urban fringe landscape contrasting with the wider landscape of the Kent Downs AONB.

- 8.15 Although the Site is located on the edge of the valley of the River Medway and is visible within views from the AONB to the north and south, it is only visible in glimpsed views from the AONB to the north, and is viewed as a minor element set back against and within the context of the neighbouring residential, industrial and employment uses within the lower valley sides.
- 8.16 The Site is located within the Cuxton Brickfields ALLI and the Strategic Gap but performs a limited function to these designations for the following reasons:
- Development within the Site would not cause the settlement edge to extend further east or south than is currently the case. There is existing development within the eastern end of the Site;
 - Development would not bring the settlement edge of Cuxton closer to Rochester or Strood.
 - Development within the Site would not reduce the open character of the ALLI as it is set back against and viewed within the context of the neighbouring development.
- 8.17 The Site is an unmanaged area of partly developed agricultural land in an area of very poor quality landscape and which performs a limited function to the designations within which it is located. **Development within the Site would not cause notable detriment to the functions of the designations if the Site was removed, particularly if the opportunities and constraints identified above are considered within any future development proposals.**

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context and Visual Appraisal Plan

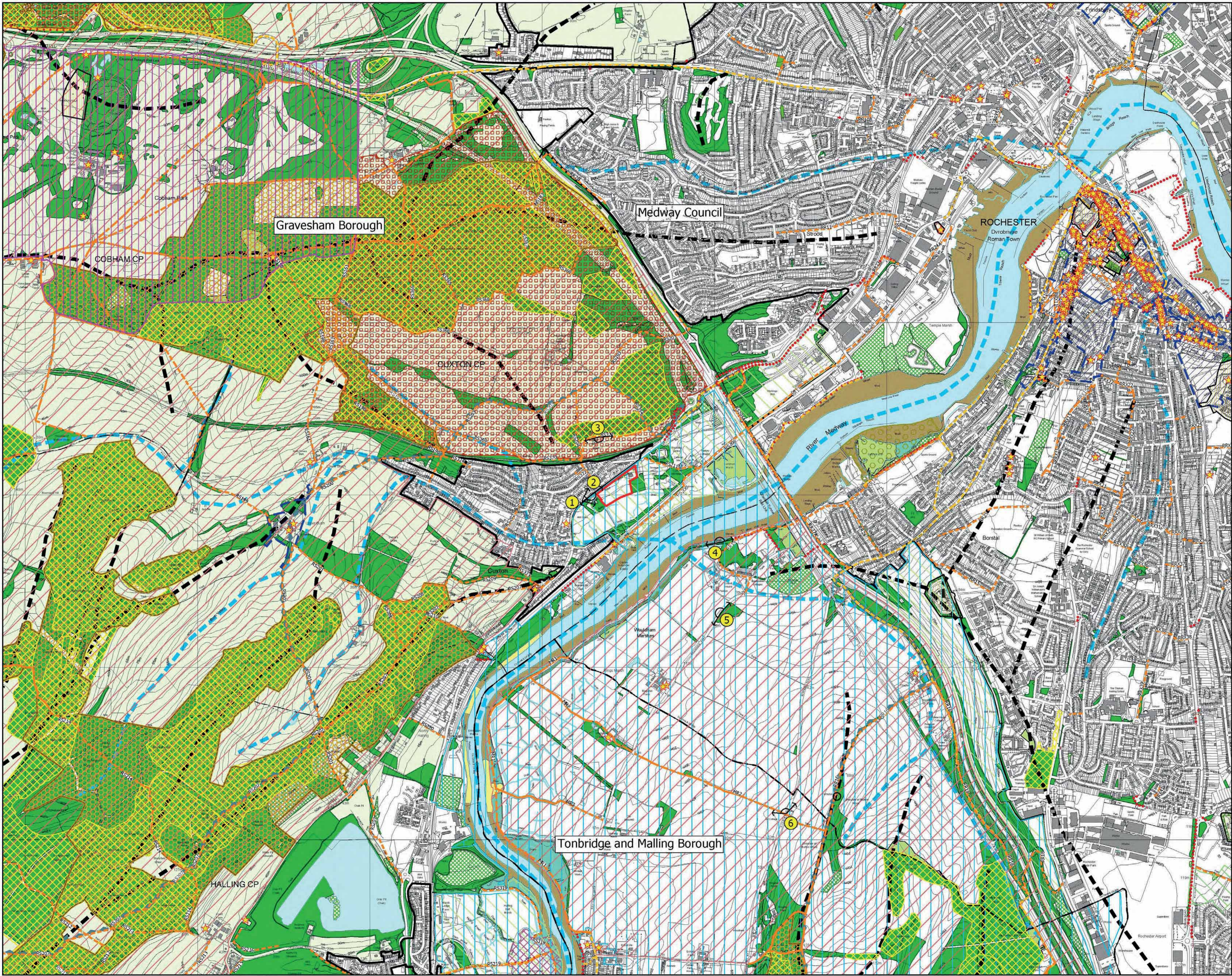
Figure 2: Topographic Features Plan

Figure 3: Landscape Character Areas

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan

Site Appraisal Photographs

Site Context Photographs



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision Date Dm Ckd

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
- Existing Scrub ^
- Existing Water Courses and Features ^
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Local Planning Authority Boundary ^
- Ridgelines
- Valleys
- Public Rights of Way *
- Countryside Rights of Way Access Areas #
- Sustrans Cycle Route +
- Cycle Route ++
- National Trail # (North Downs Way)
- Listed Buildings ~
- Registered Parks and Gardens ~
- Scheduled Monument ~
- Conservation Area
- Ancient Woodland #
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest #
- Local Nature Reserve #
- Country Park # (Ranscombe Farm)
- Green Belt ^^
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty #
- Local Plan Policies **
- Boundary of Urban Area / Rural Settlement
- Strategic Gap (Policy BNE 31)
- North Kent Marshes Special Landscape Area (Policy BNE33)
- Areas of Local Landscape Importance (Policy BNE34)

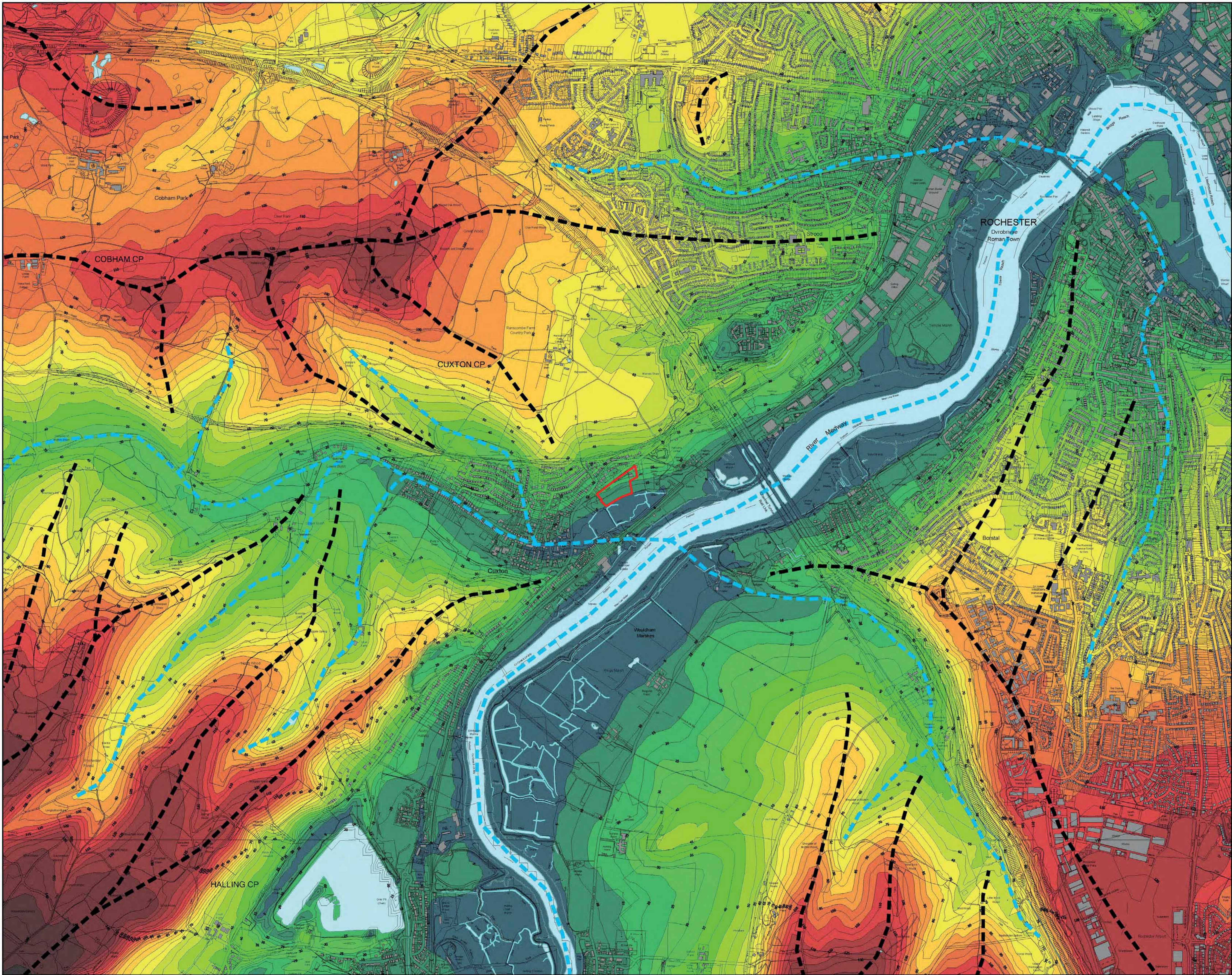
Sources:
^ OS Mapping
Natural England GIS Data Set
Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
+ Medway Council Prow GIS Data/Medway County Council Prow Online Map
+ Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data
+ Department of Transport Great Britain Cycle Network Data
+ Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data
+ Medway Local Plan, May 2013 / Tonbridge and Malling Local Development Framework, May 2012 /
+ Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Sept 2014

Data collected for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation. Insetted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 1

Project
Land South of Sundridge Hill,
Cuxton
Drawing Title
Site Context Plan

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Date | Scale | Drawn by | Check by |
| 17.03.2017 | 1:10,000 @A1 | MK | ET |
| Project No | Drawing No | Revision | |
| 25973 | L1 | - | |



Revision

The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Date

Dm

Ckd

LEGEND

Site Boundary

Existing Water Courses and Features

110m

+

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD)

Ridgelines

Valleys

Elevation (Metres AOD)

155 to 165

145 to 155

135 to 145

125 to 135

115 to 125

105 to 115

095 to 105

085 to 095

075 to 085

065 to 075

055 to 065

045 to 055

035 to 045

025 to 035

015 to 025

005 to 015

0.5 to 005

Sources

OS Mapping

Data collected for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may therefore not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be held liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 2

Project
Land South of Sundridge Hill,
Cuxton
Drawing Title
Topographical Features Plan

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Date | Scale | Drawn by | Check by |
| 17.03.2017 | 1:10,000 @A1 | MK | |
| Project No | 1:20,000 @A3 | | Revision |
| 25793 | L2 | | |

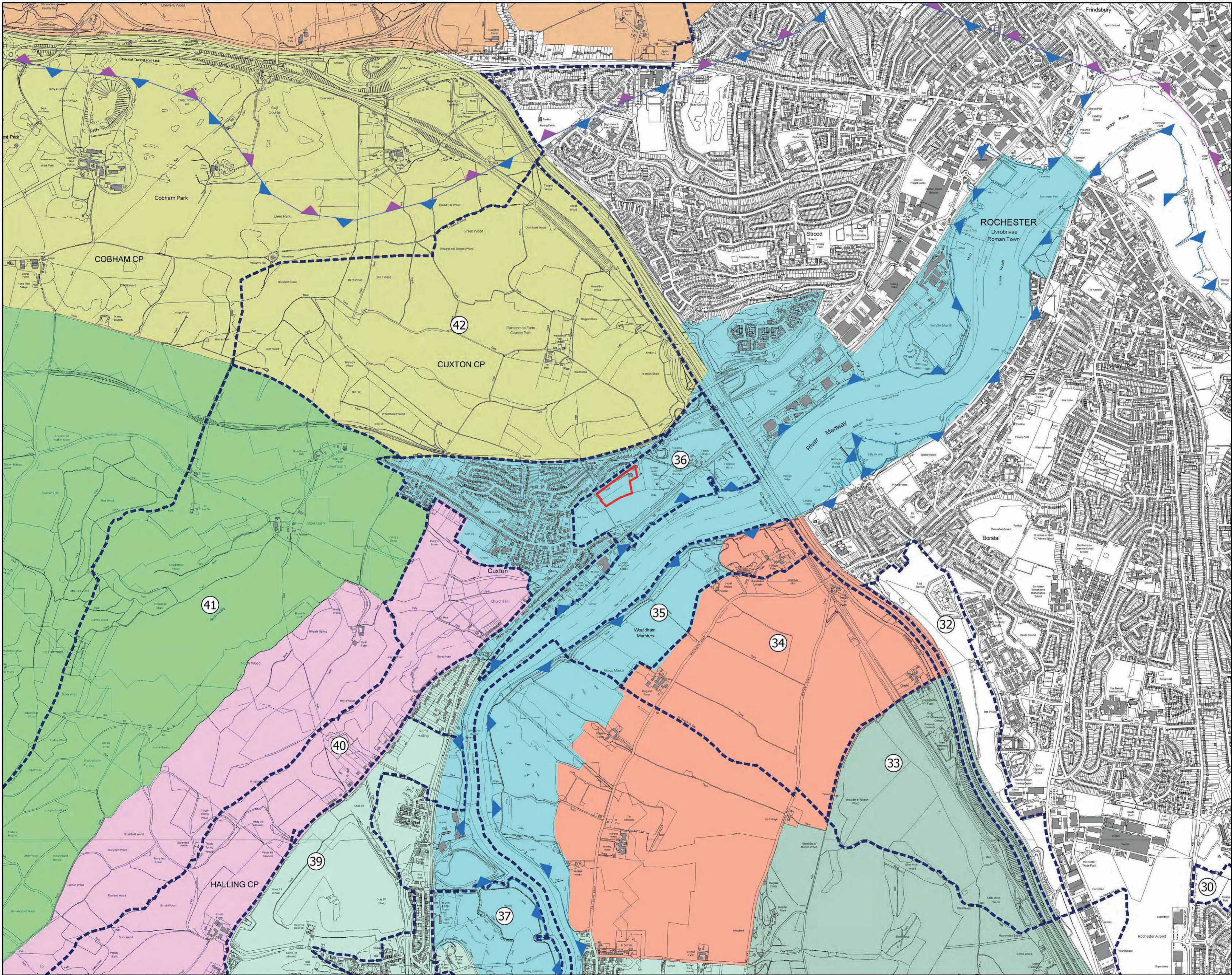
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3125000-25999,25000-25999/25973 - Land South of Sundridge Hill, Cuxton (A1 - Design & Register's Landscape) 25973 L2 Topographical Features Planning - A1



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision Date Dm Ckd

LEGEND

Site Boundary

National Character Area Profiles #

Area 113, North Kent Plain

Area 119, North Downs

County Character Areas (Kent) *

Cobham: West Kent Downs

Kent Downs - Medway, Western & Eastern Scarp

Luddesdown: West Kent Downs

Medway Valley Lower

Nashenden Valley: Mid Kent Downs

Shorne

The Eastern Scarp: Medway

The Western Scarp: Medway

Medway Landscape Character Areas +

Character Area Boundary

Character Areas:

- 30 Horsted Valley
- 32 Nashenden Scarp
- 33 Nashenden Valley
- 34 Woudham Scarp East
- 35 Woudham Marshes
- 36 Cuxton Scarp Foot
- 37 Halling Marshes
- 40 Halling Scarp West
- 41 Bush Valley and Dean Farm
- 42 Ranscombe Farm

Sources:
Natural England GIS Data Set
+ Kent County Council Landscape Character Assessment 2004
+ Medway Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011
Data collected for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation. Inevitably, using the British National Grid and other data, there may be inaccuracies. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 3

Project
Land South of Sundridge Hill,
Cuxton
Drawing Title
Landscape Character Plan

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Date 17.03.2017 | Scale 1:10,000 @A1 1:20,000 @A3 | Drawn by MK | Check by |
| Project No 25793 | Drawing No L4 | | Revision |

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Revision _____ Date _____ Drn _____ Ckd _____

LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- Existing Water Courses and Features
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD)
- Public Rights of Way
- Sustrans Cycle Route
- Cycle Route
- National Trail # (North Downs Way)
- Listed Buildings
- Ancient Woodland #
- Country Park # (Ranscombe Farm)
- Green Belt
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty #
- Local Plan Policies**
 - Boundary of Urban Area / Rural Settlement
 - Strategic Gap (Policy BNE 31)
 - Areas of Local Landscape Importance (Policy BNE34)
 - Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Appraisal Photographs: A-D)

Sources:
- OS Mapping
- Natural England GIS Data Set
- Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
- Medway Council (PROM) GIS Database County Council PROM Online Map
- Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data
- Department of Transport (DfT) GIS Cycle Network Data
- Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data
- Medway Local Plan, May 2007 / Tranbridge and Malling Local Development Framework, May 2012 / Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Sept 2014

Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation. Insetted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 4

Project
Land South of Sundridge Hill,
Cuxton

Drawing Title
Site Appraisal Plan

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Date 17.03.2017 | Scale 1:1,250 @A1 1:2,500 @A3 | Drawn by MK | Check by ET |
| Project No 25793 | Drawing No L3 | | Revision - |

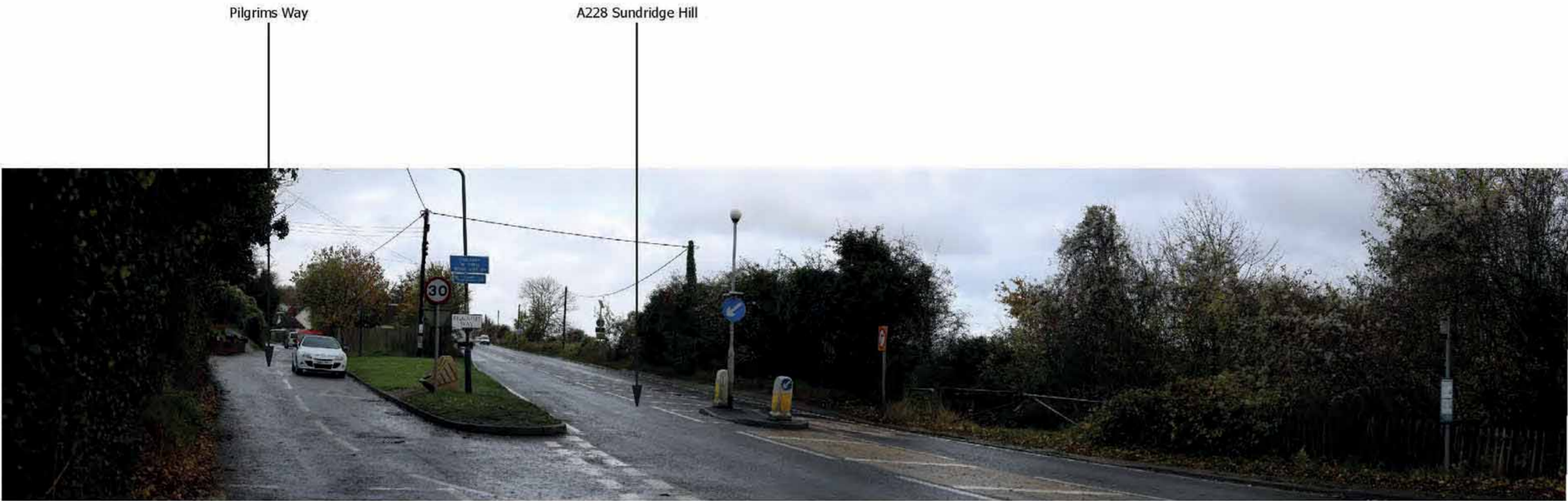
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Metres

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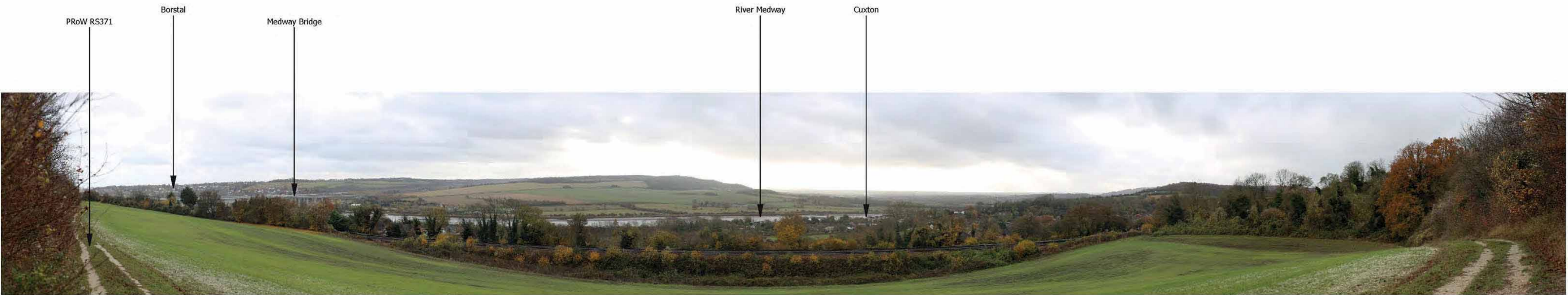
Office at Bristol: Cambridge Cardiff Edinburgh London
London Manchester Newcastle Reading Solihull Southampton



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW FROM JUNCTION OF A228 SUNDRIDGE HILL AND PILGRIMS WAY
 Distance: 80m
 Elevation: 12.5m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW FROM A228 SUNDRIDGE ROAD
 Distance: 20m
 Elevation: 11.3m AOD



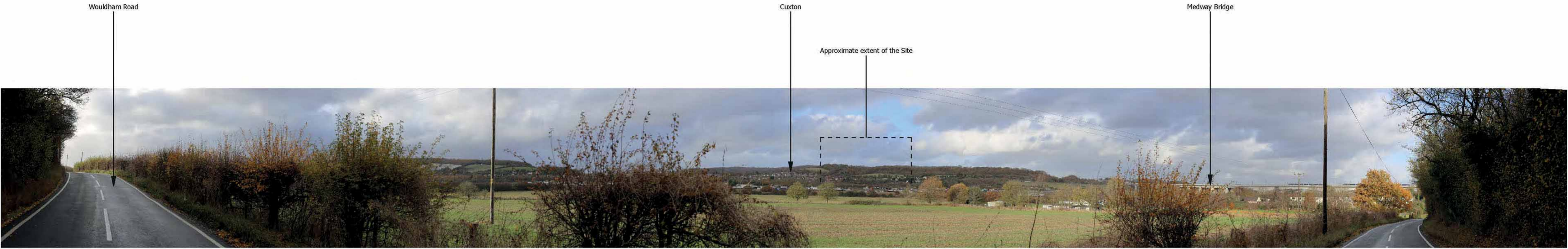
SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW FROM PROW RS371
 Distance: 250m
 Elevation: 55.6m AOD

LAND SOUTH OF SUNDRIDGE HILL, CUXTON

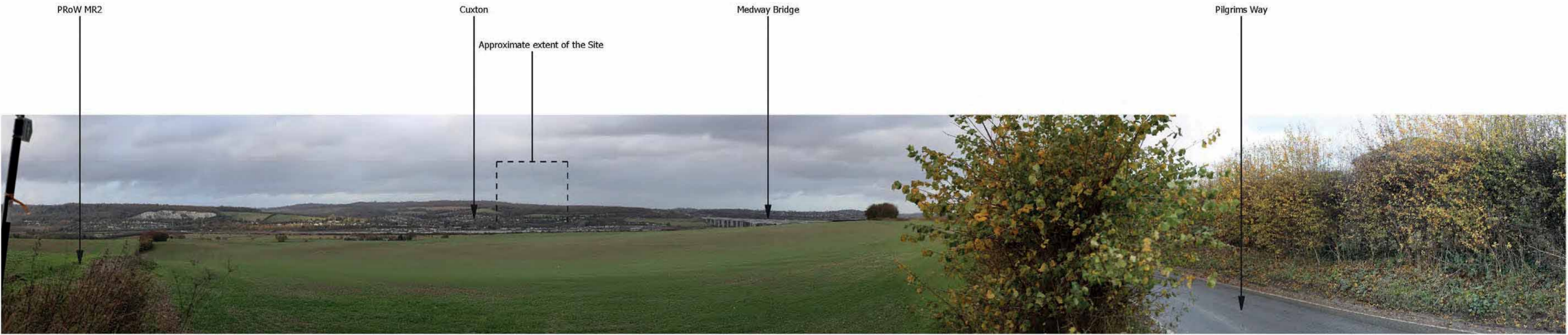
SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3
RECOMMENDED VIEWING DISTANCE: 20CM @A1
DATE TAKEN: NOV 2016
PROJECT NUMBER: 25973



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW FROM PROW RR14
 Distance: 0.53km
 Elevation: 2.9m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW FROM WOULDHAM ROAD
 Distance: 0.84km
 Elevation: 9.3m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 6: VIEW FROM JUNCTION OF PILGRIMS WAY AND PROW MR2
 Distance: 2.05km
 Elevation: 56.4m AOD

LAND SOUTH OF SUNDRIDGE HILL, CUXTON

SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHS: 4 - 6
RECOMMENDED VIEWING DISTANCE: 20CM @A1
DATE TAKEN: NOV 2016
PROJECT NUMBER: 25973

Vegetation along Sundridge Hill



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A:



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH B:

Rainbow's End



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH C:

Rainbow's End



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D:

LAND SOUTH OF SUNDRIDGE
HILL, CUXTON

SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: A - D

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

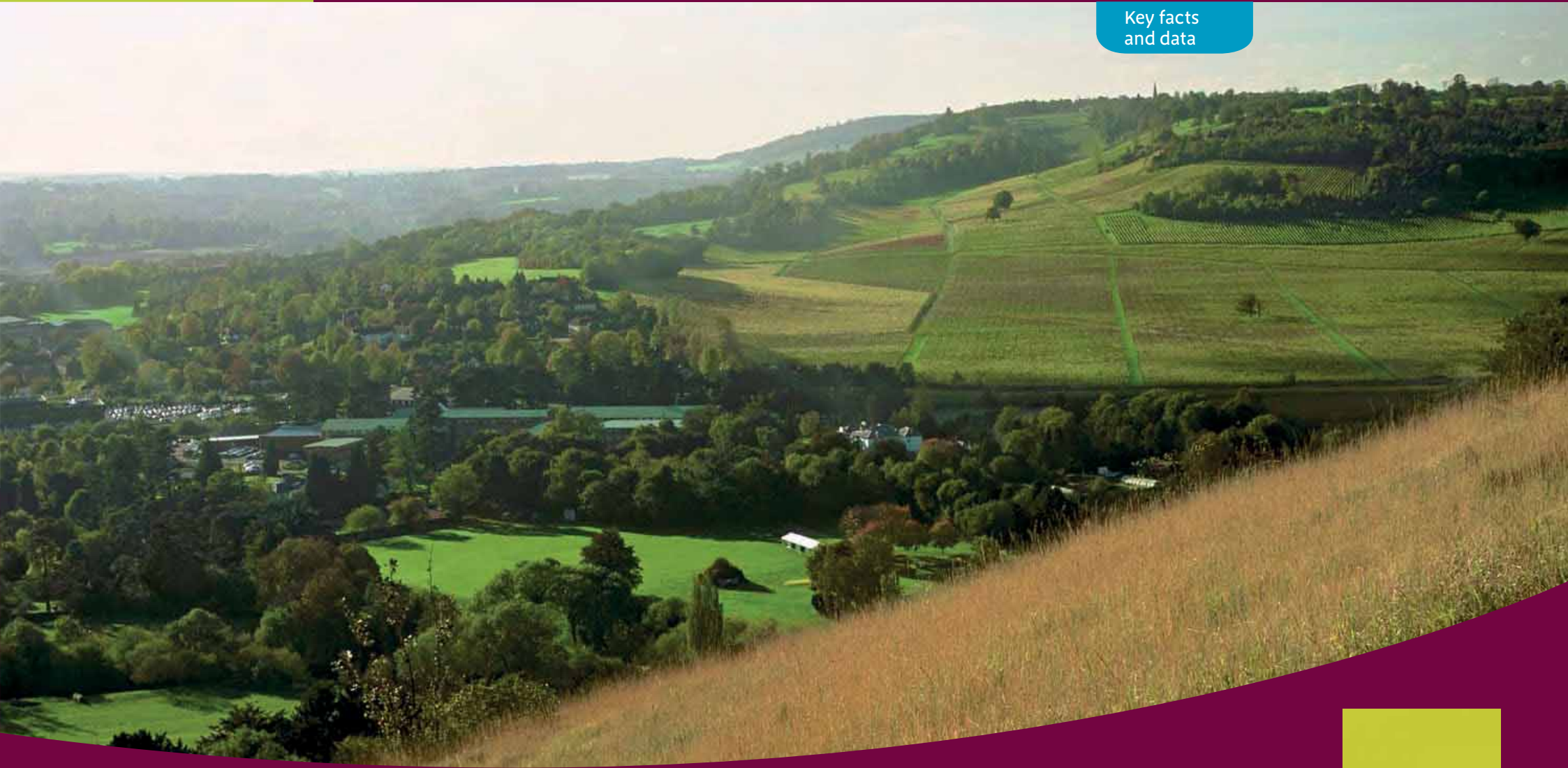
DATE TAKEN: NOV 2016

PROJECT NUMBER: 25973

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.1: Extracts from Published Landscape Character Assessments



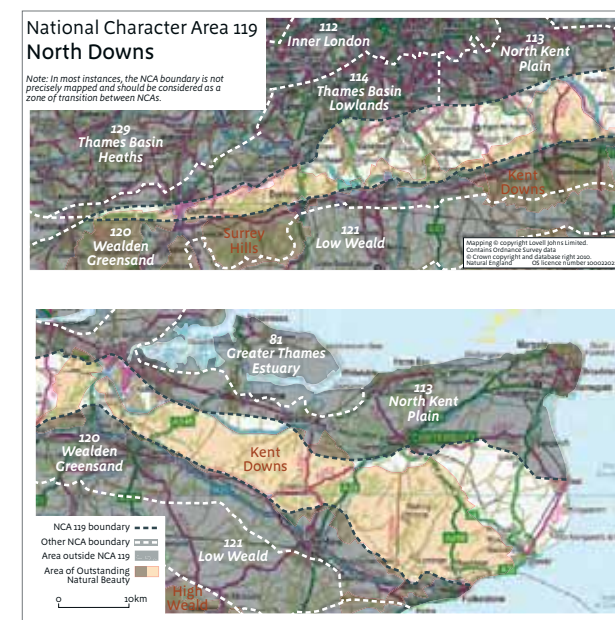
Summary

The North Downs National Character Area (NCA) forms a chain of chalk hills extending from the Hog's Back in Surrey and ending dramatically at the internationally renowned White Cliffs of Dover. The settlement pattern is characterised by traditional small, nucleated villages, scattered farms and large houses with timber framing, flint walls and Wealden brick detailing. Twisting sunken lanes, often aligned along ancient drove roads, cut across the scarp and are a feature of much of the dip slope. The Kent Downs and Surrey Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations are testament to the scenic qualities and natural beauty of the area.

Agriculture is an important component of the landscape, with variations in soils supporting mixed farming practices where arable, livestock and horticulture have co-existed for centuries. The woodlands, many of which are ancient, are a prominent feature of the landscape, yet their ecological value has suffered in recent years due to a reduction in active management, particularly of mixed coppice, since the 1990s. Two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are designated for their rare woodland compositions. Chalk grassland is particularly notable, with seven SAC designated for chalk grassland interest including outstanding assemblages of rare orchids. The chalk downland habitats support rare species, including the late spider orchid – wholly restricted to Kent – and the black-veined moth and straw belle moth which are currently found only within the North Downs.

The North Downs are cut by the valleys of the Stour, Medway, Darent, Wey and Mole with their associated wetland habitats. The chalk aquifer of the North Downs is important for supplying water within Kent and to London.

The coast is of international significance with an SAC designation due to the presence of rare maritime cliff communities found within the cliff face and on cliff-tops. Two stretches of the coast are recognised as Heritage Coast: South Foreland and Dover to Folkestone. An outstanding range of historical and geological features are found along the coast, including Dover Castle and the White Cliffs with their strong cultural associations. Other historical features, including numerous Scheduled Ancient Monuments and buildings dating from the medieval period, are scattered throughout.



Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

More urban-fringe influence and modern development is associated with the land fringing Croydon, Purley and south London in the western part of the downs, with Dorking, Redhill and Guildford located on the fringes of the NCA. In the east, Dover is the main settlement, but the Medway towns of Rochester and Chatham and the town of Folkestone also lie on the periphery of the NCA. Other towns, including Maidstone, Ashford and Sevenoaks,

and the city of Canterbury, although within adjacent NCAs, lie close to the boundary. Views from the eastern scarp are dominated by generally undeveloped landscapes much valued by visitors, with outstanding views across the Vale of Holmesdale to the Weald and from many parts of the downs to France. These views are affected to varying degrees by the Channel Tunnel terminal development and the M25 and M20 corridors.

Development pressures and agricultural practices continue to be forces for change throughout the NCA; high-quality and well managed green infrastructure both within and surrounding the NCA could help to service the demands of a growing population, a changing climate and increased pressures on natural resources, including the chalk aquifer, critical for water provision. Opportunities to create more robust and resilient ecological networks across the agricultural landscape should be maximised, working in partnership to secure positive environmental outcomes. The natural and cultural assets of the NCA support food production, regulation of water and soils, biodiversity, recreation, tranquillity, sense of place and sense of history.



Chalk grassland is an important component of the North Downs NCA supporting a range of wildlife.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs, including the long-established settlement pattern, ancient routeways and traditional buildings. Protect the tranquillity of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area's rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations.
- **SEO 2:** Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs, for their internationally and nationally important habitats and species, cultural heritage and recreational value and to help to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Seek opportunities to establish local markets for timber and biomass to support the active management of local woods, while recognising their contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquillity.
- **SEO 3:** Manage and enhance the productive mixed farming landscape of the North Downs and the mosaic of semi-natural habitats including the internationally important chalk grassland. Promote sustainable agricultural practices to benefit soils, water resources, climate regulation, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character while maintaining food provision.
- **SEO 4:** Plan to deliver integrated, well-managed multi-functional green space in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness, particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the North Downs.



Children enjoy the extensive views from Wye NNR across adjoining NCAs. The NCA offers opportunities for access and education.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The North Downs National Character Area (NCA) borders the Wealden Greensand NCA to the south, while to the north it borders the Thames Basin Lowlands NCA between Farnham and Purley, and the North Kent Plain NCA in west, mid and east Kent. The scarp forms a defining feature along the length of the NCA and panoramic views provide links with adjoining NCAs and beyond. Views across London, the Thames Estuary and to the south help provide the context and setting of this NCA.



The steep scarp slope provides extensive views over adjacent NCAs as shown here in Surrey.

The catchments of the rivers Wey, Mole and Darent drain through valleys dissecting the downs from the Wealden Greensand in the south to the Thames in the north, while further east the River Medway runs north to the Thames Estuary and the Stour runs north-east to the Kent coastline. Flooding is an issue along localised stretches of the rivers and activities within the NCA may have the potential to exacerbate or alleviate downstream flooding in adjacent NCAs. The chalk bedrock supports a principal aquifer which supplies water to both London and Kent. Spring flow from the Chalk is an important feed for the internationally designated habitats of the north Kent marshes and the Thames Estuary.

Coastal processes link NCAs and the construction of harbours at Dover and Folkestone has prevented any continuing sediment transport around South Foreland, but there is a moderate northwards movement of shingle into the North Kent Plain NCA coast. The role of this sediment supply in the development and denudation of beaches has a critical influence on the rate of coastal erosion. The proximity of this NCA to mainland Europe is notable, with the significant activity at the Port of Dover allowing for the passage of goods and people between England and the rest of Europe.

The M20 runs from Folkestone and Ashford along the southern boundary of the NCA until it cuts across to London. The M2/A2 skirts the northern boundary, connecting Dover and Canterbury to Chatham and south and east London. High Speed 1 (the Channel Tunnel Rail Link) has reduced the travel time by rail between Dover and London.

Key characteristics

- Cretaceous Chalk forms the backbone of the North Downs. A distinctive chalk downland ridge rises up from the surrounding land, with a steep scarp slope to the south providing extensive views across Kent, Surrey and Sussex and across the Channel seascape to France.
- The broad dip slope gradually drops towards the Thames and the English Channel, affording extensive views across London and the Thames Estuary. The carved topography provides a series of dry valleys, ridges and plateaux.
- Chalk soils are predominant across the NCA but the upper part of the dip slope is capped by extensive clay-with-flint deposits. Patches of clay and sandy soils also occur with coombe deposits common in dry valleys.
- The North Downs end at the dramatic White Cliffs of Dover, one of the country's most distinctive and famous landmarks. Most of the coast between Kingsdown and Folkestone is unprotected, allowing for natural processes. The cliffs are home to internationally important maritime cliff-top and cliff-ledge vegetation.
- The area is cut by the deep valleys of the Stour, Medway, Darent, Wey and Mole. The river valleys cut through the chalk ridge, providing distinctive local landscapes which contrast with the steep scarp slope.

- The south-facing scarp is incised by a number of short, bowl-shaped dry valleys, cut by periglacial streams and often referred to as combes. The undulating topography of the dip slope has also been etched by streams and rivers, today forming dry valleys, some of which carry winterbournes that occasionally flow in the dip slope, depending on the level of the chalk aquifer.



The fertile and lighter soils of the footslopes and valley bottoms support arable farming.

Key characteristics continued

- The footslope of the escarpment supports arable cropping, the dominant land use within the NCA. In the east, the richer, loamy soils of the lower dip slope support large tracts of mixed arable and horticultural production.
- Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes of the scarp, valley sides and areas of the dip slope capped with clay-with-flints. Well-wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing to a strongly wooded character. Much of the woodland is ancient.
- Tracts of species-rich chalk grassland and patches of chalk heath are important downland habitats and of international importance.
- Ancient paths, drove roads and trackways, often sunken, cross the landscape and are a distinctive feature of the dip slope. Defensive structures such as castles, hill forts and Second World War installations, and historic parks, buildings and monuments are found throughout.
- Small, nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads including oasts and barns form the settlement pattern, with local flint, chalk and Wealden brick the vernacular materials.
- In the western part of the area, around and to the west of Sevenoaks and into Surrey, there is increased urban development.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs, including the long-established settlement pattern, ancient routeways and traditional buildings. Protect the tranquillity of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area's rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations.

For example, by:

- Conserving the downland settlement pattern of nucleated villages, irregular fields and scattered farmsteads linked by a network of narrow, winding lanes and characteristic sunken 'hollow ways' through appropriate planning policies and development management, and in particular promotion of Kent Downs and Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) design guides.
- Protecting from damage the rich and varied heritage of historic buildings, settlements and sites dating from the prehistoric period onwards, including iron-age hill forts, defensive coastline installations and traditional farmsteads, and improving management, access to and sensitive interpretation of historic features.
- Improving management of historic parklands and any associated key habitats such as ancient and veteran trees, ancient woodland and species-rich grassland. Works such as successional planting, coppicing or reversion of arable back to grassland should be prioritised and informed by assessment of the historic design and significance of parkland.

Continued on next page...



The NCA has a number of heritage assets including the megalithic remains at Kit's Coty as shown here.

SEO 1: Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs, including the long-established settlement pattern, ancient routeways and traditional buildings. Protect the tranquillity of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area's rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations.

... continued from previous page

- Conserving and appropriately managing ancient trackways such as the North Downs Way National Trail which links Dover and Guildford, and the Pilgrims' Way which links Canterbury and Winchester; and working across sectors to promote and strengthen the network through high-quality interconnecting routes, increasing the benefits of these routes for biodiversity, health and local businesses.
- Using AONB design guidance and understanding of the area's traditional and historic architecture, and its distinct local materials (flint, chalk, brick, timber and tiles) and patterns of settlement, to inform appropriate conservation and use of historic buildings, and to plan for and inspire any new development which makes a positive contribution to local character.
- Seeking opportunities to minimise the impact of new developments, including visual intrusion, disturbance and noise, on the tranquillity and beauty of the countryside. Green infrastructure planning should be maximised for its multiple benefits and best practice should be shared locally.
- Working in partnership with Kent Downs and Surrey Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to identify management opportunities in accordance with their respective management plans¹².
- Seeking to increase awareness and maximising the potential of the various historic, natural and cultural assets, improving access to and interpretation of sites and features, including the world-renowned White Cliffs of Dover, as a platform for enhanced education and to enthuse local communities, linking them with their local geology, wildlife and cultural and historic environments. At the same time there is a need to recognise and manage the impact of increased visitor numbers on sensitive sites.

¹² Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009–2014, Surrey Hills Board (2009); Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009–2014, Kent Downs AONB Unit (2009)

SEO 2: Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs, for their internationally and nationally important habitats and species, cultural heritage and recreational value and to help to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Seek opportunities to establish local markets for timber and biomass to support the active management of local woods, while recognising the contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquillity.

For example, by:

- Supporting the sustainable re-establishment of coppice management to appropriate areas of woodland, where this will improve biodiversity interest while providing a local resource including wood fuel.
- Seeking to work in partnership to aid co-ordinated conservation management, particularly where there are woodlots. Managing all woodlands as single entities aimed at benefiting the whole wood, its biodiversity, its contribution to landscape character, and the provision of community and other benefits where appropriate.
- Supporting existing markets and encouraging new markets for the products of native woodland underwood and timber. This will provide the market driver to encourage and maintain viable and sustainable woodland management.
- Encouraging the positive management of open habitats and spaces, such as rides and glades, for their landscape, biodiversity and cultural benefits, especially where they will support rare species, such as Duke of Burgundy fritillary. Maintaining an appropriate balance of well-structured woodland and transitional and open habitats will produce a mixed structure of tree species and stand age, benefiting biodiversity.
- Working to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance of woodlands, including the impacts of harmful activities and inappropriate management. Utilising the woodland resource for education, appropriate recreation and research, furthering our understanding of the role of woodlands in a changing climate.
- Ensuring that the North Downs Woodland and Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Areas of Conservation attain and retain favourable conservation status as an element of the Natura 2000 network. Also, ensuring that the woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable condition and that local sites are in positive management.
- Protecting and expanding the existing urban tree resource, recognising its multiple benefits, including its role in climate change mitigation.
- Targeting the expansion and re-linking of existing semi-natural woodland, benefiting biodiversity and landscape, where it can re-connect isolated woodland blocks and help to prevent soil erosion and nutrient run-off (where this does not result in loss of existing important habitats such as chalk grassland). Taking into account future climate change, looking to enhance the coherence and resilience of woodlands, hedgerows, trees and other habitats to create robust networks of woody and open semi-natural habitats.
- Creating new areas of broadleaved woodland, where it accords with the landscape character of the area, helping to maintain tranquillity while providing a local recreational resource and further source of wood fuel and high-quality timber products.
- Encouraging conservation management of game woodlands as promoted by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and sharing best practice locally, as shown in the Kent Downs AONB game management guidance.

Continued on next page...

SEO 2: Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs, for their internationally and nationally important habitats and species, cultural heritage and recreational value and to help to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Seek opportunities to establish local markets for timber and biomass to support the active management of local woods, while recognising the contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquillity.

... continued from previous page

- Recognising and managing the risks of tree diseases and woodland pests, taking co-ordinated conservation action to safeguard the woodland resource, and considering the close vicinity to the continent from where diseases can spread.
- Conserving ancient and veteran trees within the landscape for the benefit of species that depend upon them, and for their heritage value and contribution to a sense of place. Planning and implementing a programme to develop the next generation of hedgerow trees and future veterans, choosing appropriate species and taking into account their resilience to climate change.
- Ensuring that populations of deer are managed to reduce the damage caused to the natural regeneration of woodland (and woodland flora). High populations will have major impacts on ancient woodland flora and coppice management.



Wood chipping in action. The woodland resource provides an excellent opportunity for biomass energy in the form of wood chip.

SEO 4: Plan to deliver integrated, well-managed multi-functional green space in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness, particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the North Downs.

For example, by:

- Creating high-quality, well-managed accessible natural green space within and surrounding urban areas as part of comprehensive green infrastructure planning, providing significant local recreational opportunities that meet the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) while benefiting health and wellbeing and providing habitats and green space linkages, increasing the permeability of the urban landscape to biodiversity and building on existing networks.
- Improving water quality by careful design to address the potential issues of pollution and contamination by run-off and leakage through water pathways. Creating new wetlands as part of sustainable drainage systems, helping to provide flood alleviation. In addition, creating extensive reedbeds where potentially polluted waters enter these wetlands to filter out pollutants and provide benefits for water quality.
- Promoting the use of London's existing frameworks to inform the design of new landscapes associated with new development and green infrastructure within Greater London, including implementation of the All London Green Grid.
- Maintaining the existing downland character as a setting for new development (where allocated and approved), ensuring that this does not impact adversely on the special qualities of the designated landscapes, conserving the tranquillity and geodiversity of the area through planning and sympathetic design, in particular minimising light spill and traffic noise to retain the 'undisturbed' feel of parts of the NCA and enhancing local landscape character.
- Promoting the use of sustainable and locally sourced materials, vernacular building techniques and styles, and existing landscape character to inform design and ensure integration with the surrounding landscape.
- Targeted planting of woodland and trees surrounding existing and new development and major transport corridors where appropriate within the existing context, helping to provide climate change adaptation and mitigation, flood alleviation, landscape character and biodiversity benefits.
- Identifying opportunities for community involvement in projects through design and implementation to foster ownership, involvement and support of local communities and to help to create environments which improve the lives, livelihoods and health of local people and communities.
- Planning schemes which connect to or incorporate an existing or planned low carbon transport network, such as walking and cycling routes.
- Developing a strategic approach to green infrastructure across the NCA and its boundaries to take account of the existing urban areas and proximity of the NCA to areas of growth, planning a network of green spaces in the urban and urban fringe areas and adjacent countryside.

Supporting document 2: Landscape change

Recent changes

Trees and woodlands

- Opportunities for further strengthening of woodland character were identified by the Countryside Quality Counts research (2003); in particular, extensive areas of broadleaved woodland, especially in the west, mid and east Kent Downs were identified as in need of active management, especially by rotational coppice.
- There has been an increased interest in wood fuel initiatives within the NCA and particularly in both the Kent and Surrey AONB with projects aiming to create local markets for wood fuel. These have the potential and are already helping to get unmanaged woodlands back into management with re-establishment of coppicing cycles¹³. There appears to have been an uplift in wood fuel markets. In addition, there has been resurgence in interest in other wood products such as those derived from cleft chestnut.
- Tree diseases and pests are an increasing threat to the woodlands of the NCA including the ash dieback, oak processionary moth and Phytophthora ramorum.
- While it is difficult to quantify there is a perception that deer populations have increased. This can have implications for native woodland flora and for re-establishing and maintaining coppice cycle in woodlands, due to browsing of re-growth.

Boundary features

- The total length of countryside stewardship capital agreements between 1999 and 2003 was equivalent to around 3 per cent of the total estimated NCA boundary length of 8,613 km. As of March 2011, 864 km of hedgerows were managed under environmental stewardship schemes, equivalent to 10 per cent of the total estimated NCA boundary length. It should be noted that CSS options related to restoration and creation of boundary features, whereas environmental stewardship has included maintenance options on existing hedgerows.
- Some hedgerows have developed gaps, become overgrown or been lost with corresponding impacts on local landscape character.
- Roadside boundaries are notable given the number of flower-rich roadside verges, these are a particular feature in the NCA and conservation efforts have resulted in new roadside verge habitats being created and appropriately managed in the last 10 years.

¹³ Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Management Plan 2009 – 2014, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Management Plan, 2009- 2014

Agriculture

- The landscape's mixed farming character is supported by figures on farm type from recent agricultural data which shows a mix of livestock, cereals and horticultural holdings. Between 2000 and 2009 there were reductions in the area of land recorded under fruit, cash roots, stock feed, vegetables and grass and uncropped land but with increases in oilseeds and other arable crops. There was also a corresponding reduction in the numbers of livestock recorded during this period.
- While data and evidence is currently lacking at the NCA level, it is likely that changes in horticultural production methods such as the use of polytunnels has increased, driven by market changes in the United Kingdom soft fruit sector.
- In the last 10 years there have been increased opportunities through agri-environment schemes to integrate a range of conservation measures into the farmed landscape. These have included habitats for rare arable plants, farmland bird options and management of chalk and neutral grasslands.
- Highly convenient and commutable distances to London have put pressure on land and house prices, particularly in Surrey. In some instances a move towards recreational land uses are replacing agricultural uses in parts of the NCA.

Settlement and development

- Countryside Quality Counts research assessed the changes in settlement and development between 1998 and 2003. At this time the area was considered to have a high share of the national build outside of existing urban and fringe areas. There was evidence of expansion into the peri-urban around Caterham along with more dispersed settlement along the M25 corridor, especially

south of Biggin Hill, around Swanscombe and Northfleet, along the A228 south of Rochester and the A249 and around Hawkinge in the east. It was also considered that development associated with the M2 had impacted locally.

- Since 2003 development has continued to have an impact with significant new developments completed or proposed within or on the boundaries of the NCA, including at Ashford, Thames Gateway, Maidstone, Guildford, Purley, South London and Dover where major housing allocation is identified in the Whitfield urban expansion. This NCA is subject to the impacts of significant development pressures outside the NCA boundaries and within its setting.
- High Speed 1, the first high speed rail project in the UK, was fully completed in 2007 and runs through part of the NCA. The route connects London with the Channel Tunnel. Other improvements to the existing road network have also taken place, with the M20, M25 and M2 all running through the NCA at some point.
- Dover Harbour Board operates Europe's biggest roll-on roll-off ferry port for both freight and passenger traffic. There are proposals for expansion in capacity¹⁴.

Semi-natural habitat

- Agri-environment schemes have resulted in the enhancement and creation of semi-natural habitats. Most notable for this NCA is the maintenance, restoration and creation of species rich semi-natural grassland associated with the calcareous grassland resource. Other areas of grassland interest will have been captured under HLS options for target species and entry level options where grasslands are managed under low and very low inputs.

¹⁴ Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011 – 2016, Kent County Council

- Of the 51 SSSI, 96.7 per cent are in favourable or unfavourable recovering position. This percentage has increased as a result of continued efforts to improve favourability of sites.
- Partnership work over recent years has been successful in securing habitat benefits. These include restoration and re-creation of chalk and neutral grasslands with wildflower hay/seed spreading and landscape scale approaches to habitat restoration. Landscape Partnership Schemes have had a positive impact in the area securing benefits for a range of habitats including chalk grassland and grazing marsh.
- The outputs from the ARCH (Assessing Regional Habitat Change) project should be used for a review of the habitats in Kent and the most recent habitat data and trends. Please note this information is only available for Kent and does not include areas of the NCA that fall into Surrey¹⁵.

Historic features

- In 1918, around 7 per cent of the NCA was historic parkland (in terms of the share of the resource the area was ranked 9). An estimated 52 per cent was lost by 1995 with about 25 per cent of the remaining parkland covered by a Historic Parkland Grant. In 2003 around 30 per cent was included within agri-environment schemes. Parkland has been identified as a priority within this NCA based on original extent within the landscape and subsequent rates of loss¹⁶.
- In 2006 it was recorded that there is a high proportion of listed working farm buildings converted to non-agricultural use (41.9 per cent, the national average being 32 per cent)¹⁷ in this National Character Area.

- Since the introduction of Environmental Stewardship (ES) schemes in 2005, options and standard capital items have been targeted at historic features and include the restoration and maintenance of parkland including the restoration of parkland structures such as ice houses, parkland railing and buildings. Parklands have also been captured under Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) or Countryside Stewardship (CSS) options, although those options may not always directly relate to management of the historic aspects of the parkland. Gains have also been made through taking archaeological features out of cultivation and securing low depth cultivations on archaeological features.
- Two sites within the NCA (Belvedere, and Western Heights fortifications) have both been identified on the Priority Heritage at Risk Sites 2012¹⁸.
- The NCA has a number of heritage assets. Sites within the NCA are identified on the Heritage at Risk Register¹⁹ with neglect, decay or inappropriate change still presenting threats to heritage assets. However, a number of sites which were previously identified on the register have been restored under Environmental Stewardship.

¹⁵ For more information on the ARCH project visit URL: <http://www.archnature.eu/>

¹⁶ English Heritage, 2006

¹⁷ North Downs, Farmstead Character Assessment, English Heritage.

¹⁸ Heritage at risk 2012, Priority Sites, English Heritage URL: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/priority-har-sites-2012/>

¹⁹ Heritage at Risk Register, English Heritage: URL: <http://risk.english-heritage.org.uk/register.aspx>

Coast and rivers

- Recent data using Water Framework Directive methods indicates that most of the rivers are of moderate ecological status and potential, but notably of poor status in the Great Stour (a Defra priority catchment), while chemical quality is variable²⁰.
- Samphire Hoe was opened to the public in 1997 and is a new piece of land that was created using spoil from the construction of the Channel Tunnel. It is a 30 ha site at the foot of Shakespeare Cliff surrounded by a protective sea wall. This land has developed in wildlife interest and is a recreational resource.
- Flood defence work is occurring along the coast at Deal with a rock revetment at the Castle end of the beach. Shingle recharge and a low sea wall in the town of Deal are currently underway.

Minerals

- A history of chalk quarrying has had an important impact on the downs scarp face and there are still a number of small-scale quarrying activities in the North Downs. The legacy of past quarrying has left some non-active quarries in the Kent part of the NCA but these are not identified in the Kent Minerals Plan to be reopened. There have been proposals for new sites and the extension of existing sand working sites and primary aggregates within the NCA and its setting in Kent and Surrey. For more information refer to the Kent Minerals Plan²¹ and Surrey Minerals and Waste Development Framework²².

Drivers of change

Climate change

- The UKCP09 climate change projections suggest that by 2050 there may be an increase of winter mean temperature of 2.2°C, an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8°C and a change in precipitation distribution, with a decrease of 19 per cent in summer and increase of 16 per cent in the winter throughout the south-east (central estimate under a medium emissions scenario, UKCP09)²³.
- The predicted changes in sea levels and increased storminess may lead to accelerated coastal processes and increased erosion at the coast. This could have impacts on biodiversity, geodiversity, recreation and the heritage along the coastline as well as impacts on areas adjacent to the Tidal Medway.
- Summer droughts may lead to an increase in water demand for crop growth and may also affect aquifer recharge, having implications for water resources, especially in meeting the demands of a growing population and maintaining flows of the chalk rivers. Equally, more intense winter rainfall may increase soil erosion and reduce effective rainfall for aquifer recharge, increasing river pollution and sedimentation and increasing stress on already over abstracted aquifers.

²⁰ River Basin Management Plan, Thames River Basin District, Annex A, Current state of waters, 2009

²¹ Kent Minerals and Waste Development Framework, Scheme 2010-2014, Kent County Council: URL http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_in_kent/minerals_and_waste/mineral_sites_document/preferred_options/mineral_sites.aspx

²² Surrey Minerals Plan 2011, Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2011 URL: http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/177259/Adopted-Core-Strategy-Development-Plan-Document.pdf

²³ UK Climate Projections science report: Climate Change projections, 2010

- Changes might affect species migration or local extinction and loss or deterioration of small or isolated habitats such as chalk grassland on the steep sections of the scarp. This may make the re-creation of chalk grassland habitats, particularly on the more gentle slopes of the scarp foot and the less steep sections of the scarp, increasingly important to help mitigate effects of climate change on the steeper south facing slopes.
- The resilience of woodlands and trees in the NCA may be increasingly important as the climate changes, in terms of their role in providing a source of low carbon fuel and in terms of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. The composition of the woodlands may be affected due to pests and diseases and there may be direct tree loss due to the changing climatic conditions, with impacts on associated woodland biodiversity.
- Climate change may result in changes to the type of crops which are grown with changes in land management in response to climate change potentially impacting on biodiversity and landscape character.
- Water resources within the NCA are likely to be impacted on by future climate change with potential implications for the North Downs chalk aquifer.
- Climate change may result in greater instances of flooding.
- A requirement for a greater proportion of energy generation from renewable sources could result in increased pressure for; wind turbines, either within the NCA or its setting; photovoltaic solar arrays, either within or affecting the NCA's setting; and the growth of biomass crop production.

Other key drivers

- Development pressures offer a challenge but where permitted it will be important to maximise opportunities for landscape and ecological enhancements through delivery of priority habitats and greenspace. The topography of the North Downs means that housing developments or industrial activities may be particularly visible from the escarpment and developments within the setting of both AONB create particular challenges. Well planned green infrastructure which strengthens or restores landscape character alongside an expansion of ecological and environmental functionality, integrated with socio-economic improvement within and reaching out from urban areas can help mitigate climate change and provide other ecosystem benefits for people and biodiversity.
- Major development at Dover including Whitfield Urban expansion, which when complete will include 5,750 new homes and associated infrastructure, including widening of the A2, will increase the impact of the urban fringe on local landscape character. In the east. Equally in the west there are significant development pressures in Surrey. Increased development may cause associated urban fringe and suburban pressures including increased traffic and recreational activities on sensitive and vulnerable sites and habitats.
- Continuing conversion of farm buildings to residential and commercial uses is expected especially if there is an increase in farm diversification potentially impacting on sense of place and history.

- The North Downs NCA is particularly close to large centres of population and planned housing developments either within or in adjacent NCAs may generate additional recreational pressures, this provides both challenges but also opportunities for good quality greenspace provision. An integrated approach to recreation management will be required especially to mitigate threats to key biodiversity sites including European sites.
- New markets, changing climate and increased pressure for food production is likely to have an effect on existing agricultural practices and land use. Changes in climate may result in opportunities for the growth of new crops such as vines, especially given the south-east location and topography of the NCA. Changes in horticultural production could also result in changes to the farmed landscape, for example through the increased use of polytunnels or glass houses.
- Landscape-scale partnerships have already delivered benefits for habitats, species and people but there is potential to deliver more and across a larger area to create robust ecological networks and place the NCA in the best place possible to respond to future challenges.
- Any new transport infrastructure which links to existing major route ways, within and adjacent to the NCA may have an impact depending upon the chosen option.
- Future water resource issues are likely to have an impact on the NCA. The chalk aquifer is an important source of water and is likely to come under increasing pressure. It will be important to work in partnership and across sectors to help safeguard the water resources.
- Woodland economics and establishing markets for wood fuel and high quality timber products could be critical for securing sustainable management of the woodland resource. There is potential to manage woodlands for their multiple benefits, addressing the threats of pests, diseases, inappropriate or poorly managed recreation and wood-lotting. Effective management and a co-ordinated approach to woodland management will also help with resilience to climate change.
- Expansion or increase in poorly managed equine developments would have impacts on the NCA. It will be important to promote best practice management guidance.
- The location of this NCA, close to the continent and with good links through the ports with significant trade, travel, tourism and transport connections means that the likelihood of new species being found here and the possibility of some of them proving to be invasive is quite high.

Photo credits

Front cover: Box Hill, on the North Downs Way National Trail with unimproved grassland in the foreground. The NCA is renowned for its far reaching views from the scarp. © Natural England/McCoy Wynne & Associates

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The Landscape Assessment of Kent

October 2004



MEDWAY VALLEY



A corridor of flat, open landscape bordering the river Medway from Penshurst in the south up to Nettlestead close to the Greensand, but one of considerable interest for its complex network of small streams and ditches.

Generally the scene is one of large fields of vegetables, grain and occasional hops, but with pastures and damp copses locally significant. Many hedges have been removed, including those along the roadsides, which can give the landscape an exposed feel. The river can at times be traced in the landscape by the small groups of willow along its edge but many have been removed to aid mechanisation.

Neither woodlands, orchards or settlement are characteristic of the floodplain because of the traditional risk of flooding, although locally these land uses do occur. Standing water is common, both as small ponds, such as those at the East Peckham Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), and in the large reservoir at Haysden, built for flood alleviation but which is also a haven for overwintering birds.

The functional unity of the landscape is being changed from that of the traditional wet meadows, hedged and grazed, to open, larger fields of leafy vegetables and other arable crops that were once confined to the better drained soils of the Fruit Belt.

Visual harmony is disturbed by the large areas of the monochromatic blue - greens of the vegetable crops with the incomplete or lost hedges creating a neglected air.

Tonbridge has spread mainly on the higher land with better drained soils, to avoid the frequent flooding in the past, leaving many parts of the valley free from development. The town and its suburbs are now protected from flooding by the Haysden reservoir scheme, but the river is still liable to spill outside its valley into the broader floodplain and the Fruit Belt, especially at its junction with the Bourne and Teise.

The suburbs of Tonbridge, the A21 and railway, and lines of pylons sometimes intrude on the flat, rural scene.

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PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Flat, open, mainly arable landscape.
Few settlements or roads in floodplain due to seasonal flooding.
Historic bridging points.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The area of the Medway Valley within the Low Weald is often incoherent as a river floodplain, appearing as a flat, open arable landscape in many areas. It retains an aura of inaccessibility apart from the historic bridging points, but is well-used for industrial and commercial purposes, and gravel workings. Arable fields run to the edge of river banks, and flood defences define the river. There is little transitional land from river to farmland. Where there are commercial properties, these dominate the river bank. Scrub and riparian vegetation grow in a limited natural corridor and in regenerative groups around mineral works.

Sensitivity

In a landscape which historically has little or no settlement, the dominant elements in this landscape are comparatively recent such as commercial buildings, post and wire enclosures and the embanked dual carriageway. The river flows through an unremarkable landform with open views over in cohesive land uses. The tree cover is sparse and this raises the sensitivity of the area to 'moderate'.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Create areas of gentle transition from the river on the lower contours to the rural landscape on the upper contours. Encourage the regeneration of riparian vegetation, especially around junctions of streams and tributaries, allowing some wetland to develop. Encourage sympathetic farming practices especially in areas immediately adjacent to the river. Restore some natural areas of the river floodplain and tributaries, creating a wider river corridor.
Restore seasonal accessibility to designated areas of the floodplain, possibly in association with the development of commercial land use and natural habitats.
Identify areas of unmanaged land, or land managed unsympathetically to the context of the floodplain, and agree a code of land use.
Create containment to existing urban edges by using riparian landscape elements and existing natural features such as landform and vegetation. Agree a design code for the distinctive new design of built form and flood defence structures.

CONTEXT

Regional: Low Weald

Condition

| | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| good | REINFORCE | CONSERVE & REINFORCE | CONSERVE |
| moderate | CREATE & REINFORCE | CONSERVE & CREATE | CONSERVE & RESTORE |
| poor | CREATE | RESTORE & CREATE | RESTORE |
| | low | moderate | high |

Sensitivity

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

| Condition | Poor. |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Pattern of elements: | Coherent. |
| Detracting features: | Some. |
| Visual Unity: | Coherent. |
| Cultural integrity: | Poor. |
| Ecological integrity: | Moderate. |
| Functional Integrity: | Weak. |

Sensitivity

| Sensitivity | Moderate. |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Distinctiveness: | Indistinct. |
| Continuity: | Recent. |
| Sense of Place: | Very Weak. |
| Landform: | Apparent |
| Extent of tree cover: | Open |
| Visibility: | High. |

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

RESTORE AND CREATE.

Create areas of transition from the fluvial to the rural landscape
Create wetland areas
Restore riparian vegetation to riverbanks and at fluvial junctions.
Create a design code for commercial properties and flood defence structures.
Create and restore seasonal accessibility to the floodplain
Create a positive land use code
Restore field boundaries and a cohesive land use to the upper contours
Create a new edge to existing urban areas using riparian elements.

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MEDWAY VALLEY LOWER



The Medway Valley divides into two distinctive sub-areas as it cuts first through the high Greensand Ridge, producing a narrow, contained valley, then a broader landscape as it crosses the softer Gault Clay vale and on through the chalk.

The latter is the Medway Valley Lower which is essentially a flat landscape developed on the valley alluviums around the meandering river Medway between the tidal lock at Allington on the Maidstone outskirts to Halling downstream. The landscape extends laterally over a broad area around New Hythe and Aylesford defined by the river deposits, but narrows as the Medway cuts through the chalk which encloses the landscape to the north.

Much of the landscape is a rather untidy sprawl of settlements and industry such as Snodland, New Hythe and Forstal that have developed along the river's flanks, most particularly in the west of the valley. It is distinguished by dramatic mineral sites associated with gravel and clay extraction, either still working as at Ham Hill Sandpits, Snodland, or reclaimed as at the lakes at Leybourne. Amongst the enterprises that traditionally used the river, some remain. Many of these are of an industrial nature, such as scrap metal yards, which inevitably detract from the visual quality of the riverside.

The river itself forms an important and distinctive feature within the character area, much of it being either a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). This includes marshes on the east bank of the Medway at Wouldham, part of which are also in an area of Local Landscape Importance. Here an area of extensive unimproved grassland and reedbeds, divided by dykes, remains under grazing. It is hoped to raise the water levels in some of these dykes to improve their nature conservation value.

At the river's margin, areas of reeds and other common emergents, mudflats and wading birds at low tide contrast strongly with the more industrialised areas to the south.

The lakes at Leybourne are an important site for migrant and breeding birds and are variously used for bird-watching or are stocked for fishermen. On the west bank, the landscape is dominated by housing, industry, pylons and arable farming. Snodland is not distinguished by its architecture and whilst Halling retains an attractive riverside church with long views to the chalk scarp, it is dominated by a mélange of 20th century development. Recent redevelopment of old industrial sites on this bank has intensified the built fabric so that when viewed from the east the impression is of continuous development. Allowance should be made for vegetated buffer zones adjacent to the river, to enhance its aquatic habitats and amenity value.

The quieter stretches of the east bank of the river are used for recreation by children, walkers at the water's edge itself and along the bank-top path that meanders down much of this bank, passing occasional old boats nestling on the peaceful bankside. Pleasure craft occasionally make their way up to Allington lock from the estuary. A general sense of quiet pervades on the river, however, especially at low tide when, for many craft, the river is unnavigable.

Much of the east bank remains a tranquil although degraded landscape. Additional new development is proposed at Peter's Pit, Wouldham and at Eccles. New vehicle and pedestrian bridges are proposed across the river as part of the development brief. The area's current relative isolation is likely to be affected by these proposals.

Recreational pressure may be put on the areas of conservation value. Traffic management measures and accessible public transport may be needed to manage the potential traffic impact on the rural lanes. The development proposals are also likely to be highly visible from the Kent Downs AONB.

A further influence on the river valley landscape would be the imposition of dredging, vegetation clearance and other flood-plain management which may be required around new built development and could be in visual conflict with the local landscape character.

The related aspects of reduced rainfall and increased abstraction of the river water have contributed to the changing face of the lower Medway Valley. Low water levels and variable water quality considerably diminish the amenity and the experience of the waterside and the expansive, spacious tidal flood-plain.

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MEDWAY VALLEY LOWER

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Tidal river with well-developed meanders. Residual unimproved grasslands and reedbeds forming important areas for nature conservation. Well developed industrial mineral and urban sites particularly on the west bank.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

Visual unity is incoherent and there are many detracting features. Views are contained by the surrounding Downs but the wide tidal river valley landscape is fragmented by extensive industrial works, floodplain management structures, new riverside residential developments and valley side quarries. Clusters of habitat include wet pasture reed beds and regenerative scrub, but industrial, residential and quarrying activities fragment the ecological interest overall. Aylesford Priory ragstone and flint churches and historic floodbanks are important heritage features, but field boundaries and tree cover are in poor condition. The built development generally detracts from the landscape, with massive industrial complexes, dramatic chimneys and high density residential areas in highly coloured brick. Overall, this is a landscape in very poor condition.

Sensitivity

The strength of character is weak with a lack of local distinctiveness and, in many areas, only a relatively recent time depth. Landform is an apparent element and the lack of significant tree cover creates a highly visible landscape.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Restoration and creation of unimproved pastures and reed beds should be used to increase the nature conservation potential and naturalistic landscape qualities of the river floodplain. Tree planting proposals need careful consideration to avoid destroying the open character of the landscape. Scrub and hedges may be more appropriate in integrating the built developments into the valley.

Where they are in a manageable context, existing hedgelines should be gapped up and properly maintained. New hedgerow proposals should aim to link existing remnant hedgerows.

Where appropriate, new developments should be sensitively sited and designed to reflect the riverside context.

CONTEXT

Regional: Greensand Belt

Condition

| | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| good | REINFORCE | CONSERVE & REINFORCE | CONSERVE |
| moderate | CREATE & REINFORCE | CONSERVE & CREATE | CONSERVE & RESTORE |
| poor | CREATE | RESTORE & CREATE | RESTORE |
| | low | moderate | high |

Sensitivity

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition

Very Poor.

Pattern of elements: Incoherent.

Detracting features: Many.

Visual Unity: Significantly Interrupted.

Cultural integrity: Variable.

Ecological integrity: Weak.

Functional Integrity: Weak.

Sensitivity

Moderate.

Distinctiveness: Indistinct.

Continuity: Recent.

Sense of Place: Very Weak.

Landform: Apparent

Extent of tree cover: Open

Visibility: High.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

RESTORE AND CREATE.

Restore and create pasture and reed beds
Use scrub and hedgerows to integrate built developments

Gap up and maintain existing hedgerows

Link existing hedgerows with new hedges

Site new developments sensitively

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MEDWAY VALLEY UPPER



The Upper Medway extends from Nettlestead where the river begins its journey through the Greensands to the southern outskirts of Maidstone at Tovil. The deep valley sides that the river has cut through these strata provide one of the most picturesque landscapes of the Medway, notably where it flows beneath the striking historic bridging points.

This stretch of the river forms part of the Medway navigation from the tidal lock at Allington to Leigh near Tonbridge. Perhaps the most important use of the river is for recreation, although before the coming of the railway it was also significant for commercial traffic. Boating, canoeing, and fishing as well as walking dominate the activities. Several moorings and boat yards are available between Watlingbury and Allington.

There is concern that erosion of the banksides by powered vehicles occurs when they are driven at excessive speed and that some owners dispose of untreated effluent and rubbish into the river. Dominance of stretches of the river footpaths by fishermen can also cause conflict with canoeists and wildlife because of the danger of lines and litter.

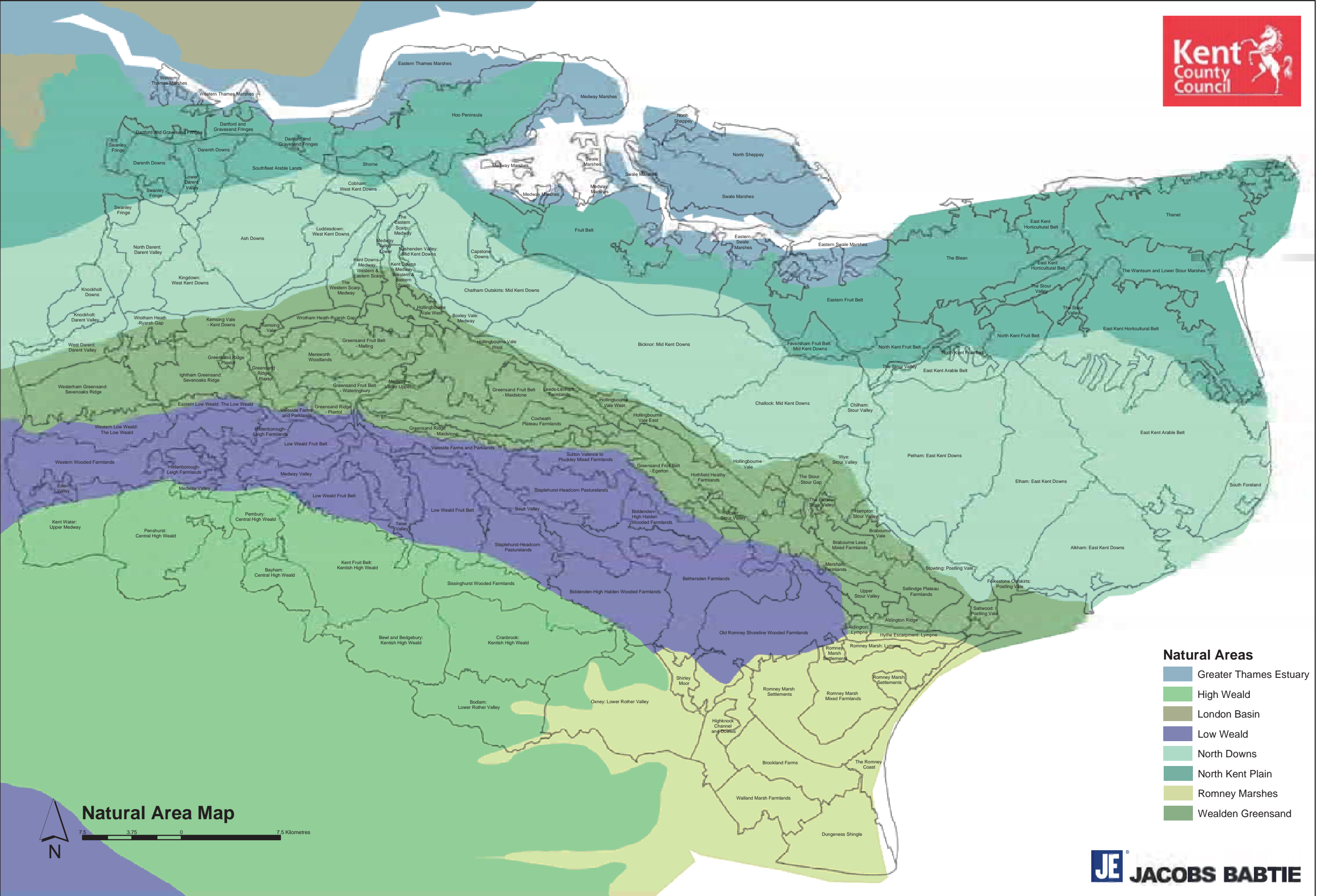
The maintenance of water levels for navigation through the use of locks has resulted in algal blooms and associated water quality problems in past years, particularly in summer.

Further, continued dry summers could result in surface flows becoming more seasonal in the headwater streams that feed the Medway.

Beyond the river channel the landscape has changed markedly over the past thirty years due to the reduction in fruit and hops that are grown, with their distinctive high hedges or windbreaks, and due to the expansion of the suburbs of Maidstone. This has resulted in a reduction in enclosure and visual variety, opening out views to the suburbs.

The land use change has also corresponded to a fragmentation in landholdings, for instance at Tutsham Hall, Court Lodge and Gallant's Farm, and the gentrification of associated buildings such as oast houses, most of which have now been converted for residences. These changes are still progressing, although less dramatically.

[next >>](#)



6.0 HOW WE PRODUCED THE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF KENT

The methodology used to undertake judgments on the landscape assessment is based on the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage's '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance*'.

Local character areas have previously been identified across the county. These are described in the following reports that are collectively referred to as the Landscape Assessment of Kent.

- The High Weald (1994)
- The Kent Downs (1995)
- Thames Gateway, Eastern Swale Marshes and Eastern Fruit Belt (1995)
- The Low Weald Landscape Assessment & Guidelines (1997)
- The Greensand Belt Landscape Assessment & Guidelines (1998)
- North West Kent Landscape Assessment & Guidelines (1998)
- North East Kent Landscape Assessment & Guidelines (1998)
- Romney Marsh Landscape Assessment & Guidelines (1998)

These studies were undertaken over a number of years whilst landscape assessment methodologies were developing and therefore there is a need to bring them together on the same basis. The character areas have been revisited and minor amendments have been made to the boundaries to align with features on the ground to update them to conform to the current guidance. Field Assessment Sheets were then carried out; these have been designed to analyse the component factors of the landscape and to reach a series of decisions on the **Condition** and **Sensitivity** of each character area.

Condition is strongly influenced by the impact of external factors. The assessment of condition evaluates the pattern of the landscape and the presence of incongruous features on the unity of the landscape. It also evaluates how well the landscape functions as a habitat for wildlife and the condition of cultural or 'man-made' elements such as enclosure, built elements and roads. Urban fringe areas are often under pressure that can frustrate other land uses. This often means that these areas are described as being in a poor condition whilst other more remote areas may still have the same basic features but be in a better condition. It is therefore practical to assume that condition may vary throughout a character area so that any conclusions should be regarded as a summary of the overall situation. **Condition** is defined by an analysis of Visual Unity and Functional Integrity and is classified as very poor, poor, moderate, good and very good.

Visual Unity is the result of an analysis of the Pattern of Elements, for example the pattern of vegetation, enclosure, settlement, and the relationship of these to the landform etc., weighed against the number of Detracting Features in the landscape.

Functional Integrity is an assessment of how the landscape functions and considers both the influence of man (Cultural Integrity) and nature (Ecological Integrity).

Sensitivity is a measure of the ability of a landscape to accept change without causing irreparable damage to the essential fabric and distinctiveness of that landscape. The term change refers to both beneficial changes such as a new woodland as well as change that

may be brought about by new land uses. **Sensitivity** is defined by an analysis of Sense of Place and Visibility and ranges from very low through low, moderate, high and to very high.

Sense of Place balances Distinctiveness with Time depth. Distinctiveness is defined by how much the key characteristics contribute to a sense of place. For example in a landscape where hedgerows are a key characteristic if the network is intact the landscape can be described as distinct or 'characteristic'. Some landscapes have features that may be considered unique or rare and these will obviously contribute to a strong sense of place. Time depth ranges from recent, through historic to ancient and reflects how long that landscape has taken to establish. Ancient landscapes are uncommon in Kent but include those that have had very little intervention by man or contain ancient or prehistoric features. Historic landscapes are generally from the medieval period onwards. This is when the pattern of most landscapes in Kent was established and is generally discernible today (although overlain with modern features). Recent landscapes are those where historic elements have been replaced with new elements or land management. They include reclaimed landscapes.

Visibility addresses the issues of Landform and the intercepting feature of Tree cover. For example an open hilltop landscape has a higher visibility than an enclosed lowland landscape.

The conclusions reached regarding each of the character areas are expressed using a matrix that encompasses Condition and Sensitivity. This analysis gives a broad indication of each area's ability to accommodate a change in management or use without loss of overall integrity. The matrix helps to assist in the direction of any policy that might be applied to the land in question.

| | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Condition | good | REINFORCE | CONSERVE & REINFORCE | CONSERVE |
| | moderate | CREATE & REINFORCE | CONSERVE & CREATE | CONSERVE & RESTORE |
| | poor | CREATE | RESTORE & CREATE | RESTORE |
| | | low | moderate | high |
| | | Sensitivity | | |

The combination of condition and sensitivity assessments has generated appropriate actions for each character area:

Although conclusions have been reached for each of the character areas, it is not the purpose of this study to rank one character area against another. Likewise this study is not intended to identify in detail areas suitable for development. It may however offer guidance to both the local planning authority and developers when deciding the type and scale of development that may be appropriate whilst respecting the character of the landscape.

Conserve - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition.

Conserve and reinforce - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, and strengthen and reinforce those features that may be vulnerable.

Reinforce - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape.

Conserve and restore - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst restoring elements or areas in poorer condition and removing or mitigating detracting features.

Conserve and create - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Restore - actions that encourage the restoration of distinctive landscape features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features.

Restore and create - actions that restore distinctive features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Reinforce and create - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Create - actions that create new features or areas where existing elements are lost or in poor condition.

It has to be recognised that whilst the process adopts a complex but logical critique of the landscape many of the individual decisions are still based on the trained but subjective judgments of the assessors. However by simplifying the conclusions into a series of generic actions it is possible to reach informed and well supported judgments on the landscape character.

Actions are offered that are locally appropriate to the character area and respond to the generic actions that have been identified. Many of these actions are not within the remit of the Local Authority to implement directly as they are not responsible for managing the land in most cases. Such references are included with the view to influencing opinions, generating support and guiding policy. In many instances certain forms of land management have a strong influence on the landscape character. These are often dependent on market forces and land management practices for their retention e.g. sheep grazing on marshland and fruit production.

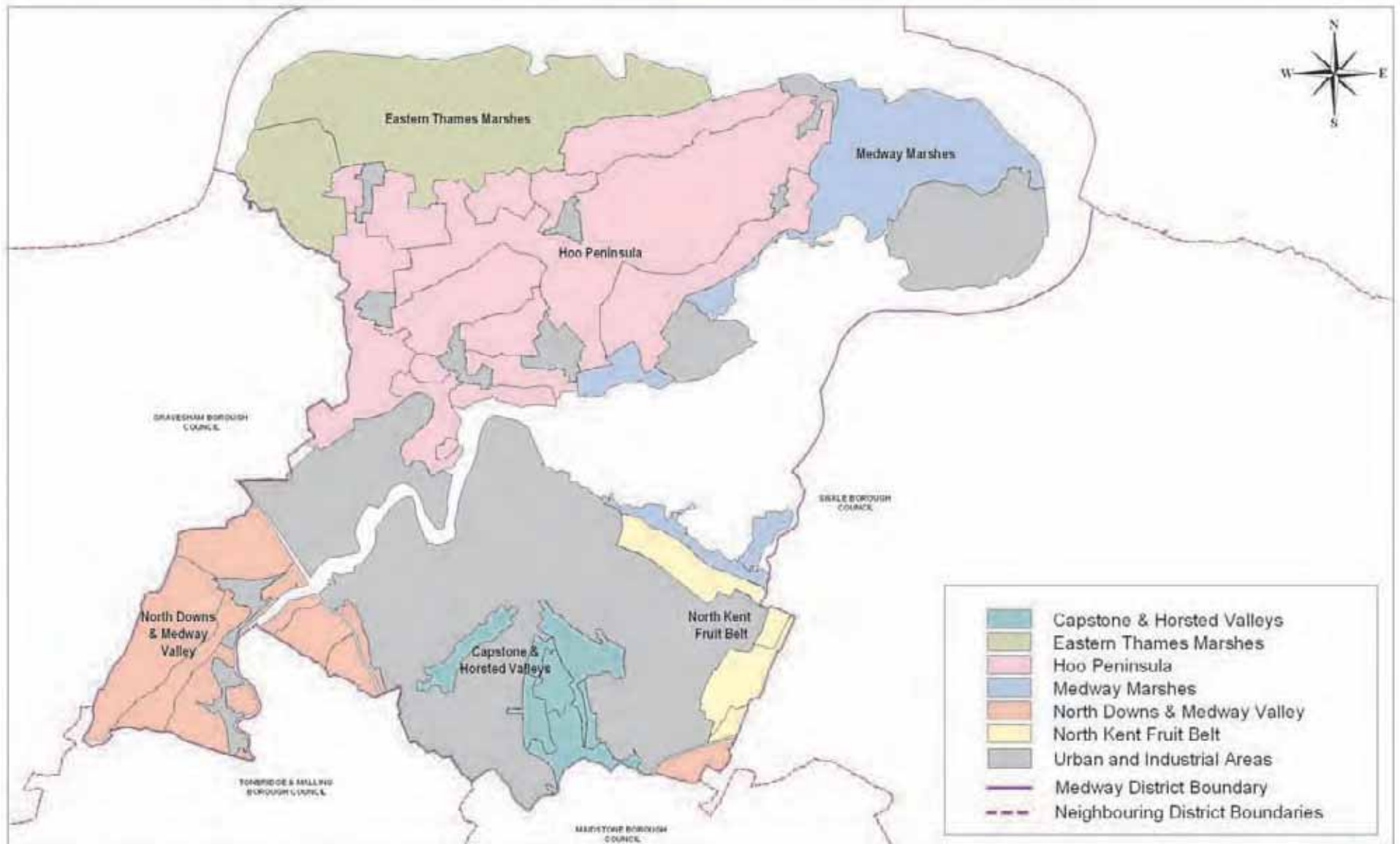


Medway Landscape Character Assessment

March 2011



Principal Landscape Areas



- *Thames Gateway* The Kent Thames Gateway Landscape (KTGLA) – Landscape Assessment and Indicative Landscape Strategy (July 1995)
- *Local* Medway Landscape and Urban Design Framework (LAUD) – Landscape and Townscape Character Assessment (May 2001)

A review by Council Officers of two of these studies (KTGLA and LAUD) concluded that The Kent Thames Gateway Landscape study adopted a more informative

approach and could usefully provide the basis for a new study of the Medway countryside and urban-rural fringe areas. This 1995 study predates current national guidance produced in 2002 (The Landscape Character Approach: Countryside Agency); however the approach taken is broadly within the guidelines. The process of updating and reviewing the Medway LCA has ensured that currently accepted methodologies and guidance have been observed. Natural England are currently preparing an updated LCA guidance document for England.



St Mary's Farmland

Methodology and Analysis

Desk top study

As a first stage, the Kent Thames Gateway Landscape Assessment (KTGLA) character areas and the Medway Landscape and Urban Design Framework (LAUD) character areas were mapped separately as overlays on top of the Landscape Assessment of Kent (KCA) character areas. This identified key relationships and areas of conflict within each study. It also helped to confirm an agreed consensus that the KTGLA was the more useful and appropriate study to form the basis of a new landscape character study. Appendix E illustrates this mapping exercise.

As a second stage the KTGLA character areas were overlaid over a series of maps that included geology, soils, topography and protective designations. This helped in understanding previous decisions related to character area boundaries and provided an opportunity to consider and review these boundaries. Decisions on character area boundaries within Medway to the south of the Thames Gateway area were strongly influenced by the conclusions of the KCA study; proposed boundaries for these areas were also mapped over the geology, soils and other mapping as listed above. In order to address cross boundary issues the Swale, Gravesham and Maidstone Borough Council LCAs were reviewed and face to face meetings took place with officers from Maidstone, Gravesham and Tonbridge and Malling. Tonbridge and Malling do not currently have their own LCA but are in the process of planning to produce one.

Fieldwork

Site survey fieldwork was undertaken between the months of January and March 2009. Some follow-up work took place in the subsequent period – to visit more inaccessible areas, to ratify results and to check conflicts. All visits were undertaken by Medway's Landscape Officer assisted by a Chartered Consultant Landscape Architect. On the few occasions the consultant was unavailable a

technical officer partnered the Landscape Officer. The Landscape Officer visited all character areas.

Site Assessment Methodology

Boundaries were reviewed and principal routes and viewpoints visited within each character area, prior to completion of a site assessment sheet (see Appendix D); this was completed at a carefully selected survey point. The format and approach adopted for these sheets was based on best practice with reference to (1) Countryside Agency guidance and (2) Condition and Sensitivity assessment techniques used for the Landscape Assessment of Kent (as well as Landscape Assessments produced by a number of neighbouring Kent authorities, including Swale, Maidstone and Gravesham). See Appendix C for a summary of the approach taken to assessing Condition and Sensitivity. See Appendix D for an example of a completed survey sheet

Boundaries

It should be noted that boundaries are often indicative of transitional rather than arbitrary zonal change. In different cases they can be defined by man made or natural boundaries – e.g. motorways and roads, industry and settlements, watercourses, woodlands and topography. The boundaries may therefore indicate in different cases an abrupt or more gradual transition from one zone to another.

The site and analysis work gave due consideration to landscape character areas that extended beyond the district boundaries of Medway into neighbouring authorities and this included a review of local Landscape Character Assessments for these authorities (where these existed). All neighbouring authorities have been consulted. As a result of these consultation responses it was decided that character areas boundaries should terminate at the Medway boundary; thereby allowing neighbouring authorities to make final judgements on their own local landscape character area designations.

Landscape types

Landscape types are divided into two broad categories – rural and transitional. These are further sub-divided into types and sub-types. In the Thames Gateway study (KTGLA), areas were identified according to landscape type. Whilst these categories remain, each character area has now been clearly identified by the adoption of a locally distinctive name. A summary of the classification of landscape types can be found in Appendix B.

Content and Structure

Medway's countryside is divided up into a number of distinct landscape areas. These areas broadly match areas identified within The Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004). They form a logical framework which then sub-divide into more detailed landscape character areas. The six principal areas defined within this study are: the Eastern Thames Marshes, Medway Marshes, Hoo Peninsula, North Kent Fruit Belt, Capstone and Horsted Valleys, North Downs and Medway Valley. The structure of the report reflects these categories.

The following subject headings have been considered for each survey sheet. The results are summarised on each character area summary sheet.

Description and Characteristics

General description (including location, geology, soils, accessibility, designations) and key distinguishing characteristics

Condition and Sensitivity

Assesses Condition and Sensitivity based on a commonly accepted approach – see Appendix C for a fuller explanation. Condition can vary widely within a particular character area. A judgement is made based on an assessment of overall condition across the whole character area. Exceptionally wide variation or unusual features/influences are highlighted within individual area assessments. Levels of sensitivity may also vary across a particular character

area and a judgement is made based on an assessment of overall sensitivity across the whole character area.

Actions

A matrix grid is used to balance condition and sensitivity. This provides nine different management option categories. This approach gives a broad indication of each character area's ability to accommodate a change in management or use without a loss of overall integrity. Some character areas could vary in condition and sensitivity outcomes when considered at a finer grain but may nevertheless retain a degree of coherency in terms of their overall characteristics. The character assessment approach provides the opportunity to undertake more detailed studies on condition, sensitivity and capacity for change for individual application sites. This approach would be encouraged, particularly for sensitive sites; however this work should be undertaken within the context (i.e. the framework and conclusions) of this assessment. It should be undertaken by a competent and skilled landscape professional and it should follow currently recognised Landscape Character Assessment procedures and methodologies.

Issues

This section seeks to identify particular issues that are specific to each character area. A summary of recurring and more generic issues is provided within introductory sections. It is intended that the Guidelines sections provide pro-active responses to the issues raised for each character area.

Guidelines

This section seeks to address principal issues and put forward a set of specific, realisable and pro-active management actions. These actions should mitigate trends that degrade locally distinctive landscape character and

encourage positive action to enhance and raise landscape quality and condition. Achieving the objectives outlined in the guidelines may not always be a simple process; however it is intended that highlighting objectives in this way will focus attention of landowners, planning officers, developers and the local community on a clear aspiration to improve the condition of the landscape in a pro-active and positive way set that is set within an overall framework and consistency of approach. The guidelines should provide an appropriate landscape framework for new development in the countryside and urban-rural fringe areas of Medway and encourage and support separate green infrastructure initiatives. A good example of this would be providing a wider green infrastructure framework to support the development of a sustainable new community at Lodge Hill. This aim can only be achieved through a multi-agency approach, drawing together funding and support from key stakeholders like the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage and obtaining financial and practical support for this approach from central government. An existing mechanism is in place to achieve this multi-agency approach through the Parklands funding regime, which is led within the Medway, Swale and Dartford and Gravesham districts by Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway (GGKM).

These guidelines are intended for use by Planning Officers when considering planning applications but are also for use to support and inform discussions with individual landowners as part of strategic landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and access enhancement initiatives that are being initiated within the Thames Gateway (as led by GGKM and Natural England. More detail on delivery mechanisms is provided in the following section.

A series of guidance sheets will be produced to support this study. This guidance will seek to reverse trends highlighted within the summary sheets that have led to

an erosion of local distinctiveness and rural character. In many cases such adverse impacts are related to the introduction of equine related activities³ and hard and soft landscape boundary treatments⁴ considered in many cases as insensitive to their context. Guidance notes on Equine Management and Boundary treatments are likely to be produced first. A wider holistic study will also be produced that considers urban and rural settlement edges within Medway. This study will seek to ensure that new and existing developments are more sensitively integrated into the surrounding countryside. A biodiversity study linked to this current LCA is recommended within the next section. A timetable to complete these projects will be subject to identification of adequate resources to fund the work. In the meantime useful guidance on the first two topics can be found within the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook and Equine Management Guidance (see Bibliography section).

Footnotes

1. The Great and Lower Lines is a high valued and distinctive landscape designated as an ALLI within the current Local Plan. This large open space (now named Great Lines Heritage Park) is surrounded by development, has been categorised as an urban open space rather than countryside and is therefore outside the scope of this study. This does not devalue its considerable significance as a metropolitan open space with high biodiversity and cultural value. It has been the subject of a number of detailed landscape and other assessments in recent years and the area forms part of a current bid for World Heritage Site status (for the Chatham Historic Dockyard and its defences). It is well protected within the current local plan as an open space, for its wildlife value and it also sits within a Conservation area. Thames Gateway Parkland funding is currently being spent on landscape enhancements to this area. Despite its urban location, this open space has great value and potential for improvement as part of a green lung linking the countryside to the south into Medway and should be considered in Green Infrastructure terms for its potential to form a stronger link between the densely populated urban areas of Chatham and Gillingham and the open spaces

of the Capstone and Horsted Valleys and the North Downs beyond. The eastern section of the area described as Cuxton Brickfields within the Local Plan and designated as an ALLI (land to the east of the M2), has been excluded from this study, on the basis that it has a predominantly urban character. A significant section of this area has now been developed as a theme park, but it remains the intention of the planning authority that the whole of this area retains an open character that respects its importance as a prominent green backdrop, wildlife corridor and green lung extending from the countryside into the urban area.

2. It is recommended that future updated LCA studies in Medway include a section that considers change in landscape condition over time – from previous studies, but also in the context of time depth / historic landscape character. An updated Landscape Character Assessment Guidance document is currently being prepared by Natural England. This will address current thinking and examples of best practice in LCA.
3. There are a number of references within this study on the adverse impacts of equine related activities on the landscape. These relate to visual and landscape character impacts. Typical adverse impacts may relate to the lotting of agricultural land (reducing larger fields into smaller units not in character with the historic field pattern) or the introduction of unsightly and insensitive boundary treatments. These issues need to be judged on a case by case basis but useful guidance on good practice may be found within the Kent Downs AONB Equine Management Guidance document (see Bibliography section).
4. Hard and soft landscape boundary treatment guidance would consider ways to achieve sensitive rural landscape treatments and remedy the gradual trend towards suburbanisation in many areas (especially along road corridors – often described as ribbon development). Typical adverse impacts are the introduction of suburban features like conifers, close board fences, ornamental shrub planting etc.

North Downs and Medway Valley

Principal characteristics

North Downs

- Wooded scarp top and steep wooded sides with large open arable fields to lower slopes; rolling dry valleys with strong woodland and landform containment ; distinctive heritage features include Pilgrim's Way, historic lanes and farm settlements
- High biodiversity value contained in ancient woodlands, chalk grasslands and regenerating chalk quarries
- Distinctive and dramatic long open views are marred in places by detracting features along valley floor – roads, quarries, industry etc
- Character areas overlap to south and west into neighbouring boroughs – Tonbridge and Malling, Gravesham and Maidstone*
- See Kent Downs AONB website, Management Plan and other guidance documents for more detail on the distinctive features of the North Downs

Medway Valley

- Mixture of lower scarp slope and valley floor mixed farmland; fragmented by several disused and inaccessible quarries with regenerating woodland edges that help to screen visual impacts
- Pockets of grazed marshland with flood defence walls and reed beds; boundary treatments in variable condition; areas generally retain rural character but with rural fringe intrusions and some detracting features
- Landscape heavily fragmented by historic land uses associated with chalk extraction industries; includes quarries; railway lines; busy roads; settlements; old wharfs; marinas, mobile homes, industrial areas etc.

Principal issues

North Downs

- The North Downs landscape within the Medway area is under considerable pressure on account of its proximity to densely populated urban areas and many busy roads (including the M2 motorway); the highest level of designation for landscape protection ensures that all development proposals are subject to careful scrutiny
- Protection of Nashenden Scarp from pressure of new development; this escarpment is valued as a distinctive green backdrop and gateway feature for the Medway urban area; chalk grassland; highly visible from motorway and North Downs
- Considering the inter-connectivity of woodland and downland links into neighbouring boroughs to the south and west of Medway

Medway Valley

- On-going threat of landscape fragmentation with loss of rural character and local distinctiveness caused by the intrusion of inappropriate urban fringe activities – particularly threatened and damaged areas are on western side of river and include Cuxton Scarp Foot, Halling Quarries, Halling and Holborough Marshes
- Medway Valley – the disused pits offer regeneration opportunities for development, recreation and biodiversity improvements
- Industrial heritage within Medway Valley forms part of local distinctiveness of area
- Current regeneration proposals include a new development scheme for the Halling Cement Works site and proposals for new road and bridge across Lafarge Cement Works site at Holborough; forms link to Tonbridge and Malling's Peter's Pit development

* Two small woodland areas (previously designated as ALLIs within the Local Plan) are located on fringes of urban areas at Walderslade; these extend into larger green spaces within neighbouring districts and are not identified as distinct character areas within this study. See Matt Hill Farmland summary sheet for an analysis of these areas

36 Cuxton Scarp Foot

Landscape type: Rural fringe (T1)
 Sub-types: Rural fringe with urban/industrial influences (T1c)
 Medway Valley Lower (KCA 2004)

Description

- Location – north of river Medway and west of M2 motorway
- Geology – Upper and Middle Chalk
- Soils – Grade 3 and undefined
- Accessibility – one principal route bordering rail line links urban area with Cuxton
- Designations – ALLI; Strategic gap; safeguarded corridor for M2 widening; safeguarded route for CTRL; SNCI
- Flood – southern half within flood zone (2003)

Characteristics

- Visually prominent area rising from marshes alongside River Medway up to Kent Downs AONB
- Prominent in views from many directions (including A228, M2, CTRL, Medway Valley Railway and the Medway River); has significant potential as an inviting 'gateway' into the urban areas of Medway
- Includes farmland to north along scarp foot and lower lying marshland to south
- Includes land affected by M2/CTRL works; adverse impacts persist in areas adjacent to this development
- Lagoons in marshland area to south-east created as part of mitigation for CTRL works
- Area has fragmented character from urban fringe land uses, motorway and railway line; land uses include rough grazing pasture; marshland; woodland;



site of nature conservation interest; sewage works; landfill/waste site; derelict land; caravan site

- Railway line creates strong severance – restricts accessibility to marshland and marina
- Mixed containment (footpath link and woodland) and openness (marshland and farmland)
- Strong urban fringe intrusion with overall degraded condition, includes areas of fly-tipping
- Openness maintains separation between urban areas, M2 and CTRL and Cuxton Village; helps to retain local identity and enhance village setting
- Provides visual link and balance with Kent Downs AONB on adjacent side of river



Analysis

Condition *Poor*

Pattern of elements – Incoherent

Detracting features – Many

Visual Unity – Fragmented

Ecological integrity – Moderate

Cultural integrity – Variable

Functional integrity – Moderate

Sensitivity *Moderate*

Distinctiveness – Distinct

Continuity – Historic

Sense of place – Moderate

Landform – Dominant

Tree cover – Intermittent

Visibility – Moderate

Actions *Restore and Create*

Issues

- Managing urban fringe intrusion/activities including fly-tipping
- Restricted access beyond main footpath link
- Main footpath unattractive and intimidating (see General Notes for further information)
- Off-road cycle path opportunity
- Severance of M2; weak and unattractive pedestrian/cycle links into urban areas to north
- Opportunity to enhance 'Gateway' potential of area
- Marina site has been built up with imported materials; developed character not in sympathy with marshland context

Guidance

- Introduce safety/enhancement plan for public right of way – to include vegetation clearance and active management to control anti-social activities
- Review cycle path opportunities linking urban areas to countryside
- Improve path network and pedestrian links through area, onto valley sides and into urban areas to north
- Restore and improve chalk grassland areas to north
- Improve boundary treatment to eyesores – including screen to sewage works entrance; replace galvanised steel palisade boundary fencing with more sympathetic style and finish of security fencing; screen with native planting where possible

- Protect and enhance natural marshland character along river edges as appropriate setting for adjacent river and AONB
- Restore and actively manage hedgerows along field, path and road boundaries and strengthen woodland blocks
- Resist development and urban fringe activities that could lead to further degradation of condition, accessibility and rural character of area
- Seek to develop 'gateway' potential of area; landscape enhancements to M2/A228 roundabout and approach roads could achieve step change in arrival experience of visitors into Medway

General Notes

- Strategic gap designations omitted and replaced by policy KTGI(x) in South East Plan. This policy seeks to avoid coalescence with adjoining settlements to the south of Medway
- Historic note. CTRL recorded a small Anglo Saxon barrow cemetery located on a prominent part of the slope so that it would be visible for a long way around. This is a common feature of such sites
- Medway Port Marina wish to divert a section of footpath (RS206) between Cuxton Station and Factory Cottages to the other side of the railway track. This application is currently being considered by the Rights of Way Section

