Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 1 Consultation

Proposed Changes as at September 2019

Key
Deletions are in red and **struck-through**

Insertions are in blue and **underlined**
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1. Introduction

Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) undertook public consultations under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 on its emerging Site Allocations and Development Management Policies local plan document between 25 April and 11 July 2018. Published alongside a number of other supporting documents, this consisted of two key parts:

- **Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 1 Consultation - Part 1 Site Allocations: Issues and Options (April 2018); and**

These documents remain available on the Council’s consultation portal at https://localplan.gravesham.gov.uk/consult/ti/system/listConsultations?type=all

Taken together with the existing Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), which will also be updated as part of this process to reflect changes that have taken place since adoption, it is intended that the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document will complete and update the Local Plan in due course.

Gravesham Borough Council has a duty to prepare a Local Plan for the whole Borough, including the area within Gravesham for which the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) is the Development Management Authority. The purpose of the Local Plan is to inform the sustainable development of our area over a number of years.

The Local Plan guides how much development is needed in the borough and where different types of development will be located, as well as providing the basis upon which individual planning applications stand to be judged.

The Local Plan therefore provides the starting point against which applications for planning permission are determined and the Council is only allowed to deviate from these policies (taken as a whole) where material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

It is therefore an extremely important document that is subject to independent examination and follows the process set out by Government. One of the key tests against which a Local Plan is examined is whether or not it can be considered ‘sound’.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)\(^1\) makes it clear that in order for a plan to be ‘sound’, a Local Plan should be:

- **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed need; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighboring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

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• **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

• **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

Whilst it is intended initially to refresh the Local Plan to fully cover the period to its existing end date of 2028, it is recognised that planning is an on-going process and that it is also necessary to consider the direction of travel beyond then and the implications. This should also be seen in the context of adjoining local authorities extending their Local Plans through to the mid-2030s

The Council is legally required to review its Local Plan every five years and to keep it up to date. A failure to maintain a 5 year deliverable housing land supply or a persistent shortfall in delivery of housing against targets also has the potential to adversely affect the weight accorded policies in the adopted Local Plan.

To assist the Council in deciding whether its development management policy approach is appropriate and has the support of the local community, it is necessary to consult local residents, businesses, organisations and a range of other stakeholders. This document incorporates amendments to that consulted on in 2018 having regard to:

• **Responses received as a result of the 2018 consultation;**
• **Changes made to national planning policy by Government (NPPF, 2019);**
• **Changes made to national planning practice guidance (PPG);**
• **Changing circumstances affecting the local area since the 2018 consultation;** and
• **Feedback from the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) of the emerging development management policies.**

The Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of Regulation 18 Stage 2 Development Management Policies consultation document is available separately at: [ADD Link](#)

It should also be noted that as a result of representations made and following further consideration, it is proposed that some additional policies be included in that document. These are identified in the sections that follow and comments on these would also be welcomed.

There will be a further opportunity to be involved in the process of refining the changes to be made to the Local Plan following this, as the Council progresses to submit the final draft version of the plan for independent examination by a Planning Inspector. This will involve a Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation later in 2020.

The full timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan (and this Development Management Policies document in particular) is set out in the Council’s Local Development Scheme available on line at [ADD LINK](#)
Development Management Policies Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation

The Regulation 18 Stage 2 Development Management Policies consultation document is available on the Council’s consultation webpage at ADD Link

The consultation period on that document starts on TO BE ADDED and ends on TO BE ADDED. Responses should be made by 5pm TO BE ADDED via www.gravesham.gov.uk/yoursay.

A full set of consultation documents will be made available via the Council’s consultation portal and will be accessible in Gravesham Gateway (Civic Centre) and public libraries.

Response to this consultation can also be sent via e-mail to planning.consultation@gravesham.gov.uk or post to Planning Policy, Gravesham Borough Council, Civic Centre, Gravesend DA12 1AU.

All responses will be made publically available: any personal details provided on the survey form will remain confidential.

However, to aid future public examination of this document it will be necessary to publish the names of those individuals, businesses or organisations commenting on the main consultation document.

Petitions will be treated as a series of individual representations provided there is a readable and verifiable name and address.
2. Green Belt

2.1. Introduction

Background

2.1.1. The extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map. We have a number of existing saved policies from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review which do not fully reflect the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. These are:

• C11 Change of Use of Redundant Buildings in the Countryside
• C12 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
• C13 Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
• C17 Horse-riding and Stables

2.1.2. It is proposed to replace these saved policies (C11, C12, C13 and C17) with the supporting text and policies set out below.

2.1.3. The Government’s draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (March 2018) includes proposed changes to Green Belt policy in terms of changes of use and redevelopment of previously developed sites that will be taken into account in future consultations.

Proposed Text

2.1.4. The national aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The national purposes of the Green Belt and policies for protecting it are set out in chapter 9 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019). These are:

• To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
• To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
• To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
• To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
• To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

There are also a number of local purposes of the Green Belt which are listed in paragraph 4.2.7 of the Core Strategy. These are:

• To maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary;
• To assist in safeguarding the countryside by minimising the expansion of the Borough’s rural settlements; and
• To assist in concentrating development on underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet.

2.1.5. The Council is committed to preserving the openness of the Green Belt and will only support development where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan (see Core Strategy Policy CS02). Inappropriate development in the Green Belt will not be approved unless the applicant can demonstrate the existence of ‘very special circumstances’ that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. When considering planning
applications, the Council will give substantial weight to any harm which may be caused to the Green Belt.

**Construction of new buildings (NPPF paragraph 89 145)**

2.1.6. The NPPF lists a number of exceptions including the construction of new buildings that are not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. These are listed below.

- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- the provision of appropriate facilities *(in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use)* for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, and for cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
- limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

**Other forms of development (NPPF paragraph 90 146)**

Other forms of development which are not inappropriate provided the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it:

- mineral extraction
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

2.1.7 As it can be seen, the change of use of land is not one of the exceptions listed in the NPPF, therefore, where planning permission is required, a change of use must be treated as inappropriate development in its own right. Any proposal for new buildings otherwise considered an exception
under NPPF paragraph 89, which also involves a change of use of land to accommodate it, is also inappropriate development.

2.1.7 The following policies set out how the Council will apply Green Belt policy in relation to a number of categories of excepted development under NPPF paragraphs 145 and 146, 89 and 90. A policy has also been included to address situations where change of use of land is required to accommodate cemetery and outdoor sport and recreation, genuinely requiring a Green Belt location.

2.1.8 NPPF paragraph 55 allows the development of new isolated homes in the countryside where justified by special circumstances such as:

- the essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or
- where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to their immediate setting;
- the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
- the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.

2.1.9 However, because the countryside in Gravesham is predominately designated as Green Belt any such proposals that fall outside of the exceptions listed in NPPF paragraphs 89 and 90 will still constitute inappropriate development requiring the demonstration of very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm. A policy is included below that sets out the approach the Council will take in considering proposals for new dwellings to accommodate agricultural, forestry and other rural worker’s dwellings in this context.

2.1.10 Whilst paragraph 79 of the NPPF (2019) deals with situations where new ‘isolated’ homes are proposed in the countryside, this has raised an issue of how the term ‘isolated’ should be interpreted. The Courts have held that this means a new home that is away from other buildings rather than distant from a recognisable settlement or services. However, this does not mean a site is a suitable location for a new dwelling simply because other dwellings or buildings may be nearby. Whilst it is recognised that many rural locations will not have the same degree of accessibility to services and public transport as urban locations, the Council will have regard to the level of dependence on the private car; the distance to shops and other services that may need to be accessed on a day-to-day basis; and the safety of those who may wish to use alternatives to the private car – such as walking or cycling. Unless otherwise allowed for as an exception under national policy, the Council will have regard to whether the proposal is in a suitable location for residential development on this basis.²

² TO BE CONFIRMED: this would not apply where it has been demonstrated that there is a proven need for a rural worker to live on site under policy DM2 or where it involves the re-use of a building under policy DM8 as paragraph 79c of NPPF(2019) allows for this.

Braintree case at: https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2018/610.html
2.1.11. A range of other factors relating to impact on amenity, landscape character, biodiversity, accessibility, highway safety, parking, heritage, and the preservation of the best and most versatile agricultural land are also likely to be material considerations in determining applications in the Green Belt.

2.2. Agricultural and Forestry Development

Proposed Text

2.2.1. Agriculture and forestry remain an important part of the rural economy that the Council continues to support. They are also activities that shape the character of the countryside and valued landscapes in Gravesham. Subject to prior approval in relation to siting, design and external appearance, many developments within agricultural units or land used for forestry benefit from permitted development rights. However, where thresholds are exceeded, planning permission is required. In either case, it is important that such development is sensitively designed and located to respect context and landscape character.

2.2.2. Many modern farm enterprises, in particular, have also sought to diversify their offer to supplement income. Such diversification can take many forms but often includes the introduction of farm shops, processing facilities or the provision of associated rural leisure activities. The change of use of existing farm buildings to accommodate alternative uses does not require planning permission in some instances.

2.2.3. Whilst such developments are supported in principle, where planning permission is required, it is important that they are carefully controlled. In particular, the Council would wish to ensure that the primary use of the farm unit remains agricultural to preserve the rural character of the countryside and to avoid the proliferation of inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Such development may also generate additional traffic on rural lanes that has highway safety implications or raise other issues in terms of impact on local amenity.

2.2.4. In determining applications for agricultural or forestry development, the following policy will be applied. Proposals involving equestrian development will also be considered under Proposed Policy DM 3 and Proposed Policy DM 4.

Proposed Policy DM 1 Agricultural and Forestry Development

2.2.5. Proposals for new development related to agriculture and forestry will only be supported where reasonably necessary to sustain the agricultural unit or forestry enterprise to which they relate. In addition, any such development should be appropriately designed and located having regard to sensitivity of context and to minimise impact on the openness of the Green Belt, whilst respecting the purposes of including land within it.

2.2.6. Proposals involving farm diversification (including the introduction of farm shops selling predominately local grown produce, processing, workshops or leisure activities) should be ancillary and related to the primary agricultural use of the site whilst being appropriate to its rural location. The re-use of existing buildings of permanent and substantial construction should be prioritised over the introduction of new buildings, with such re-use not resulting in a need for replacement buildings unless otherwise justified.

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2.2.7. In determining applications under this policy, the Council will also have regard to
the highway and amenity impacts of any proposals, including but not limited to the access and the
approach roads, the need for additional car parking, hardstandings or lighting which may also
adversely impact on the Green Belt, landscape and character of the countryside.

2.3. New dwellings for agricultural, forestry or other rural workers in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.3.1. Whilst NPPF paragraph 55 79 allows the development of new isolated homes in the
countryside where it can be shown there is an essential need for a rural worker to live
permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, this would still represent
‘inappropriate’ development in a Green Belt location in Gravesham. As such, it would be
necessary to demonstrate ‘very special circumstances’ that clearly outweigh harm to the Green
Belt and any other harm as required by national policy. This applies whether the new dwelling
is isolated or not.

2.3.2. The following policy sets out how the Council will consider such proposals in
Gravesham.

Proposed Policy DM 2: New Dwellings for Agricultural, Forestry and Other
Rural Workers in the Green Belt

2.3.3. The Council will not grant planning permission for new dwellings for agricultural, forestry or
other rural workers in the Green Belt (including those taking majority control of a farm business)
unless an essential need to live permanently at or near the place of work has been demonstrated
that clearly outweighs harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness and any other harm.

2.3.4. In considering whether ‘very special circumstances’ exist, regard will be had to:

   a. the functional need for the worker to live permanently at or near the place of
      work, including on a 24-hour basis and whether alternative arrangements are feasible;
   b. the likely duration of that need, including whether the activity to which the need relates
      is well established and likely to persist into the future;
   c. the availability and suitability of alternative residential accommodation at or near
      the place of work or the likelihood of it becoming available within a reasonable
      period of time; and
   d. whether there are existing buildings available and suitable at or near the place
      of work that are capable of conversion.

2.3.5. Any new dwelling should be of a minimum size reasonably necessary to accommodate
a rural worker and be designed and located to minimise impact on the Green Belt and
countryside.

2.3.6. As an alternative, where need is not well established or there is doubt that it is likely to
persist into the future, planning permission may be granted for a temporary unit of accommodation
such as the stationing of a caravan or mobile home on site on a trial basis

2.3.7. Any grant of planning permission will be subject to conditions or a legal agreement
to ensure future occupation by an agricultural, forestry or other rural worker requiring
accommodation in that locality and/or requiring the removal of any temporary unit of
accommodation and the restoration of the site at the end of any trial period.
2.4. New Buildings and other Facilities for Outdoor Sport, Recreation and Cemeteries in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.4.1. National planning policy allows new buildings in the Green Belt where they provide appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, and cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments as long as they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. This includes whether their provision is in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use which accords with national policy.

2.4.2. The change of use of land in the Green Belt is not one of the types of development specifically allowed for under national planning policy—including change of use of land to provide facilities for outdoor sport and recreation or as a cemetery.

2.4.3. Where development involves such a change of use, it remains the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that ‘very special circumstances’ exist that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. This also affects any proposal to provide buildings to support such uses, where that land is not already in such a lawful use.

2.4.4. Under such circumstances, the Council would expect a planning application to justify such a change of use before the building can be treated as an exception under NPPF paragraph 89. There is no reason why the application cannot cover both the change of use and the new building as a single submission. The Council’s approach in dealing with such changes of use is set out in Proposed Policy DM 5.

2.4.4. Even where land is in an existing lawful use for sport or recreation or as a cemetery, the treatment of new buildings as an exception to Green Belt policy depends on them being appropriate in relation to that use, whilst not compromising the fundamental aim of preserving openness and not undermining the purposes of including land in it. It is important therefore that policy establishes a range of criteria against which proposals can be assessed.

2.4.3. Additional criteria that will be applied to proposals involving equestrian development are set out in Proposed Policy DM 4.

Proposed Policy DM 3 New Buildings and other Facilities for Outdoor Sport, Recreation and Cemeteries in the Green Belt

2.4.4 Proposals for new buildings and other facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, and cemeteries, Burial Grounds and Allotments in the Green Belt will only be allowed where they:

a. are appropriate, directly related to and reasonably necessary to support the lawful use of the site for sport, recreation or cemetery purposes;

b. preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it by reason of their scale, height, bulk, size, design, location and visual impact;

c. prioritise the re-use of existing buildings over the development of new buildings where practical; and

d. satisfactorily integrate with existing buildings, where present.

2.4.5 In determining applications under this policy, the Council will also have regard to the highway and amenity impacts of any proposals, including but not limited to the access and the approach road and the need for additional car parking. Consideration will also be given to potential adverse visual impacts on the Green Belt due to the introduction of increased activity and lighting on the character of the countryside. Potential harm to biodiversity, including through the introduction of
2.5. Equestrian Development in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.5.1 Gravesham has seen a growth in the popularity of horse riding and other equestrian related activities in recent years. Equestrian activities can fit in well with farming, helping to diversify the rural economy. However, where this requires planning permission for a change of use of land, it once again represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt requiring special justification as set out in Proposed Policy DM 1 and Proposed Policy DM 5.

2.5.2 Equestrian development can lead to the proliferation of development and the introduction of sizeable buildings which can have a significant adverse impact on the openness and purposes of including land in the Green Belt. This can include new buildings to accommodate riding schools, stables, tack rooms and field shelters. It can also include ancillary development such as sand schools, areas of hardstanding, subdivision of fields into paddocks, artificial lighting and landscape remodelling.

2.5.3 To avoid the proliferation of inappropriate buildings in the Green Belt, the Council will expect such developments to make use of existing buildings where possible, whilst ensuring that this does not result in demand for a replacement building.

2.5.4 Proposals for equestrian development must have regard to the minimum size requirements for stables and the amount of grazing land for each horse as set out in the DEFRA Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids (or any equivalent updated guidance). This is in part to ensure that overgrazing detrimental to landscape quality is avoided and to ensure that the number of stables is appropriate and subsidiary to the use of the land. Within the Kent Downs AoNB, the Council will also have regard to the Kent Downs AoNB Management Unit publication ‘Managing Land For Horses’ as a guide to best practice.5

2.5.5 In assessing equestrian developments, the Council will need to consider the traffic implications of proposals, including access and on-site parking arrangements for vehicles such as horse boxes or trailers etc. Because of the particular characteristics of such development, it is also important for the Council to understand how sites will be used and impacts managed. To minimise conflict with other road users, it is also desirable that equestrian development should also be well related to the public bridleway network or other safe riding routes or areas.

Proposed Policy DM 4 Equestrian Development in the Green Belt

2.5.6 In addition to the requirements of Proposed Policy DM 5 policy DM3, proposals for equestrian development will also be required to show:

a. that there is sufficient pasture grazing land available within the curtilage of the site for grazing the proposed number of horses (a minimum of 0.5 ha of grazing land to be available per horse), and how that pasture will be managed and subdivided by fencing or other means;

b. there is convenient and safe access from the site to the bridleway network or other safe riding routes and areas;

c. how waste arising from the equestrian use of the site will be sustainably managed and foul and surface water disposed of;

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a. details of any on-site parking and areas of hardstanding, together with the types of vehicle that will be parked there and for what duration; and
b. how any other adverse environmental impacts of the proposed use will be adequately managed or mitigated.

2.6. Changes of Use of Land to Accommodate Cemeteries, Outdoor Sport and Recreation in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.6.1. As noted above, the change of use of land to accommodate cemeteries, outdoor sport and recreation in the Green Belt is not one of the exceptions set out in national policy. Where this is proposed, it is necessary for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm in the normal way.

2.6.2. However, the Council recognises the importance of providing such facilities close to the areas that they serve and that in the countryside there may be limited options to provide them unless they are in the Green Belt.

2.6.3. Core Strategy Policy CS13 makes clear that the Council wishes to protect and enhance the quantity and quality of playing pitches and other sports facilities and it would also be a material consideration where there is a deficiency in existing provision. NPPF paragraph 81 also recognises that local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation. Whilst this does not in itself constitute an exception to Green Belt policy where a change of use of land is required, it may assist in justifying a proposal on the basis of very special circumstances.

2.6.4. Similarly, a lack of burial space serving a local community may justify a Green Belt location, particularly where this is an extension to an existing cemetery.

2.6.5. In assessing proposals for the change of use of land to accommodate cemeteries, outdoor sport and recreation in the Green Belt, the following policy will be applied.

Proposed Policy DM 5 Changes of Use of Land to Accommodate Cemeteries, Outdoor Sport and Recreation in the Green Belt

2.6.6. Proposals that involve a change of use of land within the Green Belt to accommodate cemeteries, outdoor sport and recreation will be treated in accordance with national policy as inappropriate development requiring the demonstration of very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

2.6.7. In determining such applications, the Council will have particular regard to:

a. whether there are alternative sites not in the Green Belt that could accommodate such uses;
b. whether there is a particular justification for the chosen location based on local need, that could not reasonably be satisfied by an alternative site not in the Green Belt;
c. whether the proposal results in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 & 3a) or adversely affects the viability of any farm holding, where the land forms part of a farm;
d. whether the proposal results in adverse impacts in terms of heritage, landscape, biodiversity, and character of the countryside; and

e. the highway and amenity impacts of the proposal, including but not limited to the need for vehicle parking and lighting to support the use.
2.6 Extensions, Replacement Buildings and Ancillary Development in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.6.1 The Council understands that those living or working in the Green Belt may wish to make changes to their buildings to allow them to adapt to changing circumstances. Many extensions to buildings, particularly residential buildings, can take place without the need for planning permission. When planning permission is required, national planning policy allows such development in the Green Belt, if it does not lead to disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

2.6.2 In considering whether a proposed extension is proportionate, the Council will compare its size with that of the original building (see Proposed Policy DM 6 for definition). As a general rule, based on past experience, the Council considers that extensions which exceed the overall volume of an original building by 33% or more will be disproportionate. However, in coming to a conclusion, the Council will have regard to the full range of factors set out in paragraph 2.6.6.

2.6.3 There are occasions when residents and businesses wish to replace an existing building with a new one. National planning policy allows such development providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. In assessing whether a replacement building is materially larger than the existing one and otherwise acceptable in Green Belt terms, the Council will compare their relative sizes and changes in built form and location on the site.

2.6.4 The inclusion or construction of basements and habitable loft space raises particular issues in that, whilst they may not directly affect openness or have any visual impact on the Green Belt, they can have an indirect impact by increasing the scale of accommodation on a site. For example, this can lead to more domestic paraphernalia or parked cars within a residential curtilage that does impact on the Green Belt.

2.6.5 In considering whether an extension is proportionate, or a replacement building is materially larger, the Council will have regard to the total size of the development including the basement and habitable loft space. Where this results in a proposal being considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it will be for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

2.6.6 When submitting an application for an extension to an existing building or a replacement building, the applicant will need to provide an assessment comparing the existing and proposed development in terms of footprint, floorspace, volume, height and any other changes in built form including the proportion of the site that is developed/undeveloped and the distribution of development/ hardstanding and open space across the site.

2.6.7 The Council also recognises that residents who live in the Green Belt may wish to build ancillary outbuildings, such as garages, summerhouses and swimming pools, within
the curtilage of their dwelling. Whilst some of these proposals can be built under permitted development rights, national policy does not recognise these as exceptions to Green Belt policy in the circumstances when planning permission is required.

2.6.8 Where planning permission is required, the Council will treat such proposals as inappropriate development which must be justified by the demonstration of very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

2.6.9 In determining whether a proposal is acceptable in terms of Green Belt policy, the Council will have regard to the need for the building, its function, size, and location on the site and whether any existing buildings could be used which negate the need for a new one. This will be weighed against any impact on the openness of the Green Belt and any conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

2.6.10 The subsequent conversion of ancillary domestic outbuildings to separate dwellings poses an issue because it can result in additional dwellings in unsustainable locations harmful to openness and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The Council would wish to avoid this, and it will not therefore grant planning permission for domestic outbuildings that would be capable of subsequent conversion. Whilst the Council recognises that the creation of a separate planning unit in this way would require planning permission, ensuring that any such buildings are clearly designed to be subservient and subordinate to the main dwelling on site reduces the risk of this taking place.

2.6.11 There are other types of ancillary development such as new walls and driveways which can reduce openness and have an urbanising effect on sites and the wider landscape by introducing features which are more appropriate to an urban environment, rather than a rural setting. In applying this policy, the Council will give careful consideration to the design, materials, extent, location and context of the proposed development to ensure that the openness of the Green Belt and rural character of the countryside is not harmed.

Proposed Policy DM 5 Extensions, Replacement Buildings and Ancillary Development in the Green Belt

Extensions

2.6.12 Proposals for the extension of an original building in the Green Belt will only be allowed where the extension will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building unless justified by very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. The following will be taken into account in determining whether the proposal is proportionate:

a. its footprint, floorspace and volume compared to the original building;

   and

b. whether its scale, mass and height is subservient to the original building;

2.6.13 In addition to the above, Core Strategy Policy CS19 will be applied to determine whether the design of any proposed extension is appropriate, having regard to the presence of any existing extensions and outbuildings, prominence and visual impact of the proposal.

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6 What constitutes the curtilage of a dwelling house is a matter of fact and degree but does not necessarily extend to all of the land within the planning unit. Curtilage is restricted to an area, that is usually enclosed, encompassing the grounds and buildings immediately surrounding a dwelling that is used in the daily activities of domestic life.

Replacement Buildings

2.6.14 Proposals for the replacement of an existing building in the Green Belt will only be allowed where the new building is in the same use and will not result in a materially larger building unless justified by very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. The following will be taken into account in determining whether the proposal is materially larger:

a. its footprint, floorspace, volume and height compared to the existing building; and
b. its scale and mass compared to the existing building.

2.6.15 In addition to the above, Core Strategy Policy CS19 will apply in determining whether the design of any proposed replacement building is appropriate, having regard to the presence of existing development on the site, prominence, visual impact, and whether the building could be relocated within the site to have less impact on the Green Belt.

Ancillary Development

2.6.16 Proposals for ancillary domestic buildings requiring planning permission will only be allowed where the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

2.6.17 The following will be taken into account in determining whether very special circumstances exist:

a. the proposal should be reasonably required to serve the needs of the dwelling;
b. there should be no other buildings on the site which could be re-used or adapted;
c. their scale, form, mass and height of the should be subordinate to the main building;
d. their size should be appropriate to their function, with any ancillary residential accommodation functionally subservient to the main dwelling;
e. they should be discreetly located and not visually intrusive; and
f. they should not be replacements for an outbuilding which has been re-used for an alternative residential use.

2.6.18 Ancillary domestic buildings will not be permitted outside the residential curtilage of the dwelling they are intended to serve, unless the land forms part of the same planning unit and there is no reasonable alternative location within the curtilage that would have a lesser impact on the Green Belt. In determining whether such a location is appropriate, consideration will be given to impact on openness, the proposed function of the building and the purposes of including the land in the Green Belt. Ancillary residential accommodation will not normally be permitted outside the existing residential curtilage unless justified by very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm.

2.6.19 Proposals for new accesses, driveways, walls, gates, other hard landscaping or other engineering operations will only be allowed where they respect the character of the local built and natural environment and do not harm the openness of the Green Belt.

In interpreting the above policy, the following definitions will apply:

Original building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if built after 1 July 1948, as it was first built.
prior to any subsequent extensions (including those allowed under permitted development rights).

ii Floorspace is an external measurement of all floorspace including roof voids and basements.

iii Existing buildings and dwellings are those which are lawful and permanent in nature.

iv What constitutes the curtilage of a dwelling house is a matter of fact and degree but does not necessarily extend to all of the land within the planning unit. Curtilage is restricted to an area, that is usually enclosed, encompassing the grounds and buildings immediately surrounding a dwelling that is used in the daily activities of domestic life.

2.7 Limited Infilling in Villages and Development of Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.7.1. The Council has identified a number of rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and these are shown on the Policies Map. The supporting text to Core Strategy Policy CS02 makes it clear that these do not define the full extent of each settlement but relate to a coherent and established built up area where infilling would not adversely affect local character and identity, or impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

2.7.2 However, there are also a number of settlements, such as Harvel and Thong, and areas close to the rural settlements inset from the Green Belt, such as Foxendown Lane and Pear Tree Lane, where existing development is more dispersed and sporadic. These areas remain in the Green Belt as it is considered that they are either hamlets rather than villages or are considered to lie beyond that part of the settlement that comprises the village. Additional infill development within them would adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt, as well as having an adverse effect on their rural character and landscape setting.

2.7.3 This approach follows that originally set out in PPG2 on Green Belts (1995, amended 2001), whereby settlements could either be inset from the Green Belt or ‘washed over’ with a boundary shown to indicate where infilling was acceptable. 

2.7.4 However, the NPPF no longer includes such advice and simply refers to ‘limited infilling in villages’ at paragraph 89 as an exception to Green Belt policy. Because no definitions are provided on what constitutes ‘limited’, ‘infilling’ or even a ‘village’, this has resulted in uncertainty as to how national policy should be applied locally.

2.7.5 What constitutes ‘limited infilling’ in a village is likely to be case specific but it is clear that national policy expects it to be of such a scale and form and be in such locations that the openness of the Green Belt would by definition not be compromised and that there would be no inherent conflict with the purposes of including land in it. For this reason, the exception provided under NPPF paragraph 145(e) does not require this test to be applied. Logic would dictate therefore that where development does have an unacceptable impact on openness or conflicts with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, it must fall outside the exemption provided within national policy.

This may simply be because the gap or space to be infilled is too large or important in terms of the contribution it makes to the Green Belt openness or the form, density or grain of the proposed development is inappropriate. To provide a degree of flexibility, the

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follows therefore defines ‘limited infilling’ in villages as development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or group of buildings, capable of accommodating no more than one or two dwellings or, where other uses are proposed, buildings of a similar scale, where other uses are proposed, unless otherwise justified as an exception given the particular circumstances of the case.

2.7.6 The policy position in this area is further complicated by paragraph 89 145 of the NPPF, which sets out exceptions to the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt, as it allows for the ‘limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would

- Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identifiable affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

2.7.7 Given that the current NPPF interpretation of ‘previously developed land’ includes residential gardens in rural areas, this means national policy also allows for ‘limited infilling’ on residential land outside of ‘villages’ provided it has no greater impact on openness etc.

2.7.8 To provide clarity on how the policy on infilling will be applied in Gravesham, it is necessary therefore to set out which NPPF exception applies to which areas and what key terms will be taken to mean. This is particularly the case because one test requires an evaluation of impact on openness etc., whereas the other does not.

2.7.9 Given that the Council has specifically identified the rural settlements which are suitable for infilling and inset them from the Green Belt, it will not support infill development elsewhere in the Green Belt unless it constitutes ‘limited infilling’ of a previously developed site as set out above.

Given that the Council has identified rural settlements which are suitable for infilling and inset them from the Green Belt, this will be the starting point from which a judgement will be made as to whether a proposal constitutes ‘limited infilling in a village’ in the Green Belt. Whilst this is not determinative, it will be for applicants to demonstrate that there are material considerations applicable that fully justify a conclusion that the boundary shown on the policies map does not represent the village boundary and that the exemption allowed under national policy applies. In considering whether a site is within a village or outside it, the Council will have regard to both any physical or functional relationships between the site and the village or the surrounding countryside.

2.7.10 There is also a need to ensure that proposals to infill or redevelop previously developed sites are carefully controlled to ensure that their design and location does not result in adverse impacts on the Green Belt. Proposed Policy DM 7 The policy below sets out the criteria which will be taken into account in assessing this. Whilst landscape impact is not a Green Belt issue, in considering proposals, special regard will be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AoNB. To determine whether a site is previously developed, the Council will use the definition set out in the NPPF.

2.7.11 It is also important to ensure that development is sustainably located. When considering proposals which would lead to an intensification of an existing use or a different use being introduced, the Council will assess the suitability of the site for that use having regard to the level of
dependence on the private car; the distance to shops and other services that may need to be accessed on a day-to-day basis; and the safety of those who may wish to use alternatives to the private car – such as walking or cycling. In terms of accessibility to public transport, services and facilities, including its proximity to settlements and their position in the settlement hierarchy.

Proposed Policy DM 6 Limited Infilling in Villages and Development of Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt

2.7.12 In considering proposals for limited infilling under national planning policy, only those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt on the Policies Map will be considered to have the status of villages and their boundaries will be taken as shown. In considering proposals for limited infilling in villages under national planning policy, the boundaries of villages will be taken as shown on the policies map unless material considerations indicate otherwise at the time the application is made. For the purposes of this policy, boundaries of rural settlements inset from the Green Belt should be interpreted as village boundaries.

2.7.13. Except under those circumstances set out later in this policy in relation to assessment of substantial harm, limited infilling on or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites in the Green Belt will only be permitted where the proposal has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. The following will be taken into account in assessing the acceptability of proposals:

a. the footprint, volume, height, bulk and location of the proposed buildings and ancillary development compared to the existing development on the site;

b. in the case of redevelopment, whether the development is located on or close to the site of the existing development or whether an alternative location within the site would have less impact on the Green Belt;

c. in the case of infilling, whether the development is in proportion with the existing buildings and does not lead to a significant unacceptable increase in the developed parts of the site;

d. impacts of the proposal in terms of highway safety, amenity, heritage, landscape, biodiversity, lighting and character of the countryside; and

e. whether the site is in a sustainable location for the use proposed, having regard to the potential dependence of occupiers on the use of the private car; In determining whether the level of harm caused by the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land meeting an identified need for affordable housing within the Council’s area is substantial, regard will be had to:

f. the scale, form and layout of the proposed development;

g. the location of site relative to existing development and the degree it visually intrudes into the open countryside, both during daylight and night-time periods due to the possible introduction of artificial lighting;

h. the overall contribution the site makes to the openness of the Green Belt at that point; and

i. whether the proposed development would result in a fragmentation or weakening of the Green Belt.

In interpreting the above policy, the following definitions will apply:

1For the purposes of applying this policy, ‘limited infilling’ is defined as ‘development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or group of buildings, capable of accommodating no more than one or two dwellings or, where other uses are proposed, buildings of a similar scale, where other
uses are proposed—unless otherwise justified as an exception given the particular circumstances of the case.

2.8 Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt

Proposed Text

2.8.1. The re-use of buildings in the Green Belt can help to ensure that buildings do not become vacant and that they have a viable future use. Such development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt if it preserves the openness and purposes of the Green Belt and if it involves the re-use of buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction.

2.8.2. As farming changes, agricultural buildings in the rural area can become surplus to requirements. It may be possible to convert these to other uses, but this depends on the nature of the building and the use proposed. For example, it might be more feasible to convert a traditional barn to a dwelling or holiday accommodation when compared to a modern agricultural building which is industrial in character.

2.8.3. The Council is keen to ensure that proposals to convert buildings do not lead to further development which could have an adverse impact on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt. This may include new buildings to replace those which have been converted. It may also include new outbuildings and boundary treatments. The Council will take into account the potential wider impacts of proposals on the Green Belt when considering applications for the conversion of buildings.

2.8.4. Many agricultural buildings can be built or extended without the need for planning permission. When assessing proposals to convert them, the Council will consider the length of time the building has been in agricultural use to ensure that there has been no abuse of permitted development rights and that the building is lawful.

2.8.5. To demonstrate that an existing building is of a substantial construction and can be converted without being substantially rebuilt, the Council will expect proposals to be accompanied by a full structural survey and a conversion method statement. This should be undertaken by an independent, RICS Chartered Surveyor or equivalent.

2.8.6. It is often the case that the re-use of buildings results in a different use being introduced onto the site. In such instances there is a need to ensure that development is sustainably located in accordance with national planning policy and Core Strategy Policy CS02. In assessing the sustainability of the location, the Council will consider how accessible the site is to public transport, services and facilities, including the site’s location in terms of the settlement hierarchy.

2.8.6. Whilst under normal circumstances the need to ensure that a development is sustainably located and not overly reliant on private car use would be an important material consideration, paragraph 79 of the NPPF (2019) allows for ‘isolated’ new homes in the countryside where this would re-use redundant or disused buildings that enhance their immediate setting. The introduction of other types of use through the conversion of existing buildings will be treated on their merits in this respect, having regard to the sustainability benefits of re-use as opposed to any disadvantages of location.

Proposed Policy DM 7 Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt

2.9.7. Proposals for the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt will only be allowed where:

-a. the building is lawful, permanent and structurally sound;
2.8.7 Proposals for the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt will only be allowed where it would not adversely impact openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes of including land in it, having regard to the need to provide any associated curtilage, parking or hardstanding associated with that alternative use; and:

a. the building is lawful, permanent and structurally sound;

b. the building is suitable for conversion for the use proposed without the need for substantial reconstruction, alterations, extensions or other development, evidenced by a structural report prepared by a suitably qualified professional; and

c. the impacts of the proposal in terms of highway safety, amenity, heritage, landscape, biodiversity, lighting and character of the countryside are acceptable.

Where the proposed use of building is not residential, consideration will be given as to whether the site is suitably located for the proposed use having regard to dependence on the private car and the need to service that use. In undertaking the planning balance, consideration will be given to the benefits of the re-use of the building as opposed to any disadvantages of location.
3. Agricultural Land

3.1. Protection of Good Quality Agricultural Land

Background

3.1.1. The Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 included policies on Areas of Special Significance for Agriculture and Other Agricultural Land which protected productive agricultural land. However, these policies were deleted when the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2014.

3.1.2. The agricultural land classification system classifies land into five grades, i.e. grades 1-5, with grade 3 subdivided into subgrades 3a and 3b. The grades of agricultural land present in our Borough are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Agricultural Land Classification (2007)
3.1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to take into account the impacts of development on the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) when making decisions which may affect it. Therefore, it is proposed to include a policy on this issue. The proposed supporting text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Supporting Text

3.1.4. National planning policy requires local planning authorities to take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which is defined as land within grades 1, 2 and 3a of the agricultural land classification. Land classified within these grades is considered to be the most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and which can best deliver food and non-food crops for future generations. Factors affecting the grade are climate, site and soil characteristics and the important interactions between them. Planning Practice Guidance describes soil as an essential, finite resource, which is used as a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, as a store for carbon and water, as a reservoir of biodiversity and as a buffer against pollution.

3.1.5. Where significant development is shown to be necessary, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality. In determining whether the loss of agricultural land is justified, it will be necessary to balance the economic, social and environmental benefits arising from development against such loss.

3.1.6. Much of the rural area of the Borough is agricultural land. The areas with the highest grades of agricultural land (grades 1 and 2) are mainly located around Cobham, Sole Street, Higham and Shorne. These provide a mix of arable fields and orchards.

3.1.7. The north eastern part of the Borough alongside the river has the lowest grade agricultural land in Gravesham (grade 4) and is formed of grazing marsh. It should be noted that much of the grazing marsh is of international importance for wildlife and this is given the highest level of protection under the Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS12 and relevant legislation. For this reason, development cannot simply be directed to that area of poorer quality agricultural land.

3.1.8. There are areas around settlements such as Culverstone, Vigo and between Shorne and Cobham which are not classified as agricultural land, as these are comprised of protected wooded or parkland areas.

3.1.9. High quality agricultural land forms part of a wider national industry, which helps to feed the nation and contributes towards food security by making provision for local produce. It also provides employment and contributes towards the landscape character of the rural area.

3.1.10. The majority of Gravesham’s agricultural land lies within the Green Belt and this Green Belt policy designation has assisted in protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land in the Borough from inappropriate development. There are also biodiversity and landscape constraints which are a factor in the protection of agricultural land.

Proposed Policy DM 8 Agricultural Land

3.1.11. Unless allocated through the Local Plan, applications for development proposals affecting agricultural land identified as being potentially best or most versatile (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) must be accompanied by an agricultural land classification survey in order to confirm the quality of the land. Where there would be significant loss of agricultural land, applications must also be accompanied by evidence of a thorough search for and analysis of alternative development sites and a farm viability assessment.
3.1.12. Development on agricultural land will only be allowed when there is an overriding need which cannot be met within the urban area; or within rural settlements inset from the Green Belt or on other previously developed land. Subject to this overarching proviso, the following policy tests will be applied.

3.1.13. Development on the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be allowed unless:

   a. the site is allocated in the Local Plan; or
   b. there is no alternative site on land of a lower grade or lower grade land has a landscape, wildlife or heritage designation which outweighs agricultural considerations; and
   c. it is development which is not inappropriate within the Green Belt or otherwise can be justified by very special circumstances; and
   d. it can avoid fragmentation and the loss of viability of remaining high quality agricultural land; and
   e. the economic, social or environmental benefits of the proposal outweigh the loss.

For the purposes of applying this policy, ‘significant loss of agricultural land’ not only relates to size, but to the importance of the land to the functioning of the agricultural unit and its viability.
4. Retail

4.1. Shopping Frontages in Gravesend Town Centre

Background

4.1.1. The current primary and secondary frontages were identified in the adopted Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 (Figure 2), whilst the primary shopping area is set out in the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy. The primary and secondary frontages have recently been reviewed to take into account the recommendations in the Retail and Commercial Leisure Assessment 2016. It is now proposed to make some changes to these frontages and these changes are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Figure 2 Current Primary and Secondary Frontages
4.1.2. Saved Local Plan First Review policy S3 seeks to resist changes of use from shopping uses (use class A1) within primary shopping frontages. Within secondary shopping frontages, saved policy S4 allows uses which are appropriate to the town centre shopping area and which require a shop window frontage, including financial and professional service uses (use class A2), provided that the total number of buildings in such uses in each particular length of street is not excessive.

4.1.3. We are proposing to replace these saved policies with a single policy on shopping frontages. This will include the areas covered by the primary and secondary frontages as well as other shop premises in the rest of the primary shopping area. It will also include those shopping frontages in Milton Road and Parrock Street which, although part of the Town Centre Opportunity Area, lie outside the primary shopping area. These also provide opportunities to accommodate a wider range of uses that complement the offer of the primary shopping area and (in the case of Milton Road in particular) act as neighbourhood centres for adjoining residential communities.

4.1.4. The shopping frontages in Milton Road and Parrock Street are not currently shown on the Policies Map. As we are proposing that the policy specifically refers to them, these will need to be included on the map. They are shown in Figure 4 overleaf.

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9 For a description of Use Classes see https://goo.gl/JNNfq8
4.1.5. The proposed text and policy on Shopping Frontages are set out below in the revised draft policy. This has had regard to changes made in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), which places greater emphasis on flexibility and the ability of town centres to adapt to both a changing retail environment and their future role. The changes made also take into account responses received at the Regulation 18 Stage 1 consultation, which also call for a more flexible approach. At this stage, no changes have been made to the shopping frontages shown at the previous consultation stage. Further information to support the proposed policy can be found in the updated Retail Centres Background Paper (2019).

4.1.6. Permitted development rights mean that it is possible to change the use of shops to financial and professional services, such as building societies, estate agents and employment agencies, without the need to apply for planning permission. They also mean that shops, financial and professional services, betting offices and other uses often found in the town centre can be changed to dwellings without the need for planning permission. As the Council wishes to protect the retail focus of the town centre and its primary shopping area. The Council will keep under review the need to limit such permitted development rights under an Article 4 direction.10

Proposed Text

4.1.7. The primary shopping area for Gravesend town centre is already established in the Local Plan Core Strategy. This primary shopping area is where the main retail development is currently concentrated. Within this area, there are primary and secondary frontages. Primary frontages are the very heart of the town centre and include a high proportion of shops which sell items such as food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages adjoin the primary frontages and support them by providing a more diverse range of uses such as restaurants, cafés, estate agents, building societies and pubs.

4.1.8. There are also areas within the primary shopping area which are considered to be neither primary nor secondary frontage areas but still contribute to the vitality and viability

10 Article 4 to the Town Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended)
of the area, i.e. the northern end of Parrock Street, Manor Road and Brewhouse Yard. The premises in these locations contain similar uses to those in the secondary frontages and provide opportunities for small independent traders in slightly more marginal locations.

4.1.9. Similarly, there are other shopping frontages that lie within the Town Centre Opportunity Area but are outside the defined primary shopping area, i.e. in Parrock Street to the south of the railway and in Milton Road. These areas also complement the offer of the town as a whole, whilst supporting adjoining residential communities in the same way as neighbourhood centres elsewhere in the Borough.

4.1.10. In Gravesend, studies have identified a need for units which provide larger areas of floorspace (250m² – 500m²) to meet the needs of modern retailers, particularly fashion retailers. The provision of such units would help Gravesend to retain shoppers and improve the vibrancy of the town centre. For this reason, the Council will protect existing larger shop units and encourage the merging of existing smaller units to provide larger units in the primary frontage areas, as long as the proposals are compatible with other policies in the Local Plan.

4.1.11. The role and function of primary frontages can be impaired when there are too many or too much clustering of non-shopping uses. On secondary frontages, similar negative effects can occur when there are too many non-shopping or non-financial and professional service uses. This is a particular problem when new uses result in the creation of a dead frontage or reduction in activity during normal shopping hours as this reduces the vitality and attractiveness of Gravesend town centre as a shopping destination. For this reason, the policy includes criteria to ensure that the existing roles of the different areas are maintained.

4.1.11. National planning policy emphasises the need to ensure that town centres are rapidly adaptable to change, allowing them to grow and diversify in response to changing market conditions whilst maintaining their role at the heart of the community they serve. Whilst recognising the need for flexibility, the role and function of primary frontages can be impaired when there are too many or too much clustering of non-shopping uses. On secondary frontages, similar negative effects can occur when there are too many non-shopping or non-financial and professional service uses. This is a particular problem when new uses result in the creation of a dead frontage or reduction in activity during normal shopping hours as this reduces the vitality and attractiveness of Gravesend town centre as a shopping destination. For this reason, the policy includes criteria to ensure that an appropriate mix of uses in the different parts of the town centre is maintained.

4.1.12. If a proposal is submitted which is contrary to the policy, the Council will give consideration to:

• whether the unit is vacant and for how long it has been vacant;
• whether there is any reasonable prospect of the premises being used in the future for retail or other uses appropriate to its location; and
• whether or not the proposed use would provide an active street frontage and be open during normal trading hours (9am – 5pm Monday – Saturday).

4.1.12 Because of the desirability of maintaining a supply of premises on the primary retail frontages suitable to attract and retain national multiple comparison goods retailers, additional criteria are applied where a proposal would result in the loss of larger Use Class A1 units. In such cases, evidence that either the unit is no longer suitable for such use or is incapable of being made so at reasonable cost or lack of market demand will need to be demonstrated. Where a change of use of retail premises is being proposed due to vacancy, the applicant will normally be expected to provide evidence of any marketing which has been carried out over a 12 month period to sell or let the property in good order, that it has been marketed at a realistic price and terms, and that no reasonable offer has been refused.
4.1.14. There are now wide ranging permitted development rights which allow certain changes of use to take place without the need for planning permission. In some cases, it is necessary to obtain prior approval from the Council before carrying out such permitted development. Some prior approvals require the Council to give consideration to the impact of the proposed development on the sustainability of key shopping areas. In these situations, the Council will treat the primary shopping area, along with the other identified town centre retail frontages in Milton Road and Parrock Street, as key shopping areas that it will seek to protect.

Proposed Policy DM 10 Shopping Frontages in Gravesend Town Centre

Primary Frontages

4.1.15. The Council will seek to maintain the vitality and viability of the primary shopping area by ensuring that shopping (use class A1) uses are encouraged and remain the predominant activity at ground floor level in the primary frontage areas shown on the Policies Map. The change of use of ground floor premises from Class A1 shops to other uses will be permitted where:

-a. It can be shown that the premises are no longer needed for A1 use and the retention of A1 use at the premises has been fully explored, without success, by way of active marketing at a reasonable rate and terms and in a good and lettable condition for a period of at least 12 months; and

-b. The proposed alternative use does not have an unacceptable impact on the retail function of the frontage, the attractiveness, or on the vitality and viability of the primary shopping frontage, including pedestrian circulation. To ensure this, the proposed alternative use should provide for an active street frontage that would be open during normal daytime trading hours (9am—5pm Monday—Saturday) with no more than two non A1 uses clustered together on any length of primary frontage.

4.1.16. Exceptions may be made where the proposal would clearly be beneficial to the vitality and viability of the primary retail function of the frontage.

4.1.17. To ensure that larger A1 use premises attractive to modern retailers are retained, the loss of units from the A1 use class will be resisted where the ground floor area exceeds 250 square metres. Sub-divisions of larger units will be allowed where the resulting units have ground floor areas which exceed 250 square metres. Proposals to merge existing smaller units into larger units will be supported where they otherwise accord with policies in the Local Plan.

Secondary Frontages

4.1.18. The Council will seek to maintain the role of the secondary frontage areas shown on the Policies Map in providing a greater range of uses within the A1 to A5 use classes to support the vitality and viability of the primary shopping area and to provide a complementary offer to the primary frontage areas.

4.1.19. Proposals that result in the changes of use of existing ground floor premises will be allowed where:

-a. they do not result in a group of more than two units accommodating uses which do not fall within shopping (use class A1) and financial and professional service (use class A2) uses; and
b. they retain an active shop front and maintain and enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the shopping area; and

c. they complement the shopping function of the area and provide a direct service to the public.

4.1.20. Exceptions may be made where the proposal would clearly be beneficial to the vitality and viability of the retail function of the frontage or it can be shown that the premises is no longer needed for an A1—A5 use and the retention of such uses at the premises has been fully explored without success, by way of active marketing at a reasonable rate and terms and in a good and lettable condition for a period of at least 12 months.

Other shop premises in the Primary Shopping Area and on identified retail frontages at Milton Road and Parrock Street

4.1.21. The Council will seek to maintain a mix of complementary uses that serve visiting members of the public at ground floor level in shop premises in other parts of the primary shopping area not designated as primary or secondary frontages and on the other identified frontages in Milton Road and Parrock Street shown on the Policies Map. It will do so by ensuring that any proposals for development do not result in less than two units in any group of three:

a. providing an active street frontage, and

b. not being open during normal daytime trading hours (9am – 5pm Monday – Saturday).

4.1.22. Exceptions may be made where the proposal would clearly be beneficial to the vitality and viability of the retail function of the frontage or it can be shown that the premises is no longer needed for a use serving visiting members of the public at ground floor level and the retention of such uses at the premises has been fully explored without success, by way of active marketing at a reasonable rate and terms and in a good and lettable condition for a period of at least 12 months.

Proposed Policy DM 9 Shopping Frontages in Gravesend Town Centre

The Council will require development within Gravesend Town Centre to contribute positively towards maintaining its distinctive character, range of services and status as the highest order centre within the borough. Proposals should contribute towards the creation and enhancement of a safe, attractive and inclusive town centre environment and have no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Primary, secondary and other shopping frontages and the Primary Shopping Area are defined for Gravesend Town Centre and the associated Opportunity Area as shown on the Policies Map. To allow the town centre to grow, diversify and be adaptable to change, whilst maintaining a suitable mix of uses to serve the borough, the Council will take the following approach to planning applications in the following areas.
Primary Shopping Frontages

On the Primary Shopping Frontages, permission will be granted for development falling within Use Class A1. Use Classes A2, A3, A4 and A5 will be permitted subject to the proposal maintaining or enhancing the centre’s vitality and viability, when considered against the following criteria:

- It should not harm the predominant retail character of the shopping frontage and generate similar pedestrian visits to an A1 retail use or greater during normal shopping hours (9am – 5pm Monday to Saturday inclusive);
- It should complement the existing shopping function of the Town Centre and not create an inappropriate concentration of similar uses which would be harmful to its function or viability; and
- It should provide an active shop frontage at ground floor level, immediately accessible by the public.

In addition to the above, proposals resulting in the loss of larger or anchor Use Class A1 units will only be permitted where:

- It has been demonstrated on the basis of evidence they are no longer suitable for retail use or are incapable of being made so at reasonable cost; or
- There is no market interest in the unit in Use Class A1, evidenced by way of active marketing at a reasonable rate and terms with the premises in a good and lettable condition for a period of at least 12 months.

Secondary Shopping Frontages

On the Secondary Shopping Frontages, permission will be granted for development falling within Use Class A1. The Council will permit a change of use away from Use Class A1 where the following criteria are met:

- The use would provide a service that complements the shopping function of the Town Centre and generate similar or better footfall than the use it replaces;
- The proposal would not harm the retail character, attractiveness, vitality and viability of the Town Centre, including unreasonably reducing the number of Use Class A1 units within that frontage; and
- The proposal would retain an appearance that is compatible with adjoining shop units, provide an active frontage at ground floor level and maintain the character of the area.

In considering the acceptability or otherwise of a proposal, regard will be given to the proposed opening hours of the unit, to ensure that vitality and viability of the frontage are not adversely affected by an unacceptable increase or clustering of uses that are not open during normal shopping hours (9am – 5pm Monday to Saturday inclusive).
Other Shopping Frontages

On the Other Shopping Frontages shown on the Policies Map, proposals for all main town centre uses and other uses compatible with a town centre location will be considered, subject to the proposal maintaining the vitality and viability of that part of the centre by attracting pedestrian activity and footfall and being acceptable in terms of other policies set out in the local plan.

Proposals on Milton Road, which also performs an important neighbourhood centre function, should not unreasonably reduce the number of Use Class A1 units within that frontage whilst maintaining an active frontage at ground floor level.

Within the Town Centre as a whole, the Council will support proposals to bring underused upper floors back into beneficial use, including residential and office use. In terms of residential uses, such proposals will only be permitted where they provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. All proposals should be of high quality design and respond positively to the character of the building to be converted and its context.

Residential development will not be permitted at ground floor level within the primary and secondary shopping frontages or other shopping frontages within the primary shopping area.

4.2. Cultural and Tourism Uses in Gravesend Town Centre

Proposed Text

4.2.1. Policy CS09 on Culture and Tourism recognises the importance of culture and tourism to the local area in general and to Gravesend town centre in particular. In applying the NPPF sequential test, Gravesend town centre is identified as the sequentially preferred location for such development, unless otherwise justified as an exception. The above policies on retail frontages prioritise retail and a range of similar uses to maintain the vitality and viability of the centre.

4.2.2. However, it is now widely recognised that modern town centres have to improve and diversify their offer if they are to thrive in the face of competition from a variety of different sources. In the case of Gravesend, this includes larger regional centres such as Bluewater, which is in the process of expanding and improving both its retail and commercial leisure offer.

4.2.3. There is significant potential for Gravesend town centre to capitalise on its heritage, riverside setting and cultural diversity to improve its attractiveness both as a destination for visitors and as a focus of activity for the local community. Making the offer of the town centre more diverse also has the potential to improve the experience of shoppers, thereby strengthening the position of the centre overall.

4.2.4. The retail frontage policies above accept that there may be exceptions where the introduction of a non-retail use may be clearly beneficial to the vitality and viability of the centre. The introduction of complementary cultural and tourism uses may be such an exception, with each case needing to be assessed on its own merits having regard to the specific characteristics of the use to be introduced. The following policy lends support to this approach and is intended to be consistent with policy CS09 by focusing on the area within the Gravesend Town Centre boundary, as shown on the Local Plan Policies Map.
Proposed Policy DM 10: Complementary Cultural and Tourism Uses in Gravesend Town Centre

4.2.5. Within Gravesend Town Centre, as shown on the Local Plan Policies Map, proposals for active town centre uses including recreation, art, creative cultural and tourism development will be supported, provided an active frontage/shopfront is maintained, where applicable, and it is compatible with maintaining the vitality and viability of the relevant retail frontage and town centre in general.

4.3. Neighbourhood and Village Centres

Background

4.3.1. The Council’s existing policy in respect of local centres is set out in Core Strategy Policy CS08. It is intended to supplement this policy with a new development management policy that is consistent with national policy and to make complementary minor amendments to Core Strategy Policy CS08 in the interests of consistency. The latter will be consulted on separately at the time of the Regulations 18 (Stage 2) consultation in 2019. The Council’s approach to Neighbourhood and Village Centres and Lone Village Shops is set out below.

4.3.2. National planning policy requires that local plans identify a network and hierarchy of centres within Gravesham, to which main town centre uses will be directed in accordance with the sequential approach. Policy CS08 of the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy identifies Gravesend Town Centre (including its Primary Shopping Area) as the sequentially preferred location for such uses in the borough and therefore at the top of the local hierarchy of centres.

4.3.3. The policy also seeks to safeguard the retail character and function of existing and new centres by resisting development that would adversely affect their vitality and viability, whilst supporting development of a scale and type appropriate to the position of centres within the local hierarchy and their character. Lone village shops are also accorded protection.

4.3.4. In addition, the policy supports proposals for new and expanded local centres where they are of a scale and form designed to meet the needs arising from planned new developments in the following locations:

- Springhead Quarter Key Site, Ebbsfleet;
- Northfleet Rise Quarter Key Site, Ebbsfleet;
- Old Northfleet Residential Extension Key Site (as an extension to The Hive Local Centre);
- Northfleet Embankment East Regeneration Area Key Site;
- Canal Basin Regeneration Area Key Site

4.3.5. At present the NPPF definition of a ‘town centre’ is capable of being applied to lower order centres, such as district and local centres. This potentially causes a problem when applying the sequential approach to site selection, which prioritises town centre locations first – irrespective of whether they are town centres or lower order local centres.

4.3.6. The definition also precludes small centres of purely neighbourhood significance being accorded the status of local centres, even though there may be a good reason to protect them through policy because they are the only retail provision serving a particular area. In this respect, protecting such centres in the urban area is the equivalent of protecting lone village shops in the rural area.
4.3.7. A decision has therefore been made to follow a practice used elsewhere to designate all centres in the urban area below Gravesend Town Centre as ‘neighbourhood centres’ or, in the rural area as ‘village centres’. This therefore provides a clear distinction between Gravesend Town Centre as the only ‘town centre’ in the Borough, as opposed to lower order centres within the local hierarchy.

4.3.8. The ‘local centres’ shown in the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Policies Map are taken from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994). Changes that have occurred since that time mean that some centres have either contracted or disappeared altogether. The new list of neighbourhood and village centres reflects the current situation on the ground. Further information to support the proposed policy can be found in the Retail Centres Background Paper.

4.3.9. In addition, because policy CS08 already supports appropriate development within the local hierarchy of centres beneath the town centre, the development management policy that follows concentrates on the approach that will be taken to protecting their distinctive role.

4.3.10. It is intended that the centres shown in Figure 5 will be designated as neighbourhood and village centres for the purposes of the application of this policy.

4.3.11. A list of all centres within the local hierarchy of centres and the location of lone village shops is provided in the supporting text to the draft policy below.
Figure 5 Proposed neighbourhood and village centres
4.3.12. It is intended that the following centres shown on the adopted Local Plan Policies Map will be deleted either because of changes that have occurred since 1994 or due to alternative provision being available in the area which is easily accessible. This would mean that the shops in these locations would not be afforded protection under Proposed Policy DM 12.
4.3.13. In addition to setting out which neighbourhood and village centres and lone village shops should be designated, the Council is also consulting at this stage on whether additional centres should be allocated or other new centres/lone village shops in locations that are poorly served should be protected through policy. Views on these issues would be welcomed as part of the consultation.

4.3.14. Currently, Local Plan Core Strategy policy CS08 applies the national default threshold of 2,500m² floorspace to determine whether the retail impact test set out in NPPF paragraph 26 is required. This is to determine whether or not any proposal that is either edge or out-of-town centre will have a serious detrimental impact on the town centre or other centres.

4.3.15. However, when it comes to considering potential impact on existing neighbourhood and village centres, the introduction of competing proposals at such a scale could have a serious adverse impact on those centres.

4.3.16. Whilst the intent of national policy is not to stifle innovation or consumer choice but to direct retail and other main town centre uses to the most central planned sustainable locations, it is recognised that the introduction of a local evidence based alternative threshold for impact testing is acceptable. In Gravesham’s case, this would involve a minor modification to Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS08 as the threshold for impact testing is set out in this Policy.
4.3.17. In common with a number of other councils, our current view is that for retail uses not located in the town centre primary shopping area or neighbourhood or village centre, the threshold for impact testing should be reduced to 500m² gross floorspace.

4.3.18. This is also considered appropriate, given exceeds the size of unit that is capable of meeting day-to-day shopping needs in local areas and which we would wish to encourage locating in or adjacent to our neighbourhood or village centres or areas where there is a current deficiency in provision. Further consideration is given to this in the Retail Centres Background Paper.

4.3.19. Finally, if our neighbourhood and village centres are to continue to function effectively and support sustainable lifestyles by allowing people to meet their day-to-day retail needs locally, it is important that their vitality and viability is protected. The most important function of such centres is to provide opportunities for top-up convenience shopping, although they are also capable of providing a wide range of services and opportunities for small businesses in local areas. In terms of protecting the important role that they play, it is intended therefore that they will be treated as key shopping areas when considering proposals for change of use which result in the loss of shop units.

4.3.20. When deciding whether or not the loss of shop units or a reduction in A1 floorspace impacts the overall vitality and viability of the centre, key issues to consider are;

- whether or not the centre would continue to provide an appropriate A1 retail offer
- commensurate with the role of the centre;
- whether or not the proposed alternative use would assist in maintaining the vitality and viability of the centre, and
- whether or not the continued retail role of the centre would be complemented by attracting additional visiting members of the public.

4.3.21. Whilst neighbourhood and village centres in Gravesham differ significantly in terms of size and offer, based on evidence set out in the Retail Centres Background Paper, the Council will seek to ensure that a minimum of 45% of shop units are retained in A1 retail use as a guideline figure under policy DM12(c). This compares to a current average of 60% of shop uses in such centres being in A1 retail use and with only 5 neighbourhood and village centres out of 28 falling below the 45% figure. Should changes of use under permitted development rights prejudice this objective, the Council will keep under review as to whether such rights should be limited under an Article 4 direction.

4.3.22. In addition, the complete loss of shop units within neighbourhood and retail centres to uses that do not support their vitality and viability because they do not attract visiting members of the public, will only be allowed where it has been shown through an effective marketing exercise that the unit is not viable and incapable of being made so.
Proposed Text

4.3.23. Neighbourhood and village centres and lone village shops play an important role in supporting sustainable lifestyles by allowing people to meet their day to day needs locally, without needing to make unnecessary journeys by private car. They also allow people without access to private cars to shop locally, providing an invaluable service to the disadvantaged and vulnerable, whilst acting as focal point within our local communities. The Council is of the view that such centres and lone village shops should be accorded a high degree of protection from development that could adversely affect them from performing this function.

4.3.24. It will therefore treat its neighbourhood and village centres and lone village shops as key shopping areas when considering proposals that could affect their future vitality and viability. A list of designated neighbourhood and village centres and lone village shops is set out below. The location of these and their boundaries are shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map and (for the smaller centres) in Appendix 1.

Table 2: List of Neighbourhood and Village Centres and Lone Village Shops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Centre</th>
<th>Neighbourhood Centres in Urban Area</th>
<th>Village Centres in Rural Area</th>
<th>Lone Village Shops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gravesend Town Centre</td>
<td>• Cross Lane West/Singlewell&lt;br&gt;• Deneholm Road&lt;br&gt;• East Milton Road&lt;br&gt;• Echo Square&lt;br&gt;• Kitchener Avenue&lt;br&gt;• Lawrence Square&lt;br&gt;• Lion Roundabout&lt;br&gt;• Livingstone Road&lt;br&gt;• Lower Higham Road&lt;br&gt;• Mackenzie Way&lt;br&gt;• Old Road West/Pelham Road&lt;br&gt;• Perry Street&lt;br&gt;• Rochester Road</td>
<td>• Higham&lt;br&gt;• Istead Rise&lt;br&gt;• Meopham Parade&lt;br&gt;• Meopham Station&lt;br&gt;• Shorne&lt;br&gt;• Vigo</td>
<td>• Cobham Village Store – 26/38 The Street, Cobham.&lt;br&gt;• Spar, Wrotham Road, Culverstone.&lt;br&gt;• Ye Little Shop, Sole Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.25. For the purposes of the application of the NPPF paragraph 24 Sequential Test, neighbourhood and village centres will not be treated as ‘town centres’. This is because Gravesend Town Centre and its Primary Shopping Area is the sequentially preferable location for major new retail proposals.

4.3.26. However, in recognition of the role and function of the lesser order centres, policy CS08 will continue to support proposals that enhance their offer where they are of a scale and type appropriate to the centre. The intention is for these lesser order centres to focus on primarily meeting day-to-day needs rather than to compete with the town centre. The Council is of the view that the maximum size of any new retail units should not normally exceed those limits laid down under the Sunday trading laws. A threshold of 280m² relevant floor area is
therefore included in the policy at which the NPPF paragraph 24.86 Sequential Test will be triggered.

4.3.27 In order to protect the vitality and viability of the centres, the policy below sets out a range of criteria against which proposals relating to the change of use or loss of shop units will be judged. In this respect the Council considers as a guideline figure under policy DM12(c) that each centre should continue to provide at least 45% of shop units in the A1 retail use class to facilitate top-up shopping and that loss of any such units should be fully justified. Provided that the minimum level of A1 retail floorspace is maintained, a range of alternative uses such as A2 (financial and professional services); A3 – 5 (food and drink type uses); B1(a) offices; and D1 (non-residential institutions) that attract visiting members of the public may be acceptable provided they do not undermine the attractiveness of the centre as a retail destination.

4.3.27 In order to protect the vitality and viability of the centres and to ensure that they continue to support day to day shopping needs in a sustainable way, the policy below sets out a range of criteria against which proposals relating to the change of use or loss of shop units will be considered. Provided that sufficient A1 retail floorspace is maintained within the centre to ensure that continuing objective is achieved, a range of alternative uses such as A2 (financial and professional services); A3 – 5 (food and drink type uses); B1(a) offices; and D1 (non-residential institutions) that attract visiting members of the public may be acceptable provided they do not undermine the attractiveness of the centre as a retail destination. It will be for the applicant to provide evidence as part of any submission that this policy requirement is met.

4.3.28 Proposed Policy DM 13 of this plan in relation to hot food takeaways also applies.

Proposed Policy DM 11 Neighbourhood and Village Centres

4.3.29 The Council will support proposals for new retail floorspace within or adjacent to neighbourhood and village centres where it is of a scale and type appropriate to that centre. Retail proposals exceeding 280m² relevant floor area¹ will be subject to the NPPF Sequential Test, prioritising town centres first in the normal way.

4.3.30 Unless alternative or better provision is to be made in an equally accessible location serving the area, proposals for change of use or loss of retail uses and other uses that meet local needs in a designated neighbourhood or village centre will only be permitted where:

   a. It does not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre; and
   b. The proposed use is not detrimental to residential amenity; and
   c. The proposed use does not jeopardise the variety of services available in the local centre to meet the day-to-day shopping and other needs of the local community and evidence has been provided as part of the application to demonstrate this; or
   d. There is evidence to demonstrate that there is no demand for the continued use of the premises for retail or other uses compatible with the role of the centre; and
   e. The use is no longer viable or capable of being made viable and the property has been actively marketed at a reasonable rate and terms and in a lettable condition for a period of at least 12 months, with no reasonable offer rejected; and
   f. The proposal does not result in additional parking demand in the surrounding area, on or off street, unless there is sufficient capacity to accommodate it.

¹The 280 square metre ‘relevant floor area’ threshold is intended to reflect the definition of a ‘large shop’ under Schedule 1 to the Sunday Trading Act 1994. ‘Relevant floor area’ for the purposes of
this policy is defined as the internal floor area of a building but excluding any part of the shop which, throughout the week is used neither for the serving of customers in connection with the sale of goods nor for the display of goods.

4.4. Food and Drink Establishments

Background

4.4.1. Saved Local Plan First Review policy S7 sets out the criteria which will apply when considering applications for the change of use of shops to hot food takeaways and restaurants. Policy CS08 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the Council’s strategic approach towards retail centres in the Borough. Proposed Policy DM 10 and Proposed Policy DM 12 of this document set out the Council’s proposed approaches to uses within Gravesend town centre and local/neighbourhood centres respectively.

4.4.2. The Council recognises that there are certain issues associated with the changes of use of premises to food and drinking establishments – hot food takeaways, restaurants, public houses, bars and nightclubs. This is because they are often open in the evenings and can create issues in terms of noise, odours and litter. Such uses are often located in existing retail centres and the Council is keen to ensure that these centres continue to provide a range of services. We consider that an updated policy is required and that this should be extended to include drinking establishments given that they can have similar impacts to food establishments. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Text

4.4.3. Gravesend town centre and the local centres provide a mix of uses and a range of services which are available to their users and which help to maintain their vitality and viability. The Council wishes to ensure that these roles are maintained and Proposed policies DM10 and DM12 set out the Council’s approach to these areas.

4.4.4. It is recognised that uses such as hot food takeaways, restaurants, public houses, bars and nightclubs can provide an important complementary role to shopping and other uses in our centres. These uses can extend the vitality of centres beyond normal working hours as they are often open in the evenings. They can also make the centres more attractive places to live, work and visit.

4.4.5. However, food and drinking establishments can also have detrimental effects on amenity and on the retail character of centres due to the increased incidence of litter, odours, noise and general disturbance, their hours of operation and the potential creation of dead frontages. They can also create parking and traffic problems. Therefore, they need to be appropriately located and any impacts adequately mitigated if they are to avoid having an adverse impact.

Proposed Policy DM 12 Food and Drink Establishments

4.4.6. The Council will only allow proposals for food and drinking (use classes A3-A5) establishments where:

a. they will not cause a significant adverse effect on amenity in terms of noise, general disturbance, litter, odour or traffic generation;

b. pollution can be adequately mitigated through the installation of ventilation equipment, grease disposal, grease traps, waste facilities and noise insulation
which does not have an adverse impact on the character of the area or the appearance of the building;

c. a satisfactory standard of servicing and parking can be provided which will not interfere with the free flow of traffic and highway safety; and

d. it will not result in two or more of such uses to be clustered together, creating a dead frontage detrimental to the viability and vitality of the retail frontage or centre where it is located. It will not have a detrimental impact on the viability or vibrancy of the retail frontage or centre where it is located due to an over-concentration or clustering of such uses on intended hours of operation.

4.5. Retention of Public Houses

Background

4.5.1. Public houses form an important part of our local communities as places to meet and socialise. They also contribute significantly towards sense of place and the heritage of our town and villages. The loss of a number of public houses in recent years has been a cause of local public concern. Whilst the Council cannot prevent this in many cases, where planning permission is required it is important that there is a policy mechanism in place against which proposals can be evaluated.

Proposed Text

4.5.2. In common with many areas, Gravesham has seen a decline in the number of public houses in the past few years. Whilst this trend reflects changing social practices and commercial reality in many instances, in others it has simply been the desire to exploit the value of the site for an alternative use, to the detriment of the communities the public house once served.

4.5.3. Within Gravesend’s historic riverside town centre, the loss of public houses can also have a detrimental impact on offer of the town as a place to visit, socialise and interact. Many public houses here either lie within Conservation Areas or are Listed Buildings and the use forms an important part of their historic character.

4.5.4. The change of use of public houses (Use Class A4) to retail (Use Class A1) or financial and professional services (Use Class A2) constitutes permitted development. 11Whilst restrictions apply where the premises has been nominated as a ‘community asset’, this only allows a limited period of time for the nominees to make an offer to purchase the public house to secure its future. Similarly, provided the public house is not otherwise protected or has been nominated as a ‘community asset’, demolition is permitted subject prior approval of the method of demolition and proposed restoration of the site.12

4.5.5. The ease with which existing public houses may be lost contradicts national planning policy in many ways. This requires local planning authorities to plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities – including public houses. It also instructs that we should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce a community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs. The promotion and retention of community facilities such as public houses in villages is also encouraged.13

11 See the Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
12 See the Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
4.5.6. Policy CS10 on Physical and Social Infrastructure also lends support to the retention of existing local facilities such as public houses, requiring where there is a threat of loss of existing social infrastructure that consideration be given to viability and whether there is sufficient alternative provision available. Policy CS09 on Culture and Tourism also seeks to protect and support improvements to existing cultural and tourist facilities and lends support to sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors.

4.5.7. The Council would therefore wish to see existing public houses retained where they serve a local need and are viable. Where planning permission is required for development that would result in the loss of an existing public house, the following policy will therefore be applied.

Proposed Policy DM 13: Retention of Public Houses

4.5.8. Planning permission will only be granted for development which results in the loss of an existing public house where:

   a. It has been demonstrated through the submission of evidence that the public house is no longer economically viable or capable of being made economically viable at reasonable cost; and
   b. The public house has been the subject of continuous effective marketing for a period of 12 months or more on reasonable terms, with no reasonable offer rejected.

4.5.9. In considering the acceptability or otherwise of a proposal which would result in the loss of a public house, the Council will also have regard to:

   a. The role the public house plays in the provision of space for community groups to meet and whether the loss of such space would contribute toward a shortfall in local provision;
   b. The design, character and heritage value of the public house and the significance of the contribution it makes to the streetscape, local distinctiveness and the historic environment of its location; and
   c. The ability and appropriateness of the building and site to accommodate an alternative use or uses without the need for demolition or alterations that may detract from the character and appearance of the building;
   d. The appropriateness of the proposed alternative use in relation to the location of the site and neighbouring uses, together with the adequacy of parking and delivery arrangements to support the proposed use and potential impact on highway safety; and
   e. Whether or not the proposal provides an alternative community service or function.

4.5.10. All development proposals resulting in the loss of a public house must be accompanied by a CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) compliant public house viability test.
5. Infrastructure

5.1. Route Safeguarding

Background

5.1.1 Safeguarding is a term used to reflect safeguarding directions issued by the Secretary of State as well as ‘red line’ boundaries under Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 – Article 18(1) and Schedule 4. The effect of safeguarding is that as the Local Planning Authority, the Council is obliged to consult the relevant body for any planning applications within the specified boundaries. A safeguarding direction is intended to prevent any development from progressing that might prejudice a safeguarded scheme from being delivered or prejudice an existing scheme.

5.1.2 Core Strategy Policy CS11 para 2.5.42 contains references to safeguarding for the future extension of Crossrail (also referred to as the Elizabeth Line) and continued protection of HighSpeed1 (HS1). The former covers the North Kent railway line to Hoo junction to allow for the extension of Crossrail services to Gravesend over existing tracks. The latter is the original Channel Tunnel Rail Link safeguarding for the construction of the scheme and retained subsequently to protect the railway. There has been a consultation on modifying the safeguarding of HS1 to remove areas that were only included for construction purposes. In due course the Policies Map will need to be modified in order to reflect changes made.

5.1.3 Saved Local Plan First Review Policy T6 contains reference to dualling Thames Way (South Thameside Development Route stage 4) in Ebbsfleet. This safeguarded scheme allows for the current carriageway to be expanded to a dual carriageway should it be required to serve development in the Ebbsfleet Valley and/or on Swanscombe Peninsula.

5.1.4 In April 2017, the Secretary of State for Transport published the preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing with a red line boundary under the above regulations. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), a highway authority, such as Highways England, has legislative powers to purchase blighted land, meaning that affected home and land owners can sell their property to Highways England at market value. For further information regarding the Lower Thames Crossing please visit www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk or phone Highways England on 0300 123 5000.

5.1.5 In August 2017 a preferred route announcement was made by Highways England for junction of improvements to Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions on the A2. The red line boundary now includes a small area of land in Gravesham for the Ebbsfleet junction, which will need to be shown on the proposals map.

5.1.6 It is important to emphasise that the Borough Council has not introduced these safeguarded areas but is obliged to reflect these safeguarded areas within the Local Plan, as they have important implications for development in the Borough.

5.1.7 For clarity it is proposed that as a minor amendment, paragraph 5.5.42 from Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS11 be deleted to avoid duplication with Proposed Policy DM 15.

Proposed Text

5.1.8 Various external bodies declare ‘safeguarded’ areas where they need to be consulted to prevent development that may prejudice their schemes. It is important that those proposing development have a clear understanding of where those schemes are and that these safeguarded areas are reflected on the Local Plan Proposals Policies Map.
Proposed Policy DM 14: Route Safeguarding

5.1.9. Land required for the following safeguarded schemes will be shown on the proposals map and development proposals that would prejudice these or any subsequent schemes subject to safeguarding will be refused:

a. possible future extension of Crossrail;
b. protection of the High Speed 1 (HS1) railway;
c. Thames Way dualling in Ebbsfleet;
d. Lower Thames Crossing
e. A2 Ebbsfleet junction

5.2. Traffic Management within Sites and Access onto the Highway

Background

5.2.1. Core Strategy Policy CS11 provides the framework for considering the impact of development on the transport network and sets out what steps should be taken to accommodate additional trips and encourage the use of public transport. At times proposals for new development include plans to form new junctions and accesses onto the existing highway network.

5.2.2. Where they are necessary, they must meet safety and highway design standards and minimise disruption to pedestrian and other traffic whilst taking account of the circumstances of a particular location and the characteristics of the road concerned. An increase in the number of vehicular accesses to a site should be avoided.

5.2.3. All new junctions to the road network must be designed to ensure that there would be no significant impact on traffic conditions in terms of increased queuing or delay. To prevent increasing traffic congestion, the creation of new accesses to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) or other classified roads will generally be resisted where alternative access routes are practicable.

5.2.4. Saved Local Plan First Review policies T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 refer to the impact of development on the highways network using a hierarchy of roads. These are shown on the Policies Map. It has been agreed with Kent County Council, which is the Transport Authority, that this hierarchy is no longer needed. However, clarity needs to be provided over the criteria to be applied when considering proposals for accesses and junctions that impact on the highway network. Therefore, saved policies T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 and the relevant Policies Map notations will be deleted and replaced with the proposed text and policy below.

Proposed Text

5.2.5. Core Strategy Policy CS11 provides the framework for considering the impact of development on the transport network and sets out what steps should be taken to accommodate additional trips and encourage the use of public transport. At times proposals for new development include plans to form new junctions and accesses onto the existing highway network. This needs to be done in a safe manner which is compliant with highway standards, taking account of the circumstances of a particular location and the characteristics of the road concerned.

5.2.5 Core Strategy policy CS11 on Transport sets out the Council’s strategic approach in this area, with the objective of facilitating the movement of people, goods and services in a sustainable way. This means trying to reduce reliance on the private car and road based...
transport of goods, with a move toward walking, cycling, the use of public transport, and more use of the River Thames for the carriage of both passengers and goods. The gradual introduction of electric vehicles will assist in making road trips more sustainable but their needs will also have to be accommodated.

The policies that follow are intended to be used when considering proposals for actual development in order that this strategic approach can be delivered over time.

Where new highways and accesses are being constructed to serve existing or new development, it is important that this is done in a safe manner which is compliant with highway standards, taking into account the circumstances of a particular location and the characteristics of the road concerned.

The highway network in Gravesham includes:

- Part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) controlled by Highways England – i.e. the A2/M2 and potentially the new Lower Thames Crossing is subsequently permitted and built;
- Part of the Major Road Network (MRN) controlled by Kent County Council as highways authority and recognised for their importance below the SRN – i.e. the A289 Wainscott By-Pass in Gravesham; and
- The remainder of the local road network (A and B class roads and other local roads), controlled by Kent County Council.

Transport Assessments describe the overall impact of developments on the transport network, and consider their accessibility by all modes of transport, taking into account any highway or sustainable transport improvements that developers propose to implement.

The need for a Transport Assessment and its contents will depend on the size, nature and location of a proposal. Detailed requirements should be discussed with the relevant highway authority at an early stage.

Travel Plans are aimed primarily at promoting sustainable transport options for sites and reducing car dependence and single car occupancy. They can reduce reliance on the private car by promoting opportunities for travelling to and from sites by public transport, walking and cycling and by offering new opportunities to reduce car use, for example through the establishment of car sharing services or car clubs.

For proposals likely to impact on the Strategic Road Network, Highways England has provided guidance in relation to the delivery of sustainable development. New accesses onto the Strategic Road Network are normally resisted by Highways England, due to potential road safety conflicts and traffic implications.

16 DfT Circular 02/0213 The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development.
It is important that new highways and accesses are designed and constructed to an appropriate standard. When considering new accesses and junctions onto roads with a speed limit of 30mph or under, the Council will have regard to the Kent Design Guide; the associated ‘Making it Happen’ supplement, which includes a number of highway design elements; and the Government’s Manual for Streets. For roads with a speed limit of 30mph or over or which experience heavy traffic or large numbers of lorries or buses, the Highways Agency Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) will be used as a guide to best practice.17

It is important to ensure that new accesses onto existing busy roads, such as Old Road East and Rochester Road, do not result in dangerous traffic movements which can lead to accidents. This means ensuring that vehicles are not required to carry out dangerous reversing manoeuvres. It also means that sight lines will need to be provided so that drivers using the access point can see oncoming traffic.

The provision of sight lines can result in the loss of protected trees or the removal of boundaries which are important to the character of the area. The Council will take policies on Green Infrastructure, Heritage and Development Design Principles into account and impact on amenity resulting from the use of the access in assessing whether such proposals are acceptable.

Developments which generate large volumes of traffic, such as supermarkets, industrial development and large scale residential development, should have good access onto the local road network. Such development will only be acceptable where the network and junctions either have spare capacity to accommodate the traffic movements or improvements can be made to accommodate the additional capacity required.

Where commercial development is proposed, it is important that the applicant provides sufficient detail at any early stage so that the Council can make a preliminary evaluation. Details of the following should therefore be provided:

- Servicing requirements of the development;
- Delivery Hours;
- Delivery Frequency;
- Service bay location and how it will be accessed;
- Details of how the service bay will be operated, including a swept path analysis; and
- The size of the servicing vehicles.

Other forms of development bring with them their own particular needs, such as ‘drop-off’ and ‘pick-up’ points associated with schools and nurseries. Early consideration therefore needs to be given as to how a proposal will operate.

As noted above, transport isn’t simply about accommodating additional traffic on the highway network when there may be more sustainable alternatives that can be considered.

The local network of footpaths and cycle routes provide opportunities for people to move around. Kent County Council has developed a statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) that has amongst its objectives to contribute towards more sustainable development; to deliver more active travel options; and to provide opportunities for exercise, leisure and

17 Links to be confirmed
open-air recreation. The Council would expect such options to be explored in any consideration against policy DM16.

The greater potential to use the River Thames for both passenger and goods transport on a day-to-day basis and to support construction projects is also recognised. Existing policies CS07 on Economy, Employment and Skills and CS11 on Transport already recognise and promote greater use of the river. The key wharves are also protected under this Local Plan and by policies set out in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The importance of the historic Gravesend-Tilbury ferry as one of the few ways the public without vehicles can cross the river outside London is also recognised, as is the potential to introduce a London to Gravesend river service explored by the Thames Clipper trail.

In determining applications, the Council will expect proposals not to have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and not result in a ‘severe’ residual cumulative impact on the road network. It should be noted that National Planning Policy does not define ‘severe’ for these purposes.

For the purposes of the policies that follow, whether or not the resulting impact is ‘severe’ and therefore unacceptable will be a matter of judgement for the Council (as Local Planning Authority) in consultation with the relevant highway authority having regard to the outcome of any Transport Assessment or supporting statement, having regard to mitigation measures proposed in each case.

5.2.6. The Council has adopted the Kent Design Guide as Supplementary Guidance15 and this is referred to in Core Strategy Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles); the Guide includes a section on Designing for Movement. There is supplementary information for the Design Guide known as “Making it Happen” which includes a number of Highways documents. The government has also produced a Manual for Streets. Together these documents will be used to assess the design and suitability of new accesses and junctions onto roads with a speed limit of 30 mph or under.

5.2.7. There is also a Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. This document will be used to assess the design and suitability of new accesses and junctions onto roads which have a speed limit above 30 mph, experience heavy traffic or experience large numbers of HGV or bus movements, for example Thames Way.

5.2.8. It is important to ensure that new accesses onto existing busy roads, such as Old Road East and Rochester Road, do not result in dangerous traffic movements which can lead to accidents. This means ensuring that vehicles are not required to carry out dangerous reversing manoeuvres. It also means that sight lines will need to be provided so that drivers using the access point can see oncoming traffic. The provision of sight lines can result in the loss of protected trees or the removal of boundaries which are important to the character of the area. The Council will take policies on Green Infrastructure, Heritage and Development Design Principles into account in assessing whether such proposals are acceptable.

5.2.9. Developments which generate large volumes of traffic, such as supermarkets, industrial development and large scale residential development, should have good access onto the A or B class road network. Such development will only be acceptable where the network and junctions either have spare capacity to accommodate the traffic movements or improvements can be made to accommodate the additional capacity required.

5.2.10. Further access will not be allowed onto the A2/M2 trunk roads within the Borough, at the request of Highways England.
5.2.11. The Council supports sustainable modes of transport which will help to reduce dependence on the car. Therefore, it will require junctions to be designed to accommodate buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

Proposed Policy DM 15 Transport Hierarchy Transport Design Principles

5.2.12. The design of developments including site layout, public realm and transport infrastructure should prioritise the transport needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users above those of motor vehicle users.

5.2.15 Development management decisions will be taken in the context of achieving the following sustainability objectives, as far as is practicable, given the context of proposals and their characteristics:

- Rebalancing the transport system towards walking, cycling and public transport;
- Making better use of the River Thames for the transportation of both passengers and goods;
- The creation of healthy streets and public realm;
- The reduction in road danger, both in town and the country – particularly on rural lanes; and
- Improving air quality.

Proposals should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and facilitate, as far as is possible, high quality public transport, within safe secure and attractive environments, which minimise potential for conflict between motorised and non-motorised users.

The needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility should be addressed, with provision made for the safe and efficient delivery of goods and access by service and emergency vehicles.

Provision should be made for or be designed to accommodate retrofitting of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations, unless otherwise justified as an exception.

Proposals for major development requiring either a Design and Access Statement or a formal Transport Assessment should set out how the above issues are addressed and the contribution made to securing the stated sustainability objectives.

Proposed Policy DM 16 Understanding and Mitigating Transport Impacts

5.2.13. Development proposals are required to meet the transport needs of the development and address its transport impacts in a sustainable manner and in accordance with best practice.

5.2.14. Where the council considers that a development is likely to have a severe adverse impact on the operation of transport infrastructure, this impact must be satisfactorily mitigated. In order for developments to be considered acceptable they are required to:

- a. fully mitigate severe adverse impacts upon the capacity and operation of transport infrastructure, including the highway network, cycling and walking routes, public transport infrastructure and the river;
b. ensure safe, convenient and inclusive accessibility to, from and within developments for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and other vehicles. Including inclusive access for mobility impaired people, and

c. adequately address the operational needs for existing and future residents, visitor and user “drop-off” and “pick-up” areas (e.g. for parents at nurseries and schools) as appropriate to the functioning of the development and the safety and free-flow of traffic. If required, the following information should be provided as a minimum:

- servicing requirements of the development;
- delivery hours;
- delivery frequency;
- service bay location;
- service bay operation (including swept path analysis), and
- size of servicing vehicles.

5.2.13 Development proposals will be required to meet the transport needs generated in a sustainable manner having regard to the principles set out in policy DM16. They should consider avoiding before mitigating any unacceptable impacts on the safety and operation of the highway, public transport and public rights of way networks or the river as necessary. Opportunities to secure net environmental gains as part of the project should also be considered.

Applications should be supported by a proportionate evidence base detailing baseline and future transport conditions and the likely impact of the proposed development, both alone and in combination with other known proposals, as appropriate.

Large or complex proposals or proposals with the potential to have unacceptable impacts in areas with existing transportation or associated air quality problems should be supported by a formal Transport Assessment, undertaken in accordance with national and local policy guidance and may also require the production of a Travel Plan, as part of any mitigation package.

Sufficient parking in new development will be provided in accordance with the Council’s adopted parking standards which will reflect the availability of alternative means of transport, accessibility to services and facilities, and the objective to secure a modal shift to more sustainable modes.

Proposals that have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network following mitigation or do not contribute positively toward the achievement of the aims of policy DM16 will not be permitted.

iFor the purposes of this policy ‘severe adverse impacts’, refer to the outcome of a Transport Assessment or Statement which varies from each development. It will be for the local planning authority in consultation with the relevant highway authority to determine what impacts there are and whether they consider these to be an unacceptable or “severe” impact on the local area, after considering what mitigation measures are being proposed in each circumstance.
Proposed Policy DM 17 New Accesses and Junctions

5.2.15. New development will only be permitted if the access and road junction which serves the development is appropriately sited and is of an appropriate scale and configuration and there is no adverse impact on highway safety and the free flow of traffic. In the case of roads which have high volumes of traffic or a high proportion of heavy vehicles during any part of the day or night, it will be necessary for new accesses to show that traffic can enter and exit the site in a forward direction without the use of turntables and ensure that adequate visibility splays are provided.

5.2.16. New access and servicing arrangements must ensure vehicles can easily reach the necessary loading, servicing, and parking areas with multiple manoeuvres not being acceptable. New development will only be permitted where adequate, safe and functional provision is made for:

- a. Refuse collection and any other service, and delivery vehicles required to serve part of the normal functioning of the development; and

- b. Emergency services vehicles.

5.2.17. New highways should be built to the local Highway Authority’s adoptable design, construction, and safety standards.

5.2.14. All new or altered accesses and junctions should be appropriately sited and be of an appropriate scale, having regard to the levels of development, traffic and types of vehicle that are likely to need to use them.

All such accesses and new on-site highways associated with them should, unless otherwise justified as an exception:

- Accord with relevant highway design, construction and safety standards applicable at the time, with junctions incorporating visibility splays consistent with their intended use and characteristics of the highway to be accessed;
- Be provided with sufficient manoeuvring space to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear;
- Ensure vehicles can easily reach the necessary loading, servicing, and parking areas on site without the need for multiple manoeuvres;
- Not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on highway safety; and
- Not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the operation or free flow of the highway network.

The impact of any new access and associated manoeuvring area or roadways on the character of the area, together with the impact of vehicles using those facilities on the amenity of neighbouring properties, will also be material considerations.

5.3. Electric Vehicle Charging Points (Policy held in abeyance)

Background

5.3.1. Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to avoid adverse environmental impacts from air pollution. One of the ways in which new development can do this is by encouraging the use of electric vehicles through the provision of electric vehicle charging points. We are proposing a policy which will require new
residential developments to make provision for these or put in place the infrastructure required for their future provision. We will also encourage provision within large scale commercial, industrial and retail developments.

Proposed Text

5.3.2. The air quality section sets out how the Council will avoid adverse impacts from air pollution as a result of new development. However, there are more proactive ways of reducing air pollution, including encouraging the use of electric vehicles. This section sets out the Council’s approach to facilitating greater use of electric vehicles.

5.3.3. The Government’s wider policy on electric vehicles is set out in “Making the Connection: The Plug-in Vehicle Investment Strategy 2011” and “Driving the Future Today: A strategy for ultra-low emission vehicles in the UK 2013.” Amongst other things, these facilitate the provision of recharging infrastructure and provide for grants towards the purchase price of plug-in cars and vans. In July 2017, the Secretary of State for Transport confirmed that the Government would be ending the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040. As a result, it is expected that the use of electric vehicles will increase over the Local Plan period to 2028 and beyond.

5.3.4. The National Planning Policy Framework states that plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. This includes requiring developments to be located and designed to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles, where practical.

5.3.5. There are two forms of charging provision:

- Active provision – fully wired and connected "ready to use" charging points at parking spaces; and
- Passive provision – providing the infrastructure to enable simple installation and activation of a charge point at a future date, e.g. cabling to parking spaces and capacity in the connection to the local electricity distribution network.

5.3.6. Where parking spaces are to be provided within the residential curtilage of dwellings, the Council expects fully wired and connected “ready to use” charging points to be provided for every dwelling. This helps future occupiers of such development in choosing whether or not to own an electric vehicle. It is recognised that this may require a second metered supply to each house, to avoid overloading the normal domestic circuit and supply cable, which in turn may require alterations to the local power supply to accommodate additional demand.

5.3.7. For residential development with shared parking or dedicated parking outside the curtilage of dwellings, the Council expects development to make provision for charging points as well as being designed so that it can accommodate the provision of electric vehicle meters/charging points at a later date. This provides occupiers with a choice as to which type of charging point best suits their requirements as the market matures and demand for charging points increases.

5.3.8. The Council also recognises the benefits of providing electric vehicle charging points at commercial, industrial and retail premises. These allow employees and customers who own electric vehicles to charge them whilst working or shopping. When planning applications come forward for large scale commercial, industrial or retail development, the Council will require the developer to make some provision for electric vehicle charging within the car park, which can be readily adapted as demand increases and technology advances.
5.3.9. The Council recognises that electric charging points may not be the only measure to be supported by the Government and vehicle manufacturers and it is the Council’s intention to introduce further guidance as the market matures.

Proposed Policy DM 18 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

5.3.10. In order to reduce emissions and increase the use of plug-in vehicles, where viable the Council will require all new developments to provide charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. The table below sets out how such provision should be accommodated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Development</th>
<th>Provision of Parking Bays and Charging Points for ULEV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Houses</td>
<td>Single charging point per house within garage, car port or driveway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats (&lt;50 units)</td>
<td>Single parking bay and charging point marked out for use by electric vehicles only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats (&gt;50 units)</td>
<td>10% of parking bays marked out for use by electric vehicles only with charging points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Development (&lt;50 Bays)</td>
<td>Single parking bay and charging point marked out for use by electric vehicles only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Development (&gt;50 Bays)</td>
<td>10% of parking bays marked out for use by electric vehicles only with charging points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol / Service Stations</td>
<td>Single parking bay and charging point marked out for use by electric vehicles only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i dedicated 32A Type 2 charger as a minimum  
ii dedicated free standing 32A Type 2 weatherproof chargers as a minimum  
iii if vehicular movements from proposed development generates 100 or more two-way vehicle movements per day, charger provision should be replaced by dedicated free standing rapid (43kw AC or 50 kw DC) Type 2 weather proof chargers as a minimum  
iv dedicated free standing rapid (43kw AC or 50 kw DC) Type 2 weather proof chargers as a minimum  
v provision as above, with installation of groundwork / passive wring in order to enable further installation to match demand.

5.3.11. Where charging facilities are shared (for example through the development of flats) any provision of infrastructure should also include arrangements for the future operation and maintenance of the facility.

5.4. Telecommunications Infrastructure

Background

5.4.1. The telecommunications industry is ever changing to improve the speed and coverage of internet connections. We support the provision of improved infrastructure within the Borough through Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS10. Some aspects of telecommunications development does not require planning permission and can be undertaken under permitted development rights.

Proposed Text

5.4.2. National planning policy requires local planning authorities to support the expansion of
electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high-speed broadband. At the same time, the number of masts and sites for such installations should be kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network.

5.4.3. Core Strategy Policy CS10 supports the enhancement of existing and the provision of new physical and social infrastructure. In addition, the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule in the Core Strategy seeks the provision of super-fast broadband on all key sites. This is in line with Kent’s Framework for Regeneration, Vision for Kent and the government’s Broadband Delivery UK Plan. At the same time, Core Strategy Policy CS12 seeks to conserve, restore and enhance overall landscape character and valued landscapes and Policy CS19 aims to conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment. The Council is also under a range of statutory duties to have special regard to protect the heritage interest of listed buildings and conservation areas, as well as according great weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AoNB.

5.4.4. Telecommunications infrastructure is moving forward at a fast pace. The government’s aim is to provide superfast broadband (speeds of 24Mbps or more) for at least 95% of UK premises and universal access to basic broadband (speeds of at least 2Mbps). In terms of wireless mobile technology, the current standard is 4G (fourth generation) but there is now a move towards 5G (fifth generation) which aims to deliver improved speeds and coverage when compared to 4G. This means that there is likely to be a continued demand for enhancing existing telecommunications infrastructure.

5.4.5. There are wide ranging permitted development rights for the installation of masts and other telecommunications equipment. However, there are greater restrictions on the development which can take place without permission in Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas. The Government is proposing to increase the amount of telecommunications development which can take place under permitted development rights.

Proposed Policy DM 19 Telecommunications

5.4.6. Telecommunications equipment, including masts, boxes and satellite dishes, will only be permitted where:

a. evidence has been provided to demonstrate there is no reasonable possibility of sharing facilities or installing the equipment on an existing mast or structure so as to minimise the need for such development and visual clutter;

b. they are sited and designed to minimise their visual impact so as not to have an unacceptable impact on landscape, townscape or the significance of heritage assets;

c. they do not have a detrimental effect upon the character or appearance of a building or area or the amenity of occupiers of surrounding properties;

d. innovative design and technological solutions have been explored to minimise visual impact, and

e. where it can be demonstrated that there is no interference with highway safety, the maintenance and operation of the Strategic Road Network and there is adequate, safe provision for the parking of service vehicles.

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18 Kent County Council is currently working with telecommunications providers to facilitate the roll-out of superfast broadband services - see broadband@kent.gov.uk

19 Highways England Guidance on impact on the Strategic Road Network
A statement should also be provided with any application complying with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 115 detailing the outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development and certifying that the cumulative exposure of the installation, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection or other safety limits that may subsequently be imposed.
6. Green Infrastructure


Background

6.1.1. Policy CS13 (Green Space, Sport and Recreation) of the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy sets out that the Council will seek to make adequate provision for and protect and enhance green space, playing pitches and other sports facilities in accordance with an adequate and up to date evidence base. It also states that we will set out standards of provision which will apply to all new development, with preference being given to provision onsite.

6.1.2. The Core Strategy (paragraph 5.8.3) also recognises that further evidence is needed to inform our planning policies on open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. For this reason, the Council has had a new study carried out which looks at indoor and built sports facilities, playing pitches and open spaces in the Borough. For each of the three elements, the study assesses existing provision and sets out proposed strategies/standards. The playing pitches assessment and strategy has been carried out in accordance with Sport England’s guidance.

6.1.3. Currently, saved policy LT6 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review requires new housing development to make provision for open space and play space appropriate to the scale of development and type of housing proposed, having regard to the provision of and proximity to existing open space in the locality. The supporting text states that we use the National Playing Fields Association standards as a guide for such provision. This indicates a minimum standard for outdoor playing space of 2.43 hectares per 1,000 people. We are proposing to replace this with an updated policy. The proposed supporting text and policy are set out below.

6.1.4. The Council’s Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study consists of the following documents which are published as supporting evidence:

- Open Space Assessment and Standards Paper
- Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment, and a Strategy and Action Plan
- Playing Pitch Assessment, and a Strategy and Action Plan

6.1.5. The reports make a number of recommendations, some of which can be addressed via planning policies and others which need to be addressed by the Council at a corporate level.

6.1.6. In general, the Open Space Assessment found that there is sufficient provision to meet the needs of the Borough’s existing population but that some of the Borough’s facilities have quality issues, including a number of play sites for children. The Open Space Standards Paper makes a number of recommendations, including the need to protect all existing open space provision and to improve the quality of some of our sites.

6.1.7. In general, the Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment found that: sports halls in the Borough are of variable quality; we do not currently have enough swimming pool or health and fitness station provision; these shortfalls will be exacerbated as population grows to 2028; and the Cygnet and Cascades Leisure Centres are ageing. The Strategy recommends the Council to:

- protect the current stock of indoor sports facilities and introduce a hierarchy of use with defined roles and functions for different facility types which will be supported by
appropriate investment;
• enhance the borough-wide approach to programming and management at all sites; and
• provide a coherent range of good quality, accessible facilities reflecting the hierarchy and serving key current and future communities across Gravesham.

6.1.8. In general, the Playing Pitch Assessment found that: we do not currently have enough grass football pitches, a situation which will be exacerbated by 2028; the quality of some of the Borough’s football pitches is poor; there are no full size 3G pitches so there is a significant need for their provision; and there is a slight shortage of rugby union pitches which will increase over time. The strategy recommends that the Council:

• protect the existing supply of all types of outdoor playing pitches;
• improve the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities where needed;
• protect and encourage the reintroduction of lapsed sites to help meet future demand for football pitches;
• explore the potential use of pitches within education sites for rugby union; and work to increase the provision of 3G pitches.

6.1.9. From a Local Plan perspective, planning policies can protect the supply of existing open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitches, and support improvements to them. This includes negotiating for community access to school sports facilities when new schools are built or existing schools are redeveloped. Planning policies can also set out requirements for the provision of open spaces within new development.

6.1.10. In terms of the requirements for the provision of open spaces within new development, the study indicates that our current and suggested provision is very low. If we were to apply it, we would need a development of 580 dwellings to achieve one reasonably sized children’s play area and a development of 189 dwellings to achieve a reasonably sized amenity greenspace. The Council wishes to improve opportunities for recreation, sport, walking and cycling (Strategic Objective 15 of the adopted Core Strategy) and the imposition of such low standards is not likely to go far towards achieving the objective. As a result, the Council is proposing to publish minimum standards required as part of Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Proposed Text

6.1.11. National planning policy states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows that the open space, buildings or land are surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity or quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision that clearly outweigh the loss. The facilities are to be replaced or the development involves the provision of alternative sports and recreational facilities which outweigh the loss.

6.1.12. A new study of Gravesham’s Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities has been carried out. This assesses the current provision of open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitches in the Borough. In general, it found that new open space is not required to meet the needs of the existing population and that the focus should be on improving the quality of existing parks, greenspaces and children’s play sites. For indoor sports, it found that there is insufficient swimming pool provision and health and fitness stations to meet the needs of the existing population, and that the quality of sports halls is variable. It noted that both Cygnet and Cascades Leisure Centres are ageing facilities.
6.1.13. In terms of playing pitches, the study found that there are currently insufficient grass football pitches, particularly for adult football, there is a need for four full size 3G pitches and there is a slight shortage of rugby union pitches. Furthermore, the quality of the artificial hockey pitch facility is likely to act as a barrier to growth in that sport. The deficiencies in the provision of indoor sports facilities and playing pitches will be exacerbated by the increase in the Borough's population by 2028.

6.1.14. The study also includes strategies, action plans and standards for future provision of open spaces and sports facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population. It is clear that the Council needs to protect the supply of existing open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitches, and support improvements to them. This includes former playing pitches which are not currently being used as they have the potential to be brought back into use. As there is a significant reliance on access to school sports facilities and playing pitches within the Borough, the Council will seek to maximise community access to such facilities when opportunities arise.

Proposed Policy DM 20 Open Space, Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities Retention

6.1.15. Change of use or redevelopment of existing open spaces, indoor sports facilities or playing pitches and disused/lapsed school or college playing fields will only be allowed if the applicant demonstrates that:

a. the loss will be mitigated by equivalent replacement provision (in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility); or
b. the development is for alternative sports/recreational use for which there is a greater need; or
c. the current use will be retained and enhanced through the provision of limited enabling development.

6.1.16. In addition to the above, the redevelopment of private or public open space will not be permitted where there would be a significant individual or cumulative loss of open space or where there would be a negative impact on amenity, character and appearance, ecological connectivity or biodiversity of an area.

6.1.17. Support will be given to proposals that improve, increase or provide greater access to open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitches in the Borough.

6.1.18. When new schools are built or existing schools are redeveloped, the Council will seek to maximise community access to the sports facilities provided on site.

Proposed Policy DM 21 Open Space, Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities Provision

6.1.19. New development will be required to provide adequate open space, sports and recreational facilities commensurate with the level of development proposed in order to meet the need of occupants. Where such facilities are proposed they should be:
a. Publicly accessible;
b. Appropriately designed to be safe, usable and integrated into the development site;
c. Include a sustainable long-term management plan; and
d. Enhance biodiversity and integrate into the existing green infrastructure.

6.1.20 In exceptional circumstances, where there are over-riding merits to the proposal and it is not possible to provide such facilities on site, a financial contribution shall be required to invest in off-site facilities.

6.1.20 Where site constraints preclude it or there are overriding public benefits that would result from the proposed development, the Council will consider off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of off-site improvements in locations accessible to the development to be permitted. In such circumstances, the application should be accompanied by an open space study and strategy to demonstrate that the needs generated by the development are being met and that a high standard of amenity for future occupants and users will ensue.

6.2. Local Green Spaces

Background

6.2.1. National planning policy allows local communities to identify Local Green Spaces for special protection where these are of particular importance to them and are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. Local Green Spaces can be designated through the local plan itself or through a neighbourhood plan. Once designated, new development on Local Green Spaces should be ruled out other than in ‘very special circumstances’. Local policy for managing Local Green Spaces should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

6.2.2. National planning policy includes the following basic criteria that should be met before a site is designated a Local Green Space:

- The green space should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- The green space should be demonstrably special to that local community and hold a particular local significance because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- The green area should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

6.2.3. Because Local Green Spaces can be designated either through a local or neighbourhood plan, it is important from a development management perspective that there is a policy mechanism in place to deal with planning applications that may affect them.

6.2.4. The following policy is intended to be consistent with national policy for Green Belts by precluding changes of use resulting in the loss of public open space and only allowing built development and engineering operations consistent with an open space function as an exception. Any other form of development would be treated as ‘inappropriate’ development requiring the demonstration of ‘very special circumstances’ that clearly outweigh harm to the open recreational function of the open space and any other harm.

6.2.5. The Council has not identified any Local Green Spaces within the Local Plan Core Strategy but intends to do so as part of the allocation of sites. The regulation 18 stage 2 consultation on our Local Plan Site Allocations document in 2019 therefore will include questions relating to the criteria to be used in determining whether a site should be designated a Local Green Space and a call for possible candidate sites.
6.2.6. National planning policy allows local communities to identify Local Green Spaces for special protection where these are of particular importance to them and are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. This can be done through the local plan itself or subsequently through a neighbourhood plan. New development on Local Green Spaces should be ruled out other than in ‘very special circumstances’. Local policy for managing Local Green Spaces should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

6.2.7. The following policy is intended to be consistent with national policy for Green Belts by precluding changes of use resulting in the loss of public open space and only allowing built development and engineering operations consistent with an open space function as an exception. Any other form of development would be treated as ‘inappropriate’ development requiring the demonstration of ‘very special circumstances’ that clearly outweigh harm to the open recreational function of the open space and any other harm.

Proposed Policy DM 22: Local Green Spaces

6.2.8. Any development of a designated Local Green Space involving a change of use resulting in the loss of open space or built development shall be treated as ‘inappropriate development’ requiring the demonstration of ‘very special circumstances’ that clearly outweigh harm through inappropriateness and any other harm.

6.2.9. An exception to this presumption against inappropriate development will be made in respect of:

a. The erection of buildings or other structures that comprise appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments reasonably required in connection with the use of the land as a Local Green Space; or

b. The extension or alteration of an existing building on site provided it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building; or

c. The replacement of an existing building on site, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; or

d. Appropriate engineering operations reasonably required in connection with the use of the land as a Local Green Space.

6.2.10 ‘Inappropriate development’ not otherwise justified as ‘Very Special Circumstances’ that clearly outweigh harm through inappropriateness or any other harm, will not be permitted.

6.3. Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Background

6.3.1. Local Plan Core Strategy policy CS12 on Green Infrastructure sets out the Council’s strategic approach in relation to biodiversity, landscape and the aspiration to create an integrated network of green infrastructure in the Borough. A number of other policies are also relevant when considering trees, hedgerows and woodland – including in relation to greenspace sport and recreation (CS13); climate change (CS18); development and design principles (CS19); and heritage and the historic environment (CS20). To ensure that the Council has a robust development management mechanism in this area, the following policy and supporting text is proposed.
6.3.2. The adopted Local Plan Core Strategy contains a number of policies that, by implication, support the retention of trees, hedgerows and woodland and their improvement as an important component of the borough’s natural and built environment. Not only are they capable of contributing positively toward biodiversity and landscape as part of a local network of green infrastructure, they also have a role to play in terms of the mitigation of climate change and the reduction of air pollution. They add to the visual amenity of places where people live and work; can provide a setting for and soften new development; and help to bring the countryside and wildlife into urban areas. They are an essential part of sustainable development.

6.3.3. Where the Council considers individual trees, groups of trees or woodland to have a significant amenity value, it will impose Tree Preservation Orders to protect them from being cut down or otherwise damaged by inappropriate works or wilful damage. Works to such trees is prohibited by law without the written consent of the Council. Similarly, work to trees above a certain size within a Conservation Area requires consent. People intending to undertake works to such trees are advised to discuss those works in advance with the Council.

6.3.4. Some hedgerows are also protected under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Works to these hedgerows also require consent from the Council. In making a judgement as to whether the Regulations apply, the Council will have regard to the length, location and importance of the hedge. Once again, people intending to undertake works to a hedgerow that may be protected are advised to discuss those works with the Council.

6.3.5. The borough also contains a number of Ancient Woodlands that are of particular value because of their biodiversity interest, the habitat they offer to wildlife, and as historic features in the landscape.

6.3.6. Ancient woodland is defined as an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. National planning policy states that planning permission should be refused for development that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. An aged or veteran tree is one which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape, or culturally.

6.3.7. Areas of ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees may already be protected under Tree Preservation Orders. Woodlands of particular value may also be covered by nature conservation designations that require forms of consent that are not within the remit of the planning system. Natural England and the Forestry Commission has produced standing advice on ancient woodlands.

6.3.8. New development often provides opportunities for planting new trees, woodland and hedgerows as part of a scheme. Not only can this improve a scheme visually and assist in

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securing wider environmental benefits, it can add value. In the interests of biodiversity, locally sourced natural species will be preferred in any proposed planting scheme. Conversely, poorly designed and executed schemes can damage existing trees and other features on site and potential adverse impacts need to be managed. The following policy sets out how the Council will approach proposals in this respect.

Proposed Policy DM 23: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

6.3.9. Development should be designed to retain trees, hedgerows and woodland that contribute positively to the amenity of the site and surrounding area and which are important in terms of landscape, townscape, biodiversity or heritage. Consideration should be given to the incorporation of trees and hedgerows within new development in the interests of sustainability, to integrate with and improve the quality of the local environment and to assist in place making. The use of locally sourced natural species in planting schemes will be expected unless otherwise justified as an exception.

6.3.10. Proposals which threaten the future retention of trees, hedgerows and woodland or other landscape features of importance to a site’s character, the amenity of the surrounding area or to wildlife will not be permitted unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss and adequate mitigation and compensation measures can be secured.

6.3.11. In evaluating proposals, greatest weight will be accorded the retention and protection from harm of areas of ancient woodland and aged and veteran trees, the loss of which will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

6.3.12. Development proposals that have the potential to result in the loss of or harm to trees, hedgerows or woodland should be supported by a tree survey, and arboricultural report and ecological report prepared by a suitably qualified professional setting out:

a. The location, species, size, health and characteristics of any affected trees, hedgerows or woodland including root spread on or adjoining the site likely to be affected by the development;

b. The extent of proposed works and development relative to the features identified together with a plan and schedule of any trees, hedgerow or areas of woodland including root spread that would need to be removed or otherwise modified to accommodate the development;

c. A plan and schedule of those trees, hedgerows or areas of woodland to be retained;

d. The measures to be taken during the course of construction to avoid damage to those trees, hedgerows or areas of woodland to be retained;

e. The ecological value of the assets to be lost and measures to be taken to avoid any unacceptable adverse impact on any nature conservation interest as a result of works to trees, hedgerows or areas of woodland; and

f. Outline proposals for how any loss or damage to trees, hedgerows or areas of woodland will be mitigated to secure environmental net gain.

Where the loss of trees, hedgerows or woodland have a potential landscape impact, the proposal should also be supported by a landscape report prepared by a suitably qualified person detailing those impacts and proposed means of mitigation.

6.3.13. Where planning permission is granted for proposals that results in the loss or damage to trees, hedgerows or areas of woodland, conditions will be imposed requiring the submission of a
final landscaping scheme for the prior written approval of the Council and details of how that landscaping will be maintained in the long-term and managed until such time as it becomes established, including provision for the replacement of planting that dies or becomes diseased before it becomes established.
7. Residential

7.1. Self/Custom-Build Housing

(Consider deleting policy DM25 and including an evidence based provision within the Core Strategy as part of the partial review.)

Background

7.1.1. Self/Custom-built dwellings involve individuals or groups of individuals who directly organise the design and construction of their new homes. Since 1 April 2016, there has been a requirement for the Council to keep a register of individuals and associations who are looking to acquire serviced plots of land in order to build a house for them or their members to occupy as their main residence. The Council is developing a scheme so that the register will take account of a number of factors including the need for a local connection and the need for applicants to have sufficient financial resources to purchase and carry out a self-build.

7.1.2. To date, opportunities for self-build and custom-build dwellings in Gravesham have been focused on small infill development in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. We will continue to support this type of development. However, we also consider that there are opportunities to provide self-build plots on some of our larger development sites. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Text

7.1.3. Since early 2016, the Council has maintained a register of people who are interested in building their own home in the area. The evidence from this suggests that there is currently limited interest from people with known links to the Borough. However, it is expected that awareness and interest in self-build housing will increase.

7.1.4. Self/Custom-build housing in the Borough to date has been limited to infill development on small sites within the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. The Council will continue to support this type of development. However, it is considered that larger development sites may also have potential to provide plots for those who wish to build their own homes. This can only take place where sites are expected to provide houses rather than flats. Therefore, the Council considers that major development sites which include the provision of residential dwellings should accommodate such form of development.

Proposed Policy DM 24 Self/Custom-Build Housing

7.1.5. To support prospective self/custom builders, the Council will seek major development proposals, including residential development, to supply at least 5% of residential plots for sale to self/custom builders unless otherwise justified as an exception by robust evidence.

7.1.6. Where plots are made available for sale they must be marketed for sale for at least 12 months, after which they must be offered to the Council or a Housing Association for purchase, before reverting to the Developer and being built out and sold on the open market.

7.1.7. Where a plot is purchased by a self/custom builder, the Council or a Housing Association, the development of the plot must be completed within 3 years of the plot being purchased, before reverting to the Developer and being built out and sold on the open market.

1For the purposes of applying this policy, ‘major development proposals’ refers to the number of dwellings to be provided as being 10 or more, and
on sites of 10-19 dwellings a single residential plots for sale to self/custom builders should be provided.

7.2. Residential Space Standards

Background

7.2.1. In March 2015, the Government introduced Nationally Described Space Standards for provision of internal space in new dwellings. These are generally calculated on the minimum gross internal area of the whole proposed dwelling based on the level of occupancy, bedroom size and number of storeys. There was a period of transition and from October 2015 the Council has had to interpret our Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance policies according to the nearest equivalent national standard. Our standards are set out in our Residential Layout Guidelines 1996.

7.2.2. We have the option to implement the full national space standards through policies in our Local Plan but can only do so where we have the evidence to justify them, taking account of need, viability and timing.

7.2.3. In order to find out whether there is a need to impose the national space standards, we recently carried out surveys of all households located within all new build developments of 10 dwellings or more completed in our Borough from March 2010 to 2015 to get residents’ views on a number of matters. This included questions on whether the bedrooms and property overall are big enough to meet the household’s needs and whether there is enough storage space inside the property. 20% of households responded to the survey. The results indicated that:

- Over 80% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their bedrooms are big enough to meet their household’s needs
- A similar amount of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their property is big enough to meet their household’s needs
- Nearly half (46%) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had enough storage space inside their properties.

7.2.4. The survey results show that the previously imposed housing space standards have led to bedroom and overall dwelling sizes that the occupiers are generally satisfied with. There were no standards imposed in relation to the amount of storage space and it is notable that a significant proportion of respondents to the survey were dissatisfied with the amount of storage space inside their homes. On the basis of the survey results, it is considered that there is sufficient justification for the Council to adopt the national standards. Furthermore, the Viability Testing Report has taken the national space standards into account in assessing the viability of development. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Text

7.2.5. Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. One of the ways that it sets out to achieve this is by requiring the design and layout of new residential development to accord with the Council’s Residential Layout Guidelines. Amongst other things, these guidelines set out minimum sizes for each room within new dwellings. In October 2015, the government introduced Nationally Described Space Standards which set out minimum internal areas for the whole space within new dwellings based on the level of occupancy, bedroom size and number of storeys. These supersede the Council’s Residential Layout Guidelines in relation to internal space within dwellings. Should the Council wish to apply the national space standards, it is required to
provide justification and include reference to the standards in its Local Plan.

7.2.5 National planning policy sets out that Local Plan policies and decisions should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing users. This is integral to policy CS19 on Development and Design Principles, which also includes a requirement that proposals comply with the Council’s adopted Residential Space Guidelines.

7.2.6 The Council wants all development in the Borough to be of a high quality, with the Ebbsfleet Garden City leading the way. A survey of occupiers of new developments built in the past 5 years has been carried out. The results indicate the importance of using standards to achieve a sufficient amount of space within new dwellings. The viability evidence assumes that new dwellings will meet the national space standards.

7.2.6 Ensuring that all dwellings created in Gravesham are fit for purpose involves a consideration of whether internal spaces are adequate to support everyday life; that they are accessible, so as to meet the needs of a changing population that is ageing and more susceptible to disability and illness; and that they are served by sufficient private amenity space to facilitate outdoor activities given the characteristics of potential occupants.

7.2.7 In order to ensure that the occupiers of new dwellings have a good standard of internal space within new dwellings, the Council will apply the Government’s Nationally Described Space Standard national space standards to all proposals for new residential development unless otherwise justified as an exception.

The Council is aware that not all forms of dwelling (such as studio flats with no bedroom) fall within the typology set out within these standards but under Government policy is precluded from adopting an alternative. In these instances, it will be for the applicant to demonstrate that a high standard of amenity for residents can still be achieved.

7.2.8 The Council continues to apply minimum garden and amenity space standards from the Residential Layout Guidelines to all new proposals for residential development. We are proposing to include these in Proposed Policy DM 26.

7.2.8 The Council will apply its minimum garden and amenity space standard guidelines as set out in policy DM26 in considering the adequacy of provision. Each case will be determined on its own merits, having regard to context and design considerations but with the overriding objective being to ensure that acceptable living conditions for occupiers results.

Proposed Policy DM 25 Residential Space Standards

7.2.9 Proposals The space standards in Table 3 will apply to all new housing development in the Borough. Table 3: Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m2)

7.2.9 The Government’s Nationally Described Space Standards will apply to all new housing development in Gravesham, unless otherwise justified as an exception. Where these standards do not apply, it will be for the applicant to demonstrate on the basis of evidence that a high standard of amenity for residents can still be achieved.
Table 3: Nationally Described Space Standards – Minimum gross internal floor area and storage (m²).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Bedrooms</th>
<th>Number of bed spaces (persons)</th>
<th>1 storey dwellings m²</th>
<th>2 storey dwellings m²</th>
<th>3 storey dwellings m²</th>
<th>Built-in storage m²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1p</td>
<td>39 (37)*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2p</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>3p</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4p</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>4p</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5p</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6p</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>5p</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6p</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>7p</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8p</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>6p</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7p</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8p</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>7p</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8p</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:

a. Where a 1b1p dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m².
b. In order to provide 1 bedspace, a single bedroom needs to have a floor area of at least 7.5m² and be at least 2.15m wide.
c. In order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin) bedroom needs to have a floor area of at least 11.5 m².
d. One double (or twin) bedroom needs to be at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom needs to be at least 2.55m wide.

7.2.10. New residential accommodation and existing residential accommodation when extended, will be required to have the minimum areas and depths for gardens and private amenity space as shown in Table 4. In certain cases, greater depths and/or areas may be required.

7.2.10. New residential accommodation and existing residential accommodation should be served by adequate external private amenity space to meet the day-to-day needs of existing or potential occupiers. In assessing the adequacy of provision, the Council will have regard to its minimum garden and amenity space standard guidelines set out in table below, having regard to context and design. In certain cases, the Council will expect the provision of private amenity space to be more generous:

a. where gardens or amenity space incorporate steep gradients, protected tress and/or vehicle parking; and/or
b. to respect the scale, mass and bulk of the property and/or the character of the area including the spaces between properties.
Table 4 Minimum garden area and private amenity space standards guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation Size / Type</th>
<th>Minimum Garden Area (m(^2))</th>
<th>Minimum depth from rear wall of house (m)</th>
<th>Private / Communal Amenity Space (m(^2) per unit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House 1-2 bedrooms</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House 3 bedrooms</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House 4 or more bedrooms</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered or retirement homes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3. Residential Annexes

Proposed Text

7.3.1. To make effective use of land, the NPPF encourages the re-use of previously developed land. Previously developed land includes structures and curtilages of buildings but within built up areas land such as private residential gardens is excluded.

7.3.2. It requires local planning authorities to consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example, where development would cause harm to the local area.

7.3.3. No such policy has been set by Gravesham Council but instead, the Council relies on policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which applies design principles to all forms of development. This requires development to conserve and enhance local character, integrate well with the surrounding area and safeguard the amenity of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land.

7.3.4. Residential annexes are usually proposed to accommodate elderly or sick relatives in the curtilage of the main dwelling while giving them a degree of independence. The annex will be ancillary to the main building.

7.3.5. Generally, if annexes can meet the design requirements of policy CS19, they will be treated in the same way as other proposed development on a given site and no specific conditions would be required to prevent the subsequent creation of a separate planning unit.

7.3.6. The Council recognises that there are special circumstances where an exception may be made where the needs of a family should take priority and an annexe permitted eventhough it does not fulfil the requirements of CS19.

7.3.7. In order to ensure that this does not become a means of creating a separate residential unit in a location where such a development would otherwise be refused, the policy includes a number of criteria which will need to be met before permission can be granted.

Proposed Policy DM 26: Residential Annexes

7.3.8. The Council acknowledges that in some instances annexes for family members i.e. parents or children may meet the accommodation requirements of these individuals in a setting that allows for their social or health needs to be met. However, residential annexes are
considered to be an exception rather than the norm and will only be permitted where:

a. there is a functional link with the principal dwelling (i.e. the occupants should be a dependant relative/s);
b. both the annexe and principal dwelling are in the same ownership and remain so in perpetuity;
c. the accommodation forms an extension to the main dwelling and is capable of being used as an integral part of the dwelling; or forms a separate outbuilding which is in close proximity to and within the curtilage of the principal dwelling, and shares some essential facilities with the main dwelling; and
d. the scale of the annexe is subordinate to the existing dwelling and is the minimum level of accommodation required to support the needs of the intended occupant/s; and
e. there is adequate parking and amenity facilities (areas for bin storage, drying clothes, garden space etc.) for the needs of the annex occupants and existing residents; and
f. there is no boundary demarcation or sub division of garden areas between the curtilage annexe and principal dwelling;

7.3.9. Where planning permission is granted for a residential annexe, a planning obligation will be imposed to ensure that the annexe retains a functional link with the main dwelling (i.e. the occupants should be a dependant relative(s) and that the annexe is retained in the same ownership as the main dwelling and that this remains the case in perpetuity.

7.3.10. The Council will maintain a presumption against the development of self-contained residential units within the curtilage of existing dwellings, where the proposal would be in conflict with the other policies in the Local Plan.

7.4. Domestic extensions, outbuildings and other development

Proposed Text

7.4.1. A significant proportion of planning applications dealt with by the Council each year take the form of householder development involving domestic extensions, outbuildings or other forms of development. Whilst these are often of a relatively small scale, they have the potential to raise issues of appropriateness of design and impact on occupiers of adjoining properties.

7.4.2. Poorly designed and located domestic development has the potential to detract from the architectural integrity of the existing dwelling, local distinctiveness and sense of place. It can also be overbearing when viewed from a neighbour’s perspective and adversely impact on their amenity through loss of light or overshadowing. Overlooking into windows of habitable rooms or private garden areas can also be a problem.

7.4.3. Depending on their scale and location, many forms of domestic outbuilding benefit from permitted development rights and do not require a specific grant of planning permission.

7.4.4. However, domestic outbuildings that are out of scale or proportion with the dwelling on the site or take up too much of the area around it can have an adverse impact on the character of an area. Such outbuildings too have the potential to impact adversely on the amenity of neighbours and future occupiers. Additional problems arise where domestic outbuildings or extensions are of such a scale or form as to be capable of future independent residential occupation.

7.4.5. To ensure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants is achieved, local plan policy relating to residential and garden space standards will be applied. Similarly, the level of parking provision available to serve the extended dwelling should reflect its
increased size unless otherwise justified.

7.4.6. The policy that follows sets out the approach that the Council will take in considering such applications.

Proposed Policy DM 27: Domestic Extensions, Outbuildings and Other Development

7.4.7. All domestic extensions, additions and alterations should be well designed and located and respect the scale, form, proportions, character and appearance of the main dwelling and its locality. Particular attention should be paid to:

a. The roof form and roof line;
b. Window detail;
c. Architectural features;
d. Boundary treatments; and
e. Materials.

7.4.8. Any such development should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on occupiers of neighbouring properties due to loss of sunlight and daylight or overlooking. Where the potential for an unacceptable adverse impact due to loss of sunlight or daylight exists, an application should be accompanied by a formal assessment undertaken in accordance with Proposed Policy DM36.

7.4.9. Proposals for domestic outbuildings should be reasonably necessary, subservient to the main dwelling and of an appropriate size to accommodate uses incidental to the enjoyment of the main dwelling. In addition, they should be well designed, discretely located and be of an appropriate scale relative to the dwelling.

7.4.10. Local plan policy in relation to residential space standards (including minimum garden size necessary to serve the resulting dwelling size) will be applied to all proposals for domestic extensions and rooms within domestic outbuildings intended to be used as habitable space ancillary to the main dwelling.

7.4.11. Local plan policy in relation to car parking standards will apply unless otherwise justified due to the location of the site relative to alternative transport modes and accessibility to services and facilities. The location and design of any required car parking should not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on occupiers of neighbouring properties, townscape or street scene.

7.4.12. Domestic outbuildings containing residential accommodation or extensions that are of a scale or form sufficient to allow future residential occupation independent of the main dwelling, will be subject to control by condition or legal agreement to ensure that the planning unit is not subsequently subdivided without an express grant of planning permission.

7.4.13. Proposals for domestic extensions, outbuildings or other forms of development which harm the character and appearance of the main dwelling or its locality or have an adverse impact on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties or otherwise are not policy compliant will not be permitted.
7.5. Residential Intensification through Sub-Division and Conversion

Background

7.5.1. Saved Local Plan First Review policy H5 sets out the criteria to be applied for the conversion of buildings to flats, maisonettes, bedsitters, hostels, homes and other forms of multiple occupancy. Partial saved policy H6 (iii) relates to proposals for residential hostels and homes. For such proposals, the Council will ensure that they are not clustered together and that they do not harm the character of the area. We are proposing to replace these policies with a single policy on residential intensification. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Text

7.5.2. The Council recognises the importance of planning for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community and therefore it supports the provision of a mix of dwelling types and sizes. There is a need to provide housing to accommodate Gravesham’s ageing population and those who have special needs. It is also important to take account of the predicted increase in one-person households over the plan period whilst ensuring that there are sufficient dwellings to accommodate families and other households. These changing housing requirements can create pressure for more intensive types of residential accommodation within existing and new residential areas. This includes the provision of flats, bedsits, annexes, sheltered housing and houses in multiple occupation. It also includes residential institutions such as residential care homes and nursing homes. This type of accommodation can be provided by converting existing buildings or by new build development.

7.5.3. It is important that more intensive residential development provides a good living environment for its future occupants and does not adversely affect the amenity of existing residents in the area. Noise from the street and adjoining properties can cause issues for the occupiers of dwellings. For this reason, the layout of adjacent dwellings and the location of circulation and communal indoor and outdoor spaces should seek to limit the transmission of noise to sound sensitive rooms (bedrooms and living rooms) within dwellings. It is also essential that sufficient space is provided within the dwellings to meet modern living standards and that sufficient private, useable amenity space and adequate refuse storage facilities are provided for the residents of new developments. Core Strategy Policy CS19 and associated supplementary guidance will apply.

7.5.4. More intensive residential development has the potential to create additional traffic and demands for parking due to increased numbers of residents and visitors and, in the case of nursing and care homes, provision for staff. It is important that this does not give rise to increased pressure for on-street parking and that suitable facilities are provided to encourage sustainable methods of travel. Therefore, the Council will expect proposals to provide adequate cycle storage facilities and to meet adopted parking standards. Core Strategy Policy CS11 and the adopted parking standards will apply.

7.5.5. The Council recognises that certain areas are more suitable for intensive residential uses and Core Strategy Policy CS15 (Housing Density) encourages the provision of higher density housing development close to the transport hubs of Gravesend Town Centre and Ebbsfleet. However, it also understands the need to create balanced and sustainable communities. Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Housing Type and Size) seeks to protect the mix

23 In planning terms, houses in multiple occupation are houses or flats which are occupied by unrelated individuals who share certain facilities.
of housing in the existing stock and expects new housing development to provide a range of
dwelling types and sizes, taking into account the existing character of the area and evidence of
local need.

7.5.6. The concentration of more intensive forms of residential development in existing
residential areas can alter the character of the area, exacerbate impacts on existing residents,
for example, as a result of increased noise, traffic generation and overlooking, and lead to
communities which lack a mix of housing. For these reasons, the Council will seek to control
the concentration of such uses to ensure that the intensification of use in residential areas
does not change the character of the area nor adversely affect the amenity of existing
residents.

7.5.7. In Gravesham, many of the larger properties potentially suitable for conversion are in
Gravesend’s 19th century suburban conservation areas, e.g. Darnley Road, Pelham Road,
The Avenue and Windmill Street. Some of these are also listed buildings. It is essential that
any proposals for more intensive residential development in these areas, including any
additional off-street parking provision, accesses or changes to landscaping, preserve the
Borough’s heritage assets. Applications for development potentially affecting these assets will
also be considered against Local Plan policies on heritage and the relevant Conservation Area
Appraisal.

7.5.8. Whilst residential intensification through sub-division or conversion is supported to meet
the diverse needs of the community for housing in appropriate circumstances, the Council
is also mindful that there is a need to protect its stock of family sized housing. What is now
capable of constituting a family in modern society can mean many things but for the purposes
of policy it is necessary to define what we mean by ‘family sized housing’.

7.5.9. In terms of size, of the 42,100 dwellings in Gravesham at March 2017, 5,440 (13%)
were one bed properties; 10,100 (24%) were two bed properties; 21,490 (51%) were three bed
properties; and 5,050 (12%) were four + bed properties.24

7.5.10. However, whilst the proportion of four + bed properties in the local housing stock may
be relatively small, it is important to remember that even a house with four bedrooms is quite
capable of being occupied as a single family dwelling. In addition, there is a significant Asian
community in Gravesham with properties often occupied by multi-generational extended
families. Given we now also have an ageing population, there is potential for this practice to
increase amongst other groups as families look after parents as they get older.

7.5.11. It is prudent therefore to be generous in our definition of what constitutes ‘family
sized housing’ and, for the sake of consistency, to link this to the Nationally Described Space
Standards. The policy that follows therefore defines ‘family sized housing’ as a dwelling with
4 bedrooms or less or with a gross internal floor area of up to 118 square metres, whichever
is the greater.25

These would require evidence of unsuccessful marketing in accordance with
policy before sub-division or conversion into flats or bedsits etc. could be considered.

24 Figures derived from Valuation Office Agency and DCLG, published by Kent County Council – see
25 A gross internal floor area of 118 square metres is the average for dwellings with 5 bedrooms,
compared to 110 square metres for dwellings with 4 bedrooms. This would afford a degree of protection
to part of the local stock of larger than 4 bedroom dwellings to accommodate the needs of larger or
extended families.
7.5.12. Proposals for flats, maisonettes, bedsits, hostels, houses in multiple occupation or residential institutions will only be allowed where they:
   a. will not result in the loss of family sized dwellings, development proposals which include the loss of a family sized dwelling will only be permitted where evidence is provided of the property being proactively marketed for a minimum period of 12 months, using a professional agent and an appropriate range of online, on site and other advertising media. The asking price should, throughout the 12 month period, be shown to be reasonable for the property and location, and reflect the open market value of the property;
   b. achieve good quality living conditions for future residents, including providing a suitable internal layout, sufficient floorspace and adequate useable amenity space;
   c. will not adversely affect the amenity of existing or neighbouring residents; demonstrate that a satisfactory standard of servicing and parking can be provided, including making adequate provision for bin storage, cycle storage and drying areas; and
   d. will not result in the clustering together of similar uses which harm the overall character and amenity of the area.

7.5.13. For the purposes of this policy, a family sized dwelling is defined as one with up to 4 bedrooms or a maximum gross internal floor area of 118 square metres, whichever is the greater.26

7.6. Residential Intensification through New Build

Background

7.6.1. Policy CS19 on Development and Design Principles sets out the Council’s strategic approach in this area. Whilst Proposed Policy DM 29 deals with residential intensification through conversion and sub-division of existing buildings, new build in existing residential areas can raise a number of different issues relating to design and impact on amenity. The following policy provides the basis upon which such schemes will be assessed.

Proposed Text

7.6.2. A key objective of national planning policy is to significantly boost the supply of housing. Whilst the Council supports this aim, it is important that local distinctiveness is at the heart of the design process. Equally important is the objective that planning should secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

7.6.3. Because of the constraints to development that apply in Gravesham, the availability of suitable sites to accommodate housing is at a premium. An inevitable result of this is that there is pressure to consider residential intensification in the urban area and in the rural settlements inset from the Green Belt.

7.6.4. Residential intensification can take many forms, including building new houses, flats or the sub-division or conversion of existing buildings to increase density. This policy deals

26 Properties with more than 4 bedrooms but with a floor area of 118 square metres or less would also fall within the definition of a family sized dwelling, as would those with up to 4 bedrooms and a floor area greater than 118 square metres.
specifically with the issue of new build in existing residential areas. Proposed Policy DM 29 deals with the issue of sub-division and conversion.

7.6.5. Whilst residential intensification may bring benefits by making better use of land and concentrating development where it can be supported by public transport as an alternative to the private car, poorly planned schemes can be extremely harmful to the areas within which they are located and the amenity of occupants of neighbouring properties.

7.6.6. Examples of this include where existing large properties set in generous gardens are demolished to make way for denser development or where an individual planning unit is subdivided to accommodate a new house in the side or back garden.

7.6.7. Back-land developments can create their own problems in terms of changing the existing grain of an area, overlooking or disturbance to the rear of residential properties, and access arrangements that are compromised by land ownership or patterns of existing development.

7.6.8. Some areas are also more sensitive than others to the introduction of new dwellings through intensification – including those where heritage considerations apply, such as Conservation Areas and sites lying within the setting of Listed Buildings. A thorough understanding of the context of proposals is therefore important.

7.6.9. An additional potential impact is that areas may be made less ‘green’ through the loss of garden land, trees and landscaping – features that are often valued by the people who live in an area and contribute significantly toward sense of place. The loss of such features may also have implications in terms of an area’s ability to contribute toward the mitigation of climate change in terms of drainage, summer cooling and air quality.

7.6.10. Whilst the Council is not opposed in principle to residential intensification, it is important that it is appropriately managed through the planning system. The following policy criteria will therefore be used to evaluate such proposals in addition to policy CS19 on Development and Design Principles.

Proposed Policy DM 29: Residential Intensification through New Build

7.6.11. In addition to the criteria set out in policy CS19 on Development and Design Principles, proposals seeking to increase the density of an existing residential area by new development involving the demolition of existing larger properties, or within the gardens of existing residential properties, or by way of back-land development should:

a. Be in a sustainable location with good access to public transport, local shops and services, and public open space; Have good access to a range of services, not be overly dependent on the use of the private car and where appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, given the type and scale of development and its location;

b. Be responsive and appropriate to context in terms of townscape, layout, design, scale, form, massing and use of materials, whilst serving to reinforce local distinctiveness;

c. Not result in the an unacceptable loss of garden areas, landscaping, planting or specimen trees that contribute positively toward the character of the area;

d. Not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on occupiers of neighbouring properties through intrusiveness, overlooking, loss of daylight or sunlight, light pollution, noise and disturbance;
e. Not result in existing affected properties failing to meet the Council’s adopted parking, residential and garden space policies or providing a good standard of amenity for existing or future occupants;
f. Provide safe pedestrian and vehicular access, including for emergency vehicles and servicing purposes e.g. refuse vehicles as appropriate to the scheme.

7.6.12. In the case of frontage development, the Council will have regard to the need to maintain building lines, where they represent an important element of townscape. Proposals that appear cramped in relation to adjoining properties or create a terracing effect and are detrimental to the character of the area will not be supported. In the case of back-land development, the built form should be subservient to and not compete with that on the street frontage.

7.6.13. Proposals failing to meet the requirements of this policy will not be considered to be of a high-quality design and will be refused planning permission.

7.7. Incorporation of Additional Land into Residential Gardens

Background

7.7.1. Saved Local Plan First Review policy C18 relates to the incorporation of additional land into residential gardens. This policy resists the incorporation of productive or potentially productive farmland and woodlands in the countryside into residential gardens.

7.7.2. We consider that there are wider issues in relation to the change of use of land into residential gardens and that this affects both the urban and the rural areas of the Borough. For this reason, we consider that an updated policy is required. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Text

7.7.3. From time to time, the Council receives planning applications from householders who wish to extend their gardens or residential curtilage into surrounding open areas or fields. This is a change of use of the land and requires planning permission. The residential use of amenity or rural land can lead to the erection of fences, garden sheds and other domestic paraphernalia. The Council wishes to ensure that such proposals do not: have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt; harm townscape or landscape character; cause the loss of biodiversity; or result in the loss of the best quality farmland.

7.7.4. In the urban area and settlements inset from the Green Belt, the extension of private gardens involving the enclosure of amenity land/ open space/ landscaped areas around housing development have the potential to detrimentally affect the appearance of the area. The Council will give consideration to whether the proposals to enclose such land would be harmful to the character, appearance, design and layout of the area, or result in the loss of open space.

7.7.5. National planning policy makes it clear that changes of use are inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The change of use of land in the Green Belt to create garden land would be contrary to its purposes as it results in urban sprawl, encroachment into the countryside and a reduction in openness. For this reason, the Council will apply national planning policy and only allow such proposals if very special circumstances are demonstrated to exist. In such cases, the Council is likely to remove permitted development rights to erect fences, domestic buildings and structures on the land.
National planning policy on the Green Belt allows for material changes in the use of land that preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it as an exception and not inappropriate development. The Council will apply national policy when considering such proposals and only grant planning permission where such principles are not met if very special circumstances are demonstrated to exist. Where planning permission is granted, permitted development rights may be removed to ensure openness is preserved long-term and the Green Belt not compromised.

Whilst Green Belt policy is likely to be the overriding consideration, Proposals to change the use of land to gardens in the Green Belt are also likely to have an impact on landscape character and it is possible that they can affect sites designated for their biodiversity interest or other important wildlife habitats. Adopted policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) sets out the need for all proposals to conserve, restore and enhance landscape character and this will be taken into account in considering such proposals. It also protects sites and areas which are important for wildlife and requires there to be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough.

In the rural area, the Council generally seeks to protect agricultural land by giving priority to development in the urban area and in settlements inset from the Green Belt. It is possible that the creation of gardens on existing agricultural land could lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. In circumstances where proposals would affect farmland, the Council will apply Proposed Policy DM 9.

Proposed Policy DM 30 Incorporation of Additional Land into Residential Gardens

Within the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt, proposals for the change of use of land to residential gardens will only be allowed if they comply with the following criteria:

a. it will not result in an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and landscape;

b. it includes the provision of appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment.

c. it will not involve the loss of any amenity land/open space/landscaped areas around housing developments which positively contributes to the area;

d. it will not result in the loss of land used for car parking.

Within the Green Belt, proposals for changes of use of land to gardens will be considered against national planning policies on the Green Belt and local policies on landscape character, biodiversity and agricultural land contained in the adopted development plan.

Gypsies and Travellers

Background

The Core Strategy includes strategic policy CS17 on the Provision of Traveller Sites. We are currently reconsidering the needs for gypsy and traveller sites in our Borough because the evidence is now 4-5 years old and there have been changes to national legislation and planning policy on Gypsy and Traveller site provision since then.

Paragraph 5.13.10 of the Core Strategy stated that we would include site allocations and a criteria-based policy in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document. We will consider site allocations at the next consultation stage as this will depend on the level of need for new pitches identified in the new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. However, we have produced a criteria-based policy which will be used to inform
future site allocations and decisions on planning applications. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

Proposed Text

7.8.3. National planning policy is contained in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 (PPTS). The PPTS provides guidance on the provision of sites for gypsies and travellers who meet the definition in annex 1, the needs of those who do not meet the definition are assessed in line with the NPPF only.

7.8.4. The proposed policy sets out the matters which will be taken into account in assessing proposals for new sites or the expansion of existing sites for gypsies and travellers. This should be applied in conjunction with Core Strategy Policies CS17 and CS02. The latter applies national policies for protecting the Green Belt. The PPTS makes it clear that new sites for gypsies and travellers in the Green Belt are inappropriate development and will not be supported unless the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstances. Where a Green Belt location has been justified by ‘very special circumstances’ it is also important to recognise that some parts of the countryside are more sensitive than others. This can result in unacceptable impacts on heritage assets, historic landscapes and settlements, or on valued landscapes of the highest significance, such as the Kent Downs AoNB.

7.8.5. There is no definition on the appropriate sizes of pitches for gypsies and travellers. However, a general guide set out in “Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: good practice guide, May 2008” states that “an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a static and touring caravan, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden.” While the Government has revoked this guidance, its principles are still helpful and will be taken into account when considering proposals for new or expanded sites.

7.8.6. As with all forms of housing, sites for gypsies and travellers should be provided in sustainable locations. Sites which are close to or have good connections to settlements higher in the settlement hierarchy can ensure that occupiers have access to services such as education and health facilities.

7.8.7. Occupiers of caravans intended for permanent residential use are also highly vulnerable to flooding. This means that gypsy and traveller sites should not be allowed in areas at the highest risk of flooding (zones 3a and 3b). They can only be allowed in flood zone 2 if they meet the exception test. Therefore, applications in flood zone 2 will need to be accompanied by information which shows:

- how flood risk will be managed;
- that the sustainability benefits of the development to the community outweigh the flood risk; and
- that the development will be safe for its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

7.8.8. It is important that gypsy and traveller sites are not in a location or of a scale which dominates the nearest settled community. They can be absorbed more easily into the built and natural environment with the use of appropriate screening, such as hedges or fences, and careful siting of buildings within the site. The Council will expect proposals to be located, designed and appropriately landscaped to minimise any adverse impact on the local built and natural environment in line with Core Strategy policies CS12 and CS19.

7.8.9. As with all new housing, gypsy and traveller sites have the potential to generate additional traffic and parking. It is important that this does not give rise to increased pressure
for on-street parking nor unsafe vehicle manoeuvring onto public roads. Therefore, the Council will expect sites to provide sufficient space for safe vehicle manoeuvring and parking. Core Strategy Policy CS11, Proposed Policy DM 17 and Proposed Policy DM 18 will apply.

7.8.10. Occupiers of caravans are more susceptible to the effects of pollution, particularly noise and poor air quality, and it is more difficult to mitigate the impacts of these than it would be for occupiers of bricks and mortar housing. For this reason, careful consideration will be given to applications to ensure that the future occupants will have a satisfactory living environment and will not suffer from adverse environmental impacts from pollution. It is recognised that some gypsies and travellers live and work from the same location, employment activities located on site can give rise to impacts which may affect the amenity of existing residents in the vicinity, through for example, noise and pollution. Core Strategy policy CS19, Proposed Policy DM 33, Proposed policy DM 35 and proposed policy DM 37 will apply in assessing the impacts of proposals on both future occupants and existing residents.

Proposed Policy DM 31: Assessing the Suitability of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers

7.8.12. In assessing the suitability of sites for stationing caravans, trailers, tourers, etc for gypsies and travellers, proposals will only be permitted where the proposal will afford a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and

a. sufficient space is available to satisfactorily accommodate the planned number of caravans, and any associated amenity buildings, amenity space, vehicle space and commercial use within the site;
b. the site is in a location which is accessible to a range of local services, including schools and health facilities;
c. the site is within flood zone 1 or alternatively meets the exception test for flood zone 2;
d. there will be no unacceptable adverse effects on the local built, natural and historic environment;
e. safe pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the highway network will be provided;
f. there will be a satisfactory living environment for future occupants and the proposal will not adversely affect the amenity of existing occupiers;
g. there is adequate and readily accessible parking on site for all vehicles, not just limited to cars and a secure metered power supply is available for the provision of electric vehicle charging points; and
h. if a cesspit/septic tank is used for foul drainage there is easy access and sufficient parking space for the tanker to empty the cesspit/septic tank and there is sufficient space to allow the tanker to enter and leave the site in a safe manner are adequate arrangements to enable safe serving of the cesspit/septic tank and no unacceptable impact on the water environment.

Proposals for sites within the Green Belt which have not been allocated through the local plan process will be treated as inappropriate development requiring the demonstration of very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

Within the countryside, special consideration will be given to potential adverse impacts on heritage assets, historic landscapes and settlements, or on valued landscapes of the highest significance, such as the Kent Downs AoNB, and should be of high quality design responsive to their context.
8. Amenity

8.1. Air Quality

Background

Core Strategy policy CS19 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to avoid adverse environmental impacts from air pollution. We consider that a further policy on this issue is needed and propose to include the following text and policy to set out the Council's approach to the implementation of policy CS19.

There are a number of Air Quality Management Areas in our Borough where national objectives for pollutants are exceeded. These are shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7 Air Quality Management Areas

Proposed Text

8.1.1 Where national objectives for pollutants are exceeded, local authorities must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan to improve air quality. In Gravesham, there are seven AQMAs where poor air quality is mainly due to exhaust emissions from traffic (nitrogen dioxide) and one where it is due to industrial emissions (particulates). There are two Air Quality Action Plans which address the problems of air quality in these areas. There is also an Air Quality Strategy to address wider air pollution issues in the Borough. The Council will continue to assess air quality in the Borough and review the Action Plans and Air Quality Strategy as needed.

8.1.2. Gravesham has a high level of background air pollution as a result of road traffic and commercial activity industry along the Thames corridor, its proximity to London and Europe and prevailing weather systems. Air quality is also an issue on the River Thames, where the
Port of London Authority has developed its own Air Quality Strategy to deal with marine emissions.

All new development has the potential to worsen air quality irrespective of whether it is located in an existing AQMA or elsewhere, even where there is relatively little traffic congestion. This could lead to more exceedances of national objectives for pollutants and more AQMAs being designated. As a result, the Council will screen all development proposals and, if necessary, it will further assess them in accordance with the Air Quality Planning Guidance December 2015 published by the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership or any subsequent guidance, having regard to relevant case law applicable at the time.

8.1.3. If they are located in areas of existing poor air quality, certain types of development, such as housing, schools and play spaces, have the potential to adversely affect people’s health. For this reason, the Council will require that such proposals are located outside of areas of poor air quality, and in instances where this is not feasible that such proposals include appropriate measures to secure acceptable air quality and a satisfactory environment for the future occupiers before planning permission is granted.

8.1.4. Not all forms or means of transportation have the same impact on air quality and more sustainable modes which have a lesser impact are to be preferred if they assist in delivering improvements. Whilst use of the River Thames for the transportation of passengers and goods may have an impact on air quality, it is likely to be far less than road transport. Both policies CS07 and CS11 promote the use of the River Thames for transport, which accords with the Port of London Authority’s Vision for the Tidal Thames (2016).

The Council recognises that electric vehicles are likely to become more widely used in the future. As these may result in fewer conventional petrol/diesel cars on the road, they have the potential to lead to reduced nitrogen dioxide emissions, however electric vehicles will continue to contribute to air quality pollution via break, tyre and road wear. Proposed policy DM 19 requires new developments to make appropriate provision for electric vehicle charging points.

Proposed Policy DM 32 Air Quality

8.1.5. Development proposals which may individually or cumulatively increase levels of air pollution in the Borough and/or are located in areas of poor air quality will be required to submit an air quality assessment. Such an assessment will be required to consider:

a. impacts upon areas with existing poor air quality;

b. impacts upon the amenity and health and wellbeing of existing and future occupiers;

c. adverse impacts upon the implementation of local and/or national air quality strategies and action plans;

d. impacts on designated nature conservation sites, biodiversity and wildlife, along with appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures where impacts are likely to occur; and

d. e. breaches of EU and/or national legislation including that applicable to biodiversity and wildlife.

8.1.6. All major developments will also require an emissions mitigation assessment. These assessments should be carried out by a suitably qualified air quality consultant in accordance with the latest guidance. Where development has the potential to cause a deterioration in air quality, it
will only be permitted if appropriate mitigation measures can be implemented to ensure that there is no deterioration in air quality as a result of the proposal. Where development\textsuperscript{27} has the potential to worsen air quality either alone or in combination with other proposals, it will only be permitted if appropriate mitigation measures can be implemented to ensure that there is no unacceptable deterioration in air quality, having regard to the sensitivity of affected receptors.

8.1.7. Where adverse impacts are identified and where such impacts cannot be adequately mitigated development proposals will be refused.

8.2. Contaminated Land

Background

8.2.1. Core Strategy policy CS19 requires new development to avoid adverse environmental impacts from land contamination. We consider that a specific Development Management policy on this issue is needed. We propose to include the following text and policy to set out the Council’s approach to the implementation of policy CS19.

Proposed Text

8.2.2. National planning policy encourages the reuse of previously developed land which can provide important opportunities for the creation of housing and jobs. It also requires the planning system to remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

8.2.3. The adopted Core Strategy promotes regeneration by prioritising the redevelopment and recycling of underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area and settlements inset from the Green Belt. Within the urban area many of these areas were previously used for industrial purposes or are historic landfill sites, they are potentially contaminated.

8.2.4. The Council maintains a register which lists all of the contaminated land sites, as defined under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, within the Borough. The Council also has a Contaminated Land Strategy which was last revised in January 2013. The Strategy recognises that Gravesham has a long and complex industrial history and highlights the following three specific areas which are likely to have been most affected by contamination:

• Gravesend & Northfleet Riverside
• Gravesend Canal Basin
• Hoo Junction/ Nuralite

8.2.5. Gravesend & Northfleet Riverside and Gravesend Canal Basin are within Opportunity Areas identified in the Core Strategy and also contain a number of key sites. Core Strategy policies CS03 and CS04 set out the policy approach to the future development of these areas. Hoo Junction is within the Green Belt and there are no specific proposals for the future development of this area within the local plan.

\textsuperscript{27} link to Planning Practice Guidance on possible mitigation measures.
Proposed Policy DM 33 Contaminated Land

8.2.6. Proposals for development on land known to be or likely to be contaminated or affected by other contaminated land will only be permitted where such proposals are accompanied by a contaminated land assessment and, if necessary, a remediation strategy, which shows how the land will be remediated to an acceptable standard suitable for the proposed use and prior to its occupation.

8.2.7. Contaminated land assessments and remediation strategies should be produced ensuring best practice and industry standards are followed, such as the Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination – Contaminated Land Report 11 or any subsequent best practice guidance.

8.3. Light Pollution

Background

8.3.1. Core Strategy policy CS19 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to avoid adverse environmental impacts from light pollution. We consider that a further policy on this issue is needed. We propose to include the following text and policy to set out the Council’s approach to the implementation of Core Strategy policy CS19.

8.3.2. It should be noted that light pollution can also have impacts on wildlife, landscapes and the purposes of the Green Belt. Core Strategy policies CS02, CS12 and Kent Downs AONB Management Plan policies will apply in relevant cases.

Proposed Text

8.3.3. National planning policy states that planning policies should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Obtrusive light comprises:

- Sky glow – the brightening of the night sky
- Glare – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a darker background
- Light intrusion (trespass) – the spilling of light beyond the boundary of the property or area being lit

8.3.4. National Planning Practice Guidance emphasises that the best use of artificial light is about getting the right light in the right place at the right time. It is important to get the design right and to set appropriate conditions at the planning stage. The Campaign to Protect Rural England has produced a map illustrating the impact of light pollution, an extract of this can be viewed at Figure 8.

8.3.5. The Council wishes to ensure that any artificial lighting associated with new development does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety, wildlife, landscape character and the purposes of the Green Belt. Therefore, the Council will expect developments to use only the minimum amount of light necessary to ensure that sky glow, glare and light intrusion are minimised.

8.3.5 Artificial lighting is required in many situations in the borough, including the need to ensure safe working conditions during hours of darkness on commercial sites, to facilitate sport and sporting events, and for security reasons.
The Council wishes to ensure that any artificial lighting does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety, navigation on the River Thames, landscape character and those rural parts of the borough which benefit from relatively dark skies.

The latter includes significant areas designated as the Kent Downs AoNB, where controlling light emissions is consistent with the statutory objective of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. The importance of controlling light emissions where they may adversely impact on biodiversity and nature conservation objectives is also recognised.

Some forms of artificial lighting are installed by powers provided under statute (such as highway and street lighting) and are largely outside of the control of the planning system. In these situations, the Council will seek to ensure that where lighting is provided, due regard is had to best practice and to minimise both light pollution and the carbon footprint of the installation in the interests of achieving sustainable development.

Where planning permission is required and the site is located in the rural area, this is likely to be covered by a Green Belt designation unless it lies within one of the inset rural settlements shown on the Policies Map. Under these circumstances, consideration would be given at the application stage as to whether the proposal constituted inappropriate development contrary to national Green Belt policy requiring special justification.

In all cases, the Council will expect any artificial light installation to only use the minimum amount of light necessary to ensure that its purposes are met and only for the time required. This is to ensure that sky glow, glare, light intrusion and adverse impacts environmental impacts are minimised. Applications should be supported by sufficient evidence produced by a suitably qualified person(s) for the Council to assess potential impacts on amenity, highway safety, and the natural environment. Proposals resulting in unacceptable impacts will not be permitted.

8.3.6. In considering the impact of any proposed outdoor light, the Council will use the advice contained in the Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011 produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals or any subsequent guidance. These set out five environmental zones according to the degree of urbanisation and degree of lighting, and the limitations for external lighting installations in each of these zones. For Gravesham these zones are illustrated in Figure 9. In the case of proposals for artificial sports lighting, the Council will also take account of guidance produced by Sport England.

8.3.6. In considering the impact of any proposed outdoor lighting, the Council will use the advice contained in the Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011 produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals or any subsequent guidance.

These set out five environmental zones according to the degree of urbanisation and degree of lighting, and the limitations for external lighting installations in each of these zones. For Gravesham these zones are illustrated in Figure 9.

The rural area is covered by two specific zones:

- Zone E1 (Natural – Intrinsically dark) coincides to a large extent with that of the Kent Downs AoNB in Gravesham. Whilst this is adversely affected by the already lit A2 corridor as part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and may be further impacted upon should the Lower Thames Crossing come forward in due course, this only places greater emphasis on the need to control the adverse impact of artificial light to protect
and enhance the natural beauty of the AoNB and associated historic landscape around Cobham Hall.

- Zone E2 (Rural – Low district brightness) comprises large parts of the Green Belt in the rural area of Gravesham, which in some places forms an important part of the setting of the Kent Downs AoNB. Control of the adverse effects of artificial lighting in this area is also warranted, in part to prevent creeping urbanisation and the encroachment of the countryside.

For the purposes of policy and to ensure consistency with boundaries shown on the adopted Policies Map, Zone E1 will be taken to coincide with the Kent Downs AoNB and Zone E2 with the remainder of the rural area lying within the Green Belt. Where proposals for artificial lighting within inset rural settlements or the urban area have the potential to adversely affect these zones, the same policy approach will apply.

In addition to the guidance produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals cited above, the Council will also take into account the separate guidance produced by Sport England on artificial lighting of outdoor sports facilities when considering whether a scheme is justified against policy, having regard to potential impacts.

Figure 8 Plan showing Dark Skies
Figure 9 GN01:2011 zones applied to Gravesham
Proposed Policy DM 34 Light Pollution

8.3.7 Proposals for any development involving outdoor lighting schemes will only be permitted if such schemes can demonstrate that the minimum amount of light intensity will be used to achieve its purpose, that glare and light spillage will be minimised and there will be no significantly adverse impact on:

- the amenity of existing and future occupiers adjacent to and within the development;
- highway safety;
- the visual character of the historic environment;
- wildlife and sites of nature conservation value; and
- the visibility and appreciation of the night sky.

8.3.8 Where a proposal involves the installation of artificial lighting, the Council will require the developer to provide full details of the lighting scheme and a lighting assessment. All proposals that involve artificial lighting should also ensure energy consumption is minimised through the use of the most efficient lighting units available.

8.3.7 Proposals involving the installation of outdoor artificial lighting should be accompanied by a report compiled by suitably qualified person setting out the need for the lighting in that location commensurate with the proposed use, its design and form, lighting level and duration of illumination together with an assessment of potential impacts in terms of:

- Amenity of existing and future occupiers likely to be affected by the scheme, both surrounding and within the application site;
- Highway safety and navigational safety on the River Thames as appropriate;
- The historic environment;
- Landscape, with particular attention given to the Kent Downs AoNB and its setting;
- Biodiversity, with particular attention given to international, national and locally designated sites as appropriate;
- The visibility and appreciation of the night sky and the conservation and enhancement of dark skies.

The evidence submitted in support of any proposal should be proportionate to the scale of the scheme and potential impact. The design of any such lighting schemes should seek to minimise energy consumption commensurate with the objective of minimising environmental impacts such as sky glow, glare and light intrusion.

8.3.8 Where located in the Green Belt and comprising inappropriate development under national policy, any such proposal shall be accompanied by a statement setting out those very special circumstances considered to outweigh harm through inappropriateness and any other harm.

Where located in the Kent Downs AoNB, harm caused by artificial lighting within its area and setting will be accorded great weight commensurate with the statutory objective of conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of such areas.
8.4. Daylight and Sunlight within New Development

Proposed Text

8.4.1. One of the core planning principles underpinning national planning policy is that we should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Policy CS19 on Development and Design Principles states that new development should be located designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity of its occupants and neighbouring properties – including in relation to daylight and sunlight.

8.4.2. Ensuring that there is reasonable access to daylight and sunlight within new development and that it does not compromise that available to its neighbours is a critical component of good design. As recognised in national planning policy, whilst this is not always fully achievable on constrained urban sites, where regeneration benefits may need to be weighed against a range of other competing policy aims. However, it is important that the Council is able to make decisions on an informed basis.

8.4.3. A standard approach towards the assessment of availability of daylight and sunlight in relation to development has been produced by the Building Research Establishment and this will be used in evaluating proposals.28 Where a proposal is likely to fail the basic tests set out in this guidance, the Council will require the applicant to submit a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment in support of the application.

8.4.4. It should be noted that the requirements of planning policy in this respect are separate from the legal issue relating to ‘right to light’, which are a civil matter over which the Council has no jurisdiction as local planning authority.

Proposed Policy DM 35: Sunlight and Daylight within New Development

8.4.5. Unless otherwise justified as an exception, all new development should be designed to ensure that adequate levels of daylight and sunlight are available to occupants and those available to occupants of neighbouring properties are not adversely affected to an unacceptable extent. The Council will adopt a flexible approach where a proposal optimises the use of a site and will weigh the public benefits of a scheme against any resulting deficiency in daylight and sunlight levels provided acceptable living conditions are achieved.

8.4.6. Where there is doubt over whether this requirement is met by the development in question, the applicant will be required to submit a daylight and sunlight report prepared by a suitably qualified professional in accordance with the standard Building Research Establishment methodology. Permission will not be granted where such a report is required but not supplied in support of the application.

8.5. Noise and vibration

Background

8.5.1. Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to avoid adverse environmental impacts from noise pollution. It is considered that a development management policy is required on this issue. The following text and policy sets out the Council’s approach to the implementation of Core Strategy Policy CS19.

28 See Building Research Establishment (BRE) publication: Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide
8.5.2. It should be noted that noise pollution can also have impacts on wildlife. Furthermore, parts of the Borough are relatively tranquil and the Campaign to Protect Rural England has drawn up a Tranquility Map for Kent. Figure 10 below shows the Gravesham section of this map. Core Strategy Policy CS12 and Kent Downs AONB Management Plan policies (where relevant) will also apply where new development has the potential to have a detrimental noise impact on wildlife or tranquil areas.

Figure 10 Tranquillity Map
8.5.3. It is important that new development does not create unacceptable impacts on health and quality of life as a result of noise or vibration during both construction and operational phases and cumulatively with other development. Conversely, consideration needs to be given to the design and location of new developments which are sensitive to noise or vibration, such as dwellings and hospitals, when there are existing sources of noise such potential nuisance in the area. National planning policy makes it clear that planning policies should address these noise and other amenity issues, along with adverse impacts on the natural environment. It also states that policies should identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.

8.5.4. The main sources of noise and vibration in Gravesham are from road and rail traffic and, to a lesser extent, industrial and commercial activity. Noise can also be an issue in relation to river related activity and at operational wharves, which is often tide and, therefore, time dependent. A number of wharves in the borough are safeguarded under policy CS07 on Economy, Employment and Skills and under policies contained in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. For minerals wharves, development management policies also apply under the latter requiring a separate assessment of the impact of the introduction of sensitive receptors on their operation.

8.5.4a In addition, localised noise from plant and machinery and equipment such as air conditioning units and kitchen extractor fans can cause disturbance to neighbours. Shops, restaurants, pubs and places of entertainment also have the potential to create noise disturbance to nearby residents from the premises themselves and those entering and leaving.

8.5.4b As with all forms of pollution, the starting point should be to minimise noise generation and vibration at source where this is possible.

8.5.4c The introduction of receptors sensitive to noise or vibration into areas subject to existing potential nuisance and where it is unlikely that acceptable environmental conditions can be created should first be avoided before consideration is given to mitigation by design or layout or (as a last resort) mitigation such as noise insulation, enhanced glazing, and non-opening windows are considered. The objective should always be to achieve a high standard of amenity for current and future occupiers in both internal and external spaces serving a development without resorting to measures which themselves adversely affect amenity or are unsustainable.

8.5.4d It is recognised that noise can have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment, with those impacts often being species specific – changing patterns of behaviour, the ability to socialise, and making them more susceptible to predation. Noise and vibration can also impact adversely on both the fabric of heritage assets and the context within which they are appreciated. People also appreciate the benefits of tranquillity that exists in parts of the countryside and urban greenspaces. Such tranquillity can provide a sense of peace and quiet and an opportunity to appreciate a natural soundscape where sounds such as birdsong are more prominent than background noise from transport and other human activity. Some of the most tranquil parts of the borough are to be found in the Kent Downs AONB, where it contributes significantly to the appreciation of the landscape and natural beauty of the area.

8.5.5. A noise/vibration impact assessment will be required for proposals that could cause significant noise disturbance or for noise sensitive developments that are proposed near to major sources of noise. The assessment is required to demonstrate how the development is
to be designed, located and controlled to mitigate the impact on health and quality of life of occupiers and neighbours.

Proposed Policy DM 36: Noise and Vibration

8.5.6 Proposals for development generating noise and/or vibration in a noise sensitive area containing premises, including residences, offices, hospitals, care homes or schools; and noise sensitive development in an existing noisy environment must be supported by a noise/vibration assessment prepared by an acoustic consultant.

8.5.7 The assessment will be required to demonstrate in full, how the development will be designed, located and controlled to mitigate the impact of noise/vibration on the health and quality of life of existing and future occupiers adjacent to and within the development.

8.5.8 Planning permission will only be granted where it is demonstrated that noise and vibration levels do not adversely affect the amenity of occupiers.

8.5.6 Proposals for development generating noise and/or vibration that may impact upon sensitive receptors or be impacted on by existing or potential sources of noise and/or vibration must be supported by a noise/vibration assessment prepared by a suitably qualified person in accordance with best practice.

8.5.7 The assessment will be required to demonstrate in full that either the noise and/or vibration impacts are acceptable without mitigation or how impacts will be mitigated through design or other means to make them acceptable.

8.5.8 Planning permission will only be granted where:

- In the case of development that may generate noise or vibration, that resulting impacts on sensitive receptors due to noise and/or vibration are acceptable both during the construction and operational phases of the development and in combination with other sources of noise and/or vibration; or
- In the case of the introduction of a sensitive receptor into an area already subject to noise or vibration, that this is unlikely to result in complaint or the curtailing of existing lawful activity causing that noise or vibration and that a high standard of amenity for existing/future occupiers of the proposed development can be achieved.

8.5.8b For the purposes of this policy, ‘sensitive receptors’ should be taken as capable of being any of those listed in paragraph XXXX above.
9. Design

9.1. Advertisements

Background

9.1.1. Saved Local Plan First Review policy TC8 relates to advertisements. This states that applications will be examined against the policy guidelines for advertisement control. It also states that advertisements which are detrimental to public safety or amenity will be resisted. We are proposing to replace this with an updated policy. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

9.1.2. The Council’s Advertisement Control Policy Guidelines were adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1996. These set out a number of area and general policies and design principles in relation to adverts. The Local Plan policies on which the area policies were based have now largely been replaced or deleted. It is important that the policy approach is clearly set out in the Local Plan with Supplementary Planning Documents being used to add further detail to policies in the Local Plan. Therefore, we are proposing to rescind the current Advertisement Control Policy Guidelines and produce some revised guidance to support the proposed policy.

9.1.3. There is an Area of Special Control for Advertisements which covers large parts of the rural area in the southern part of our Borough (see Figure 11 below). This places additional restrictions on the display of advertisements which means that our consent is required for some adverts which could otherwise be displayed without our consent. We are obliged to review Areas of Special Control. Therefore, we propose to review the Area of Special Control to ensure it is still relevant and fit for purpose.

Proposed Text

9.1.4. Advertisements such as signs, boards and placards are part of the local scene and play an important role in attracting the customers that allow businesses to grow. Well designed and sensitively located advertisements can add interest and contribute beneficially to commercial areas. However, too many advertisements can result in visual clutter whilst those that are poorly designed, located or badly lit can have a significant adverse impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment.

9.1.5. Although many types of sign can be displayed without the Council’s consent, the Council has the power to control the most prominent outdoor advertisements. Additional powers to control advertisements exist in parts of Cobham, Culverstone, Luddesdown, Meopham, and Vigo where a Special Area of Control has been designated. When considering applications for advertisement consent, the Council can only take into account the impacts of the proposal on amenity and public safety.

9.1.6. It is proposed to produce a Supplementary Planning Document to give further guidance in relation to the proposed policy.
Figure 11 Area of Special Control for Advertisements
Proposed Policy DM 37: Advertisements

9.1.7. Advertisements should be well designed and appropriately sited so that they contribute positively to a safe and attractive environment. No forms of advertisement which require consent should be detrimental to amenity or cause a hazard to public safety.

9.1.8. Any proposal for an advertisement will need to comply with the following criteria:

a. it is of a high-quality design and sensitive to the visual appearance of the building on which it is to be sited and the surrounding street scene, especially when it is to be displayed on a listed building or in a conservation area;
b. it is appropriate to its setting and location and has due regard to local distinctiveness;
c. it does not contribute to an unsightly proliferation or clutter of signage in the vicinity;
d. it does not cause a hazard to pedestrians or road users;
e. it does not cause visual intrusion by virtue of light pollution into adjoining properties or poorly directly light pollution elsewhere; and
f. it is appropriate and relevant to the business or premises on which it is to be displayed.

9.1.9. The Council will seek to avoid a proliferation of advertisements in sensitive locations where it is considered that the amenity of the locality would be adversely affected, particularly in areas of heritage interest, residential areas and rural locations.

9.2. Shopfront Design

Background

9.2.1. Saved Local Plan First Review policy TC9 relates to shopfronts. This resists the loss of existing shopfronts of traditional design and materials. It also resists the installation of security grilles and shutters on the exteriors of shopfronts. We are proposing to replace this with an updated policy. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

9.2.2. The Council also has a number of Shopfront Design Guidance Notes. These provide informal guidance and this affects the amount of weight which they can be given in planning decisions. We consider that these should be used to develop a formal Supplementary Planning Document which would be subject to consultation and carry more weight in decision making.

9.2.3. The Council also has Supplementary Planning Guidance on Security Measures for Shopfronts and Commercial Premises. This Guidance will continue to apply.

Proposed Text

9.2.4. The Council’s strategic approach to design issues is set out in Core Strategy policy CS19 on Development and Design Principles. Amongst other things, this requires that new development is visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It also states that new development should conserve and enhance the character of the local built and historic environment and meet anti-crime standards as well as being designed to be accessible to all.

9.2.5. The Council considers that a more detailed policy on shopfront design is required as shopfronts are frequently changed over the lifetime of a building and are important features of the townscape. The aim is that all new shopfronts are well designed, relate well to the scale and character of the original building and make a positive contribution to the area. Much of Gravesend’s town centre, The Hill at Northfleet and Shorne local centres and a few lone village
shops are within conservation areas. Shops can also occupy individual buildings of heritage interest. In such cases, the heritage policies will also apply.

9.2.6. Shopfronts often contain original features of interest such as pilasters, brackets, stall risers and cornices. These are an attractive feature and therefore new shopfronts should be designed to retain and restore them. The type and colour of materials are also important elements in the overall design of a new shopfront. The Council will seek the use of high quality materials which relate well to the building and the area in which it is situated. For example, traditional materials such as timber and masonry should be used within conservation areas and on buildings of heritage interest. The use of a large number of materials or ones which could clash with adjoining premises will not be appropriate.

9.2.7. Well-proportioned and positioned fascias, signage, windows and doors help to achieve good shopfront design. The Council wishes to ensure that new shopfronts are well proportioned to create a common pattern of shop fronts along the street, creating a sense of character. It is also important that fascias and signs take account of the features of the shopfront, the building and adjacent buildings. For example, these should not obscure first floor windows or window sills, extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings or cover or ignore any architectural details.

9.2.8. Windows obscured by posters, vinyl or the use of obscure glazing can create dead street frontages. Conversely, an active and attractive window display can draw people into the shop from the street and enliven the street scene. Therefore, the Council will expect new shopfronts to be glazed, thus allowing shop window displays and avoiding the creation of dead frontages.

9.2.9. Canopies and awnings can have a positive function, allowing pedestrians to shelter from the rain and protect goods on display. However, they also have the potential to look unsightly, especially if they are poor quality, made of plastic or covered with advertisements. It is important that they do not interfere with views of the shopfront and are designed to be contained within the shopfront.

9.2.10. People with mobility difficulties such as older people, those with disabilities and carers with young children in pushchairs can find it difficult to access public premises. Therefore, it is important that new shopfronts include measures such as ramps or step free access to ensure that the premises are fully accessible.

9.2.11. The Council recognises the need for shop premises to be secure. However, it is important that security considerations are balanced with the need to maintain an active frontage and avoid an intimidating street scene and dead frontages. The use of laminated glass and internal grilles to provide more security is preferable to the use of more intrusive measures such as removable grilles, roller grilles and roller shutters. Solid roller shutters are particularly intrusive in the townscape, especially when they are used outside shop opening hours. The boxes needed for roller grilles and shutters also have the potential to adversely affect the appearance of the building if they protrude beyond the frontage. Particular care is needed for all such proposals which affect listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas. The Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Security Measures for Shopfronts and Commercial Premises sets out detailed guidelines for the installation of grilles and roller shutters. This will continue to apply to give more detail to the Local Plan policy.

Proposed Policy DM 38: Shopfront Design
9.2.12. New shopfronts should be of high quality design and respond positively to the character of the building and its location. Any proposal for a new shopfront will need to comply with the following criteria:

a. it retains original features of architectural or historic interest; and
b. it uses materials which are appropriate to the building and the street scene; and
c. it is well-proportioned in relation to the building itself and the street scene; and
d. fascias and signage are sensitively positioned across the shopfront; and
e. it is designed to allow for a shop window display; and
f. any canopies or awnings should not obscure the shopfront and should be fully retractable; and
g. it is designed so that the premises are fully accessible to all;

9.2.13. Any security features should be appropriate to the location. Roller grilles or roller shutters will not be allowed on listed buildings or on buildings in conservation areas. On other buildings, roller grilles or roller shutters for security purposes will be allowed where: they are of an open mesh variety; they leave the shop window visible; and the box is located behind the fascia. Solid roller shutters will only be allowed exceptionally where a persistent security problem exists, and the box is located behind the fascia.

9.3. Tall and Bulky Buildings

Background

9.3.1. Core Strategy policy CS19 requires new development to conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards. It will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the characteristics of adjoining buildings and of the wider site context, including strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

9.3.2. We consider that a further policy for tall and bulky buildings is needed. We propose to include the following text and policy to set out the Council’s approach to the implementation of Core Strategy policy CS19.

Proposed Text

9.3.3. As the Borough’s population and number of households continues to increase, the demand for development in Gravesham will continue into the foreseeable future. This will inevitably place greater pressures on the limited amount of development land available, this in turn could lead to increasing proposals for taller and bulkier buildings. The height and mass of buildings form key aspects of building design and effect local character and appearance. For this reason, they are an important consideration in planning decisions.

9.3.4. Whilst high density does not imply tall and bulky buildings in all cases, such buildings can form part of a strategic approach to meeting the Local Plan’s regeneration and economic development goals. This is particularly the case where they would make optimal use of site capacity in suitable locations close to the transport hubs of Gravesend town centre and Ebbsfleet.

9.3.5. Tall and bulky buildings can make a positive contribution to meeting the needs of the local area, and if well designed can be excellent examples of architecture which enhance a local area. Due to their scale, such buildings have the ability of affecting the image and identity
of an area. If designed unsympathetically they can have significant detrimental impacts on local character and amenity, whilst if designed correctly they can assist in regeneration and stimulate further growth and investment.

9.3.6. To be successful it is imperative that proposals for tall and bulk buildings take into account their immediate and wider context especially in terms of both visual and heritage impact. Gravesend has a special quality stemming from its rich history and riverside location. It is important for new development to recognise the town’s unique heritage and the need to preserve and enhance the quality of the town’s physical environment and attractiveness.

9.3.7. Tall buildings are not defined in terms of height or number of storeys because what might be considered a tall building will vary according to the nature of the local area. Instead, tall buildings are defined as those which are substantially higher than their neighbours. Bulky buildings are wide, have a large footprint and make a significant visual impact when viewed from ground level. Tall and bulky buildings should always be of the highest architectural quality (especially prominent features such as roof tops for tall buildings) and should not have a negative impact on the amenity of surrounding uses. Opportunities to offer improved permeability of the site and wider area should be maximised where possible.

9.3.8. A single tall building is unlikely in itself to justify the establishment of a cluster of tall buildings around it. Also, the existence of a tall building in a particular location will not of itself justify its replacement with a new tall building on the same site or in the same area.

9.3.9. As set out in the Core Strategy, applicants will be required to submit Design and Access Statements in support of their proposals, explaining the design principles underlying an application.

9.3.9. Proposals falling below a statutory threshold do not require a formal Design and Access Statement, although for most tall and bulky buildings it is anticipated that they would be needed. Irrespective of this, the Council considers it likely that any such proposals would need to be accompanied by a supporting statement which seeks to address the types of issue set out in the policy below. Use of the Council’s pre-application advice service where such proposals are being considered is advised.

Proposed Policy DM 39 Tall and Bulky Buildings

9.3.10. Design and Access Statements accompanying proposals for tall and bulky buildings will need to include a rigorous analysis and justification for the proposal; as a minimum this should include a consideration of:

   a. those elements that create local character and other important features and constraints, including:
      i. natural topography
      ii. urban grain
      iii. significant views of skyline and effect on the skyline
      iv. scale and height – immediate and wider
      v. streetscape and character assessment including the history of the place and heritage assets
      vi. landmark buildings and areas and their settings, including backdrops, and vii. important views, prospects and panoramas;

   c. where tall buildings might enhance the overall townscape
9.3.10. Proposals for tall and bulky buildings will need to be accompanied by a statement which includes a proportionate analysis and justification for the proposal; as a minimum this should include (as appropriate) a consideration of:

a. The context within which the proposed development will take place, including those elements that contribute toward existing local character and distinctiveness. These to include:
   - The topography of the site and its surroundings;
   - The existing urban grain around the site, its historic development and associated streetscape, including the scale, form, massing and architecture of existing buildings;
   - Where the streetscape includes either public or private open spaces, whether those spaces make a positive contribution to the sense of place and the way it functions or detract;
   - The contribution made to the distinctive character of place by any surviving heritage assets and the extent to which their setting contributes or detracts from their significance;
   - A consideration of any existing significant views, prospects or panoramas either of places or the skyline that may be affected by the proposal; and
   - Whether there are any existing landmark buildings and their significance.

b. A consideration of the positive and negative effects of the proposal in relation to its context, including where such development will serve to enhance townscape and secure regeneration benefits. This to include in addition a consideration of the following impacts in terms of:
   - Overshadowing and reduction of daylight and sunlight both to surrounding buildings and public and private spaces;
   - Solar glare, dazzle, and associated heat effects;
   - Wind and micro-climate effects within the area surrounding the development and, where adjacent to the River Thames, impacts on safe navigation;
   - Permeability and the ability to move within the public realm on foot or cycle;
   - Telecommunications, radar and radio transmission;
   - Air traffic safety; and
   - The amenity and security of adjoining residential and other buildings or land uses due to overlooking or any other adverse impacts.

In addition to the above, the design of any tall buildings should consider how they relate to the public realm at ground level in order to contribute positively to the creation of sense of place and urban vitality.

c. Where it is intended that tall or bulky buildings will form a constituent part of a wider regeneration proposal, they should be included within the masterplan submitted as part of a planning application for that wider site so that they can be considered in context.

9.3.11. Proposals for tall and bulky buildings will not be permitted where it is deemed that they are inappropriate in their context, and/or where such proposals fail to maximise the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
9.3.11 Proposals for tall and bulky buildings will be permitted where they are considered to be appropriate to their context; adverse impacts arising from their development are not unacceptable; they are in sustainable locations capable of accommodating such a form of development; and they either optimise the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions or, in the case of major regeneration sites, assist in creating a sense of place.

9.4. Designing for a High Quality and Accessible Riverside

Background

9.4.1. The adopted Local Plan Core Strategy includes strong support for a number of policy initiatives that are intended to facilitate the delivery of a high quality accessible riverside alongside enhanced flood defence; the protection of commercial wharves and essential riverside infrastructure; and improvements to biodiversity and nature conservation. The following development management policy is intended to ensure that this is fully taken into consideration in the decision-making process when it comes to individual planning applications.

Proposed Text

9.4.2. The location of Gravesham on the River Thames is largely responsible for the way it has developed as a place and is one of its key defining characteristics. This is recognised within paragraph 4.1.30-4.3.10 of the adopted Core Strategy, where strong policy support within the three riverside opportunity areas is accorded:

- The maintenance, improvement and replacement of the tidal flood defences in line with the Environment Agency TE2100 Plan as a priority;
- The creation of a high quality, dedicated pedestrian and cycle link alongside the river, as part of the local Green Grid and the proposed Thames Estuary/England Coast Path; and
- The safeguarding of capacity of commercial wharves and sites needed to support the river as a working waterway.

9.4.3. A number of area based policies (CS03, CS04 and CS05) and their supporting text contain specific reference to the importance of the River Thames as part of the context for regeneration. The following generic policies are also important:

- Policy CS09 on Culture and Tourism seeks to maximise culture and tourism activity in the borough, in part by lending support for greater use of the river and capitalising on the appeal of Gravesend as a riverside heritage town.
- Policy CS11 on Transport seeks improvements to walking and cycling facilities, with particular reference to the Thames Estuary Path and provides support for proposals that facilitate the use of the river for passenger transport.
- Policy CS12 on Green Infrastructure sets out the Council’s aspirations to deliver a network of multi-functional greenspace, including access along the River Thames and to improve the biodiversity of the borough.
- Policy CS 18 on Climate Change prioritises flood defence over other forms of development whilst embedding Water Framework Directive and objectives from the Environment Agency’s Thames River Basin Management Plan into the local plan.
- Policy CS19 on Development and Design principles requires new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive whilst conserving and enhancing the character of the local built, historic and nature environment. It also requires that new development be accessible, incorporate high quality public realm,
and take advantage of opportunities to improve biodiversity and the borough’s green infrastructure network.

- **Policy CS20 on Heritage and the Historic Environment** accords a high priority toward the preservation, protection and enhancement of heritage assets and the borough’s historic environment, central to the regeneration of the area. Proposals are supported which preserve and enhance such assets and their setting, where it contributes towards to their significance, interpretation and enjoyment. In this context, an active and accessible working Thames represents an important part of the setting of the borough’s riverside heritage assets.

9.4.4. **Whilst recognising that there are operational and safety constraints applicable in the case of commercial wharves, the Council wishes to ensure that riverside development delivers on the above policy objectives as far as is practicable. However, even where land is in commercial use, this does not mean that the achievement of good design commensurate with function is unachievable.**

9.4.4. **The Council recognises that there are operational and safety constraints applicable to commercial wharves that are likely to make public access to the waterfront impracticable, although in some areas public rights of way already come in close proximity. However, even where land is in commercial use, this does not mean that the achievement of good design commensurate with function is unachievable. Elsewhere, the Council wishes to ensure that better access to the riverside is achieved where safe and feasible to do so, in accordance with the above policy objectives, and so far as is practicable and viable.**

9.4.5. **In accordance with adopted policy, the Council will expect riverside developments to secure the delivery of a high quality riverside walkway/cycle path as part of its multi-functional green infrastructure network and the proposed Thames Estuary/England Coast Path. The ability to include places where people can safely dwell, sit and enjoy the river in a safe environment should also be considered as this can contribute significantly to the quality of the local environment created and sense of place. Whilst there may be instances where this is not achievable, the Council will require evidence justifying any exception.**

9.4.6. **Similarly, the access to the river itself on foot or for those wishing to use it by boat is limited and could be improved through the installation of the necessary equipment – i.e. stairs, landing stages, mooring rings etc. This is important if the area is to exploit the benefits of the borough’s riverside location to its full potential. Where this is practicable by design and safe, but cannot be delivered at the time of development due to viability constraints, the potential to retro-fit should be secured by agreement.**

9.4.6. **In seeking to achieve this, the Council recognises the risk inherent in attracting people to the riverside. The River Thames is a major waterway, with deep cold water in some places and strong tidal currents to which people (if only accidentally) could be exposed.**

9.4.6B. **Where riverside walkways are provided, thought needs to be given to public safety and reducing risk through the provision of life saving equipment and its long-term maintenance as recommended within the 1991 Hayes Report on the Inquiry into River Safety.**

9.4.6C. **In places where it is the owner under the 1908 Port of London Act, public access to the foreshore and the river itself lies largely within the gift of that body. It should be noted that aside from access allowed in relation to navigation, fishing and associated activities, permission from the Port of London Authority (PLA) to go onto the foreshore or river may be required.**
9.4.6D The foreshore and river itself present their own risks, which can significantly exceed those to which people simply going to the riverside to enjoy the view are exposed. It can represent an extremely hostile environment and it needs to be treated with the utmost respect. There is also the potential for recreational and commercial uses of the river to be in conflict with each other, where recreational uses are likely to be inappropriate.

9.4.6E However, subject to the agreement of the PLA at the application stage, the Council would wish to see better access to the river by recreational users where it is appropriate and safe to do so. This should be seen in the context of the PLA’s own Thames Vision document that includes a goal to promote ‘greater participation in sport and recreation on and alongside the river’.

9.4.6F At the moment, access to the river by those wishing to do so is limited and could be improved through the installation of the necessary equipment – i.e. stairs, landing stages, mooring rings etc. This is important if the area is to exploit the benefits of the borough’s riverside location to its full potential and one of the goals of the PLA’s Thames Vision achieved. Where this is practicable by design and safe, but cannot be delivered at the time of development due to viability constraints or for other reasons, the potential to retro-fit should be secured by agreement.

9.4.7 The Environment Agency is proposing a major future upgrade of flood defences in this area under its Thames Estuary 2100 project. Whilst it is accepted that the Environment Agency undertake such works under permissive powers where funding for associated improvement works may be limited, the Council will expect seek similar public benefits to be secured via this route as the design is developed. Where this is not practicable at the time of upgrading, the potential to retrofit later should be considered at the design stage.

9.4.8 Given the potential to improve biodiversity of the river and its riparian environment through development, this opportunity should not be overlooked as it would assist in achieving Water Framework Directive and Thames River Basin Management Plan objectives. This also accords with proposals to create a Thames Estuary Marine Conservation Zone and the Environment Agency’s Estuary Edges guidance.

9.4.9 The potential for there to be important foreshore archaeology should also not be overlooked, not only in the historic Gravesend town centre but at other points along the waterfront.

9.4.10 In determining planning applications relating to the riverside, the following policy approach will therefore be applied.

Proposed Policy DM 40: Designing for a High Quality and Accessible Riverside

9.4.11 A high quality of design both sensitive to and appropriate to context and function will be expected on all sites fronting the River Thames. Residential and residentially-led mixed use developments will be expected to incorporate a publicly accessible riverside walkway/cycle path with dwell points and appropriate safety features that is capable of functioning as part of the borough’s network of multi-functional greenspace/Thames Estuary/England Coast Path unless otherwise justified as an exception or is unachievable.

9.4.12 Subject to the agreement of the Port of London Authority, where it is safe, appropriate, practicable and viable to do so, access to and from the river along with features to facilitate its recreational usage should be provided as part of the development. Where practicable and subject to viability, access should also be made available to and from the river itself on foot.
and/or by boat. Where this is practicable but not viable at the time development takes place, the scheme should be designed to allow retro-fitting of any necessary equipment or features at a later date. Under these circumstances, the Council will seek to secure future public access by legal agreement.

9.4.13. Where any scheme of improvement to the flood defences under the TE2100 or any other project is carried out, the Council will seek to achieve similar benefits as set out above, subject to the availability of funding. Where funding is not available at the time of the delivery of the improved flood defences, the Council will expect them to be designed in such a way as to allow retrofitting at a later stage. Any scheme of improvement to the flood defences under the TE2100 project will also be expected to deliver the above features as a public benefit.

9.4.14. In addition, riverside developments will be expected to be supported by a proportionate assessment of their impact of the biodiversity as appropriate and secure improvements, a net environmental gain to the biodiversity of the riparian environment where practicable and have regard to the potential for foreshore archaeology.
10. Heritage Assets

10.1. Heritage Assets

Background

10.1.1. Saved Local Plan First Review policies TC2, TC3 and TC7 set out the Council’s current policies on Listed Buildings, Development affecting Conservation Areas and Archaeological Sites respectively. Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework includes detailed policy guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Core Strategy Policy CS20 sets out our strategic approach towards heritage and the historic environment. The Core Strategy also sets out that we intend to produce a Supplementary Planning Document on heritage and the historic environment in due course. Amongst other things, this would create a list of non-designated heritage assets that are considered locally important. Given this, we are proposing to replace policies TC2, TC3 and TC7 with a suite of policies on heritage assets. This would be read in conjunction with the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CS20. The proposed text and policy are set out below.

10.1.2. Our Policies Map currently shows the locations of the Scheduled Monuments and the boundaries of the Conservation Areas in the Borough. The extent of Conservation Areas is set locally whereas Scheduled Monuments are statutorily designated. Currently, we do not show other statutorily designated heritage assets such as listed buildings or registered parks and gardens on our Policies Map.

10.1.3. Following public consultation, some changes were made to the boundaries of a number of our rural Conservation Areas earlier in 2017. These changes affect the following Conservation Areas:

- Chestnut Green, Shorne
- Lower Higham
- The Street, Meopham

10.1.4. These changes are set out in further detail in a report to a Full Council meeting (21st February 2017) at Agenda Item 75 https://goo.gl/hDEENk

Proposed Text

10.1.5. The Council has already set out its strategic approach to heritage and the historic environment in Core Strategy Policy CS20. This recognises that heritage is a non-renewable resource and the Council will give high priority towards its preservation, protection and enhancement.

10.1.6. The supporting text to Core Strategy Policy CS20 sets out information on the heritage interest which exists in the Borough and includes a list of Gravesham’s key heritage assets. Heritage assets which are designated under relevant legislation include: listed buildings; scheduled monuments; registered parks and gardens; and conservation areas.

29 Whilst there are none in the borough, designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Protected Wreck Sites, and Registered Battlefields. Should any be designated in the future, these too will be treated as such under the policy that follows.
The Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments are shown on the Policies Map. No designated heritage assets include: historic landscapes and parks; archaeological sites and areas of archaeological significance; and unlisted buildings of historic interest.

10.1.7. In considering proposals which affect a listed building or its setting, the Council has a legal duty to have special regard to preserving the building, its setting, and its features of special architectural or historic interest. For proposals which affect conservation areas, the local planning authority must pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. These legal duties are contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

10.1.8. As well as setting out information on the relative weight which should be given to the conservation of heritage assets in the decision-making process, national planning policy includes criteria based policies that should be applied where it is considered that proposals would result in either substantial or less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets. It also includes a policy for proposals that affect the significance of non-designated heritage assets. In this context significance is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from the asset’s physical presence but also from the contribution made by its setting.

10.1.9. National planning policy also makes provision for enabling development and the need for local planning authorities to assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies. Historic England provides advice on enabling development, including the criteria against which proposals will be considered and the supporting evidence required, and the Council will use this advice when considering any proposals for enabling development.

10.1.10. The Council has adopted Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for all its Conservation Areas and these will be taken into account in any decisions with the potential to affect these areas. In addition, the Council will also prepare a list of locally important buildings in due course, to assist in the application of policy in relation to non-designated heritage assets.

10.1.11. Historic England has produced guidance relating to such issues as making changes to heritage assets, the setting of heritage assets, and managing significance in decision taking in the historic environment. The Council will have regard to Historic England’s guidance as best practice when making decisions which affect heritage assets.

10.1.12. The Council will require a Heritage Assessment to be produced for all proposals which are likely to affect a designated or non-designated heritage asset. This will be in proportion to the significance of the heritage asset and the scale of impacts upon it. For assets with archaeological interest, this will include a desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation carried out by an appropriate professional. In determining applications, the Council will consider the impact and degree of impact on affected heritage assets, having taken the applicant’s Heritage Statement into account.

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10.1.13. In accordance with its priority of preserving, protecting and enhancing the heritage of the Borough, the Council expects proposals to avoid negative impacts on historic features. In cases where development which causes harm to a heritage asset is allowed, the Council will seek measures to minimise the impacts as much as possible. The Council would wish to see assets such as archaeological remains preserved in situ but recognises that this is not always possible. Where the loss of heritage features or assets are justified, these will need to be properly assessed and recorded.

The Council will apply the following suite of policies as appropriate when determining planning applications that have the potential to impact upon heritage assets and their settings.

• Proposed Policy DM 41: Development Involving Heritage Assets
• Proposed Policy DM 42: Listed Buildings
• Proposed Policy DM 43: Conservation Areas
• Proposed Policy DM 44: Archaeology

Policies DM42, DM43 and DM44 should be read in conjunction with policy DM41, which provides the framework within which applications involving heritage assets will be determined and the weight to be accorded heritage as opposed to other material considerations.

Proposed Policy DM 41: Development Involving Heritage Assets

10.1.15. Proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment of the borough and the contribution it makes to local distinctiveness and sense of place will be supported. Encouragement will also be given to proposals that make sensitive use of historic assets through regeneration and re-use, particularly where these bring redundant or underused assets back into an appropriate use. Proposals involving enabling development which conflict with policy will be required to demonstrate that it is reasonably necessary to secure the future conservation of the heritage asset and that this outweighs the disbenefits of departing from policy.

10.1.16. Development will be expected to conserve and enhance or reveal the significance of designated heritage assets and the contribution made to that significance by their settings. Development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly through development within their settings, unless it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that would outweigh the harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

   a. The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
   b. No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
   c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and,
   d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

10.1.17. Where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, any harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

10.1.18. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be a material consideration in its determination. Those that affect the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be carefully considered and a balanced judgment made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset involved. Proposals which, on balance, have an unacceptable impact will not be permitted.
10.1.19 Any application affecting directly or indirectly the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset should be prepared in sufficient detail to enable the Council to evaluate the impact of the proposal on that asset. A Heritage Statement will also be required in support of such applications to outline and provide evidence as to the significance of the heritage asset, the contribution made by its setting, and the likely impact of the development upon it and any alternatives considered that may impact lesser upon its significance. In determining applications, the Council will accord additional weight as appropriate where multiple heritage assets stand to be adversely affected.

10.1.20. Should permission be granted for the removal of part or all of a heritage asset, this will not be allowed to proceed until such time as a mechanism is put in place to ensure that any approved replacement development will proceed. Where permission is granted for such development, conditions will be attached requiring photographic or other recording of the asset to be removed with a report containing said information to be submitted to the Council as a public record.

Proposed Policy DM 42: Listed Buildings

10.1.21. Alterations and extensions to listed buildings and development within their settings that affect their significance should preserve and ensure enhance their character and appearance and the special features for which they were designated ensure that the significance for which they were designated is conserved and enhanced. In evaluating proposals, the Council will have regard to any features that contribute to the special character of the listed building and the context within which it is appreciated and understood.

10.1.22. The re-use of listed buildings will be supported where they are at risk or under-used and the alternative use is demonstrated to be compatible with the character, appearance, fabric, interior and setting of the building.

10.1.23. Applications for new works to listed buildings will be carefully assessed. Extensions will be required to be of an appropriate scale and design and be in materials that retain the special interest of the original building. The character and significance of the building should not be diminished by over-restoration. Existing architectural or historic features should be retained where they contribute toward the character of the building and its significance.

Proposed Policy DM 43: Conservation Areas

10.1.24. Development, in or adjoining a Conservation Area, which would enhance its character, appearance, or the contribution made to its significance by its setting will normally be permitted subject to other policies within the Local Plan. In evaluating proposals, the Council will have regard to its adopted Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans as a material consideration.

10.1.25. New development in a Conservation Area should aim to preserve and enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and respect its surroundings in terms of height, massing, volume, scale, form, materials, details, roofscape, plot width and the spaces between buildings.

10.1.26. Development within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of, a Conservation Area should preserve and enhance all features that contribute positively toward the area’s character and appearance. Particular consideration will be given toward the following:
a. The retention of buildings, groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces;
b. Retention of architectural details that contribute positively to the character or appearance of the area;
c. The impact of the proposal on the townscape, skyline, landscape and the relative scale and importance of buildings in the area;
d. The protection of trees and elements of landscape or townscape that contribute positively towards the character and appearance of the area;
e. Whether the proposals result in the removal of unsightly and negative features and their replacement by others that make an appropriate and positive contribution.

Where development is proposed within a Conservation Area, consideration should also be given to the possible existence of buried archaeology to which policy DM45 may apply. Any Heritage Statement should therefore also provide evidence that this aspect has also been assessed.

Proposed Policy DM 44: Archaeology

10.1.27. The archaeological and historic integrity of designated heritage assets and other important archaeological sites, together with the contribution made toward their significance by their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

10.1.28. Planning applications on sites where there is or is potential archaeological interest must be supported by an appropriate informed desk-based assessment of the asset and the impact of the proposal on its significance.

10.1.29. Where important or potentially significant archaeological heritage assets may exist, developers will be required to arrange for field evaluations to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications in accordance with a specification to be agreed in writing with the Council.

10.1.30. Where the case for development affecting a heritage asset of archaeological interest is accepted, the Council’s preference will be that the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ.

10.1.30 Where the case for development affecting a heritage asset of archaeological interest is accepted, a decision will be made on its treatment weighing the significance of the asset against the public benefits of the proposal. Where the heritage asset is of demonstrably equivalent significance to a Scheduled Monument, any potential harm to that significance shall be evaluated on the same basis as if it were a designated heritage asset.

10.1.31. Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record will be required. In such cases, a copy of the report detailing and interpreting findings shall be deposited with the Council and the County Historic Environment Record, for its records.

11.1.1. The Gravesham Local Plan First Review was adopted in 1994. Many of its policies were saved by the Secretary of State in a Direction letter issued in September 2007. Some of these saved policies were replaced in whole or in part by policies in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, 2014. The remainder are listed below and are either deleted or replaced by new policies in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. No saved policies will form part of the Development Plan.

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12. Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood and Local Centres
Location Plans

Neighbourhood & Village Centres: Cross Lane West
Neighbourhood & Village Centres: Lawrance Square

Neighbourhood & Village Centres: Lion Roundabout
Neighbourhood & Village Centres: Wrotham Road

Neighbourhood & Village Centres: Higham
**Air Quality Action Plan:** Under the Environment Act, 1995 and associated Air Quality Regulations, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has to be designated if air pollution is too high. Local authorities must then produce an Air Quality Action Plan and work with Partner Agencies to pursue an improvement in air quality. The aim of the Action Plan is to identify how existing powers can be used and to work together with other organisations in pursuit of the Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate matter (PM10). In Gravesham, direct and general measures are proposed to improve air quality both within the seven AQMAs and across the Borough as a whole.

**Air Quality Assessment:** The purpose of an air quality assessment is to determine whether the predicted impacts from a development on local air quality will impact on public health and/or the local environment.

**Air Quality Strategy:** The aims of an Air Quality Strategy are to address the wider air pollution issues in the Borough and prevent air quality deteriorating by taking action to improve air quality. The Air Quality Strategy provides a framework for future air quality issues and encourages partnership working within the Council and with the County Council, neighbouring local authorities, health authorities, transport operators, local businesses, community groups and members of the public to deliver air quality improvements.

**Article 4 Direction:** Article 4 Directions allow local planning authorities to withdraw the ‘permitted development’ rights that would otherwise apply by virtue of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended (the ‘GDPO’). An Article 4 Direction does not prevent the development to which it applies, but instead requires that planning permission is first obtained from the local planning authority for that development.
CAMRA Public House Viability Test: A methodology for the assessment the viability of public houses, based upon a series of questions under the following headings: Local trade potential; customer potential; competition; site flexibility; parking; public transport; multiple use; partial loss; management past and present; and sale asking price.

Community Asset: An asset of community value (ACV) is land or property of importance to a local community which is subject to additional protection from development under the Localism Act, 2011. Voluntary and community organisations can nominate an asset to be included on their local authority’s register of assets of community value.

Conservation Area Appraisal: An assessment of the elements which contribute to an understanding of the historic and architectural importance of an area, which is used when considering the designation of a conservation area, the subsequent preparation of a management plan for the area and as evidence when amending a conservation area and when determining planning applications within a conservation area and its setting.

Contaminated Land Strategy: The Environmental Protection Act, 1990, requires local authorities to inspect their areas to identify contaminated land. Statutory guidance makes clear that in order to carry out their contaminated land duties, Authorities must produce a formal contaminated land strategy document which clearly sets out how areas of land which merit detailed individual inspection will be identified in an ordered, rational and efficient manner, and in what time scale. Gravesend adopted its strategy in 2001 and the last revision was in 2013.

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges: The “Design Manual for Roads and Bridges” (DMRB) is a comprehensive manual which contains requirements, advice and other published documents relating to works on motorway and all-purpose trunk roads for which Highways England is the relevant highway authority. It has been developed as a series of documents published by Highways England.

Emissions Mitigation Assessment: The consideration of mitigation and off-setting required for all developments where air quality assessments are required for both construction and operational impacts.

Exception Test: Where new development cannot be steered to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, development on areas of higher risk may be permitted providing that an exception test can demonstrate that its sustainability benefits to the community outweigh the flood risk and a flood risk assessment shows that the development and its occupiers will be safe, flood risk will not be increased elsewhere and where possible, overall flood risk can be reduced.

Framework for Regeneration: Kent County Council’s Framework for Regeneration: Unlocking Kent’s Potential, sets out the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the County over the next 25 years and how they will be addressed. The main issues include those relating to business and the economy, population change, homes and communities and transport.

Key Shopping Area: A shopping area afforded a high degree of protection by the Council, because of the role it plays in helping people to meet their day to day needs locally, thus reducing the need to travel and providing a focus for the community.

Locally Sourced Natural Species: These are tree species which have colonised the landscape of by natural processes since the last ice age. Over many generations, the successful species have adapted to local conditions and support a wide range of plants and animals. The particular soil, geography, micro-climate and other factors result in native plants that are uniquely suited to their environs. Species widely accepted as being truly native are
mainly broadleaved, deciduous species, including birch, oak, ash, willow, as well as evergreens such as holly, yew, scots pine and juniper.

**Major Development:** For housing; development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development; additional floorspace of 1,000 sq.m. or more or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Manual for Streets:** Manual for Streets is a design guide published in 2007 by the Department for Transport. It shows how the design of residential streets can be enhanced and advises on how street design can help create better places with local distinctiveness and identity. In addition, it establishes a common reference point for all those involved in the design of residential neighbourhoods.

**NPPF National Planning Policy Framework:** This sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their councils can produce their own distinctive local plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. The Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Network and Hierarchy of Town Centres: The categorisation of retail centres according to their size and function and their distribution throughout the Borough as shown on the Policies Map. In Gravesham, the hierarchy consists of two categories: Gravesend is the highest order centre, having a sub-regional role; the second tier consists of neighbourhood centres in the urban area and village centres in the rural area, both serving a more localised need. Not Materially Larger: The size of a replacement building being no larger than the one it replaces, or any size difference not being readily discernible, nor having any greater visual impact due to its size nor creating any additional, useable space.

**PDL Previously Developed Land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including its curtilage, and any fixed surface infrastructure. It excludes land that is occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land used for mineral extraction or waste disposal by landfill where provision has been made for restoration; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and previously developed land where structural remnants have blended into the landscape over time.

**Permitted Development Rights:** The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, 2015, sets out classes of development for which a grant of planning permission is automatically given, provided that no restrictive condition is attached a planning permission for that development removing the permitted development rights. Prior Approval: Certain changes of use do not require planning permission providing certain specified issues are agreed and a number of limitations and conditions are met, including the size of the unit and the commencement date. This is referred to as the Prior Approval process.

**Riparian Environment:** Land consisting of a river bank.

**Saved Policies:** The Gravesham Local Plan First Review was adopted in 1994. Many of its policies were saved by a Direction issued by the Secretary of State in September 2007 and therefore continue to be applied. Some of the saved policies were replaced by policies in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted in 2014. The remaining saved policies will continue to form part of the Development Plan until they are either superseded or cancelled upon the adoption of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document. No First Review policies will continue to be saved after that adoption.
Settlement Hierarchy: The categorisation of settlements in accordance with the level of services and facilities available to identify which are most sustainable.

Social Infrastructure: Facilities such as hospitals, health centres, GP surgeries, community centres, schools, libraries and places of worship which play a role in providing for the health, welfare, educational and spiritual needs of the community.

Strategic Road Network: Nationally significant roads used for the distribution of goods and services, and a network for the travelling public. In legal terms, it can be defined as those roads which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport and managed by the Highways Agency.

Thames Estuary Marine Conservation Area: Marine Conservation Zones are created under the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009, to conserve marine animals, plants and their habitats, together with areas of geological importance. A Thames Estuary Marine Conservation Zone has been recommended for designation.

Thames Estuary Path: One of the aims of the Thames Gateway Delivery Plan, 2007, was to develop a continuous estuary path to run along both banks of the Thames and to improve waterfront environments. This was carried forward into the Thames Gateway Parklands Vision, 2008 and implemented by the Thames Estuary Partnership of local authorities, national agencies, industry, voluntary bodies and local communities. Overlain now by proposals, being currently developed by Natural England, for this section of the Coastal Path.

Thames River Basin Management Plan: River Basin Management Plans are a requirement of the Water Framework Directive and a means of achieving the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. This includes surface freshwaters (including lakes, streams and rivers), groundwater, ecosystems such as some wetlands that depend on groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters out to one nautical mile. Plans must include: objectives for each water body; reasons for not achieving objectives where relevant; and the programme of actions required to meet the objectives. The Environment Agency prepared The Thames River Basin District: River Basin Management Plan in 2015.

3G Pitches: 3G pitches consist of synthetic turf designed for football and rugby at both competitive and recreational levels. The pile (artificial grass blades) is supported by a thin base layer of sand and by an infill of rubber comb.

Transport Assessment or Statement: A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, including walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts. A transport statement is a simplified version of an assessment where limited issues arise from proposed development.

Transport Hierarchy: The concept of a hierarchy of users has been established by the Department for Transport for use in the planning and design processes for new developments and proposed traffic management schemes. This places pedestrians at the top, followed by cyclists then public transport, with unaccompanied private car-users last. The objective of such a hierarchy is to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable road users are fully considered in all highway schemes, but not necessarily to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists in every location. Adoption of a hierarchy of users is recommended as one of the elements of good practice in Local Transport Plans.

Vision for Kent: This is Kent’s Sustainable Community Strategy for the period 2012 to 2022,
produced by the Kent Forum consisting of the 14 Kentish Local Authorities. It sets out three countywide ambitions to grow the economy, tackle disadvantage and put citizens in control.

**Vitality and Viability:** Vitality is a measure of how busy a centre is and viability is a measure of its capacity to attract ongoing investment for maintenance, importance and adaptation to changing needs.

**Water Framework Directive:** The purpose of the European Union Water Framework Directive is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. The framework for delivering the Directive is through River Basin Management Planning. The UK has been split into several River Basin Districts and each one has been characterised into smaller management units known as Water Bodies. The surface Water Bodies may be rivers, lakes, estuary or coastal.