

2022 Kent Property Market Report

The annual guide to investment
& development in Kent



Cover:
Aviator, Manston Business Park, Ramsgate.
CREDIT: MILEWAY



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CREDIT: GAVIN THOMAS DESIGN CONSULTANTS



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CREDIT: HICO GROUP

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CREDIT: PANATTONI

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Welcome

Welcome to the 31st Edition of the Kent Property Market Report. The report is produced by Kent County Council, Caxtons and Locate in Kent.

The **Caxtons Property Market Analysis** reviews property deals and activity during 2021-22 and covers:

- **Market Outlook**
- **Science & Business Parks**
- **Offices**
- **Industrial & Distribution**
- **Retail**
- **Rural (courtesy of Savills)**
- **Residential**

An update on **Inward Investment** and future opportunities is provided by **Locate in Kent** along with a Focus on the Industrial & Logistics sector this year. Locate in Kent also launch the Kent Growth Space Initiative and the 'Big Conversation' on growing Kent's employment space.

In **Leisure and Tourism** Visit Kent review the year and recent investments as well as the impact on the sector from the pandemic.

The **Infrastructure and Regeneration** section features current and planned developments. It focusses on Kent's growth areas, the continuing regeneration of Kent's coastal towns and rural communities, housing initiatives as well as significant investment in road and rail infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure highlights projects that support sustainable development.

The **Strategic Developments** pages feature a comprehensive list of sites, useful contact details and a location map.

The full report can also be found at **kentpropertymarket.com**.

Caxtons Property Consultants, established in 1990, is one of the largest independent property practices in the South East offering a full range of agency, management, professional and surveying services across all property sectors.

Kent County Council's Economic Development Division works with public, private and voluntary sectors to support economic growth by encouraging and supporting businesses; working closely with specific sectors to promote growth and finding ways to fund business critical infrastructure and unlocking key development sites.

Locate in Kent provides a comprehensive, confidential and free business relocation and advisory service for all companies looking to relocate to or expand in Kent and Medway.

The producers of the report thank sponsors and contributors to the report:

- **Clear MPW**
- **DHA Planning**
- **Hollaway**
- **MHA MacIntyre Hudson**
- **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors**
- **Thomson, Snell & Passmore**

We hope you find the report useful and informative.



Derek Murphy Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Kent County Council



Ron Roser Chairman, Caxtons



Susie Warran-Smith Acting Executive Chair, Locate in Kent

Left: The Lamp Room at Betteshanger Country Park near Sandwich.

CREDIT: BETTESHANGER COUNTRY PARK

Caxtons' Property Market Outlook

The last 12 months has seen a mixed picture within the commercial property market on the back of an increase in inflation which reached 10.1% (September 2022) and with the threat of further increases in the short term.

Interest rates have reached 2.25% and are predicted to rise again soon. Energy prices and construction and transport costs have also risen, and trade is being held back by Brexit.

There remains a shortage of labour in construction, which is a hangover from Brexit and the pandemic as some staff move to other sectors. All of this will have a great effect on UK trade, and consumer spending is being, and will continue to be hit badly. The threat of a recession is close by but was narrowly avoided this autumn. Notwithstanding this, unemployment is now only slightly behind pre-pandemic levels and although GDP has reduced significantly since 2020, recent figures have been better than expected. GDP was flat in the three months to July 2022, but monthly GDP grew 2.3% between July 2021 and July 2022. The new conservative leader is certainly putting in measures which attempt to deal with the current economic situation, although the initial results of this are increased uncertainty and a poor reaction in the financial markets.

Akin to the rest of the country, Kent will have similar struggles although the county is very well placed to ride most storms due to its relative affordability in terms of commercial rents, land values and house prices. The county's proximity and transport infrastructure for access to London, the M25 and consequently the rest of the UK and Europe, can only add to its USP compared with many other parts of the UK.

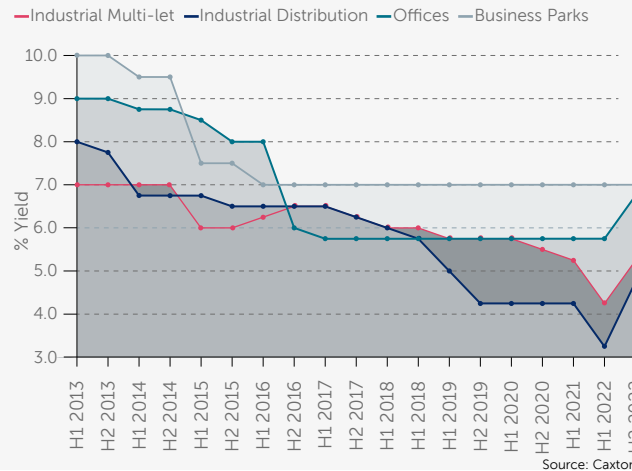
The Investment Property Forum (IPF) Survey of independent forecasts shows total returns declined in 2022 to 6.4% from 10.2% earlier in the year. The projection for 2023 is notably weaker, falling to 3%, although we

6.4%

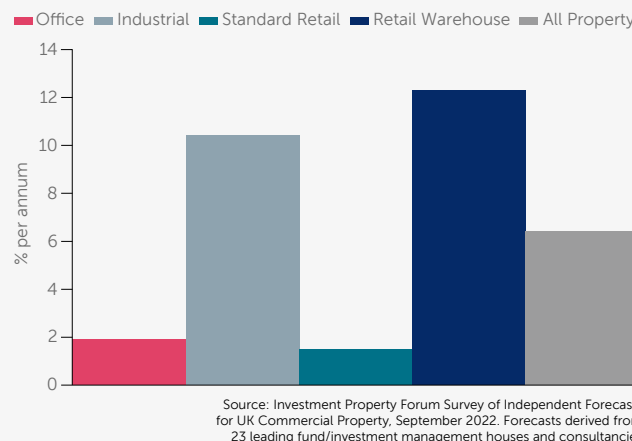
UK property total return forecast for 2022

IPF Survey of independent forecasts for all UK commercial property, September 2022

Kent prime yields



UK Total Return IPF Consensus Forecasts, average over 2022/26 period



6.8%

Prime yields for Kent industrial and distribution property, H2, 2022, the highest rate since 2016

Caxtons



Oakdene at Wrotham, a newly constructed Trade Counter development.

see this as a temporary dip, with forecasts showing an improvement to 5.8% by 2024. Overall, industrial total returns combining rental and capital growth in 2022 showed 10.4% with only retail warehousing beating this figure, at 12.3%. Kent total returns within these sectors are similar.

Science and business parks in Kent have continued to do well, particularly the former, which have been assisted by the growth of life sciences in the UK, and the fact that 18% of all office lettings in the UK in the first quarter of 2022 were to this sector. Kent Science Park and Discovery Park have experienced positive levels of lettings and renewals and have both developed new lab and start-up space, a scarcity in the South East. Traditional business parks have also secured lettings and in some cases rents have increased, or at least remained stable. Kings Hill for example achieved just under 24,000ft² of transactions with four tenants.

The working from home/hybrid ethos has settled in post-pandemic and this has played to the strength of the flexible

and co-working space market. New spaces have been set up across the county and these have proved popular.

The supply of offices has reduced due to continuing conversion to residential, albeit the rate has slowed, and with little new space, and this has contributed to rents increasing overall by 7% over the year. The average rent now stands at £18ft², but closer to London this has reached £30ft² in places. With construction costs increasing, there has been more refurbishment. **Kent is still seeing good investment yields. There were several deals at 8% to over 7% net initial yield compared to the average of 5.25% in the South East.**

The industrial market has been one of the best performing property sectors in the UK this year with total returns of 10.4%, and Kent too has seen good returns. Occupier demand has continued to come from retail, parcel delivery and third party logistics. Demand is such that currently, Kent has less than a year's supply of industrial space. Build costs have continued to increase due to supply problems, an increase in raw material prices, particularly steel, an increase in labour costs/shortage of labour and the war in Ukraine. **Rental levels continue to increase from the heights of 2021, with Kent rents increasing by 8%, compared with 6% in the South East.** Land prices have gone up by 40% in some areas. Kent has come a long way in terms of rental levels and land values, which may well continue for some time.

The retail sector continues to struggle as internet sales remain high as a percentage of all sales, and consumer confidence has dropped. **Average high street rents in Kent remain stable but the picture varies vastly from town to town, with some seeing rents increasing by up to 12% (Sevenoaks) and others seeing sizeable decreases.** In terms of vacancies and lettings, fortunes also vary, but in most towns, coffee shops and hospitality, surprisingly perhaps, have taken over many units previously occupied by more traditional retail. Some shopping centres have benefitted from investment and improvements, two in particular – County Square, Ashford and Westwood Cross, Broadstairs, may soon see changes to incorporate more hospitality. Ashford Designer Outlet and Bluewater continue to see new lettings and expansions. Some supermarket chains remain in expansion mode, with new stores across the county, and retail warehouses continue to do well with reduced vacancy rates.

As noted in the 2021 report, residential has continued to perform strongly. Analysis of Land Registry figures shows

that house prices in Kent have increased on average by 23.5% across the last five years, compared to 19.5% in both the South East and England and Wales. Some districts in east Kent have seen far higher increases – up to 40%. New build prices have increased too, but in some areas, by surprisingly little. There is still substantial demand for housing, and housing land in many areas, and Kent continues to see large influxes of buyers from London, especially in north and west Kent. 'Nutrient neutrality' has caused a major slowdown in housebuilding in the Stour catchment area, but this is starting to be resolved potentially freeing up many stalled sites. Demand for later living accommodation continues to increase but conversions from office to residential have slowed.

At the beginning of 2022, Kent's M25 region yields in the industrial sector were reaching a hiatus achieving a whole

point above the asking price in certain instances. This was in keeping with the South East in particular. However, this soon came to an abrupt halt in May when the US Federal Reserve increased their interest rates putting a temporary pause on acquisitions and the UK property investment market followed suit. Whether this will change towards the end of the year is yet to be seen, as many funds and institutions are under pressure to allocate funds before the year-end. Kent is slightly behind the South East curve for offices but returns are held up by science parks. Even better returns from out of town retail makes up for the relatively poor performance of the retail sector.

Moving forward we are in unknown territory in terms of both the commercial and residential property sectors due to the volatile, economic climate. However, Kent is arguably in a better position than other parts of the country both because of affordability and location within the UK and Europe.



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Science and Business Parks Performance

The continued growth of life sciences in the UK has contributed to take up this year, accounting for 18% of all office lettings in the first quarter of 2022. The government has set out a 10 year strategy, the Life Science Vision, to help companies and institutions looking to invest. As the sector matures, specific areas of the life science market will evolve and science parks will no doubt adapt to this. **Kent is fortunate in having sufficient science park space and land available, so has not seen the repurposing of office space for lab space that other South East towns have.**

Kent Science Park continues to see activity with 126,000ft² (11,710m²) being pre-let to GW Pharmaceuticals following planning consent for 165,000ft² (15,335m²). Completion will be at the end of 2023 for operation in 2024. Building 400 comprising 14,000ft² (1,301m²) is currently being fitted out for lab space to be completed in Q4 2022. Finally, buildings 110-130 comprising 25,000ft² (2,323m²) are also being converted allowing occupiers to have a choice of units from starter labs through to 25,000ft² (2,323m²).

Discovery Park, Kent's largest science, technology and innovation park, registered strong tenant and investor interest, with significant arrivals during the last 12 months. Between January and August 2022, Discovery Park agreed leases with 32 new arrivals for a total of more than 24,000ft² (2,235m²) of office and laboratory space.

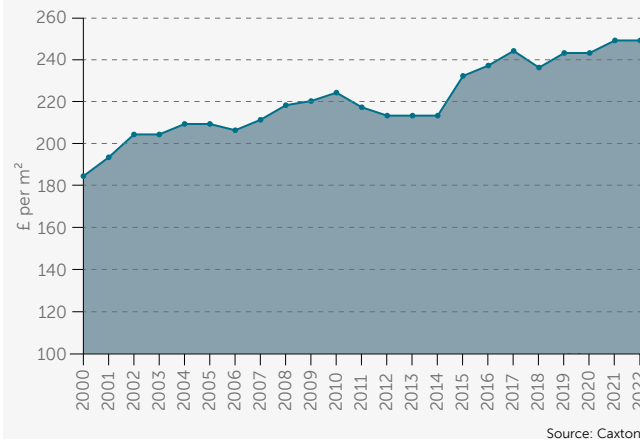
Discovery Park's new incubator facility within Building 500 will be available for occupation in September 2022. It will provide 50,000ft² (4,647m²) of lab and write-up space for start-ups and small life science companies.

Also at Discovery Park, GrowUp Farms is building their fourth vertical farm which topped out in July. Once complete, the farm will employ 60 staff and grow salads which will be on supermarket shelves at affordable prices early in 2023.

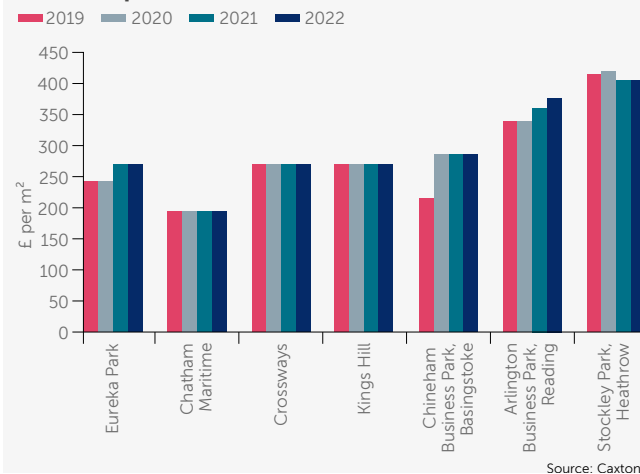
23,958ft²

Space let to four tenants at Kings Hill in the last year.
Prologis

Kent average prime business park rent



Business park rents



32

New tenants arrived at Discovery Park taking 24,000ft² space between January and August 2022

Discovery Park



18 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill.

Significant arrivals include Cummins, relocating 200 staff from its former base in Manston to 16,500ft² (1,534m²) of state-of-the-art offices. Silicon Valley-based global leader in hydrogen-powered aviation HyPoint invested £11m in a new research, development and production centre. An emerging factor in attracting new businesses is Discovery Park Ventures (DPV), an investment fund designed to nurture and grow exciting early-stage disruptive technology companies. Four businesses have been supported to date, with plans to grow the fund up to £25m in the next three years.

Close to J7 M20, Kent Medical Campus is home to KIMS Hospital and Cygnet Healthcare and higher educational facilities. The council owned 37,000ft² (3,439m²) Innovation Centre continues to let to science and medical related SME's.

Horticultural research at NIAB at East Malling has benefitted from a new development – the GreenTech Hub for Advanced Horticulture. The hub comprises almost 21,520ft² (2,000m²) of commercial glasshouse facilities, with modern lighting, irrigation systems and climate-controlled compartments

LETTINGS							
Date	Location	Landlord	Tenant	Floorspace ft ²	Rent (pa)	Lease term	Agent/s
Mar '22	Part 18 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling	Prologis	Trooli	11,323	£25.00 psf	10 yrs	Altus/Knight Frank
Apr '22	130-190 Upper Pemberton, Eureka Business Park, Ashford	Confidential	Accountancy Firm	1,023	£19.50 psf	10 year lease 5 year break/review	Avison Young

with heating and cooling facilities. Plant growth rooms offering complete control of environmental conditions are also included, along with a new research winery and client zone for industry visits and meetings.

The most recent business park to be constructed in Kent is at LOC8, Maidstone, at Junction 8 of the M20 comprising industrial and office accommodation. The office element comprises 109,180ft² (10,143m²).

Over the last 12 months Kings Hill achieved 23,958ft² (2,226m²) of transactions involving four tenants, including 11,323ft² (1,052m²) at 18 Kings Hill Avenue to Trooli Ltd, 3,391ft² (321m²) at 35 Kings Hill Avenue to Illuminate Skin Clinics Ltd, 4,733ft² (440m²) in 30 Tower View to Africa Express Lines Ltd and 4,511ft² (418m²) in 10 Kings Hill Avenue to Optegra UK Ltd. Headline rents were maintained.

One of the largest floor plates to become available this year was Riverbridge House at Crossways Business Park, Dartford totalling 20,663ft² (1,918m²) over three floors. Rents have risen to £25 per ft². Similarly Blake House comprises 2,612ft² (243m²) to 5,760ft² (535m²) where quoting terms are in the order of £23.50 per ft².

Eclipse Park, Maidstone at Junction 7 of the M20, has seen a letting on the second and third floors to Insurance Broker Aston Lark at £24 per ft², in June 2022. Similar to many parks, this development has evolved from a mainly office location, albeit with a hotel, to now also offering food/non-food retail.

The mixed-use development at Chatham Waterside owned by Schroder UK Estate Fund is due to open a Ninja Warrior UK adventure park at the former Dickens World unit comprising 30,000ft² (2,788m²). Terms were agreed on a 15 year lease. Chatham Maritime has seen part of the ground floor at Fidentia House, the former Lloyds building, comprising 3,786ft² (352m²) come to the market. The residential/

regeneration allocated part of the 26 acre (10.5ha) former docks is owned by Peel Holdings (UK) with the leases expiring before 2025 to make way for residential development.

On Gillingham Business Park, the former Lloyds building comprising 38,998ft² (3,593m²) is being offered for sale at a price of £4.5m (£115 per ft²). **Sales such as this show the affordability that Kent business parks can offer to companies looking to purchase their own offices.**

At Eureka Park in Ashford, Rift House comprising 10,313ft² (1,030m²) has been let at £12.42 per ft² and a surrender

and renewal to the NHS at The Medical Centre comprising 10,699ft² (994m²) at £16.92 per ft² is underway.

Business park investment represents a hedge against volatility as the parks often fall within a mixed-use class. Although rarely traded due to the size of the asset, science parks are similarly becoming more attractive with Funds creating specialist science park platforms to service this sector at yields comparable to business parks. **National science park yields currently sit at 3.5% across the UK.** Amazon's property fund has made its first purchase in the science park market highlighting the attractiveness of this type of asset to Funds.



Proposal for GrowUp Farms vertical growing facility at Discovery Park.

CREDIT: GROW UP FARMS

Office Performance

With the work from home/hybrid working ethos setting in post-pandemic, companies are still deciding on the right combination of working from home and going into the office, and many are changing the way they operate.

This has played to the strengths of the flexible office market resulting in a surge in the availability and demand for flexible and co-working space in Kent. But will this interest continue? Recent surveys show that it probably will. One of many new examples in Kent is Lime Tree Workshop, a converted historic warehouse in the centre of Sevenoaks which opened in April 2022 offering 4,500ft² (418m²) of co-working space over two floors (see photo on page 39).

Kent is slowly seeing an increase in activity in the office market which shows firmly that we are out of the pandemic doldrums within some, if not all size ranges, not only in Kent but the South East.

The South East has seen rental increases of up to 9% this year. **In comparison Kent saw an increase of 7% over the last 12 months – an increase of 16% over a five-year period.** The average rent in Kent is now £18 per ft² up from £16.91 per ft² in 2021. Some Kent districts, including **Maidstone, Folkestone and Dartford have seen a 14% increase in the last year.** Many South East locations are now breaking through the £40 per ft² barrier. Sevenoaks is the only Kent location close to this figure at more than £30 per ft² even outperforming inner M25 locations such as Orpington where rents are in the order of £28 per ft². Certain towns look relatively affordable compared to other locations in Kent and the South East, due to the lack of rental growth over the last few years. **From a relatively low rental base in Kent we expect to see further, albeit marginal, rental growth in the coming few years.**

The supply of offices continues to reduce due to the number of offices converted to residential and the lack

7%

Increase in Kent average office rent in last year
Caxtons



Proposals by George Wilson for Capita House, John Wilson Business Park, Chestfield.

of new space. Nationally the volume of offices being converted has jumped by a quarter in the last year although approvals have reduced and there have been less conversions under the PD rules. This is partly because the rules have changed with offices now having to remain vacant for 3 months and the area converted has to be less than 16,050ft² (1,500m²). Kent has also seen this trend. Maidstone will see the loss of Medway House comprising 12,746ft² (1,185m²) sold for residential development subject to planning. Sevenoaks has seen Berkeley Homes relocating to new offices at Quinton Court, their residential led development in London Road, comprising 9,948ft² (924m²), freeing up their offices in Oakhill Road which will be converted to residential on receipt of consent.

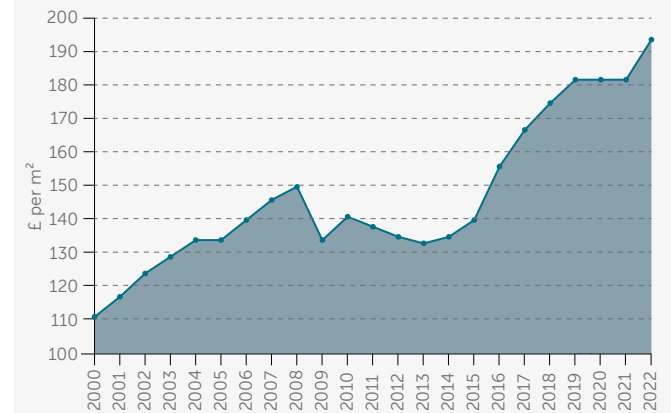
Kent is starting to see a number of strategic lettings.

The Gallagher headquarters at Shannon House at Junction 5 of the M20, Aylesford comprising 5,613ft² (522m²) was let to National Highways at £21.50 per ft². The building was refurbished to a Grade A specification.

18ft²

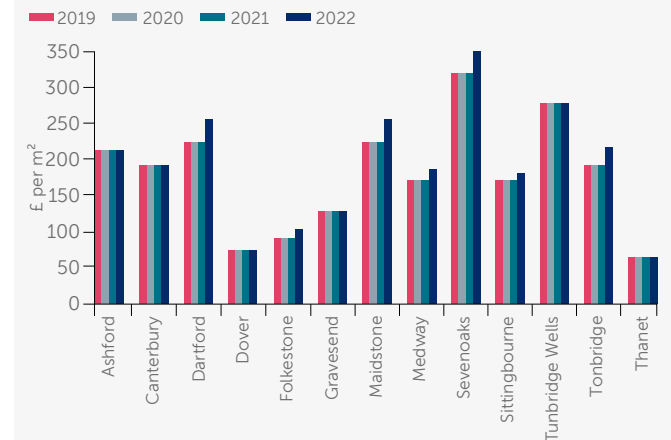
Average office rent in Kent in 2022 – up from £16.91ft² in 2021
Caxtons

Kent average prime office rent



Source: Caxtons

Office rents



Source: Caxtons

LETTINGS							
Date	Location	Landlord	Tenant	Floorspace ft ²	Rent (pa)	Lease term	Agent/s
Feb '22	BEC Building, Barton Road, Dover	Ed Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark	Care provider	7,001	£67,500	10 years with 5th yr anniversary break	Smith Woolley
Jan '22	5th Floor, Brockbourne House, 77 Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells	BlackRock	Crimson Tide	5,100	£138,000 to £153,000 (Ave. rent £145,500)	10 yr FRI with review/ break at 5th Lease. Expires Dec. 2031	Broadlands Commercial Property Agents
Feb '22	9 & 11 Lime Tree Workshop, Sevenoaks	Portman Homes (LTW) Ltd	Thoughtscape Ltd	4,582	£137,460	7 years	Salisbury & Co
Apr '22	Unit 67, Sir Thomas Longley Road, Medway City Estate, Rochester	J D Geerings Plumbing & Heating Ltd	J H Commercial Catering Services Ltd	1,157	£11,000	6 Break: 3 yrs (tenant) 3 year review	Harrisons
Jul '22	Unit 12 Oak Trees Business Park, Ashford	Private	N/A	890	£18,500 (£20.78 psf)	5 years	Stafford Perkins

SALES							
Date	Location	Vendor	Purchaser	Floorspace ft ²	Capital venue	Agent/s	
Jun '22	Utmost House, Vale Avenue, Tunbridge Wells	Utmost Life & Pensions Ltd	6 Vale Avenue Limited	15,250	£3.2m	Broadlands Commercial Property Agents [TW] Ltd	
Nov '21	99 Victoria Road, Margate	East Kent ITeC Limited	Tracey Emin	10,825	£750,000	Caxtons	

Some of the more notable available buildings include Priory Gate Maidstone comprising eight individual offices ranging from 1,674ft² (155m²) to 16,838ft² (1,565m²). Quoting terms are in the order of £19 per ft². In February 2022, Canterbury City Council granted George Wilson Developments planning permission for a new 9,000ft² (837m²) office building split over three floors at Markerstudy Business Park in Whitstable, which will start on site later this year.

As development costs rise due to steel price increases and additional costs such as environmental, social and governance requirements, speculative development has all but given way to refurbishment which is more cost effective. Tunbridge Wells has seen the refurbishment of Crescent House, to accommodate up to 16,939ft² (1,574m²) over four floors. Quoting terms are £28.50 per ft² or £200 per ft² freehold. George Wilson have carried out a number of lettings including the renovation and letting of 3,300ft² (307m²) at the Eurocentre Business Park in Faversham. Notwithstanding the general lack of speculative development, Sevenoaks is seeing one of Kent's only such developments with Salters Heath Business Centre comprising 13 offices ranging from 420ft² (39m²) to 3,411ft²

(317m²) owned by the Montreal Estate and constructed by AB Canham. At the Quinn Estates built Connect 38 in Ashford, in November 2021 there was a letting on the second floor following a category A fit-out, that achieved in the region of £21 per ft².

The South East investment market held firm over the course of the year with prime net initial yields at 5.25%.

This makes Kent relatively good value with potential for strong reversionary value. Although there were very few office investment sales in Kent, Tunbridge Wells has seen the sale of Wellington Gate, comprising 27,356ft² (2,541m²) let to six tenants. Quoting terms were £6.5m (7.7% NIY). Maidstone House was sold to Maidstone Borough Council, who already lease the premises from the landlord Capital and Regional, for £7.07 million. The vacant space will be let out to subsidise the cost. Finally, Heathervale House, Tunbridge Wells, let to a single tenant is also currently being marketed comprising 28,510ft² (2,650m²), for £12m (6.71% NIY). In March Kentstone purchased Denne Court in Sittingbourne from a family trust, comprising 16,000ft² (1,487m²) for £3.1m, a yield of 6.6%, comprising a self-contained block with four tenants.

The next 12 months should see a slight increase in rental growth purely down to the lack of stock and the low rental base. Those offices coming to the market will be the subject to the 'flight to quality' where occupiers are demanding higher quality offices. This may create a two-tier market where those landlords who are not refurbishing their offices to such a high standard may be left with unlettable stock.



CREDIT: SALTERS HEATH BUSINESS CENTRE

Proposal for offices at Salters Heath Business Centre, Sevenoaks.

Industrial and Distribution Performance

The pandemic could have seen an uncertain industrial market, but both 2020 and 2021 saw record levels of take up as retailers, parcel delivery operators and third party logistics businesses upgraded and expanded. Now, adding to material supply problems caused by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, there has been an 11% increase in steel prices to March 2022 adding further to increases in build costs. **Rental levels and land values continue to escalate from the heights of 2021 with rents in Kent increasing by 8%, outperforming the South East average of 6%. Industrial land values in some towns increased by up to 40% on 2021 and yields reached 2.5%.** However, since May 2022, investors have taken their foot off the pedal with yields going out by at least 1%. Nonetheless, occupational demand continues.

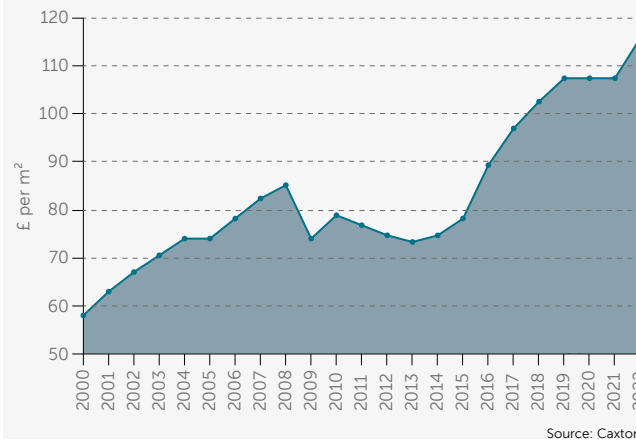
As mentioned above, there have been large increases in land values with a 12acre (4.9ha) site at AG Thames, Crayford reaching a land value suggested to be in the order of £3.75m per acre. ABRDN (Aberdeen Standard) are also selling their 33acre (13.3ha) site in Sittingbourne, known as G-Park, which is currently under offer. In Tunbridge Wells, Tavis House purchased a 3.9acre (1.58ha) site at North Farm in May 2022. In Wrotham, an 8acre (3.2ha) site owned by Marley Tiles has been purchased by Panattoni. The proposal for this site is for a DPD parcel facility with new facilities for Marley created at Panattoni's Aylesford site, creating 250 jobs in total.

Further rental growth will no doubt follow last year's increase and in certain locations has already surpassed this. Kent as a whole saw an 8% increase in rents and most Kent districts saw growth. Canterbury and Dover saw 20% and 21% respectively and Tunbridge Wells and Sittingbourne 14% and 13% respectively. This was helped by speculative development in these areas which has created new product to let.

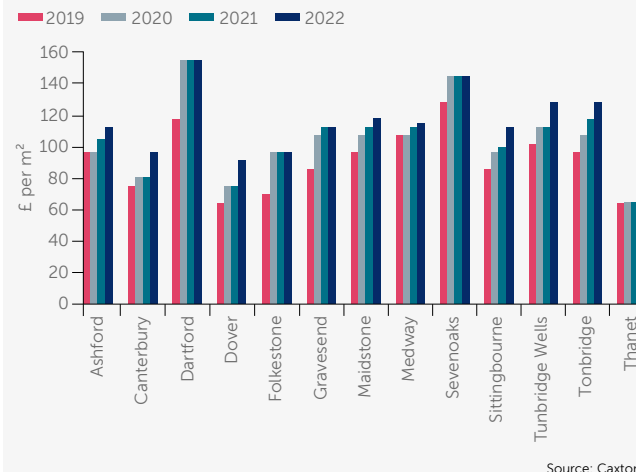
8%

Increase in Kent average industrial and distribution rent in the last year
Caxtons

Kent average prime industrial and distribution rent



Industrial and distribution rents



75%

Increase in industrial and distribution rents in Gravesend in the last five years
Caxtons



New Hub building, control tower, hangars, car park & heliports and extension of the existing access road, and refurbishment of the existing hangars at Rochester Airport.

Rochester Airport has finally received planning permission for new aviation buildings and facilities as well as a mixed-use office/industrial development and has already seen a number of current occupiers search for new premises. Occupiers at the Peel owned Chatham Docks will also have to re-locate once the site is sold for residential development and vacated by 2024. Finally, one of Kent's biggest success stories so far has been Brompton Bicycles choosing a site in Ashford for their UK manufacturing facility which should be operational by 2027.

George Wilson Holdings are in planning for a retail and industrial mixed development adjacent to Dargate services on the A2. At the Joseph Wilson Industrial Estate in Whitstable, the company are constructing buildings for Hills Home and Garden, Mattressnextday Limited, Travis Perkins and 33 small warehouse/storage units, all of which have been sold off plan.

LETTINGS							
Date	Location	Landlord	Tenant	Floorspace ft ²	Rent (pa)	Lease term	Agent/s
Nov '21	Unit 5, Paddock Wood Distribution Centre, Paddock Wood	Redwood	DHL	55,554	£8.00 psf	5 yrs	Altus
Jun '22	Ashford 34, Monument Way, Ashford	Pembury Developments Ltd	Blue Chyp Ltd	34,100	£332,475	15 yrs, 10 yr tenant bk 5 yr rent review	Caxtons and TRLE
Jan '22	2 Arden Business Park, Chaucer Close, Medway City Estate, Rochester	Mark Knight-Adams	Curly Pepper Trading Ltd	15,146	£125,000	10 yrs Break 5 years	Harrisons
Jan '22	Unit 2, Baldwins Yard, Kemsing, Sevenoaks	Tubcom Associates	Meristem Design	7,752	£45,000	Until June 2026	Salisbury & Co
Mar '22	Units 3 & 4 Brunswick Trade Centre, Ashford	George Brewster Property Ltd	City Plumbing Supplies	5,000	£62,500 (£12.50 psf)	10 years	Stafford Perkins

SALES							
Date	Location	Vendor	Purchaser	Floorspace ft ²	Capital venue	Agent/s	
Jun '22	The Emir Site, Ashford	Private	Petchey Holdings Ltd	38,500	£2.55 m (£66 psf)	Stafford Perkins	
Ju1 '22	Causeway House, Chiddingstone Causeway	Bishops UK Ltd	Ashill Regen Ltd	26,000	£2.3m	Broadlands Commercial Property Agents [TW] Ltd	
Apr '22	Westbourne House, North Close, Cheriton	GDRE	Benham (VF) Limited	21,013	£1.050m	Caxtons/Smith Woolley	
Apr '22	Units 12 & 12A Mill Hall Business Estate, Aylesford	Mill Hall Developments	Hamilton Holdings Partnership	4,657	£884,500	Harrisons	



Proposals for a new industrial unit in Wrotham for DPD, to be developed by Panattoni.

As property companies, funds and institutions look for opportunities, those such as Marchmont IM seeing the potential for open storage sites have made their first purchase in the UK at Leacon Road in Ashford comprising 4.7 acres (1.9 ha). Similarly, lack of fully let investment stock is encouraging the funds to look at vacant buildings. Orchard Business Park in Paddock Wood, originally constructed as a multi-let but only occupied by one occupier, recently sold to Petchey Holdings.

Investors are not alone in looking 'outside the box' and property developers with a lack of opportunities are looking at areas beyond the more established locations. Areas such as Queenborough are being looked at favourably due to the good value they offer. Walbrook Business Park at Neats Court is one of the first developments to be constructed in the area with units from 1,000ft² (929m²) to 40,000ft² (3,716m²).

Newly constructed developments and those in the course of construction all have strong interest or are letting well. Bericote's Powerhouse Dartford with its speculative 302,790ft² (29,728m²) space will be completed later this year, and Goodman's Crossways Business Park totalling 580,000ft² (53,903m²) within 3 buildings has only one unit of 240,840ft² (22,374m²) left, Wrenbridge's 5 unit Dartford X has only one building available of 75,277ft² (6,996m²) and Location Works in Burnham Road comprises two units totalling 40,871ft² (3,787m²).

At Aylesford, Panattoni achieved their first pre-lets to DHL of 110,406ft² (10,261m²), Fowler Welch 97,891ft² (9,098m²) and Evri 78,794ft² (7,323m²). Panattoni are now planning to speculatively develop a further 752,823ft² (69,965m²) building at the site, to complete in the fourth quarter of 2023. Occupation of all these units will result in more than 3,000 jobs at the site.

Industrial and Distribution Performance Continued

CREDIT: MILEWAY



Aviator, Manston Business Park, Ramsgate.

Clearbell's speculative 433,238ft² (40,248m²), LOC8 Maidstone, at Junction 8 M20 near achieved its first two pre-lets to local companies Zehnder, a ventilation manufacturer and Va-Q-Tec totalling 85,000ft² (7,900m²). The 34,000ft² (3,160m²) unit at Ashford 34 speculatively constructed by Pembury Estates has already been pre-let.

Space available in Kent in buildings over 20,000ft² (1,859m²) totals 3.5million ft² (278,811m²) within 33 buildings, compared to last years' take up of 4.5 million ft² (418,216m²), so there is under 12 months' supply. Sites offering design and build solutions include Goodman's London Medway Park, Rochester offering land to accommodate over 500,000ft² (46,469m²) and ABRDN's G Park in Sittingbourne offering similar space. Sites in for planning include Wrenbridge's Click Aylesford at Junction 6 M20 accommodating units up to 110,000ft² (10,223m²).

Further east at Ramsgate, Mileway are marketing one of the only existing large buildings in the South East comprising two adjoining facilities known as Aviator, which with the adjoining Manston House provides a total of 315,000ft² (29,275m²). In addition 30 acres (12.14 ha) has just become available for sale which will offer a very cost effective solution to potential occupiers.

The investment market has already seen another game changer with the fully multi-let asset at Mark's Way, Swanley selling for 3.13% net initial yield to Kennedy Wilson from an asking price of 4.25%. Trade City Gravesend sold to Legal & General comprising 35,408ft² (3,291m²) at 3.63%, although the yield represented a sale of two assets which would have slightly diluted the yield. Similarly, single let industrial assets such as the newly constructed units at Trilogy in Sittingbourne let to DHL comprising 72,000ft² (6,693m²) sold for a yield of 4.13%. Units 1-8 at Wincheap Industrial Park Canterbury which is multi-let sold for 7% net initial yield (£6.25m) from a quoting of 6% in January 2022 and CCK House at Park Farm Industrial Estate Ashford which is also multi-let sold for 6% net initial yield (£4.8m) from an asking

price of 5.4% NIY (£5.3m). Lastly, Claygate Distribution Centre in Marden, which is single let, sold for 4.31% (£19.75m).

The market has slowed considerably since the US Federal Bank increased interest rates in June by 0.75%, and debt has become more expensive. UK yields have come off by up to 1%. Later this year we may well see a compression on yields again as the US exchange rate is performing well.

Notwithstanding this Kent has come a long way in terms of rental levels and land values which may continue for the foreseeable future. However, the investment market could well stall completely this year but this would only take the market back to where we were 12 months ago.



CREDIT: PANATTONI

Kent looks set to become home to the largest speculative logistics building in the South East, after Panattoni submitted new proposals for 'Aylesford 750', offering 752,823ft² (69,965m²) high-quality warehousing and distribution space, with the option for an additional 400,000ft² of mezzanine space, at Panattoni Park Aylesford.



Construction nearing completion at LOC8, Maidstone.
CREDIT: GORDON YOUNG

Retail Performance

The pandemic saw internet sales double to 38% of all sales (ONS) during lockdown, a trend some analysts feared would be permanent. When shops re-opened internet sales understandably fell by 11% on the previous year, suggesting that consumers like going to physical stores. The jury is out on the extent to which 'clicks' can work alongside 'bricks'.

Consumer confidence in the United Kingdom dropped to a record low in June 2022 and remained the same in July as inflation ran away due mainly to fuel and food price increases and rising mortgage rates. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 8.2% in the 12 months to June 2022, up from 7.9% in May (ONS). In addition, we are yet to feel the true pressure of rising energy bills.

For the rental picture on the high street nationally, there is certainly a mixed message, with the story varying between towns and types of retail, and this is certainly the case in Kent. The average Kent retail rent remained stable as it did in many Kent towns but some such as Ashford, Folkestone and Gravesend saw sizeable rises between 8 and 11%. Sevenoaks though saw rents increase by 12% to £67.27ft² (£723.87m²). Tunbridge Wells where rents remained stable, still boasts the highest retail rents at £111.52ft² (1,200m²).

In terms of vacancies and lettings too, the high street continues to see mixed fortunes depending upon location and demographics, with those towns in more affluent locations such as Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks performing slightly better than others with a lower socio-economic profile. Banks in particular have left voids in town centres and time will tell how quickly these fill.

Perversely maybe, both coffee shops and hospitality generally remain in favour in the high street no matter how badly the economy is performing and how much

12%

Increase in retail rents in Sevenoaks in last year, from £645.80 to £723.87 per m²

Caxtons



One of the first Wendy's burger takeaways in the UK which replaced Carphone Warehouse in Week Street Maidstone.

the cost of living increases. Kent towns have benefitted from chains which are increasing their presence in the UK or South East such as a Taco Bell taking space in Tunbridge Wells, alongside Gails Bakeries and Five Guys. In Maidstone, hospitality businesses which shut during the pandemic were replaced by not only Taco Bell but also Pizza Express and The Giggling Squid. The Canadian fast food restaurant Tim Hortons opened a new store at Westwood Cross, the first in Kent, and another will open in Gravesend. In Canterbury the large empty Cross and Hamblin unit in St Margarets Street was taken by concept restaurant, Cosy Club.

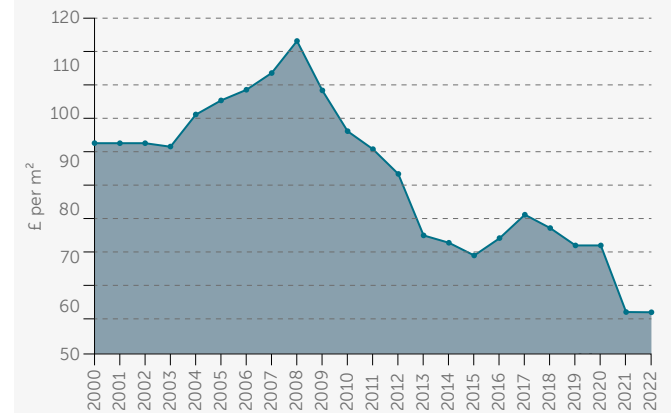
Nonetheless, the high street is still seeing administrations including JC Rook & Sons, the family butcher which had been trading for 50 years with 11 shops around the county. One national success story is McColls, with 1,100 UK convenience stores, who were on the brink of bankruptcy,

21%

Decrease in Kent average prime zone A retail rent over the last five years

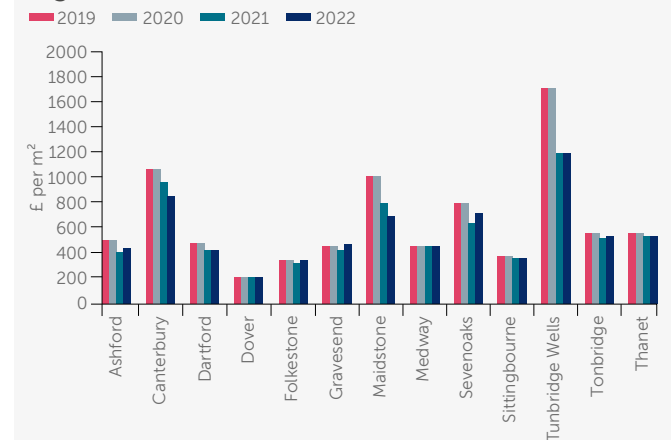
Caxtons

Kent average prime retail rent



Source: Cradick Retail

High Street Zone A retail rents



Source: Cradick Retail

LETTINGS							
Date	Location	Landlord	Tenant	Floorspace ft²	Rent (pa)	Lease term	Agent/s
Feb '22	5 Bligh's Walk, Bligh's Meadow, Sevenoaks	abrdn	Amazon Fresh	Grd floor – 2,264 1st floor – 1,423	Confidential	Confidential	Salisbury & Co
Feb '22	295 High Street, Chatham	Firth (UK) Ltd	Chatham MB Ltd	1,892	£20,000	10 years 5 yr tenant break 5 yr rent review 3 mths rent free	Caxtons and Hummerstone & Hawkins
May '22	17 High Street, Sittingbourne	Kemsley Farms	Alexandru Ionescu	1,283	£15,000	5 years	Harrisons
SALES							
Date	Location	Vendor	Purchaser	Floorspace ft²	Capital venue	Agent/s	
Ju1 '22	14 Mercery Lane, Canterbury	Kounnis Group limited	St Marylebone Property Company (Building Works) Ltd	1,940	£575,000	Caxtons	
Mar '22	10/10a Bank Street, Ashford	Private	Private owner occupier	1,708	£322,000 (£188 psf)	Stafford Perkins	



Co-op store completed at Eddington Park, Herne Bay by Quinn Estates.

having been purchased by Morrisons, saving many thousands of jobs. Some other sectors apart from coffee shops are also doing well. Sales of books hit a 10 year high in the UK during lockdown and independent booksellers have capitalised on the trend.

As an example of how the non-food retail sector is bouncing back, two UK retailers – Sports Direct and Next are looking to expand across the country. Often these new facilities need to give the consumer a reason to visit such as e-sports gaming and concessions from the likes of Game and Evans Cycles. At the other end of the scale Amazon Fresh will not be opening further stores other than those it has committed to, as the concept had proved less popular than expected.

Local authorities and the government are assisting with town centres where they can, with various initiatives proposed including the government's introduction of the planning Class E, encouraging a new, mixed-use approach to town centres and making it easier to convert old buildings; and permitted development rights to convert retail to residential. Nationally however, local authorities denied 45% of applications to turn shops into homes between 2020 and 2021, research by commercial law firm EMW has shown. This is probably due to councils' concerns about losing too much retail space in prime locations, as well as the quality of

homes resulting. Despite this, the number of applications for such conversions rose 37% year on year.

With more confidence in some shopping centres which have bucked the trend, landlords are spending money on refurbishment and improvement.

The owners of Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, Gillingham, have completed the refurbishment of the scheme's East Mall entrance and signed a deal with JD Gyms. Debenhams, at Westwood Cross, is to be converted for hospitality uses, following the trend in high streets discussed above. At Gillingham Retail Park, Blackrock are extending and refurbishing parts of the scheme. Not only are landlords taking the opportunity to maximise revenue from their existing stock but they are also buying town and city centre assets they could not previously afford. County Square in Ashford has new owners and could well be repurposed for food and drink or even offices following departures by Debenhams, H & M and River Island.

Meanwhile at Bluewater, Landsec purchased Landlease's 25% stake in the 1.8 million ft² shopping centre for £200m, taking its stake to 55% and resulting in Landsec taking majority control. Bluewater has also seen M & S introduce the Early Learning Centre to its store, one of only 10 being introduced in the UK. Miele GB, the high-end electrical goods distributor,

Retail Performance

Continued

has taken their fourth store to complement stores in London, Edinburgh and Hertfordshire.

Ashford Designer Outlet continues to attract good footfall from the 0-90 minutes drive time catchment. It has welcomed 10 pivotal new brands since reopening post-pandemic in April 2021, such as Ghost, Hollister, Hobbs, L'Occitane and Russell & Bromley, amongst others. A number of brands also upsized their units such as Adidas, Lyle & Scott and Tommy Hilfiger with Nike following suit in late 2022.

Landlords remain acquisitive for asset management and in particular are purchasing those assets which lend themselves to residential uses or higher value uses such as recreation. In Sevenoaks, refurbishment of the former Tesco Metro site on the High Street, has started and will produce a £30m mixed-use development comprising 100 flats with 8,000ft² (744m²) of retail on the ground floor. Evolve Estates acquired 67,000ft² (6,227m²) at 2 – 46 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells. The company are focussing on the regional convenience retail sector.

The high street parades in provincial shopping areas continue to perform well, not necessarily in terms of rental growth but in terms of occupational demand and investment.

The supermarkets remain acquisitive with Morrisons' putting their name to a planning application for a 30,000ft² (2,788m²) store at Henley Investment's residential led Ebbsfleet Garden City. At Eddington Park, Quinn Estates' housing development in Herne Bay, the company signed a lease with the Co-op for a 4,000ft² (372m²) store at £18ft². This was then sold to a private individual on a 15 year lease at a yield of 4.95%.

UK Retail Warehouse vacancy rates are down to the same level as they were pre-pandemic having reached a peak in 2021. This is one retail sector which remains buoyant.

The investment market in the high street continues to perform well largely due to the smaller lot sizes involved with individual shops. However, towns have fared differently, sometimes due to the quality of assets. Sevenoaks has seen the investment sale of 130-130a High Street anchored by WH Smith for £1.05 million, a 5.63% yield, with a similar asset let to Starbucks on the market for 5.6%. Tunbridge Wells, which would normally offer a similar yield profile, saw an ex Bank of Scotland retail/banking unit with residential floors above sell for 10% yield with potential for repurposing as a restaurant. This yield was most probably due to quality of asset. There is renewed investor interest in retail parks, which are thought

to be less at risk than high streets from the growing rise of on-line shopping, with yields on portfolios at 7.5%, although it should perhaps have been keener. The Supermarket Income REIT paid £73m for three UK assets include a Tesco superstore in Maidstone from Argo Real Estate.

Retail performance continues to be mixed according to location, quality of asset, and class. But with inflation now biting and the cost of living rising, consumers' disposable income is and will be seriously reduced with potentially serious effects on retail.



TacoBell in Week Street Maidstone which replaced Bill's.

CREDIT: CAXTONS



Ashford Designer Outlet

CREDIT: MCARTHUR GLEN/ASHFORD DESIGNER OUTLET

Rural Performance

The UK farmland market remains strong in 2022 with high levels of demand driving values, whilst in the South East supply begins to bounce back from the lows of 2020 as the economic uncertainty of Brexit and Covid-19 fades. Meanwhile the viticulture industry continues to grow across the region, mirroring the increasing popularity of English wine.

The Savills Farmland Value Survey shows that during the first six months of 2022 the average value of prime arable land in the South East remained at the upper end of those across the whole of the UK, averaging £9,830 per acre, an increase of 1.9% on 2021. This compares to the UK average of £9,420 per acre.

Since the turn of the year, lesser quality arable land has seen the largest change in value with a 3.7% increase to £7,000 per acre in the South East, driven by buyer demand for environmental outcomes. Whilst it has made farming more

9%

Increase in farmland marketed in H1 2022 compared with H2 2021 (acres)

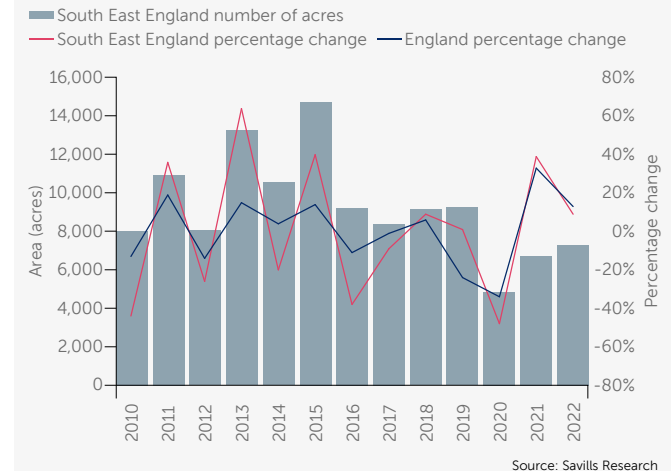
Savills

difficult, the disruption caused by the war in Ukraine and the changing economic outlook is likely to further stoke investors' appetite for inflation-hedging investments such as farmland and drive values upwards.

Chris Spofforth, head of Savills farm agency in the South East, says: "at the time of writing the demand from buyers looking for lifestyle property has softened and the market is increasingly price-sensitive. Land which offers diversity, whether it's income opportunities or environmental credentials for example, remains popular and there are still buyers frustrated by a lack of stock.

"Commercial farmland is well received by the market at the moment, particularly quality land in good locations, and we are seeing strong prices paid in some cases. This area of the market has shown remarkable resilience, given the huge amount of change across the farming sector at the moment.

H1 publicly marketed farmland supply



"Off market transactions are still commonplace in the commercial farmland market, whereas with lifestyle farms, open market is often the favoured approach."

"Supply remains relatively constrained, but we are seeing it begin to pick up, with more farmland coming onto the market in the first half of the year than the equivalent period of the past two years. In the South East 7,300 acres of farmland were marketed in the first half of 2022 compared with 6,700 acres in 2021 in the same period, an increase of 9% (figure 1). Savills research anticipates that supply will continue to rise this year.

"Our analysis of registered buyers shows that demand is still high, with land suitable for delivering nature based solutions to mitigate issues such as nutrient neutrality, biodiversity net gain and carbon capture increasingly becoming a factor for buying."

Across the South East the demand remains for land suited to vineyard establishment, however it is rare to see suitable properties on the open market. Spofforth comments: "Private or off market transactions form the lion's share of the viticulture market for a variety of reasons, but primarily to protect the brand vendors have worked so hard to establish."

As the UK wine market continues to improve, the demand for land is following the same pattern, with a 400% increase

CREDIT: HICO GROUP



Chapel Down and Defined Wine proposal for a winery and bottling facility, Canterbury.

in the total area of vines between 2004 and 2021. This has resulted in a different buying mindset for vineyards. "Ten years ago demand was primarily for bare land, because of the limited number of established vineyards," says Spofforth. "These days, buyers do not tend to want to wait five years or more to establish a vineyard or brand but instead are looking more to areas already in production, which they can put their own mark on."

HICO Group, Chapel Down and Defined Wine, have submitted an application for a £65m project to provide a 40,000ft² (3,716m²) winery and bottling facility plus storage space adjacent to Canterbury Business Park on the A2.

Savills anticipates this upward trend in demand to continue, with viticulture expected to be a beneficiary of climate change. Climate modelling suggests there could be a 1.4 degree increase in average temperature across April to October over the next two decades. This would open the doors for sparkling wine production to move into new areas. Alternatively, it provides the option for already established vineyards to expand into grape varieties not currently grown in the UK and allows for the production of still red wine, which in the past has been difficult to produce. (Ref: <https://oeno-one.eu/article/view/5398>)

In terms of value, Spofforth says: "The average price for land suitable for planting is around £15,000 per acre, but in prime areas such as the North Kent Downs this can extend to £20,000. Established vineyard land trades for between £30,000 to £35,000 per acre."

In addition to the expanding viticulture market, opportunities for diversifying away from food production and towards ecosystem services such as tree planting and the wildlife conservation of biodiverse habitats are expected to be in increasing demand in the region. Despite the falling subsidy support, these emerging markets will support farm incomes and generate further demand for farmland".



The new 21,520ft² (2,000m²) GreenTech Hub for Advanced Horticulture, at NIAB at East Malling, funded by Growing Kent & Medway, the East Malling Trust, and Kent County Council.

Residential Performance

As noted in last year's report, the residential sector is performing strongly following its' surprising emergence as one of the most successful sectors of the pandemic. Intense activity has continued over the last 12 months, and the after-effects of the pandemic, primarily working from home and construction cost increases, have continued to affect the market.

Analysis of Land Registry figures show that Kent house price growth over the last five years at 23.5% outperformed the South East and England and Wales where prices grew by 19.5%. Within Kent, price increases over five years varied with those districts starting from a lower base such as Dover and Thanet seeing the highest five-year increases, both of over 30%. This was particularly the case in the last two or more years when people were able to work from home and looked further afield for relative bargains. Notwithstanding that, Sevenoaks, with its established commuter base saw a rise of nearly 30%.



Ledian Gardens later living homes, Leeds Village.

46.2%

Increase in house prices in Thanet in last 5 years
Land Registry

Working from home and hybrid working continue to make Kent attractive to people and families, especially from south London, looking for more space, gardens and separate workspace. A 2021 report from Savills showed that 46% of buyers moving to Dartford were from London, while the figures for Sevenoaks and Gravesham were 36% and 23% respectively. The same report shows that the number of buyers from London was up to 3.5% higher than 2017 in some districts. Compared with the South East average, the county remains more affordable in relative terms, as well as offering desirable places to live with excellent communications afforded by High Speed One.

The increasing cost of construction and land, and the scarcity of land in some cases, is increasing new build costs. Though this continued in 2021 and into 2022, in many cases the increase in costs was surprisingly, lower than between 2020 and 2021. There is still substantial demand for good housing land in attractive areas. However, the need for sites to be 'nutrient (nitrate and phosphate) neutral' has meant that in many districts in the east and south of the county within the River Stour catchment, sites could not be granted planning permission until this problem was solved. As permitted sites were built out, this presented a significant challenge for the future and was one factor resulting in large reductions in the number of houses permitted. In July 2022 these restrictions were partially lifted, but developers still need to find a practical answer to this problem. Some are opting for on-site wastewater plants, and others for offsetting. Nutrient neutrality and the backlog of applications may continue to take its toll on the number of homes permitted.

Despite various challenges, the pace of demand continues, construction activity has proceeded and a number of residential schemes have been bought forward. Redrow re-commenced works on a 400 home site at Cockering Farm near Thanington outside Canterbury

Average new build price range by location		
Residential new build land values by district council		
New build average price achieved (£/ft²)		
Houses & Apartments		
Location	June 2021	June 2022
Ashford	£325 – £425	£330 – £475
Canterbury	£375 – £500	£385 – £650
Dartford	£400 – £500	£425 – £555
Dover	£300 – £400	£305 – £500
Folkestone and Hythe	£310 – £500	£350 – £650
Gravesham	£375 – £475	£400 – £525
Maidstone	£350 – £450	£375 – £525
Medway	£330 – £430	£340 – £475
Sevenoaks	£550 – £825	£575 – £950
Swale	£300 – £435	£305 – £475
Thanet	£310 – £400	£325 – £550
Tonbridge and Malling	£410 – £525	£450 – £600
Tunbridge Wells	£425 – £675	£475 – £800

Source: RPC Land & New Homes

following a High Court legal challenge and have acquired a site in Faversham with a GDV of £120m.

At Chilmington Green outside Ashford, where 5,750 homes are planned over 20 years, plans have been submitted by Hodson Developments for up to 655 more homes at the adjacent Possingham Farm. Also in Ashford, GSE have achieved both permission and £22m funding to help deliver 400 new homes at Junction 10 M20 in a joint venture with Mulberry Homes, funded by Octopus Real Estate.

At Conningbrook Park in Ashford, Quinn Estates sold a site to Redrow in a £38m deal, and consent has been granted for 725 homes of which 30% will be affordable. Plans also include a primary school, retail space, a bowls club and a bridge to provide access to the lakes.

At Ebbsfleet Garden City, plans have been submitted by Henley Investments for the first phase of a £32 million district centre which will include a nursery, gym, public realm, a 30,000ft² (2,788m²) Morrisons and more than 500 homes, of which 81 will be affordable. At Ebbsfleet Green,



Aerial view showing housing and community facilities, Kings Hill.

Redrow launched the final phase of homes, the Plaza Central apartment scheme. Redrow also applied for 599 homes on a 25a site. Progress also continues at Alkerden Gateway.

At Kings Hill, Countryside Properties have completed and sold their scheme for 132 homes, ranging from 2 bedroom apartments to 5 bedroom houses. Clarion Housing Group has delivered 166 homes over three separate housing areas, of which around two thirds are affordable. Bellway is close to completing its' 70 unit scheme comprising 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses. Bellway has started construction over three separate housing areas to provide a total of 350 residential dwellings, including family homes, apartments and affordable housing, along with additional open space.

In Herne Bay, Bellway have started clearance on a 57a site off Greenhill Road, for 450 homes. Also in Herne Bay, at Quinn Estates' Eddington Park, Moat Homes purchased

23 apartments and 7 houses, and the build has commenced on a further 26 open market apartments in two blocks. Planning consent has been granted for an additional 95 apartments including 30% affordable, alongside 2,000ft² of co-working space and 3,000ft² (278m²) of Class E units.

Demand is still high for later living accommodation.

Ledian Gardens in Leeds village was completed by Kier for Inspired Homes in August and 89 retirement homes are being built for sale in Tunbridge Wells as a joint venture between UK Retirement Living Fund and Elysian Residences. The green facility offers rates tied to carbon emissions. Anchor Lifestyle Developments is constructing 75 assisted living apartments at Kings Hill, which will be ready in autumn 2022.

Generally, the pace of office to residential conversions has slowed in recent years, but with greater uncertainty in the office market, new schemes may come forward.

Retail to residential conversions are proving more difficult

House price change in Kent, South East and England and Wales to end Q2, 2022

Location	5 year cumulative change	Average price Q2 2017	Average price Q2 2022
Ashford	17.5%	£308,316	£362,309
Canterbury	27.9%	£307,030	£392,612
Dartford	18.9%	£320,090	£380,666
Dover	35%	£248,804	£334,916
Folkestone and Hythe	18.7%	£275,387	£326,915
Gravesham	15%	£308,815	£354,965
Maidstone	19%	£325,326	£387,145
Medway	24.1%	£248,896	£308,943
Sevenoaks	29.6%	£497,815	£645,235
Swale	27.6%	£255,007	£325,444
Thanet	46.2%	£241,683	£353,500
Tonbridge and Malling	16.2%	£377,792	£453,170
Tunbridge Wells	4.1%	£465,502	£484,495
Kent	23.5%	£321,717	£397,224
South East	19.5%	£370,947	£443,429
England and Wales	19.5%	£293,223	£350,457

Source: Land Registry

though as local authorities across the country become more resistant to such conversions, despite the number of applications increasing. Resistance is due to both quality of the homes proposed, and fears for the high street.

More modular homes continue to be built, with Legal and General delivering 80 on a site in Littlestone.

The UK private rental sector continues to be of interest to institutional investors. Centra Living, part of Lloyds Bank Group, has purchased 110 properties at the Riverside Park Development in Ashford from GSE Developments.

Several building societies and estate agents have reported that in September, house prices started to drop. Time will tell the extent to which the continuation or not of working from home, construction cost increases, steep cost-of-living increases and the increase in mortgage rates will influence housing demand, supply and prices.

Leisure and Tourism Performance

Sector performance

Visit Kent's latest Economic Impact Model data shows the severe impact on the county's visitor economy from the pandemic, with a 50% drop in visitors in 2020 compared to 2019, and a 61% decline in value to £1.6bn. However, Kent's tourism, leisure, and hospitality sector, which is one of our county's biggest employers and the life and soul of our high streets, has demonstrated huge amounts of resilience and the ability to adapt.

Green shoots of recovery have been evident in the second half of 2021 and into 2022, largely driven by staycations and Kent's attractive rural and coastal areas which saw a quick return of domestic visitors, accounting for 64% of visitors in 2020 compared to 37% in 2019. Findings in Visit Kent's Business Barometer have shown that indoor-based attractions also saw a return in footfall this year compared to 2021, driven by the lifting of restrictions and growing consumer confidence to return to these types of attractions. Despite a decrease in booking lead times, accommodation occupancy also saw a boost, driven by an increase in demand of 55% for serviced accommodation and 46% for self-catering accommodation in June 2022 compared to the previous year. As a result, Kent serviced accommodation saw average occupancy return to pre-pandemic levels.

VisitBritain are forecasting a 65% increase in domestic visitor spending in 2021 compared to 2020, but this still only represents 61% of the pre-pandemic level. International visitors have been slower to return with VisitBritain forecasting 2022 inbound visitor spend of £16.9bn which represents 59% of the spend in 2019. The economic climate, with rising costs and reduced disposable income, is now the biggest challenge to the recovery of the sector with 74% of businesses citing these issues as their greatest concern in the June 2022 Visit Kent Business Barometer.

“The economic climate with rising costs and reduced disposable income is now the biggest challenge to the recovery of the sector.

The Visit Kent three-year strategy will focus on supporting the sector to rebuild. It will capitalise on growth opportunities and delivering sustainable destination management to recover the sector value and jobs ahead of the average UK destination.

Emerging trends and consumer behaviour

Kent's recent recognition by global travel authority Lonely Planet, who have named 'Kent's Heritage Coast' as number four on a list of the world's best regions to visit in 2022, demonstrates the global appeal of our natural assets. Kent's Heritage Coast was praised for its commitment to sustainable tourism initiatives, the regeneration of the historic town of Dover, Creative Folkestone and plans to secure Kent Downs AONB/Straits of Dover as a UNESCO Global Geopark were all recognised within the region's entry.

Lonely Planet's publisher also highlighted Visit Kent and Kent Downs AONB's involvement in the Interreg EXPERIENCE project within its entry. This supports local tourism and hospitality businesses in developing new, low-impact, year-round tourism experiences.

Recent Visit Kent visitor perception research showed that 30% of people consider environmental and sustainability factors in their choice of holiday destination. This shows the importance of continued investment in sustainable tourism and low carbon transport solutions that protect our natural environments and landscapes.

The same perception study identified a growing interest in experiences that are unique and authentic to Kent. Visit Kent have been supporting businesses to adapt and diversify their offering to respond to the changing market and emerging trends through targeted programmes such as the Interreg funded Experience Development Programme. This has produced over 300 new tourism products so far

and small grants provided through the SELEP funded Covid-19 Visitor Economy Recovery Fund to invest in adapting their business. The study also showed the increasing importance of accommodation in driving destination decisions. Among younger people it is often the primary decision influencer and is a core element of the short break/holiday for over half of travellers.

The strong local market has helped to support the Kent tourism, hospitality and leisure sector while the wider domestic and international markets recover. During 2020 Kent saw a 5% increase in the proportion of visitors that were visiting friends or relatives in the area and businesses continue to report a greater proportion of local visitors than pre-pandemic.

The advocacy by Kent locals is strengthened further by findings from a separate study by Visit Kent into residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism across the Garden of England. This highlighted that 85% of residents supported tourism in their local area and 79% agreed that tourism improves local development and infrastructure.

The same study showed that the shift to hybrid and flexible working has resulted in residents spending more leisure time in their local areas and that 30% of respondents had moved permanently to a mix of office and home-based working since the pandemic. Kent residents who have more recently moved to the area were found to be more likely to have had friends and relatives visit, with more than half showing family and friends around the county in the last six months. Visit Kent's "Rhythm of Kent" place marketing campaign, funded



F51 Urban Sports Park in Folkestone features the world's first suspended concrete skating bowls.

by the SELEP Covid-19 Visitor Economy Recovery Fund, showcases the quality of the Kent lifestyle and positions the county as the perfect place to live, work, visit, study or invest.

Investments

Several major investment projects were completed and opened to the public in spring 2022. The £17m F51 Urban Sports Park in Folkestone opened three floors of skateboarding, the tallest climbing wall in the South East and the world's first suspended concrete skating bowls. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council opened the doors to The Amelia Scott, a new £21m culture centre and learning hub in a spectacular space which joins two heritage buildings with a barrel-vaulted atrium.

Quinn Estates completed the new Kent Mining Museum at the 250 acre (101ha) Betteshanger Country Park in April. This project also included significant investment in a new eatery, The Lamp Room Kitchen and Bar and an events venue, The Glass Room. As part of this investment, a new play park and facilities have been created that now enables the country park to host seasonal and family events across the calendar and is a must-visit destination in East Kent.

This year saw the opening of the Herne Bay Sports Hub by Sir Roger Gale MP. The 15acre (6ha), £10m state-of-the-art facility incorporates tennis courts, hockey pitches, football pitches and a cricket ground

Existing tourism destinations expanded their offering including the opening of a new outdoor skydiving machine experience by Hangloose Adventures at Bluewater. Canterbury City Council opened the new South Quay Shed complex in Whitstable home to shops, eateries and cultural activities in 15 self-contained units, as well as the new Curzon Cinema at the Riverside Canterbury. Folkestone Harbour Arm have expanded their highly successful Beachside area including a new adventure golf course right on the beach. The new Folkestone Marketplace and expanded Goods Yard with a permanent screen provide visitors with a year-round offer. Further investment in the new Harbourside development, set inside a collection of shipping containers, will offer a brand-new Quayside dining environment that boasts unparalleled views and glimpses of France on the horizon.

The Orida Group expanded their portfolio by acquiring the Hilton Maidstone and rebranded the property The Orida

Hotel, Maidstone. Following extensive restoration, new boutique accommodation is set to open at the 17th century Boy's Hall Restaurant and Rooms, near Ashford. Further high-end accommodation is to be developed by Richard Balfour-Lynn, owner of Balfour Winery, after planning permission was granted for a luxury wine hotel at the Archbishop's Palace in Maidstone.

Exciting regeneration projects in Ramsgate and Medway secured Levelling Up Funding which include significant investment to attract visitors to the area. A £23m investment in Ramsgate will support a thriving town centre, transform the port into a Green Port and bring heritage buildings back into use, including plans for a hotel in the Smack Boy's

building in the Harbour. Medway Council secured £14.5m to invest in historic landmarks in Chatham. The Docking Station will be a unique creative facility which will include performance spaces and an innovative digital immersive and interactive gallery. The Brook Theatre will be fully refurbished and upgraded into a modern, sustainable and fully accessible theatre and the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust will transform the Fitted Rigging House into 20, 871 ft² (1,939m²) of creative industries focused commercial floorspace.

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CREDIT: SEAHIVE AND BETTESHANGER COUNTRY PARK

Submitted proposal for the SeaHive Wave Garden & Hub Building at Betteshanger Country Park.

Inward Investment and Sector Focus

A Focus on Kent's Industrial and Logistics Sector – current trends and future expectations

The industrial and logistics sector in Kent shows no sign of slowing in the medium term, despite the UK economy being on the brink of a downturn and the Bank of England forecasting a GDP decline equivalent to that seen during the 1990s recession. The imbalance between industrial land supply and demand and low property vacancy rates means the region's real estate could represent more stable returns than yields on government bonds.

Current trends

This yield potential from Kent's imbalance and the opportunity from its proximity to the capital and ports has been recognised by global real estate investors like Mount Park, Panattoni, Prologis, Uniper and most recently Arax. UK investors like Bericote, Chancerygate, Clearbell, Goya, Tritax and Wrenbridge all have schemes underway.

Just as couples and families have migrated from London over the past 20 years to fill Kent and Medway's newly built homes (Source: Savills), businesses have relocated as well. London has lost 24% of employment land to housing over the last 20 years (Industrial Land Commission, 2022). That is 5.7 million ft² (530,000m²) of industrial space given to largely residential use since 2011 (Savills, 2022).

Most of those employers are now operating in areas around the M25, especially on the Thames Estuary. Industrial vacancy rates are at record lows; driving Kent's employment land values to match residential and in some areas, doubling it. Since 2017, the average land price for industrial land has increased by 175% (Savills, 2022). The markets that have experienced the most significant growth in land values are east of London and in south Essex and north Kent, where populations and jobs are set to also increase by the highest margins.

Demand for industrial properties remains high. As developer Chancerygate said recently "There continues to be significant demand within Kent for sustainable Grade A urban logistics space in strategic, highly accessible locations. The rate of forward sales at Sidcup Logistics Park is proof of this." (Insider Media, 2022).

The Locate in Kent (LiK) Property Portal handled almost 79,000 property searches and registered over 21,000 new users to access the site in the year to 31 July 2022. Each user typically looks at 5 properties. Half of the property searches were for industrial space or employment development

land. The outcome, 316 property enquiries generated and distributed directly to agents.

Currently, Locate in Kent's active pipeline has 132 employers with requirements for industrial space. The mean requirement is 34,300ft² (3,200m²). However, deals completed in the region have fallen in the year to 31 July 2022 due to a shortage of suitable space. The number of industrial properties being marketed in the region has reduced by 22.5% over 3 years, from 1,156 in 2019/20 and 1,050 in 2020/21 to 896 in 2021/22.



Panattoni Park Aylesford: DHL building in the foreground, progress on the new Bellingham Way, plus (L-R) Fowler Welch and Evri in the background.

CREDIT: PANATTONI

According to EGi data, there were 157 industrial lease deals in Kent and 14 sales in the year to 31 July 2022. This is 25% down on the same period the year before, 171 deals over 227. The average deal size to 31 July 22 was 18,396ft² (1,709m²) for letting deals and 6,783ft² (630m²) for sales deals.

There are two principal uses and tenures for industrial demand in Kent; logistics want leased properties and manufacturing facilities require freehold.

The logic of logistics

The fundamentals of the warehouse property sector remain strong. Firstly, as LiK charts show, underlying demand and under supply means the market will remain buoyant. Research shows the UK vacancy rate of industrial and logistics real estate is just 5% and it has been falling since 2010 when it stood at 15.4% and is lower in Kent (Statista, 2022). Despite the cost of construction increasing and start to practical completion taking longer due to supply chain issues; rents show no sign of going the other way.

Secondly, with plenty of capital looking for a home and investors needing predictable returns; logistics presents investors with an inflation hedge. Rent reviews are the best way to maximise returns in a high demand/low supply market, yet anniversary inflation linked increases can just as effectively lock in landlords and tenants to sustain capital provider's yields over 20-year periods to offset inflation.

In any case, the cost of rent is less than 5% of the cost of operating a logistics operation, with salaries, road costs and energy representing more like 85%. Location is such an important factor supporting Kent's appeal. So, it is no surprise Knight Frank's Logistics Market Outlook shows that 39.7% of the UK All Balanced Property Fund Index is invested in the industrial sector in Q4 2021, up from 33.2% in Q4 2020 and from just 16.4% nine years ago (Knight Frank, 2022). Industrial and logistics assets are set to continue to outperform all other real estate sectors.

Thirdly, despite inflation rising since early 2021, consumers continue to shop. It could be argued that consumers facing the increased cost of living will turn to online shopping more to find better prices. Equally, given the choice of retail space or warehouses, warehouse distribution offers retailers a more responsive lower cost model and stock accordingly. Especially well located and well-designed facilities.

Retailers need the capacity to hold large volumes of stock and not large amounts of retail space. CBRE predict there is demand for another 59 million ft² (5.5 million m²) of logistics space until 2025 just to meet growing online sales demand (CBRE, 2021).

Online retail is forecast to reach 35% of all shopping by 2025 (Mastercard, 2022) against the backdrop of the Bank of England's warning that a UK recession will begin in the fourth quarter of 2022 and last all the way through 2023. Combined with the population of London, set to increase to 9.7 million by mid-2024, the need for good quality warehouse space in Kent is likely set to increase even further.

The British Property Federation, tenuously estimate 69ft² (6.5m²) of warehouse space is required for every new home built. Multiply that by the million new homes set out in combined local plans for London and the South East over the next ten years and you get to a very big number for warehouse space needed.



A new 39,000ft² industrial building, pre-let to Mattressnextday Limited, at Joseph Wilson Industrial Estate, Whitstable.

CREDIT: GEORGE WILSON DEVELOPMENTS

Planning consents for industrial classes – year on year to 31 July 2018-2022

District	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	Total
Ashford	18	14	33	24	89
Canterbury	19	20	11	16	66
Dartford	10	11	11	17	49
Dover	8	10	17	17	52
Folkestone & Hythe	5	6	8	11	30
Gravesham	8	14	1	6	29
Maidstone	25	14	16	24	79
Medway	6	8	8	10	32
Sevenoaks	18	16	19	19	72
Swale	15	15	4	16	50
Thanet	17	1	15	8	41
Tonbridge & Malling	15	23	15	16	69
Tunbridge Wells	19	13	12	12	56
Total	183	165	170	196	714

Source: EG Radius Data Exchange

Inward Investment and Sector Focus

Continued

Future expectations: changing domestic manufacturing strategies

The pandemic accelerated onshoring to present a genuine opportunity for wholesale industry transformation leading to demand for more industrial space from Kent's makers.

The UK is the 9th largest manufacturing economy in the world and the 10th highest exporting economy by value. Much of UK manufacturing is based on importing raw material and smaller parts to combine for higher value exports. Think automotive, pharmaceuticals, fashion and the machines used in factories to make more things.

The South East region has the UK's largest concentration of manufacturing facilities with some 285,000 people working in the sector. In Kent we are at the forefront of food processing, construction supply chain and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturing sectors (Make UK, 2022).

As with other global mega trends, the pandemic accelerated change that was already underway in this sector. Currency fluctuations as the Global Financial Crisis is unwound, the trebling of shipping costs from China, Brexit, the infamous Suez Canal blockage and industry recognising the value of Just in Time, over low cost, has all contributed to manufacture growth in Kent. Not necessarily in the number of factories, but in the amount and value of work no longer subcontracted offshore.

The Brexit and pandemic combination delivered net EU emigration from the UK for the first time in twenty years. Just as factories want to grow, there are fewer people to work in them. The result is record capital investment in automated capacity. According to Make UK, the latest available figures show the UK invested over £31bn (US\$35bn) in manufacturing – the classic economic move to swap labour for capital (Make UK, 2022).

Interest rate increases could slow investment growth, but we expect this to be offset by the sheer scale of underlying demand and the rush to spend before the 130% corporation tax Super Deduction ends in March 2023.

As manufacturers replace people for machines to onshore, they need space for their new kit and to hold more pre-production materials. Unlike logistics that has constant cashflow, manufacturing is a less liquid enterprise. Orders don't always come at a steady rate and investment decisions and orders can take years to secure and fulfil. The business model and balance sheets of manufacturers don't lend themselves to 20-year leases – they cannot easily close and move to a nearby box due to an unfavourable rent review. Manufacturers need freehold.

Kent's place in this future

Kent is the destination of choice for manufacturers in the South East.

Firstly, it is adjacent to one of the greatest and most global cities in the world, London, and is the point where the European Single Market meets the UK. Dover alone handles around a sixth of all UK cargo vessel arrivals each year and over £100bn (US\$113bn) of trade in goods passes through the port each year (Port of Dover, 2022).

Secondly, there are the forthcoming and very significant infrastructure investments. £26bn (US\$29.5bn) to build the Lower Thames Crossing and £500m (US\$566.5m) private investment in reopening Manston as an international aviation freight hub, plus resolving the planning uncertainty for the London Resort that could unlock £8bn (US\$9.06bn) and create some thousands of new jobs over the next five years.

Thirdly, Housing Infrastructure Funding is enabling development. HIF has enabled junction improvements on the A2/M2 at Ebbsfleet and Sittingbourne that will unlock more potential, especially for some hard-to-reach

Kent industrial availability – year on year by number of sites 31st July 2018-2022

District	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Ashford	172	153	139	119
Canterbury	60	77	87	64
Dartford	85	81	102	78
Dover	25	25	20	21
Folkestone & Hythe	57	72	43	32
Gravesham	23	22	28	30
Maidstone	108	158	126	110
Medway	142	137	136	131
Sevenoaks	56	73	71	47
Swale	76	77	82	77
Thanet	72	101	55	49
Tonbridge & Malling	117	149	129	103
Tunbridge Wells	37	46	46	48
Total	1,030	1,171	1,064	909

Source: Evolutive

investment opportunity areas like the Isle of Sheppey. Medway's £170m investment (US\$192.5bn) on the Hoo Peninsula includes road improvements and a rail connection to Gravesend that is just 22 minutes from London on the UK's only operational High Speed train service.

Register for more Kent and Medway market insight delivered to your inbox quarterly from Locate in Kent here:
www.locateinkent.com/property-newsletter



CREDIT: GORDON YOUNG

Construction nearing completion at LOC8, Maidstone.

Locate in Kent property portal searches

1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022

Top 3 searches:

1. /Property/Search/all-of-kent/Industrial – **4,851 searches**
2. /Property/Search/east-kent/Industrial – **2388 searches**

Searches ranked by location:

1. All of Kent – **40,230**
2. East Kent – **16,118**
3. North Kent – **16,070**
4. West Kent – **3,917**
5. Medway only – **1,912**

Searches ranked by use type:

1. Industrial – **57,551**
2. Other – **13,891**
3. Land – **13,889**
4. Co-working – **3,043**

Source: Locate in Kent

Kent industrial lettings by district – year on year 31st July 2018-2022

District	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	Total
Ashford	13	16	48	17	94
Canterbury	5	5	3	3	16
Dartford	20	11	17	22	70
Dover	4	1	1	4	10
Folkestone & Hythe	10	1	6	2	19
Gravesham	11	3	4	4	22
Maidstone	29	26	20	15	90
Medway	43	28	36	30	137
Sevenoaks	15	8	4	3	30
Swale	32	12	19	15	78
Thanet	4	11	2	2	19
Tonbridge & Malling	28	19	29	30	106
Tunbridge Wells	13	5	8	10	36
Total	227	146	197	157	727

Source: EG Radius Data Exchange

Kent Growth Space Initiative

Join Locate in Kent in the 'Big Conversation' on growing Kent's employment space

What is the Kent Growth Space Initiative?

Allocating land use between competing and sometimes conflicting uses to secure rational and orderly development of land must be one of the most complicated challenges we face to unlock economic growth in Kent and Medway. Ensuring sustainable development happens in an environmentally sound manner compounds the challenge further but must be at the core of our decision making.

The Kent Growth Space Initiative, led by Locate in Kent, will start to address these challenges through dialogue to identify employment land and fulfil unmet building demand. It will promote a 'Big Conversation' between:

- Investors
- Employers/Occupiers
- Agents
- Developers
- Landowners
- Local and national government

Like any community wide conversation, it will include groups sharing ideas on new approaches and making breakthroughs to meet common needs alongside individual requirements to meet specific needs.

The Big Conversation aims to:

- Prioritise land and premises infrastructure and fulfil the provision of modern, fit for purpose space;
- Raise the profile of the importance of employment land uses within our communities and develop a pipeline of new schemes;
- Build a 'community of interest' across the public and private sector to act as advocates and share qualitative and quantitative insight;

- Respond to opportunities in an agile manner based on respected sources of local intelligence.

Invitation from Locate in Kent

Kent's local planning authorities, through KCC and Locate in Kent's Housing and Development Group, welcome this dialogue. This group wish to establish a complete picture of employment land needs and opportunities with you. We are continually working to understand better how we can provide support to bring specific schemes forward to address market imbalances. Hearing the 'occupier voice' is paramount and this recognises that demand does not always receive the level of attention it deserves. We know that demand does not always fit into traditional warehousing, manufacturing, industrial or office asset classes.

We expect engagement will come through developers, land agents and promoters, as well as employers, to

unlock projects that will ignite economic growth through employment property investment.

How to get involved

If you are working to bring forward more employment space, either directly or indirectly and regardless of where you are based now, join in now and at any time. Our initial focus is to better understand occupier requirements and demand, including the type of new facilities required and how legacy properties and sites can be upgraded or repurposed. We know there is more work to do.

Just some reasons to get involved:

- You have a site for allocation in a forthcoming local plan;
- You have an opportunity for rural diversification that can meet the needs of an occupier but with legal or planning constraints;

The Big Conversation: timetable

Conversation stages

By when

Announce the Big Conversation at the launch of the Kent Property Market Report 2022	8 November 2022
Compile a register of interested individuals/companies/organisations	November/December 2022
Survey sector views	January to March 2023
Initial findings and Kent Conference	spring 2023
Full reporting	autumn 2023



A 12,500ft² industrial building, pre-let to The Luna Cinema, at Plumpudding Lane, Dargate.

CREDIT: GEORGE WILSON DEVELOPMENTS



11 Applegarth Drive, Questor, Dartford.

- You have ideas how local government or statutory consultees can enable your scheme sooner;
- You are aware of how public sector land and property assets can be used for the delivery of business space;
- You are being affected by the limited availability of freehold property where bespoke, resilient space is required;
- You know of legislative, fiscal, or other 'freedoms and flexibilities' which could unlock delivery of new business space;
- You have solutions such as Modern Methods of Construction and energy efficiency/decarbonisation measures that would reduce occupier costs or provide good practice models.

What comes next

Real estate professionals know the benefit of a rich source of market insight. This is your opportunity to share in the Kent and Medway 'Big Conversation' on market performance. Remember, the Kent Growth Space Initiative aims to unlock existing property and potential growth for Kent businesses through property.

In addition to providing practical support for specific projects, we are carrying out surveys to capture insight and collecting data on demand and supply. We intend to report our initial findings in spring 2023 with a more comprehensive report to guide local policies in autumn 2023.

Registration is now open with Locate in Kent, the inward investment agency for Kent

www.locateinkent.com/big-conversation



Proposal for Newtown Works, Ashford.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

North Kent

DARTFORD

The borough of Dartford is in the heart of the Thames Estuary growth area at a pivotal point between Greater London, Kent and Essex. It has excellent connections to central London, the South East and UK and the continent via the strategic road and rail network. The intersection of the A2 and M25 and the Dartford Crossing provides a unique locational advantage to attract investment interest and drive growth. As a well-placed location, Dartford station is very well used and will continue to thrive with the Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) services at Abbey Wood to Canary Wharf, the West End and Heathrow. Abbey Wood is just one stop and 12-minutes away by train with residents closer than ever before to the London Underground – the first Elizabeth Line services opened in May 2022.

Latest Census data confirms that Dartford has one of the fastest growing populations in England (20.0% increase 2011-2021). Economic indicators highlight the strong economy, with Dartford in the top five percent in terms of employment and in the top twenty percent for GVA per head, workplace earnings and job density.

Improvements to the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions on the A2 are complete. Improvements will serve demand from major development at Ebbsfleet Garden City: the Whitecliff site (formerly Eastern Quarry), Ebbsfleet Green, Ebbsfleet International Station and the proposed large mixed-use site at Ebbsfleet Central. It will also ease access to Bluewater shopping centre. The area will also benefit from the upgrade to the national road network that will occur with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing to relieve the Dartford Crossing and increase the resilience of the local road system.

Dartford town centre

Progress has been made in taking forward private and public investment. Dartford Town Centre Framework sets a high standard of development, identifying improvements to accessibility and environment. Around 5,000 new homes are planned which will significantly support the future vibrancy of the town. These are starting to come forward creating increased spend in the town and demand for a different offer. Private investment on key sites is being complemented by £12m of public funding for transport and public realm improvements. This increased to £18m with the addition of s106 contributions, community infrastructure funding and council funding in order to extend the public realm and transport improvements to all key streets in the town:

- A much enhanced and pedestrian-friendly new square for the town has been created linking the High Street with Central Park. This delivers an enhanced setting for new residential and commercial development under construction as well as providing a great new space for town centre events;
- Improvements to the High Street are underway including new granite paving, lighting and landscaping;
- Further phases of work to ease movement into the town centre will commence later this year with phase three public realm improvements and dedicated cycle routes along Hythe Street in the design stage.



Proposal for mixed use development of up to four retail units and 14 apartments near Central Square, Dartford.

These works complement the recent regeneration of the Acacia site, at the northern end of Central Park. The site now has a number of refurbished buildings offering opportunities for the leisure and hospitality offer in the town, much improved car parking and significant improvements to the public realm.

Residential development immediately north of the town centre at the award-winning Langley Square and Phoenix Quarter sites is complete. There is strong developer interest and further sites are expected to be brought forward. South of the town centre, at Lowfield Street, construction is well underway, with approximately 150 homes already occupied. The development, known as 'Copperhouse Green' comprises 16,146ft² (1,500m²) of retail and community space, a micro-brewery and café facing on to the new public square. The proposal will provide 711 homes in total and support the continued rejuvenation of the town centre.

Economy

Strong economic development interest in Dartford was highlighted by the establishment of a state-of-the-art distribution facility for Amazon, with floorspace in excess of 2,152,782ft² (200,000m²), on the former Littlebrook Power Station site. This has been in operation for a year now and the Fastrack rapid bus service has been extended to serve the development in order to support reduced car usage by employees.

The supply and take-up of new business and industrial premises is still growing rapidly. Major new units have been recently completed at key locations such as The Bridge and Questor Industrial Estate and construction activity continues for additional space at Crossways, The Bridge and Littlebrook Power Station site. Opportunities in the borough are supported by an up-to-date Local Plan guiding development, maintaining a consistent future 5-year housing land supply and a well-developed Infrastructure Plan. A new Local Plan was submitted for consideration by the Planning Inspectorate in late 2021 and is undergoing examination. Funding mechanisms, including CIL, are in place to bring forward the infrastructure required to support new development.

For further information:

www.dartford.gov.uk/policy-1/planning-policy

GRAVESHAM

Located at the heart of the Thames Estuary growth area, Gravesham is poised to benefit from major infrastructure, educational and regeneration projects. In the last year, a number of new-build schemes have either been completed or are in the advanced stages of construction.

Looking forward, a Levelling Up Fund bid has been submitted by the council, for a major, mixed-use regeneration scheme in Gravesend town centre, close to the riverside. Proposals are also being developed for a further 1,500 homes at Gravesend's riverside canal basin, accompanied by commercial space such as the 258,000ft² (23,967m²) light industrial and warehousing scheme at Higham.

High Speed One services direct to Kings Cross St Pancras in 23 minutes and Stratford in 17 minutes, further boost the location proposition for Kent's closest town to London by journey time – comparable to Underground Zones Three and Four. Proposals to extend Crossrail to neighbouring Ebbsfleet are also being consulted on.

Placemaking

The council and Reef Group continue to deliver progress on a major mixed-use transformation of Gravesend Riverside and town centre.

The Charter is the first phase of the wider masterplan for Gravesend town centre and is currently being built out by Gravesham Borough Council and development partners, Reef Group. Overlooking the Thames from the heart of Gravesend, the scheme of 242 new homes will provide design-led apartment living. An improved network of routes integrate with the neighbouring Gravesend Borough Market Hall and riverside.

A Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid was submitted to central government in the summer which is intended to enable the delivery of St George's Square. The project is part of a place-led vision for Gravesham Riverside and a vibrant town centre. The mixed-use development comprises a flagship civic and cultural hub, 146 homes, community space and café's, hotel and high-quality public realm. LUF investment is intended to unlock the delivery of a new Civic Centre and lever in the place benefits of the wider residential-led scheme and regeneration of the existing Civic Centre site. St. George's Square will also support the council's pledge to be



Trade City: A new scheme of six light industrial warehousing/trade units on the outskirts of Gravesend.

operationally net zero by 2030 and deliver associated benefits such as revitalising the local day/night economy and assisting wider regeneration through boosting developer confidence.

A key gateway site to Gravesend's Heritage Quarter, the former Woolworth building at 1-2 King Street, is also in the advanced stages of redevelopment, to provide a mix of retail and leisure space, with 35 new residential units being provided.

The St George's Creative Hub opened in Gravesend in December 2021, as part of the ongoing evolution of the St George's Centre, to provide a wider cultural and leisure offer alongside its established retail offer. Funded by the Getting Building Fund and the council, the centre provides a total of 3,500ft² (325m²) of gallery and co-working space overlooking a public square. The flexible gallery space accommodates exhibitions, creative learning activity and events. A café area and creative co-working space and meeting room on the first floor, complete the accommodation.

In partnership with Creative Estuary, a review of 'creative assets' has identified potential new workspace attractive to the creative & digital industries. An informal collaboration with Kent County Council and Gravesham Borough Council is considering new ways to provide flexible workspace for micro and creative businesses, with expressions of interest also being invited from owners and agents who may have suitable space and would like to learn more about the initiative.

Business space and skills training

A new 37,000ft² (3,437m²) scheme of six light industrial/warehousing/trade units opened at Trade City in the second half of 2021, adjacent to the A2 and a development of 400 new homes on the outskirts of Gravesend.

Nuralite Business Park in Higham is a long-established rural business location where planning was granted in December 2021 for a 258,000ft² (23,970m²) light industrial and warehousing scheme which is due to be progressed in phases and is likely to be available for occupation from 2023.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Groundwork contractors and civil engineers, O'Halloran & O'Brien, have opened the OHOB Academy in a purpose-built construction training facility adjacent to their site in east Gravesend. It comprises a mix of classrooms, a simulator and practical training zones which recreate the progressive stages of a typical project. In total, more than 1,000 NVQs have been commissioned as well as short courses, work experience and pre-employment training.

Northfleet School for Girls completed an extension to its sixth-form block in 2022, adding dedicated science laboratories in response to a fast-rising school roll and in September, an even larger development was opened at Saint George's Church of England secondary school. Alongside a new sixth form centre, the purpose-built building provides four new music practice rooms and a recording studio plus a fully equipped dance studio, café, study areas, presentation zones and IT facilities.

Gravesend Riverside

The award-winning Uber Boat by Thames Clippers plans to establish a long-term River Bus service from Gravesend in the next 2-3 years. This will be made possible by the council's upcoming sale of Gravesend's Town Pier to Uber Boat by Thames Clippers, to facilitate the expansion of the service further east and help support the growth of the Thames Estuary.

A resolution to grant planning consent for a major residential-led mixed use development, Albion Waterside, is due to unlock a new Thameside neighbourhood in Milton to the east of Gravesend. The Joseph Homes scheme has been designed by a team including JTP architects and Beispiel and seeks to tap into the shift to remote working and the '15-minute' city concept.

Once completed the scheme will provide 1,500 new homes to ambitious LiveWell standards, 48,438ft² (4,500m²)



The social housing at Constable Road has been shortlisted for the Inside Housing Development Awards 2022.

of commercial space likely to generate 172 jobs and an estimated £4-6.5m in GVA. Two thirds of the site will be a series of public gardens around the reinstated canal, east of the adjacent harbour basin.

The commercial element builds on Kent's food and drink heritage. The ground plane of Albion Waterside will host a series of shops, restaurants and production spaces that support local sectors. Centred around the food production, the non-residential units will accommodate small food, craft and production businesses such as chocolatiers, small batch brewers, distillers and cheese makers. Units will enable the combination of production space, retail frontage, servicing and logistics, within the heart of the development.

Housing regeneration new build programme

The council's brand-new development of seven homes at Rembrandt and Constable Road, built by Westridge Construction Ltd, completed in May 2022. The homes are part of Gravesend's wider Housing Regeneration New Build Programme to deliver new social housing. This site was identified as part of a feasibility study carried out with architects, bptw.

Built to meet the high standards of building regulations Part M4(2), the homes are accessible and include adaptable bungalows with parking, private gardens and communal play area shared with the neighbouring community.

For further information:

Economic.development@gravesham.gov.uk

MAIDSTONE Business capital of Kent

The county town is located in the centre of Kent surrounded by beautiful rural countryside. A thriving hub, home to over 8,000 businesses from large multinationals and recognisable main chains to niche independents and voted in the top 10 most entrepreneurial towns in the UK. (Source: GoSuperscript Survey 2022)

High Speed One (HS1) connects the town to St. Pancras London in less than an hour and has direct railway services to Charing Cross and Victoria. With four junctions on the M20, easy access to London airports, International train services from Ebbsfleet and Ashford, Dover and Tilbury Ports and Eurotunnel services, make it a perfect business location for both domestic and overseas markets.

Investors, businesses, young professionals and families are being attracted to the area by competitive office and industrial rents, house prices, the area's outstanding schools and cultural and leisure offer. Maidstone is recognised as the most popular town to move to in Kent (Office of National Statistics 2022).

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) wants to see business thrive but equally protect and invest in the beauty of the area for a healthy work life balance. Four parks were recently awarded Green Flags and there are 60 open spaces across the borough. A £4.3m investment is being made in the 450 acre (182ha) Mote Park to deliver a new café and visitor centre.

Key to the council's investments is the renaissance of the town centre. A new Town Centre Strategy focussed on bringing forward social, economic and environmental infrastructure as part of a plan to promote investment in jobs and homes, together with a range of retail, leisure, arts and cultural facilities is being developed.

Harnessing demand from residents for leisure and tourism following the pandemic, forms a key part of the council's Economic Development Strategy. A key focus is to enhance the town centre and central to this are the plans Balfour Winery are taking forward for the Archbishop's Palace. Currently at planning stage, aspirations are to develop the site into a boutique hotel, wedding venue, and training centre for wine excellence, while keeping this historic site open to the public.

The developers of Len House, a grade 2 listed building near to Archbishop's Palace are bringing forward a mixed-use site of leisure and residential uses that will further enhance this part of the town.

Maidstone town centre investments

MBC continues to invest in the borough with new commercial, residential, leisure, amenity and infrastructure schemes. Investments include the £7.07m purchase of Maidstone House, already council offices, where there are plans to refurbish the building. It is also home to The Business Terrace, which offers flexible workspace, support to new and growing businesses and office space for a number of more established independent companies.

Lockmeadow

Following the council's acquisition of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex in 2019, MBC has continued to invest in the centre in order to ensure it fulfils its purpose of helping to make Maidstone a thriving place. A food hall, Love Food @ Lockmeadow opened in late 2021, offering globally inspired street food from local independent businesses.

Maidstone Innovation Centre

Based at the Kent Medical Campus near Junction 7 of the M20 where health, science and education come together, the £14.5m joint investment by MBC and the European Regional Development Fund has built the new Maidstone Innovation Centre. It offers 30,000ft² (2,787m²) of space dedicated to



Love Food@ Lockmeadow opened late 2021.

the growth of the MedTech & science sector. The centre is expected to support over 270 jobs and create £120m added GVA over the first 10 years. Opened in December 2021 the centre is receiving strong interest and is at 47% occupancy – ahead of projected occupancy levels.

For further information:

www.kentmedicalcampus.com

www.maidstoneinnovationcentre.co.uk

Kent Medical Campus

A £14.6m road improvement scheme adjacent to the site led by Kent County Council, is due to start in autumn 2022. The proposed scheme aims to accommodate increased traffic volume by signalling the A249 Bearsted Road roundabout and enlarging the New Cut Road roundabout and road widening between the two. Additional smart technology will help ease traffic congestion and will lead to improved traffic flow and journey time. The scheme is funded through developer contributions and £9.4m from the National Productivity Investment Fund. Additional improvements are planned for the signalisation of M20 Junction 7.

Clearbell Property Partners' £5m development of a 33 acre (13ha) greenfield site off M20 Junction 8 in 2019 is now near completion and is receiving strong interest from the market. The site, LOC8, is designed to be a new business destination for Kent. As Maidstone's premier commercial park it will have



New café and park management building at Mote Park, Maidstone.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

industrial space from 5,4365 – 36,404ft², logistics space from 40,289 – 106,240ft² and office space from 11,840 – 17,179ft².

The scheme is proving attractive to occupiers with:

- The closest location to a major motorway junction in Kent;
- Flexible Grade A logistics, industrial and office opportunities;
- High quality architecture, landscaping and green amenity spaces;
- High profile location to serve into London and Europe.

The spaces at LOC8 have been designed not only for functionality and durability but also to protect nature and enhance sustainability. The specification includes the latest technologies to minimise material, energy and water use, reduce CO² emissions as well as extensive planting and protected areas for biodiversity. LOC8 will welcome its first occupiers by the end of 2022.

Signed up occupiers include, Swiss based Zehnder Group, who have confirmed taking on a 45,275ft² (4,181m²) unit in their move to the site and Va Qtec, a dynamic high-tech company pioneering the development of innovative insulation solutions since 2001 with a 40,293ft² (3,743m²) unit.

For further information:

<https://loc8maidstone.co.uk/>

Genco Construction Services have recently completed and occupied their new 11,800ft² (1,096m²) office complex near to the M20 at Junction 8. The council granted permission for amendments to a previous planning permission in order to allow more floorspace, increased flexibility and the opportunity to create space for sub-letting.

Housing

Maidstone Borough Council's David Burton expressed the ambition of 1,000 affordable homes to be built in the

borough. Already completed is the refurbishment of Trinity Place in the town centre, and the acquisition of the former Springfield Library and Maidstone East sites which together will provide in excess of 350 new homes.

Medway Hospital

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust serve a population of over half a million with significant future population growth expected. Maidstone Hospital is a key element of the Trusts' infrastructure and has secured over £30m of Government funding under the Build Back Better health programme to develop a new operating theatre complex. The 50,000ft² (4,645m²) facility will introduce innovative technologies through what is known as Barn Theatres, which use air curtains rather than physical subdivisions to significantly improve elective activity and quality of care. Future proofing will include robotic capabilities and four new operating theatres and two additional wards. Accelerated delivery will be achieved through off-site Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) modules.

Further Education

Appointed as one of eight national skills trail blazers, MidKent and North Kent College secured £5.6m of Government funding in 2021 to develop a new 'net zero skills factory' offering both practical and theoretical skills in green construction technologies. Continuing the college's ambition to bring business and education close together, the factory will work closely with local businesses to target skills and training. Located at the Maidstone Campus, the unit aims to become carbon net zero through a combination of initial build and retrofit and will be based upon recycled pre-fabricated modules.

Maidstone Studios

The new digital hub at the studios is part of the Hi3 Network Partnership, a collaboration between Maidstone Studios, Screen South, Canterbury Christ Church University, Creative Folkestone and London Southbank University. The Hub secured investment from the European Regional Development Fund to provide space, facilities, opportunities and expertise to support creative innovators to develop ideas and practice and helping bring together the creative industries network within the borough.

For further information:

Chris Inwood, Economic Development Manager
chrisinwood@maidstone.gov.uk
www.businessinmaidstone.co.uk

MEDWAY

Innovation Park Medway (IPM)

Innovation Park Medway will offer over 600,000ft² (circa 60,000m²) of high quality, innovative commercial space in a prime location near Junction 3 of the M2. It will attract high value, knowledge-intensive businesses looking to grow and benefit from access to world-class research and development and highly skilled talent through the cluster of Kent and Medway based universities. The development will help to create 3,000 jobs, within a unique, mixed business environment with 'Google' style collaboration hubs.

IPM was awarded £4.4m from the Local Growth Fund in 2016 for improvements to airport infrastructure, these works are now complete. As part of these works the second runway was closed to release valuable commercial development land. A further award of £3.7m was made through the Local Growth Fund for access roads and utilities infrastructure on the first phase of the site, with subsequent awards of £1.5m from Growing Places Fund to deliver the second phase, and £778,000 from Getting Building Fund towards the Runway Park public realm. The main infrastructure work on the southern site is now complete, including the delivery of drainage, power and utilities and two office plots are now available. The car park design for this site is now in progress. Infrastructure work is also now underway on the northern site. The work is expected to be completed in spring 2023. When finished, a further 28 office plots will be made available.

Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council adopted Local Development Orders (LDOs) to offer streamlined planning for businesses that locate to the site. All plots are available to buy or lease via the fast-track planning process – ideal for fast-growing businesses. The site also benefits from Enterprise Zone status, maximising the opportunity to reinvest business rates into the IPM for 25 years, contributing to UK productivity and the quicker realisation of business rate yields. These are important for future local authority income streams, particularly with Business Rate Retention. This will accelerate delivery of high GVA jobs. The council are actively marketing the site, to attract companies looking to self-build custom premises – subject to site design code compliance but made easier through the LDO process.

To express an interest in the site email :

ipm@harrisons.property or sam.vyas@avisonyoung.com



Proposal for Innovation Park Medway (southern side view).

Medway Development Company

Medway Council has bold and ambitious plans to regenerate and revitalise its urban areas and has therefore created Medway Development Company Ltd. (MDC) to deliver high quality developments and support its regeneration initiatives. The MDC projects continue to progress well and are outlined in more detail below.

Chatham Waterfront

This high-quality, mixed-use development at the Chatham Waterfront site will act as a driver for further regeneration in the area. The focus has been to deliver an exemplar scheme and plans include 182 new homes, new commercial spaces for cafés, restaurants, and offices alongside a new public realm to create a vibrant centre for Chatham. The stunning flagship project forms part of a multi-million pound revamp of Chatham and is designed to offer the very best of contemporary living, with luxury fittings and high spec appliances. Best of all, the project includes the innovative 'First Homes' initiative offering a 30% discount to first time buyers.

Chatham is undergoing an astonishing revival and demand is expected to be high for the luxury homes which will be released in phases from 2022 to spring 2023.

White Road

The development features twenty, two-bedroom affordable family homes which have transformed the local area, reducing anti-social behaviour and raising the standard of affordable housing. The houses are energy efficient with solar voltaic panels to generate electricity and are designed to maximise light into the homes.

The scheme has set a high benchmark in terms of affordable housing and we are thrilled to announce that the project has won the Residential Major – 11 to 49 units category at this year's Medway Design and Regeneration Awards. The judges applauded "the aspirations of the scheme, delivering 100% affordable housing on a difficult site, highlighting the benefits of modular housing.

This development shows how working closely with the local community at a difficult site can be transformed to provide much needed affordable housing as well as many benefits for the community. White Road has also been recognised and celebrated by various award bodies in construction and local government:

- Winner – Structural Timber Awards 2021 – 'Social Housing Project of the Year' category;
- Winner – Constructing Excellence SECBE Awards 2021 – 'Offsite' category;
- Shortlisted – Explore Offsite Awards 2021 – 'Best use of Timber Technology' and 'Social Housing Project of the Year';
- Shortlisted – LGC Awards 2021 – Best Housing Scheme.

Garrison Point

There is no better example of regeneration than the Garrison Point scheme, a leafy development of 115 one and two-bedroom apartments with prices starting at just £220,000.

A stone's throw from the centre of town, with its buzzing shops, river views and appealing lifestyle options, it's surrounded by history nestled in front of Fort Amherst, a historically significant defensive Napoleonic structure, providing a dramatic backdrop to this prestigious site. The development has a contemporary design and has been carefully developed to be sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area. Fort Amherst vegetation will be removed to reveal historic features and each luxury apartment has been designed to have far reaching views of the adjacent parkland and river.

Sales have been strong and this luxury scheme also offers the opportunity to purchase a home with a 30% discount under the 'First Homes' initiative. Works are nearing completion and sales are progressing well, with over 70% sold, three months before completion. The design approach has been led by careful brick detailing, to sit comfortably in its historical context.

Britton Farm KMPT fit out

MMDC was commissioned by the council to project manage the conversion of an empty supermarket premises into new office accommodation due to its detailed knowledge of the site through developing the adjacent residential scheme.

KMPT are part of the NHS and specialise in providing mental health services. The scheme was completed in May and KMPT are now operational within the newly refurbished building.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

The project is an excellent example of two public sector organisations working in collaboration, under the One Public Estate programme, which provided feasibility funding to review the viability of the project.

The conversion will accommodate 150 employees, allowing the NHS to vacate two other buildings. KMPT's presence in Gillingham is expected to significantly increase footfall for the High Street and have a positive impact for local businesses in this area.

Following the award of £1.99m Getting Building Fund investment in 2020, KMPT's offices will be joined by a Skills and Employability Hub, run by Medway Adult Education.

Britton Farm Residential

Britton Farm will provide 44 new homes with a modern and spacious design. This high-quality scheme forms part of wider regeneration initiatives being implemented in this area. Demolition has been completed and MDC is progressing the main construction phase.

Mountbatten House

MDC coordinated an application to develop Mountbatten House into high quality residential apartments and commercial spaces - now approved. This scheme will see an empty building brought back into use, creating homes in the town centre which will support the local economy. Planning permission was granted in 2021 and enabling works are currently in progress to plan for the main works to progress. The project will be delivered alongside a new public realm area with new restaurants to create a vibrant centre and a unique rooftop restaurant will offer spectacular views across Chatham and beyond.

Chatham Waters – Delivery progress 2020/2021

The £650m Chatham Waters development is situated on a



CREDIT: PEEL L&P

The £650m Chatham Waters development is situated on a unique waterfront location.

unique waterfront location, on the site of the former naval dockyard. Boasting unparalleled views across the Medway Estuary, the Peel L&P regeneration scheme is only a 40-minute train journey into Central London.

Over the last five years, Peel L&P have invested over £50m into the first few phases of development at Chatham Waters with a further £600m investment in the pipeline. The scheme has the potential to deliver circa 1.9 million ft² (177,000m²) of floorspace which is similar to the scale of Peel L&P's MediaCityUK development in Salford.

Consisting of residential, commercial, retail, leisure, and education, the dynamic 26 acre (10.5ha) destination is already home to a University Technical College, Marston's family restaurant, Asda Superstore, and extensive public realm. To date, approximately 500 new full-time jobs have been created at Chatham Waters.

Working with Medway Council, Peel L&P have created a masterplan to ensure that the regeneration of this former

brownfield site delivers a truly inspirational new destination that not only complements but enhances the surrounding area. The new development will form part of Natural England's Coastal Pathways scheme, opening up the waterfront of Chatham Waters for a public walkway and nature trail. Works will soon begin on further public realm for people to relax, socialise and unwind.

Medway Council – Rochester Riverside:

Following the start of construction in 2018, Rochester Riverside, Countryside and Hyde's £419m regeneration scheme on the banks of the River Medway is making swift progress, with the first residents having moved in during June 2019. A previously brownfield site, this exciting new riverside destination will provide 1,400 new homes, with 25% affordable, when fully complete in 2030. With the marketing suite, show apartment and two show homes now established, sales are progressing strongly on the remaining homes in the first phases of the development. Rochester Riverside is also providing a wealth of community facilities, including a new primary school, retail space, a hotel and over ten acres of

green, open space, helping to create a sustainable community at this landmark new development. These amenities are progressing quickly, with the new Travelodge hotel now open and the first commercial occupiers in occupation. The newly regenerated Salt Marsh Creek is now open to the public, while construction on the Rochester Riverside primary school began in the summer of 2021.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

There's been continuing progress in the development of proposals for Medway Council's Housing Infrastructure Fund. The £170m funding secured will enable the council to forward fund the physical transport and environmental infrastructure required to unlock potential new development on the Hoo Peninsula of 10,600 homes by 2037.

The HIF proposals are an important opportunity for Medway that will ensure a well-managed programme of works to provide the infrastructure needed to accommodate Medway's growth and economy, and which supports the government's housing targets.

The ambitious plans include major improvements to highways and new roads, a new train station and passenger service to Gravesend, that will provide an alternative mode of transport and access point on and off the peninsula, and proposals to create many new open spaces and areas for leisure, with new interconnecting walkways and cycle paths to residential, transportation and commercial hubs.

For further information about the HIF project:

medway.gov.uk/futurehoo

To express an interest in the IPM site:

ipm@harrisons.property or sam.vyas@avisonyoung.com

SWALE

Swale has seen continued delivery against long-term infrastructure improvements as well as new commercial development to aid economic recovery for the borough after the pandemic.

Highways England commenced preparation work in September 2021 and full construction work in January 2022 on improvements to Junction 5 M2 (Stockbury Interchange). This will include a new north-south flyover to provide the A249 with free-flowing movement, improved travel times and enhanced road safety. Contractors have been progressing the project with utility diversions, retaining walls and redirection of cables. It is scheduled to open in winter 2024. In addition, funding was secured for £38m via the Housing Infrastructure Fund for improvements to enable committed development in the area. Improvements at the Key Street junction and an additional bridge over the A249 at Grovehurst Junction will create a full gyratory to improve journey times for businesses



Rochester Riverside regeneration scheme will provide 1,400 new homes. Architect: bptw.

CREDIT: COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIPS

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

located on the major business parks in Sittingbourne. Both projects are expected to start in 2023, with completion in August 2024.

Speculative schemes, such as Precision 2 Business Park on Eurolink Sittingbourne, have provided much needed employment space across a range of sizes. Strong demand has buoyed investor confidence with new opportunities being sought for similar schemes.

GW Pharmaceuticals started construction at Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne on a new medical cannabis manufacturing facility. Jazz Pharmaceuticals is investing £75m in the project for completion by 2024. The facility will be approximately 67,000ft² (6,226m²) and aims to create 100 new jobs. Designed to support GW Pharmaceuticals' two existing regulatory-approved cannabis-based medicines and support future capacity for new medicines. The building will also include animal boxes for wildlife, minimal single-use plastics and more than 1,100 solar panels.

The Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust is working to repair and transform the Grade 2* listed Dockyard Church, at the entrance to the former Royal Dockyard, Isle of Sheppey. The £7.98m project is funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund and UK philanthropic trusts, foundations and individuals. The work has revealed the restored clock, which is a reinstatement of the original George Ledwell Taylor's neoclassical design of 1823. The roof construction has progressed, with five of the giant roof trusses carved into place. By autumn 2022, the project will deliver a new enterprise centre, community hub, heritage space and event's room.

A successful bid was made for £300,000 from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, and Swale Borough Council committed a further £1.3m to refurbish Masters House in Sheerness. It will create a social,



Restoration and conversion of the former Sheerness Dockyard Church.

community and business hub for use by local organisations and companies. By autumn 2022 it will deliver nine office suites, three meeting/conference spaces, a large function hall, kitchen and a breakout space.

In summer 2022 Swale Borough Council submitted a £20m bid to the government's Levelling Up Fund for the Sheerness Revival project to improve health, education, leisure and employment opportunities in Sheerness. It focussed on

the Beachfields area with an expanded health centre, and Sheppey College to extend provision for local young people and provide easier access to training and education. Studios at nearby Masters House will be converted into a creative workspace to support employment opportunities. New leisure activities will also be created at Beachfields including soft play, adventure golf, TAG active, a new café and outdoor gym. The funding will also go towards delivering public realm improvements from Sheerness train station to the high street and seafront to encourage visitors to explore and enjoy the town.

Homes England and Swale Borough Council have progressed infrastructure and land-raising and remediation works for the Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Project and are close to completion after an injection of over £6m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. The first phase of 100 homes is complete and as land is remediated and/or raised, phases two, three and four will enable completion.

The employment offer at Queenborough is also set to continue to grow, with permission recently granted for 102,063ft² (9,482m²) of new space and a range of high-quality business units adjacent to the A249. A Queenborough business, Olympic Glass, has also acquired a site and invested in improvements, which includes the prospect of further small business space being made available.

At major mixed-use developments in Faversham, Perry Court and Love Lane, housing development is largely complete. With significant employment land remaining, and well located in relation to the trunk road network, these sites provide key opportunities to deliver new employment space in the borough. A new 84-bed Premier Inn has already opened during the last year at Perry Court.

A new development of 48 high quality industrial units located on Thanet Way (A299) with access from both carriageways is now also well advanced. In terms of size, 41 of the units are proposed to be 1,900ft² (177m²) and 7 of the units at 2,325ft² (215m²).

For further information:
www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk

West Kent

SEVENOAKS

Sevenoaks is a positive place for business with a council committed to supporting the commercial and residential sector. The collaborative and supportive nature of the Sevenoaks district business community comes across strongly, with the district providing an environment where business survival rates and levels of productivity are high and there is a choice of business property with co-working spaces in town centre and rural locations. The district's entrepreneurial spirit, which along with affordable business rates and a supportive council, make it a compelling place to relocate, especially for those considering cutting costs by moving away from London.

Sevenoaks district remains one of the very best-connected areas in the county. With the M25 and M20 motorways and extensive rail lines, you can reach the capital in less than 30 minutes, seaports and airports are also within easy reach. It is home to some of the best schools in the country and is fortunate to have a highly trained and educated local workforce. The area offers work-life balance and is increasingly becoming the choice for those who want an attractive and desirable place to live, visit, work or invest.

As the commercial property market returns the district is in a strong position to recover and reap the benefits post-pandemic. Demand for high quality, modern business centres providing flexible office accommodation and support facilities remains strong and the council has plans to develop a wider strategy to identify further opportunities for business hubs in recognition of the trend towards more flexible and hybrid working.

The council has been allocated funding via the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and, over the next few years, will be developing plans to invest into the district's town centres. This will help to boost productivity and enhance employment opportunities by delivering real change to local communities, places and businesses.

Swanley

Currently an area of particular focus for the council, the town is just 26 minutes from London Victoria by rail and next to M25 Junction 3. The council is about to open its new

business hub, The Meeting Point, a short walk from Swanley's mainline train station. The project has been supported with funding from government's Getting Building Fund. It will bring new activity and footfall to Swanley town centre, whilst delivering significant environmental benefits and providing employment and housing within a building constructed to high environmental standards. The Meeting Point will provide co-working space and private offices based on flexible membership terms as well as events space and dedicated business support. This mixed-use development which includes seventeen new one and two bedroom flats, will have electric vehicle charging points, energy-saving air source heating, cycle facilities and a wildlife-friendly garden.

A significant proposed residential development for Swanley, subject to planning permission, is Bevan Place. The scheme proposals include 93 residential units of predominately one and two bedroom flats, retail frontage and a communal garden with vibrant green space, seating and a play area. The site is currently a public car park and an old working men's club.

Swanley has a new, £20m state-of-the art leisure centre at White Oak, which opened in February 2022 and boasts a 25m, six lane swimming pool, 100+ station gym, cycling studio and TAGactive, a game-based indoor obstacle course. Swanley's renovated train station also opened in 2021, part-funded by money secured by the council with support from the Darent Valley Community Rail Partnership

Sevenoaks Town Centre

Despite the national retail picture, the district's high streets, notably in Sevenoaks town, continue to buck the trend with growth in the independent retail and food/beverage sectors. The district is benefitting from recent public and private sector investment in new co-working spaces including the Lime Tree Work Shop, a vibrant co-working space for those looking for more than just a place to work and the Sevenoaks Business Hub, both based in Sevenoaks Town. In addition a community focussed rural workspace at Preston Farm just north of Sevenoaks, the 'Hatchery' is due to open late in 2023. This will offer a high-quality, flexible working environment for small businesses, freelancers and makers.

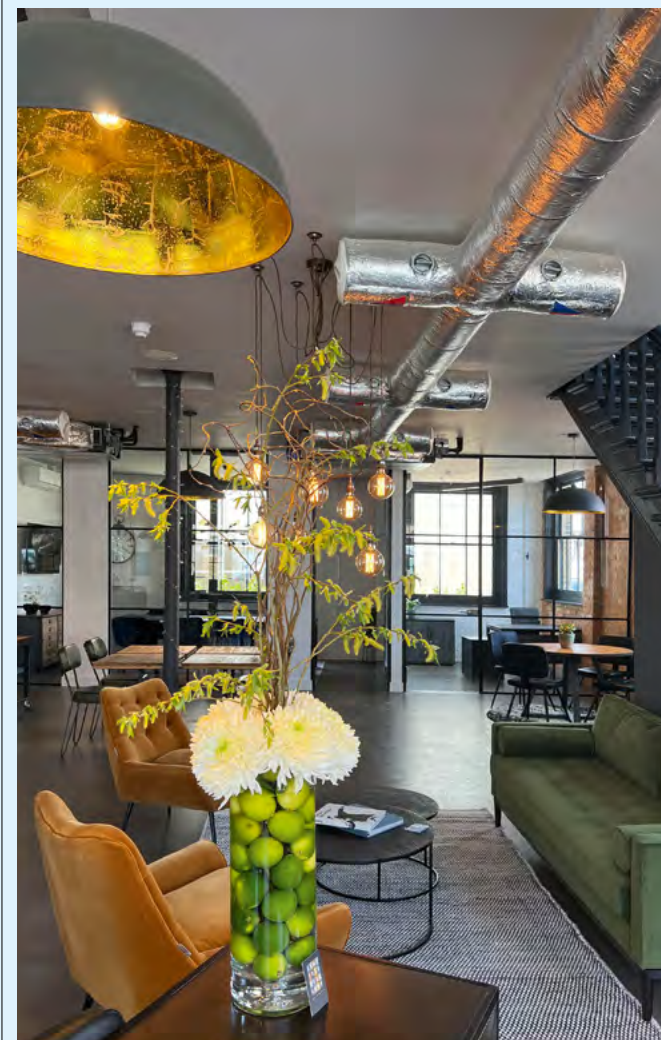
The council has a number of other residential schemes based in Edenbridge, which are currently in development or at the

appraisal stage including the provision of eleven two and three bedroom houses, new community car parks, a community shop and landscaping at Stangrove Estate and twenty five new homes and community facilities at Farmstead Drive.

For further information:

Economic Development and Property Team

www.business@sevenoaks.gov.uk



Lime Tree Work Shop, new co-working space in Sevenoaks.

CREDIT: LIME TREE WORKSHOP

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING

The council's Economic Recovery Strategy sets out a vision to "maximise the strengths of the local area to help create a resilient, dynamic and inclusive economy that fosters sustainable growth". In order to achieve this vision, the borough council has a number of priorities:

- Supporting town centres and helping independent retailers;
- Measures to help support people into employment;
- Promotion of the borough;
- Business support and finance;
- Enabling the delivery of key strategic investment projects.

New developments

NIAB East Malling

A new £11.3m GreenTech Hub for Advanced Horticulture was opened at in May 2022 (see photo on page 19). The Hub now provides the horticulture and viticulture industry with access to a new state-of-the-art research facility and includes specialist greenhouses, modern polytunnels, growth rooms and cold rooms. The facility was funded through UKRI's Strength in Places Fund, the SELEP Local Growth Fund and East Malling Trust.

Panattoni Park, Aylesford

Major logistics developer, Panattoni are progressing well with the construction of 1.9 million ft² of flexible grade-A industrial and logistics space at the former Aylesford Newsprint site. This 90acre site, close to M20 Junction 4 is a £180m investment in high quality sustainable industrial development, infrastructure, parking, landscaping and access, including a new £7m link road. The development is expected to be completed in 2023 and will create over 3,000 new jobs. DHL, Fowler Welch and Evri have secured leases on the site, with detailed discussions underway with other occupiers for the remainder of the space.

Tonbridge Trade Park

Work is nearing completion on the new £20m investment which will deliver 15 modern trade/industrial units. The scheme was developed and will be managed by Northwood Urban Logistics.

Arc Logistics Park near Snodland

The £25m investment was completed in late 2021, providing 125,000ft² (11,613m²) of industrial units along with two ancillary drive-thru facilities. New tenants on the site include Must Have Ideas and Swegon.

Royal British Legion Industries' Centenary Village, Aylesford

RBLI's new development will include:

- £8m investment in expert care and new facilities for the elderly;
- £12m investment in single person apartments and homes;
- £2m investment in community services and a community centre where wrap-around welfare services will be delivered with specialist partners.



Royal British Legion Industries' Centenary Village, Aylesford.

Phase 2 of the development comprises family homes, specially-adapted flats for injured veterans and an assisted-living block. Future plans include a community centre with a state-of-the-art gym and IT learning suite. It comprises 22 adapted apartments, 16 family homes and 24 assisted living apartments and was completed in July with a formal VIP opening planned for November 2022.

Peter's Village

An all-new rural community, built on the banks of the Medway between Snodland and Rochester and overlooked by the imposing heights of the Kent Downs. With the impressive new primary school now well-established, work has just completed on a new community centre comprising medical centre, community hall and shops.

Infrastructure

Supported through DEFRA, the Local Growth Fund and other partnership funding, work on increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (LFSA) and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme are being progressed. Having secured planning permission for the works to the LFSA, the Environment Agency secured the required ministerial approval to increase the maximum stored water level in September 2021. Works on the LFSA are currently scheduled to start in late 2022, with completion at the end of 2025.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Local Plan

The council hopes to adopt its new Local Plan in early 2023. The council published its Submission Local Plan in November 2021, ahead of examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The Local Plan examination was carried out between March – July 2022. The Plan sets out the council's proposed overall strategy and related site allocations for development in the borough up to 2038. The level of housing growth, which will meet the local housing need target for the borough, includes proposals for strategic growth at Paddock Wood (through urban expansion) and a new settlement at Tudeley in Capel parish, as well as identifying additional capacity for housing in Royal Tunbridge Wells and other settlements. In addition, work has also now started on a Town Centre Plan for Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre

The Amelia Scott

The Amelia Scott cultural centre opened in April 2022. The newly refurbished building integrates the museum, art gallery, library, tourist information, council customer services and adult education as well as a coffee shop. The new facility creates an exceptional visitor experience that will welcome touring exhibitions each year and showcase local culture and heritage within a new dedicated space with approximately 25,000 visitors a month.

Town Hall

Town Square Spaces (TSS) are the successful partner to deliver approximately 29,000ft² (2,694m²) of co-working space. Following a successful soft marketing process, the council went out to open tender to seek a provider to take a 15-year lease on the accommodation. The council is now at the stage of agreeing the lease and working with TSS on design and planning. It is anticipated that the new co-working facility will be fully open in June 2023.

Former cinema site

Retirement Villages Group Ltd have submitted an application for the former cinema site. The proposed development includes the provision of an extra care retirement community comprising: extra care accommodation, associated facilities (café, restaurant and wellness facilities), new commercial floorspace, public realm improvements and the realignment of public rights of way.

Kingstanding Way, North Farm

In September 2020, permission was granted for new business floorspace located to the east of Kingstanding Way, at North Farm. The development is set to create up to 796,520ft² (74,000m²) of business accommodation and nearly 4,000 direct and 2,000 indirect jobs. Discussions with the developer are continuing regarding the overall development of the site. It is anticipated that there will be some small alterations to the original permission and work will commence on developing Phase One of the Reserved Matters soon.

Knights Wood

The borough's largest housing scheme is now nearing full completion. The Dandara development will provide 599 new homes as well as a new primary school (Skinners) and small-scale business/commercial units.



The Amelia Scott in Tunbridge Wells opened in April 2022.

Hollyfields, Hawkenbury

Building-out is continuing on site by Berkeley Homes to provide 271 homes (269 net), with 198 homes already completed as at April 2022. The new primary school, St Peter's CEP is also fully open.

Paddock Wood

There is residential development across three major sites in Paddock Wood, to the north of the borough:

Mascalls Farm by Berkeley Homes: Phase 1 is currently under construction, with 65 homes already completed as at April 2022. Permission was granted in March 2021 for 100 additional dwellings (Phase 2), bringing the total number of homes to be delivered onsite to 413.

Mascalls Court Farm by Persimmon Homes: Phase 1 comprising 175 dwellings is now completed, the majority of which are now occupied. Detailed permission was granted in June 2021 for Phases 2 and 3 for 200 dwellings.

Church Farm by Countryside Properties: Detailed permission was granted in July 2020 for Phase 1 comprising 300 dwellings. Work began on site in February 2021 and recently the site has seen its first completions. A planning application for Phase 2 comprising 60 dwellings has received a resolution to grant planning permission.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

East Kent

ASHFORD

Brompton Bicycles Ltd

Brompton, the UK's largest bicycle manufacturer, has revealed plans for a revolutionary new factory to the south of the town centre on the A2042, which it hopes will produce over 200,000 bikes per year once fully operational. Sustainability is at the heart of the facility, with plans to create a public nature reserve and cycle path. The new company HQ represents a £100m investment and will support up to 4,000 jobs.

Ashford International Studios at Newtown Works

Located on the site of the former Victorian railway works, Ashford International Studios is a £250m mixed-use regeneration project. Centred around TV and film production space, the development is set to support 2,000 jobs, create a new hub for the creative industries and benefit from Ashford's connectivity to London and beyond. The project has been awarded £14.7m of Levelling Up Funding by Government.



Proposal for the interior of Brompton Bicycle's new Global HQ.

Ashford College extension

With a successful Post-16 Capacity Fund bid, Ashford College is bringing forward the second phase of the £26m Station Road campus. The new building will house additional facilities for information technology, engineering and business courses with capacity for 250 students.

Creative Enterprise Quarter

Brought forward by Kent County Council and with additional funding from the Arts Council and Ashford Borough Council, the Creative Enterprise Quarter is an exciting development of 26 new light industrial units. Central to the scheme is a new home for the internationally-renowned Jasmin Vardimon dance company, which offers studio space plus a new café and meeting rooms. Most of the units were let or sold before completion, especially to the creative sector.

Residential

South of Ashford Garden Community

The South of Ashford Garden Community is made up of three developments, including Chilmington Green. Together they represent 7,250 homes, a 350acre (142ha) public park along with new schools, a primary healthcare space, play spaces and ecological areas are to be protected. The community will support job opportunities and contribute to public realm and infrastructure improvements.

Victoria Way

Currently the location of much residential development and handy close to the railway station and town centre, this area boasts new developments at Riverside, Victoria Point and The Triangle. The latter is being delivered by Kings Crescent Homes and includes 400 apartments and commercial space.

Plans have been approved for Infinity Ashford, which at 18 storeys, will be Ashford's tallest building when it is built opposite the railway station. The scheme, from A Better Choice for Property Ltd, includes 207 apartments and nine riverside townhouses, plus three commercial units, and a rooftop restaurant. Just across the rail tracks in Elwick Road, plans have been approved for 200 apartments on land between the Travelodge in Elwick Place and the railway station.

Retail and town centre

Several new operators have recently moved into the borough council-funded Elwick Place, a 100,000ft² (9,290m²) leisure



Proposal for Phase 2 Elwick Place, a residential development with Sunningdale Homes and Stanhope PLC.

and restaurant development which opened in December 2018. Across the town centre, retail space is in demand in Ashford with more than 30 new openings in 2021.

Plans have been approved for a 92-bed hotel, bar, restaurant and spa. The four storey building includes 10 apartments on the top floor and has been designed by architect Guy Holloway for SPPF Ltd. It will join a Travelodge and Hampton by Hilton which have opened in the town centre in recent years.

Ashford Borough Council and Milligan have sought occupiers to repurpose the former Odeon building in response to ever-changing retail trends. The transformation of the iconic site marks the first phase of town centre improvements.

Leisure investment

Ashford Borough Council has invested £9m in upgrading leisure provision across the borough, with major refurbishments at leisure centres in Ashford and Tenterden, plus £300,000 spent on a new athletics track at the Julie Rose Stadium.

Digital infrastructure

Large scale investment into digital infrastructure is underway, particularly from Openreach and Netomnia. Over 7,000 premises in the borough have been connected to Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) in the last year, with 52% of premises having a Gigabit (1000 Mbps) connection. Mobile connectivity has improved with 99% of premises having 4G indoors and 5G being installed across Ashford and Wye.

Warehousing

Nearly 310,000ft² (28,800m²) of warehousing was approved or built in 2021, including Ashford 34, a new build industrial warehouse unit on Orbital Park less than a mile from M20 J10a, plus the adjacent site which is to let but has planning permission for a 25,000ft² (2,323m²) warehouse.

Stodmarsh mitigation strategy

The council is working to create new strategic wetlands in order to achieve nutrient neutrality and unlock housing and other developments in the River Stour catchment area. This will enable new residential development to be granted planning permission and accord with the Habitats Regulations. The council is working with other local authorities to deliver a catchment-wide strategy and lobbying government to assist with nutrient mitigation, including upgrading wastewater treatment works.

CANTERBURY

This year is very much about continuing recovery and progress following the difficulties caused by the pandemic. In addition, by building increased resilience the district is ready to meet the likely challenges in 2023 and to exploit any new opportunities.

Riverside

Central to this is Canterbury's £115m Riverside development, located in the Kingsmead area, north east of the city centre, which is almost complete. The construction of this mixed-use leisure led development, anchored by a five-screen Curzon cinema, has continued apace despite the challenges created by Covid-19. Delivered by Linkcity, which is part of the Bouygues Group, it comprises 53,820ft² (5,000m²) of commercial space, 491 bed student accommodation and two residential sites, comprising a total of 189 affordable homes. As of September 2022 nine of the twelve cafés, bars and restaurants are let or under offer with the new cinema already open. There is also a new public square for events and cultural activities.

St George's Street

Following on from this, early 2023 will see commencement of the long-awaited regeneration of St George's Street in the city centre. The area between McDonald's and Metro Bank will be revitalised by replacing the currently tired streetscape with a boulevard-style avenue comprising new seating and



New Curzon cinema and retail units, Canterbury Riverside.

lighting. In addition, a flexible space for events and activities will be created along with more space to accommodate outdoor chairs and tables, allowing more people to enjoy the hospitality of local businesses.

City Council site, Military Road

Looking further forward Canterbury Council is marketing its current 6.89 acres (2.79 ha) Military Road site in Canterbury, where it has operated for forty years. This site includes its 1980s-built main office, two outbuildings and car parking, and, if sold, could be used to provide new housing. By early 2024 the council intends to have relocated its offices to the city centre's Whitefriars shopping complex, in space above the former Top Shop unit, the Flying Tiger store and in the former Royal Bank of Scotland building in Rose Lane. Once relocated, most of the council's staff will be based on the second floor of the former Topshop store, which would also have a small ground floor reception area.

Bids to government

Another major new opportunity for the area comes with the council's submission of two Levelling Up Fund bids (LUF Round 2 in 2022), for Canterbury and Herne Bay. New capital funding would use a series of targeted heritage and public realm improvements to transform Canterbury city centre for residents and visitors. This would include preserving nationally important heritage assets like Canterbury Castle and reopening them to the public. The Herne Bay proposals would enhance key seafront buildings and assets by modernising the King's Hall venue and restoring the Central Bandstand as well as improving the seafront and creating new cycle routes.

These schemes would help bring forward at an early stage, community supported priorities and ambitions from the new, emerging, Canterbury District Local Plan (2040). A first draft of the plan is expected to be published later in 2022. Together with providing the blueprint for new housing and road infrastructure the refreshed plan will also aim to create new jobs, focus on delivering a new hospital and schools while boosting biodiversity and maximising carbon neutrality.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

DOVER

Dover has been busy working on a range of major investments and regeneration projects:

Marina

The Port of Dover's regeneration programme is well underway and the port now features a new marina with pier plus a new Marina Curve and Clock Tower Square which is host to a number of new hospitality businesses. There is live music on the Curve every Sunday and both locals and visitors come here to relax and appreciate the local beauty and culture. Planning permission has been granted for a 70-bed 'electric motel'.

Western Docks

The Dover Cargo Terminal at the Western Docks is now complete with an eight-chamber temperature-controlled warehouse now in operation. Every stage including storage, container stripping and distribution can now be conducted at a set temperature. This is a huge development for the logistics and cargo customers that use the Port.

Eastern Docks ferry terminal

Dover is the UK's busiest passenger port and the busiest roll-on roll-off ferry port in Europe. It retains its dominance as the most efficient transport link for freight goods between the UK and Europe. Ferry crossings are on offer 24 hours a day, 364 days a year, with a departure on average every 30 minutes. There are now three ferry operators running ships from Dover – P&O Ferries, DFDS and, more recently Irish Ferries.

Cruise terminals

With two impressive state-of-the-art cruise terminals, Dover has the capacity to accommodate three cruise ships at a time. Dover is the second largest cruise port in the UK and had 126 cruise ship visits in 2022.

Dover town centre

Market Square

The council is investing heavily in the future of the town centre. Work on Market Square is almost complete – a £3.1m project, supported by £2.44m from the Coastal Communities Fund. The refurbished square includes a unique water feature that acts as a wayfinder and will enliven the space, creating a focus for children to play and families to congregate.

Underpass and creative centre

A £3.2m award from the Future High Streets Fund which, along with a £1.7m commitment from the council will deliver two key projects designed to increase footfall and local spending in the town centre. A refurbished subway will encourage greater movement of people between the town centre and waterfront and a new creative centre in Bench Street will enhance the offer of the lower end of the town centre.

Maison Dieu

A £10m restoration of the Grade I Listed Maison Dieu has begun supported by a £4.27m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project will bring redundant spaces back into commercial use, including restoring the Mayor's Parlour as a holiday let and a unique new café in the space once occupied by Victorian gaol cells. In 2024 Maison Dieu will be permanently open to the public for the first time in its 800-year history and will contribute to the creation of a heritage quarter in the town centre.

St James

Legal & General's £53m development is thriving in the heart of the town centre with a range of top names in retail and leisure.

Business grants

The council's town centre business grant scheme continues to be popular, awarding businesses up to £10,000 for property



Refurbishment of the Grade II Listed seafront terrace of Waterloo Crescent, for Port of Dover.

CREDIT: GORDON YOUNG, HMY ARCHITECTS

refurbishment costs in Dover, Deal and Sandwich. The council also has a green energy grant scheme where businesses can apply for up to £10,000 to assist with investments. In total, 67 businesses have been awarded grants.

Transport

Work has started on the FastTrack bus system which will connect Whitfield, central Dover and Dover Priory railway station. Funded through a £16.1m grant from the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund, Fastrack buses will have priority on the proposed express route which will include a new bus, cycle and pedestrian-only bridge across the A2 at Whitfield, and dedicated new link road through to Guston.

Discovery Park

Home to more than 160 companies, the business park has grown to be a thriving part of the South East's life science community offering high quality laboratory, office and manufacturing facilities. Pfizer UK retains a strong presence and has recently announced a £10m manufacturing investment to speed development of breakthrough medicines.

Discovery Park and Oyster Venture Partners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to create a Neuroscience Centre of Excellence in Kent. Barclays will be opening a new Eagle Lab this year which will be a co-working and incubator community for start-ups and scale-up companies.

Work has started on a £100m investment by Generate Capital on delivery of GrowUp's energy-efficient vertical salad farm at the Discovery Park site.

Housing

The council has embarked on an ambitious programme to build 500 new homes district wide. A total of 147 new affordable homes are currently completed, under construction or in planning at six locations. This includes the recently completed £12.5m development of 65 new homes in Harold Street, Dover. It has 24 apartments for social rent, 29 shared ownership apartments and 12 town houses, which each contain a purpose built work/live space ideal for remote working.

Work is well underway at both Aylesham Garden Village and the Whitfield Urban Extension. In Eastry 50 new 'eco-friendly' homes are being built which are manufactured using a hyper



CREDIT: JOHN MILLER/EXPLORE KENT

Samphire Hoe's rare, exceptionally biodiverse chalk grassland habitat.

structurally insulated panelised system and will achieve an Energy Performance Certificate rating above the highest category of A.

Other developments

Lonely Planet

Kent's heritage coast came 4th on Lonely Planet's list of the world's best regions to visit in 2022 – the only UK destination to feature in Lonely Planet's Best In Travel 2022. It is home to many coastal gems, including:

- Samphire Hoe, a rare chalk grassland habitat and an exceptionally biodiverse site;
- St Margaret's Bay, a stunning secluded cove;
- Spectacular walks along the White Cliffs of Dover;
- The historically significant South Foreland Lighthouse;
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Dover Castle, chronicling more than 2000 years of history.

Kent's Heritage Coast was praised for its commitment to sustainable tourism initiatives, with the regeneration of the historic town of Dover recognised within the region's entry.

The Open Golf Tournament

Despite restricted attendance numbers due to the pandemic the 149th Open at Royal St George's in Sandwich in 2021

delivered £113.4m in economic benefit to Kent. This was the conclusion of the report commissioned by the R&A and carried out by Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre. YouGov Sport also carried out a destination marketing study and calculated that Kent gained £94m in gross advertising value with over 5,400 hours of dedicated global television coverage, traditional TV and online news coverage, digital streaming and social media content.

Dover district has been named 'Kent's Golf Coast' and features some of the finest links. Just down the road from Royal St George's in Deal, Royal Cinque Ports Golf club has been selected as a qualifying venue for The Open from 2023.

New Aqua Park

Whitemills Wake and Aqua Park opened on 9 July 2022 in Sandwich – www.whitemillswake.co.uk

New Adventure Golf

Roman Landings, a new 18 hole adventure golf experience opened in July 2022 – www.walmeradventuregolf.co.uk

For further information:

Please see www.investindover.co.uk

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

FOLKESTONE & HYTHE

Folkestone town centre

Following the completion of the Folkestone Place Plan in 2021 work has continued to develop priority projects in the plan to realise the long term vision for the town. This involved extensive engagement with stakeholders/local residents and culminated in the council submitting an application to the government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in August.

The LUF bid for the Folkestone – A Brighter Future is for £20m and includes:

- Significant improvements to the road system around Folkestone Central station;
- Better signage and improved links to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Changes to the road network to reduce traffic speeds and create a pedestrian-friendly environment;
- Replacement of the bus station in Bouverie Square to run along Middelburg Square where there will be more space for bus users and better access into the town;
- Transform Bouverie Square into a new park, 'a green heart' to Folkestone;
- Refurbish the art deco Folca building into a modern space ready for new uses.

Folca Building

The council purchased the building in 2020 and is working with health partners and GP's to bring forward the new £16m medical centre on part of the site. It is a key project to anchor the transformation of the town centre, bring much needed facilities and significantly increase footfall in the town. LUF funding would redevelop the remainder of the building to provide space for businesses, retail and leisure.

Ship Street

The former gas works site (3.8acre /1.54ha) was acquired by



Proposal for residential and hotel development at Princes Parade, Hythe.

the council in 2021 to bring a key regeneration site forward. In the last year there has been public engagement on the future of the site and preliminary survey work has been undertaken and costed.

The aim is to provide 150 energy efficient homes, in line with the council's aspiration towards net zero carbon by 2030. At least 22% will be affordable in a setting which promotes safe walking and cycling between Folkestone Central train station and the town centre, adds to cultural development and builds on the town as a creative destination through architectural expression. The scheme will also include live/work space.

Biggins Wood, Cheriton

This site at Caesars Way, Cheriton has permission for 77 units of residential and 62,431ft² (5,800m²) of commercial development. The council has agreed the sale of the land for commercial and housing development and has

taken forward infrastructure works agreed in the deal for completion in 2023/24. Commercial development will begin in September 2023 with completion in 2025.

Coast Drive, New Romney

This transformational project will create a £1m major beachside visitor destination for the Romney Marsh at Littlestone, and a boost for the local economy with:

- A new visitor hub and changing facilities;
- Catering outlets;
- Space for new water sports businesses;
- 108 beach chalets and fully accessible boardwalk.

This is all aimed at providing a much enhanced visitor experience for local residents and tourists. The development will be jointly funded by the council in partnership with the Magnox Socio Economic Fund.

Romney Marsh Business Hub, New Romney

This opened at Mountfield Road Industrial Estate in December in 2021 and was delivered through a joint venture between East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKSDC) and Folkestone & Hythe District Council, with additional funding provided by the Magnox Socio Economic Fund. Providing 8,084ft² (751m²) of quality business accommodation. Divided into 14 rooms of varying sizes, the offices can house businesses ranging in size from 2 to 10 employees and will support a diverse range of enterprises.

Businesses seeking to locate to the Hub can receive up to £10,000 grant (and more in exceptional circumstances) towards fit-out costs for a bespoke design tailored to business needs, new furniture, office accessories and ICT equipment. In addition, in exceptional circumstances, up to 3 months' rent and/or business rates (if payable) for a maximum of 12 months.

On the remaining undeveloped part of the estate, the council received a £3.5m 'Getting Building Fund' grant in summer 2020. Since then work has progressed to construct a new roadway and service the 10.7acre (4.33ha) site. A variety of businesses have shown an interest in plots and the overall development may create 480 jobs over 10 years.

Green Business Grant Scheme

The council has committed to reducing its own carbon footprint to net zero by 2030 and to support businesses to implement measures to reduce their CO₂ footprint. As a result, the new Green Business Grant Scheme is for local businesses or those seeking to relocate and which are developing new products/services to help others reduce their footprint and also for any local business, in any sector, looking to reduce carbon emissions. Grants of up to £10,000 (and up to £25,000 in exceptional circumstances) which equate to up to 40% of total project costs can be awarded and these funds can be used to match KCC's LoCaSE grant scheme. The Folkestone & Hythe scheme will run until 31st March 2024.

Highview

The former Highview school site was purchased by the council as a site for affordable housing. Planning for a scheme of 25 homes for affordable rent and five homes for shared ownership, all designed to be net zero carbon rated, was approved in August 2021. The scheme is currently going through procurement to appoint a lead contractor.

Princes Parade

The development will provide Hythe and the new seaside community with a purpose built leisure centre and a much-needed new swimming pool with modern facilities for people of all ages, residents and visitors alike. The development will also include 150 quality homes, new public parks and better access to the canal and beach. Once completed, about half of the site will be a new promenade, parkland and open space in a waterfront setting.

Otterpool Park

This year has seen major milestones for the proposed garden town. The site was allocated in Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Local Plan at the beginning of the year with an amended application submitted in March. The new community will have up to 8,500 homes, community facilities and infrastructure in a garden town with more than 50% green space.

Otterpool Park LLP, the project's master developer, set out detailed plans to create a landscape-led development on a 2,000acre (809ha) site which has the historic Westenhamer Castle at its heart. It is set within countryside and benefits from excellent road connections, Westenhamer train station and close proximity to the coast.

More than 130 people attended a public exhibition of the plans held at Westenhamer Castle in May with as a series of community engagement events held throughout the year. Subject to planning, main infrastructure works begin next year and housebuilders are expected to begin construction in 2024.

For further information:

www.otterpoolpark.org

For further on formation on Romney Marsh Business Hub and also Green Business Grant scheme contact:

Andy.Markwell@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk



Proposal for Otterpool Park, near Hythe.

CREDIT: PILORY BARN

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

THANET

Local economy

The local economy has continued to grow with the district seeing further inward investment, an increase in visitors as well as more people relocating to the area to work from home. House prices have risen, with evidence some of this is driven by purchasers exiting the London housing market. Thanet's improved connectivity is also driving entrepreneurs to set up businesses in the district for the local market and nationally and internationally.

Despite financial challenges and travel disruption Kent residents and domestic visitors are the top two visitor markets for the area. National research shows that 67% of UK adults plan on taking an overnight domestic trip in the next year as the appetite is still strong.

Local plan

Thanet District Council Local Plan was adopted in July and sets out the framework for future growth and development to 2031 and identifies land for 18,000 new homes. New housing was delayed due to the pandemic but work continued on key sites and a range of smaller sites, adding to the variety of housing on offer. With more consistent levels of completions year-on-year there are some sites now proceeding that had experienced long delays.

Infrastructure and regeneration

Thanet Parkway

Work on a new station, on the Ashford International to Ramsgate line, is nearing completion and due to open in May 2023. Combined with line speed improvements, the station will increase rail connectivity between Thanet, London and Kent with access to mainline and High Speed One services. It will provide access to more employment opportunities and will improve investment appeal at business parks locally.

Manston Airport

A Development Consent Order for Manston Airport was approved by government in August. The owners of the site, Riveroak Strategic Partners, propose to re-open and develop the airport as a dedicated air freight facility with at least 10,000 cargo movements a year.

Inner Circuit

A proposed major road improvement (the Inner Circuit) would ease pressure on the existing roads in Thanet. Part of this circuit, the A28 Birchington, Acol and Westgate-on-Sea Relief Road, is included in the 'top ten' list of high-priority road improvements for the South East. It is part of a bid to government under the Main Road Network Fund for submission in early 2023. This will help to link existing and planned housing to key employment and leisure destinations, including Westwood Cross, Quex Park and the seafronts.

Margate Harbour Arm

The council is actively promoting the Margate Harbour Arm as a destination for residents and visitors. Historically a focus for fishing, and now with exhibition and gallery space, the Harbour Arm now has a number of acclaimed food outlets, an artisan bakery and a nationally recognised restaurant, Sargasso. In its first year of trading, Sargasso secured Thanet's only Michelin Bib Gourmand award (1 of only 122 awarded nationally) and was also recognised in the UK's 100 best restaurants at the National Restaurant Awards.

Regeneration funding

Significant public sector investment is raising Thanet's profile among private investors and developers. The council has secured funding from the government for the vision for its main town centres via:

- Future High Streets Fund: £2.7m secured for a highway and workspace scheme in Ramsgate;
- Town Deal Programme: £22.2m allocated for Margate;
- Levelling Up Fund: £19.8m awarded for Ramsgate to develop the Commercial Port and buildings around the Royal Harbour;
- Levelling Up Fund: £6.3m for a digital skills hub in the heart of Margate.

Ramsgate

Regeneration focuses on three areas: new food and hospitality spaces, refurbishment of key assets in the Royal Harbour and the creation of a Green Port as a centre of



CREDIT: CAXTONS

Royal Sands Apartments, Ramsgate.

excellence for renewable energy and zero carbon maritime logistics. Port infrastructure will create a significant number of new jobs across a range of maritime sectors. The Royal Harbour area will see a new hotel and restaurant, providing training opportunities in hospitality. This will complement a new facility for the local fishing fleet to store and sell their catch. Two new community spaces help local people to access training and career development. Infrastructure investment in the Port of Ramsgate will help unlock opportunities for Ramsgate as an open, short sea crossing port.

'Future Ramsgate Investment Plan' has been developed to make the most of assets and deliver a shared vision to transform and regenerate the town.

The Ramsgate High Street Heritage Action Zone is an Historic England funded project. It will enable physical improvements to Ramsgate High Street, bringing underused buildings back into use along with cultural activities and community engagement.

Margate

In Margate, the £22.2m funding includes investment in a number of projects, some of which will encourage public and private investment to bring forward key developments across the town, create new jobs and deal with some of the impacts of the pandemic. Tourism and the creative industries continue to be important sectors and will form part of the solution for regeneration. The first project to be delivered is the Margate Creative Land Trust. To date, £6.7m of funding has been unlocked, to allow the Trust to acquire underused

or empty properties to be offered as affordable commercial space for the creative businesses generating jobs and training opportunities.

Margate Town Deal funding includes projects to support two venues, the Theatre Royal and Margate Winter Gardens. The Theatre Royal has £2m to deliver much-needed works to safeguard the building and to engage an operator/commercial partner. The goal is to unlock public and private match funding to develop a hub for the performing arts. Margate Winter Gardens has been awarded £300,000 for a review of the building to understand how the council can reinvigorate this heritage asset, secure its future, and support footfall and income for the district.

Creative industries in Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate

Thanet's coastal resorts have moved beyond the bygone traditional British seaside holiday. Their pull is now much broader, attracting businesses and individuals looking to achieve the all-important, work-life balance, whilst remaining a great place to holiday. Margate and Ramsgate are home to a huge variety of businesses, freelancers and

creative practitioners. Thanet's strong appeal to the creative industries, coupled with its attractive, coastal environment, is helping to drive a reputation as a location for filming and photoshoots. The combination of visual appeal, proximity, affordability and creative talent make it an excellent choice for creative agencies and principal broadcasters when contracting for shoots and programme making. In the last year, leading publications, household names and high-end brands have used local beaches, bays, towns and attractions as backdrops for photoshoots and productions. Notable examples include:

- Sam Mendes' 'Empire of Light', a critically-acclaimed feature film set in Margate, on general release from January 2023;
- 'Dreamland' for Sky TV;
- Photoshoots for diverse publications and top brands, including Grazia, Aston Martin, Jaguar and Anthropologie Europe.

The Kent Film Office estimates that in 2021-2022, filming generated over £710,000 for the local economy, with 120 separate productions filming in the district for a combined total of over 163 days.

Tourism and leisure

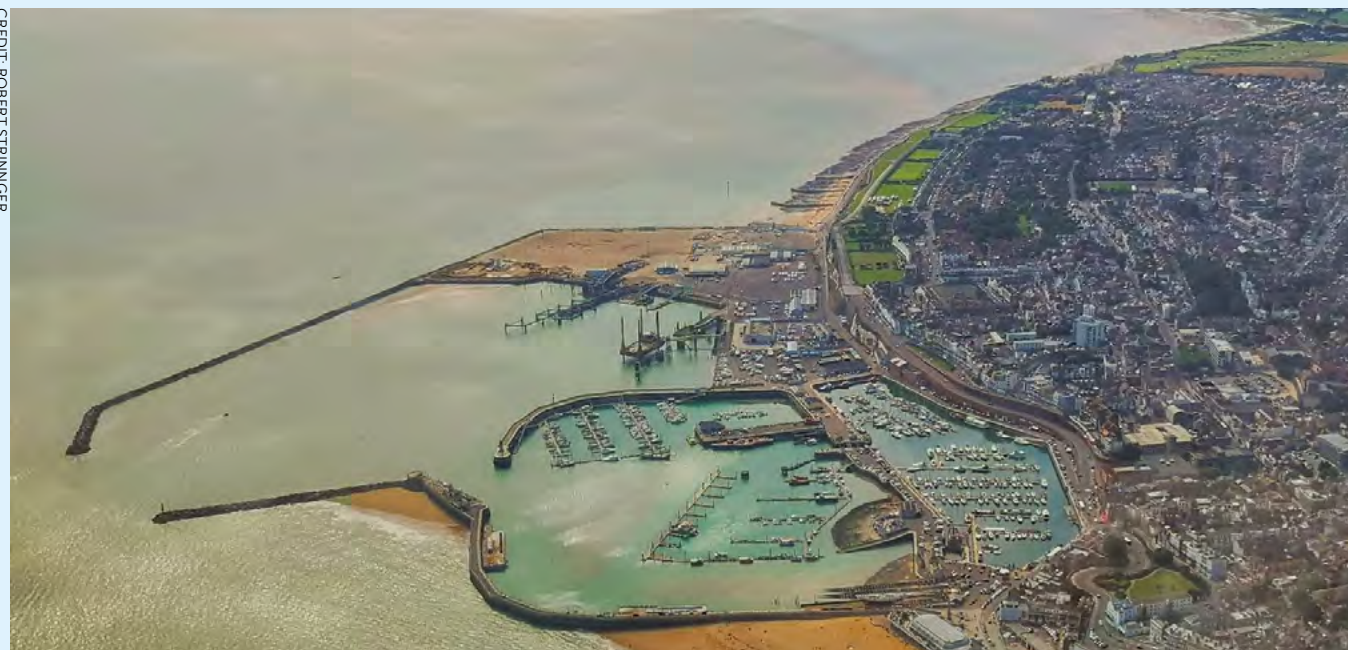
An integral part of Thanet's economy, trips to the popular and award-winning seaside resorts of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate rose by 9.9% in 2019 (from 2017). Pre-pandemic, the sector accounted for 20% of the total employment across the district. There is now a dedicated focus on developing a year-round economy, driven by experiential tourism. With investment in a number of large hotels planned there is also a growing demand for out of season, short break, coastal tourism and smaller, alternative business events with an experiential element. The Local Plan makes provision for the development of small-scale accommodation such as seaside glamping or camping sites to cater to these markets.

The reopened Margate Caves, new Crab Museum, the reopening of the Fort Hotel in a prime position on Margate seafront, plus the steady increase in independent shops in Cliftonville and the Old Town, add to the town's year-round offering for locals and visitors. Broadstairs is looking firmly to the future with a number of independent shops, bars and restaurants recently launching at key sites on the seafront and harbour arm. Stark, became Thanet's first establishment to receive a Michelin Star. A new attraction, Clip 'n Climb Thanet, opened at Westwood Cross in March, offering an inclusive indoor climbing experience from an organisation with over 250 centres worldwide. With the opening of Chapel House Estate, an exclusive-use luxury venue for weddings, experiences and private stays the last year also saw the opening of West Bay House, a vast and opulent home which hosts corporate retreats, events and overnight stays for groups and large families.

At Ramsgate, the Four Gold Anchor Award marina contains 650 finger moorings for visiting vessels, all year-round vessels and a fishing fleet. The Port hosts the maintenance fleet for four wind farms, with a total of 320 wind turbines. Planned investment in the port will further support the renewable sector, enhance job and training opportunities in marine engineering and the blue economy. Further education colleges and universities will support marine businesses to grow and take advantage of the opportunities at the port.

For further information:

www.thanet.gov.uk



Port of Ramsgate.

CREDIT: ROBERT STRININGER

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Kent County Council Property

Basic need programme for schools

Kent County Council produces a Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (KCP) annually. The KCP sets out the principles to determine proposals and forecasts the need for future provision across Kent schools. It illustrates how the council discharges its statutory responsibility to secure places for early years, special educational need and disabilities, primary and secondary children.

KCC has delivered expansions to nine schools for over 3,019 pupils. For 2023, we are on course to deliver at least another seven expansions and new schools resulting in an additional 1,482 places. This does not take into account all pre-construction design work to facilitate new schemes for 2024.

KCC has also completed new schools and expansions which include:

- New Barton Free School – new 5FE provision in Canterbury completed and ready for occupation from September 2022. The scheme delivers 150 places per year plus 300 sixth form places;
- Simon Langton Boys Grammar School – new 2FE expansion to provide 300 pupil places;
- Mayfield Girls Grammar School – expansion to complete the 1FE expansion across 5 phases which provided 420 pupil places in total;
- Northfleet School for Girls – expansion scheme for additional 6th form provision completed in April 2022 and occupied by the school;
- Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar annexe, Sevenoaks – new 3FE annexe at Sevenoaks site providing 630 pupil places;
- Towers School and Sixth Form Centre – conversion of eight science labs to provide places for 150 pupils for the Towers School Academy Trust.

Two Special Resource Provisions (SRP) within mainstream schools:

- Holy Trinity and St John's – refurbishment and extension within the school to provide 16 Place SRP;
- St Nicholas CoE Primary School – new multi-media classroom and alterations to existing space to create SRP provision for 14 pupils.

Kent Estates Partnership

The Kent Estates Partnership (KEP) brings together Kent local authorities, NHS, higher education/further education, blue light services, and central government to identify and promote collaborative projects and opportunities. KEP enables engagement with the national One Public Estate Programme (OPE), providing the potential for bids for OPE, Department for levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and other funding opportunities.

OPE provides support and funding to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration and taking a strategic approach to asset management. OPE funding is designed to help project initiation/development work for projects with a higher risk profile. The expansion of the programme to include DLUHC Land Release Fund (LRF) and Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) has enabled partners to bid for funding towards projects further on in the process considered 'shovel ready'. It is aimed at land remediation and infrastructure works on local authority owned land where there are barriers to development. KEP has entered bids in four funding rounds and has been allocated £1.3m in OPE funding and £0.87m from two rounds of LRF plus £3.1m in BLRF.

All the projects are targeted to ensure the efficient use of the public sector estate and support the release of surplus land for housing. In addition, projects deliver significant benefits to local communities, such as a new Community Centre, improvements to town centres and the public realm, improved access to health services and a diagnostics centre. LRF and BLRF have delivered 94 homes with a further 250 forecast by 2024/25. The successful projects are:

OPE

- Dartford town centre including Integrated Health & Social Care Campus
- Dover Discovery Centre
- Ebbsfleet Grove Road

- Ebbsfleet Integration of Healthy Living & Preventative Care

Care services

- KEP Shared Spaces Working Group
- Maidstone East Civic Quarter
- Paddock Wood Community Centre
- Repton Housing & Health Hub
- Sittingbourne Civic Quarter
- West Kent Blue Light Hub
- West Kent Partnership
- Whitfield Public Sector Office Hub

LRF/BLRF

- Brunswick Street and Union Street, Maidstone
- King Street Car Park, Maidstone
- Heather House and Pavilion, Maidstone
- Biggins Wood, Folkestone & Hythe
- Princes Parade, Folkestone & Hythe

For further information:

KentEstatesPartnership@kent.gov.uk

Kent County Council disposals

KCC's Infrastructure Team has a wide-ranging involvement in the county's property market. The council must ensure that the size and shape of its estate suits the organisation's current and future needs. This necessitates redevelopment projects, taking advantage of land value capture to defray capital costs wherever possible, to adapt and repurpose operational sites. It also involves disposal of assets surplus to the council's requirements.

Approximately £9.5m of land and property assets were realised from the KCC estate in the 21/22 financial year, principally for new housing and employment uses. These receipts will be reinvested in the council's capital development programme which funds vital infrastructure projects. The release of brownfield sites, often in urban locations, allows for the development of new sustainable properties including affordable homes and care facilities in the heart of local communities.

The disposals team also work closely with public sector partners such as the NHS in bringing forward schemes that deliver public benefit as well as generating reinvestment capital for KCC to invest in its services. This has included working with town parish councils on joint projects, including

a recent development at Walderslade Woods. In this case the land value uplift generated from the sale of a modest site has allowed the parish council to take on ongoing responsibility for the management of the woodlands and implement an ambitious maintenance and improvement programme.

Other projects

Oakwood House

Delivery of complex refurbishment scheme to provide accommodation for libraries, community learning and skills and coroners services from December 2022. Works are on programme for completion by November 2022 ready for occupation. This will allow a decant from existing facilities to progress the planned disposals & vacation of current leased properties. The project provides for:

- Adult education
 - Dance studio
 - General teaching provisions
 - Specialist teaching provisions (pottery, jewellery workshop, IT suite, art studio, photography studio)
- Registrar
 - Three new registrar ceremony rooms (small, medium and large)
 - Supporting registration services
- Coroner
 - 5 Court Room Spaces
 - Supporting staff accommodation and senior coroners provision
 - Court meeting rooms and jury provision

Creative Enterprise Quarter, Ashford

One of Kent's largest cultural infrastructure projects is the Creative Enterprise Quarter in Ashford.

A new state-of-the-art production facility for Jasmin Vardimon Company is at the heart of the development. It has been built piloting an innovative and unique approach by using the value of the industrial units as an enabling development to provide investment for new building.

Further capital investment has been secured from Arts Council England, the Cultural Recovery Fund's Capital Kickstart Fund, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) from the Business Rates Retention Pilot (a fund which supports housing and commercial) and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Getting Building Fund. Local materials have been used wherever possible.

JVHome is a new creative hub with facilities for the internationally renowned dance company to expand and create its touring productions and rehearsals. Dedicated studios will grow the company's acclaimed educational programmes and community classes and additional incubator space for small creative businesses.

The two-storey building, on a just over 13,455ft² (1,250m²) site, includes dedicated studios to accommodate the graduate programme JV2, other educational programmes with about 60 schools and colleges in Kent and the soon to be relaunched programme of public classes.

The main studio, has a fully sprung dance floor and retractable seating and is 19m x 22m with 8 metres grid height, and a full lighting, sound and AV rig. Suitable for large scale rehearsals, the studio is designed to accommodate the ambitious scenery and vigorous movement which characterise the work of Jasmin Vardimon and will also be available to hire by external creative companies. A café and meeting rooms will provide flexible community spaces.

The building forms the centre of a major new arts hub in

Ashford known as the Creative Enterprise Quarter. The location is also home to Kent Music, an education charity and lead partner for the Music Education Hub for Kent. Kent Music develops musical opportunities to support the aspirations of children, young people, adults and teachers in Kent. They will consolidate their current operations into a single building which will house their office and meeting room space, music library and musical instrument store and repair workshop.

In terms of the project's 26 commercial units ranging from 950ft² (88m²) to 5,200ft² (483m²) GIA with mezzanine options available on all units aimed at creative business and the commercial market. There are 15 units sold and 10 units let at full market value meaning only one unit remains available. Sales and lettings have exceeded original expectations due in part to growth in market demand and values in the industrial sector post pandemic, as well as the positive benefits of the council's anchor tenant, Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company. By early autumn 2022 KCC are anticipating exchange and completion of all deals agreed.

All commercial unit enquiries contact:

Sibley Pares phil.hubbard@sibleypares.co.uk



The new Jasmin Vardimon Centre, Ashford.

CREDIT: JASMIN VARDIMON/KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Housing

Housing market in Kent for calendar year 2021

House sales statistics:

- Number of sales in Kent area: 29,044;
- Up 48.4% since 2020 (9,474 sales more);
- Larger percentage increase than South East (+47.9%) & England & Wales (+41.5%);
- Number of sales in Medway area: 6,962 (1,582 or 52.1% up on 2020).

All Kent districts saw an increase in house sales over the previous year:

- Maidstone saw the largest increase (+1,204 sales, +53.5%);
- Second largest was in Thanet (+1,032 sales, +55.3%);
- Largest percentage increase was in Folkestone & Hythe (+57.2% or +845 sales);
- Maidstone had the most sales in 2021 (3,456);
- Gravesham saw the fewest sales (1,422).

House price statistics:

- Average price paid in Kent £390,171 up 6.7% on 2020 (+£24,482);
- Average price paid Medway £304,208, up 7.2% (+£20,474);
- South East average price £435,976 up 6.0% (+£24,510);
- England & Wales average price £349,358, up 7.9% (+£25,490).

All Kent districts saw an increase in house prices over the previous year:

- Sevenoaks saw the highest average price (£598,890) and the biggest increase in price since 2020 (+£37,870 or +6.8%);
- Swale had the lowest average house prices at £312,523;
- Thanet saw the biggest percentage increase in average house price at +12.9% (+£36,605) and the second highest price increase after Sevenoaks;

- Ashford saw the smallest increase in average house price (+£2,661 or +0.7%).

Most notable is, that in percentage terms, the top three house price increases were in the coastal districts of Thanet (+12.9%), Swale (+9.1%) and Dover (+8.9%). The cause of this is not known but may be a reflection of changing work patterns. There were 7,613 Energy Performance Certificates issued in Kent in 2021 this was 840 more than in 2020 (+12.4%).

Sources: HM Land Registry Open Data Standard Reports Ministry of Housing, DLUHC (Dept for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities): Live table NB1

Stodmarsh phosphates and nitrates

In July 2020 Natural England issued water quality advice which affects applications for new homes in the catchment. An assessment must be carried out before the affected areas can agree new housing which discharges wastewater to the Stour Valley catchment. This is to ensure new development does not cause further deterioration of the water quality at Stodmarsh. The advice from Natural England applied to applications which would connect to a wastewater treatment works which discharges into the Stour Valley.

Since the advice in July 2020 the affected LPA's, Natural England, Kent County Council, the Environment Agency,



Customised house types coming forward at Alkerden Gateway.



Proposal for new homes by Redrow at Cliffe Woods, Rochester.

Southern Water and government departments have been working on a solution. In July 2022, the Environment Secretary George Eustace announced a ministerial direction to support Natural England to establish a Nutrient Mitigation Scheme (NMS). Natural England will accredit mitigation delivered through the NMS, enabling LPA's to grant permission for developments which have secured the necessary nutrient credits. Funding will be available to 'pump-prime' mitigation projects, including wetland and woodland creation. Funding will be recouped from a payment by developers who can purchase 'nutrient credits' which discharge their requirements to provide mitigation. Also announced was an amendment tabled for the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to place a new statutory duty on water/sewerage companies in England to upgrade wastewater treatment works to the highest technically achievable limits by 2030 in nutrient neutrality areas. More details to be announced in autumn 2022.

In the meantime, the affected LPA's are working with Kent County Council and the Environment Agency to make sure Kent can take advantage of funding available to unlock housing development.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill was published in May 2022. The Bill describes “an intention to develop a plan to refocus government priorities, and for the housing sector this means identifying better solutions for the delivery of quality, affordable housing and creating long-term sustainable communities”. The government has set out the approach to improve the planning process to give “local communities control over what is built, where it is built, and what it looks like, and so creates an incentive to welcome development provided it meets the standards which are set.” The Bill includes powers to support the government’s approach to achieving this, which is through reforms to:

- Deliver high quality design and beautiful places, and protect our heritage;
- Enable the right infrastructure to come forward where it is needed;
- Enhance local democracy and engagement;
- Foster better environmental outcomes;
- Allow neighbourhoods to shape their surroundings, as this is where the impact of planning is most immediately felt.

The Bill also signposts further changes to come forward which will enhance the way that planning works, including full digitalisation of the system and improving processes.

Housing Delivery Test (HDT)

In February 2019, the first annual HDT results for councils were published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Housing Delivery Test (%)	Total net homes delivered over three year period.
	Total number of homes required over three year period.

For the HDT 2021 measurement, there is a reduction in the period for measuring total homes required. This would usually be measured over a rolling 3-year period published by Government in November, but an 8-month period has been used for the 2020/21 test year due to the “disruption” caused to homebuilding by the Covid-19 pandemic

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to take specific action depending upon their HDT result, these actions persist until subsequent HDT results are published or new housing requirements are adopted. The latest HDT results



CREDIT: HOLLAWAY STUDIO

Proposal for Flour Mills mixed-use residential development in Ashford, designed by Hollaway Studio with Oliver Davis Homes.

demonstrated a varied performance over the three-year results:

- Ashford at 118%, Maidstone at 170%, Dartford at 105% and Tunbridge Wells at 97% have passed the test and have no action required;
- Housing delivery in Dover DC at 88%, Folkestone and Hythe at 85%, delivery was below Government expectations at less than 95% of the allocated target and are required to have an action plan;
- Swale at 78% and Thanet at 78% are required to implement a 20% buffer under the NPPF;
- Canterbury at 65%, Gravesham at 57%, Medway at 67%, Sevenoaks at 62% and Tonbridge and Malling at 63% performance means a presumption in favour of sustainable development now applies to housing proposals in these authorities.

Building materials, labour shortages and cost price inflation

All three issues have been a problem for the construction industry since early 2021. Commentators have reported a perfect storm with issues associated with Brexit, the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine all contributing to unprecedented material and labour shortages with resulting pressure on productivity. The construction sector has an extremely challenging business environment with SME's being hardest hit in the supply chain.

Kent Housing and Development Group has been contributing to regular engagement with DLUHC and Homes England on market conditions, alongside developer group colleagues from the SELEP area.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

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Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2020-2025 'A Place People Want to Call Home'

Housing delivery remains high on the agenda for government, with continued commitment to accelerate housing growth and meet the target of 300,000 new homes per year by the end of the parliament. The Affordable Homes Programme provides grant funding to support the capital costs of developing affordable housing for rent or sale. Homes England are making available £7.39bn from April 2021 to deliver up to 130,000 affordable homes by March 2026 – outside London. New Strategic Partners were announced in September 2021, delivering nearly 90,000 grant funded affordable homes between 2021 and 2026.

The Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2020-25 'A place people want to call home' has been aligned to respond to the current challenges and opportunities at a strategic level, both nationally and locally. It links to, and references, documents such as the Homes England 5-year Strategic Vision (2018 to 2023), the SELEP Economic Strategy Statement and the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework.

The strategy aims to provide a platform for a shared approach and ambition to meet the county's housing challenge including tenure, affordability and supported housing. It can be used by a range of partners to lobby at local and national levels, to ensure that Kent and Medway can meet identified growth ambitions and that communities benefit from homes and places where they wish to live and work. The strategy is an all-encompassing document that is relevant to all providers of homes in Kent and Medway. It recognises the great diversity of housing provision across Kent and Medway and that what is appropriate for one neighbourhood may not be in another. The strategy has a menu of solutions to assist authorities in their local aims, whilst supporting a collective objective to deliver an ambitious housing offer.

Homes England

Homes England (HE) has been working closely with partners in Kent and Medway to achieve their housing requirements. HE's role is to ensure more people have access to better homes in the right places and is an integral part of the government's Levelling-Up agenda. HE intervenes in the market to:

- Get more homes built where needed;
- Accelerate delivery;
- Tackle market failure where it occurs;
- Help to shape a more resilient and diverse housing market.

HE can provide lending for development finance, structured real estate investment and infrastructure finance, with Gravesend Canal Basin in Gravesham being a good example of this.

The brokering role includes working with equity and partnership guarantees, joint venture partnerships, attracting institutional investments and guarantees. Interventions include land acquisition and assembly to enable and de-risk schemes to encourage activity that the market is not yet ready to activate. An example of this is HE land acquisition at Otterpool Park to support Folkestone and Hythe's Garden Communities ambition. The Homes England Affordable Housing Programme for Kent and Medway delivered a total of 4,818 affordable homes in the programme period to February 2021.



Union House, Tunbridge Wells.

CREDIT: ARDMORE CONSTRUCTION LTD/TWBC

No Use Empty

Now in its 17th year, No Use Empty (NUE) has recently secured:

- £8m further investment from KCC to provide larger secured-interest bearing loans to developers to bring derelict land or sites back to use providing new homes;
- £2.5m from the Growing Places Fund (GPF) to return an extra 100 long-term empty properties back into use by March 2026;
- An internal reallocation of £2m GPF for Margate to meet increased demand to tackle larger buildings which can be converted to provide much needed family homes.

With the industry facing challenging times, NUE is increasingly important in supporting the recovery of the Kent economy. The increased investment is a direct response to NUE continuing to see an unprecedented increase in loan applications as shown in the table below, which includes data to August 2022.

Economic decline, recession, and some of the lowest property values in the South East have led to an historical lack of investment in parts of our coastal towns such as Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet. Whilst wider regeneration initiatives continue to attract high profile investors and funding there has been an increase in applications from SME developers looking to refurbish empty buildings and turn them into homes. However, in many cases severe dilapidation and an inability to access funding on the open market for renovation costs, left buildings empty.

Delivered by KCC in partnership with all twelve district councils and Medway Council, NUE is the longest running empty property initiative in the country, providing an exemplar model which can be replicated. NUE is now self-financing thanks to the interest-bearing loans and application fees charged. NUE remains committed to reducing the

numbers of long-term empty properties, with district Empty Homes Officers returning more than 7,352 back to use since 2005 through a range of interventions:

- Adjusting delivery models to reflect current market conditions;
- Providing financial assistance to owners by offering short term secured loans with repayments recycled for new loans;
- Continuity over a sustained period.

Bringing long-term empty properties back into use is a key method of driving regeneration, one which not only provides new homes but also new sources of employment and a sense of community.

NUE residential statistics

Data provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities shows that there are 237,340 long term empty dwellings in England. Long-term means those dwellings that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for over six months.

Latest council tax records show there are 7,507 such dwellings in the Kent and Medway area representing 3.1% of the national total. Figures include all tenures (local authority, housing association and private sector) although many are privately owned. NUE was responsible for 72% (428 out of 594) of all properties brought back into use in Kent last year. In the same period Medway had a reduction of 270 empty properties being brought back into use. In the last year:

- Nine Kent districts saw a reduction in their long-term empty properties with the most being Thanet 252, Sevenoaks 141 and Dover 124;
- The district with the highest number of long-term empty properties is Thanet with 877;
- Dartford has the lowest number at 252;
- Ashford saw the biggest increase (138) in long-term empty properties with a total of 681.

Financial year	Total loans approved	Empty property loans	Empty homes funded	New build loans	New build homes funded
2019-20	33	£5,195,300	89	Loans not available	
2020-21	60	£4,073,656	80	£11,047.00	96
2021-22	56	£9,602,500	132	£6,212,250	39
2022-23 (Aug)	43	£5,309,375	69	£9,379,800	58



Nevill Row, Royal Tunbridge Wells.

NUE residential loan scheme

NUE provides short term secured loans to meet the cost of repairs and improvements to bring property back into use. If you are new to the loan scheme you can access an interest free loan of up to a maximum £175,000. If you return for a further loan, this will be on interest bearing terms.

The loan scheme operates on a recyclable basis – as soon as the loan is repaid the fund is replenished and can be loaned again. NUE have awarded £52m in secured loans to date, leveraging in £40.59m from the public/private sectors, which has supported 1,340 units across Kent since it launched.

The combination of NUE loans and top-up loans (administered by NUE for Dover, Folkestone and Hythe and Tunbridge Wells) help developers to bridge the gap between pre/post refurbishment values with a loan which takes account of cost of works – which banks and other lenders will not do. Without this joined-up approach these properties would have remained empty.

Average renovation cost to return a unit to occupation is £70,000 with the average county council investment being £39,000. Over £32m (62%) of loans advanced have been repaid and recycled.

Case study: Nevill Row, Royal Tunbridge Wells

NUE provided a loan to help Beau Property return four period terraced townhouses back into use. Nevill Row is a

Infrastructure and Regeneration

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collection of eight, Victorian-style homes providing in total 7,914ft² (735m²) of accommodation. Each two-bed home has a small front garden and one car parking space to the rear. The developer sought to restore the original features including bespoke double glazed energy efficient timber sash windows, while incorporating contemporary additions, like brass hardware, light oak flooring in the kitchen and living spaces, and wall panelling. The property has been shortlisted in the category for best refurbishment project at the national Housebuilder Awards 2022 (winners to be announced 10 November 2022).

NUE commercial (phase II)

NUE's primary focus has been on empty residential properties. However, in 2018 NUE secured an extra £1m from the GPF administered through the South-East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The aim of this funding is to unlock economic growth, create jobs and 'kick-start' house building at stalled development sites. Operating as a recyclable loan scheme it complements NUE.

Following the success of NUE Commercial in which short term secured loans were provided to return 15 empty commercial properties back into use and creating 28 residential units, GPF awarded a further £2m funding in 2021 for a second phase.

Due to the demand for this loan product NUE has accelerated the drawdown of funding and have contracted with thirteen individual projects in Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Swale and Thanet. This puts NUE Commercial Phase II in a position to ensure that most projects are completed and provide 36 residential units (48 supported) with the remaining funds available.

Case Study: 12-13 Marine Gardens, Margate

In a prominent position on Margate seafront and vacant

for over 10 years it had fallen into major disrepair. The listed building is of design and specification from the Victoria era including original architectural features such as the first-floor balcony with wrought iron railings. A new roof ensured the property is watertight and new shop fronts with re-purposed entrances will be created. There is separate access for the six residential apartments which are being refurbished. The owners engaged with traditional lenders, but due the dilapidated condition were unwilling to take a risk. The project will complete in late 2022.

NUE new build

In 2020 KCC made available £12m for NUE to provide funding for new builds on derelict or vacant land with required permissions in place. All loans are secured as a first charge and interest is collected on a quarterly basis with the capital loan being repaid on an agreed future date or a sale. Demand was such that by March 2022, KCC made available a further £8m for NUE to allocate to new projects. To date NUE has

approved loans to the value of £26m funding 193 homes across Kent of which 54 homes have been completed, sold and the loans (£6m) repaid and recycled to the next scheme. The average new build loan per unit is £127,767. KCC has provisionally allocated up to £40m for NUE loans which will give greater flexibility in allowing those projects on our waiting list to start and not rely on earlier loans being recycled.

Case study: Carter's Park, Ashford Road, High Halden

NUE supported the development of Carter's Park an attractive development of nine individual and traditionally styled new homes. Local developers, GPML Group, delivered the project at a cost of £1.4m including an interest-bearing loan from KCC. The eastern side has three houses and two apartments, all with gardens. The other side has four two-bedroom apartments, two with private gardens and the other two with balconies. All the properties have allocated parking with electricity charge points.



Carter's Park, Ashford Road, High Halden.

CREDIT: NUE

NUE breaking new ground

NUE are piloting a scheme with Tridax Limited (previously worked with NUE on residential projects), to construct twenty-two business units at Whitfield, Dover. When complete it will be a flagship NUE project and make a positive contribution to the economic recovery in Dover.

Case study: Honeywood Parkway, Whitfield, Dover

- Phase 1 (Units 16-22) began in April 2022 and is on schedule for hand over in October 2022 and opening by Roger Gough, leader, KCC on 2 November 2022. The seven units are 57m long x 12.0m deep with internal each unit being 11.2m deep x 7.75m wide and are already reserved by local business' including a printing firm, a glazing firm and freight forwarding companies relocating to the area;
- Phase 2 (Units 13-15) is due to start in September 2022 with completion in late 2022. A Belgian customs clearance, forwarding and logistics company have reserved the units to have a presence close to Port of Dover;
- Phase 3 (Units 1-8) is due to start in January 2023 with completion in July 2023;
- The final phase (units 9-12) is due to commence in August 2023 with full completion of the development anticipated in December 2023.

Remaining units will be available for reservation in early 2023. However, there is already a list of prospective purchasers exceeding the number of units available. All units will:

- Be serviced by an electrical supply and ducted for fibre optics up to the boundary of each unit. Constructed to 'shell' arrangement as a watertight/sealed unit;
- Have insulated panels to walls and ceilings;
- Be ready to use with windows/doors and lockable
- Have power supplied (single or 3 phase);
- Have fully installed first floor (not a mezzanine floor) with unenclosed staircase to the upper floor;
- Have a toilet/kitchenette facility provided at ground floor level.

NUE going forward

By returning domestic and commercial properties to use NUE increases Council Tax receipts for local authorities across Kent, has attracted New Homes Bonus (NHB) and is helping to generate new Business Rates. The initiative has created or safeguarded over 1,600 jobs and provided homes to nearly 3,000 local people.

Kent's successful approach to tackling empty properties has been widely acknowledged:

- Winning three national awards for Regeneration and Partnership Working;
- The County Council were the only non-housing authority finalist in the category for 'Council of the Year' at the UK Housing Awards 2020;
- NUE are providing administration and legal services support to Southend on Sea City Council (April 2022) for their NUE Commercial and Residential Loan Scheme which operates across six Essex districts;
- NUE are renewing the service provided to Medway Council (July 2022);
- KCC are the only non-housing authority finalist in the category of 'Council of the Year' at the UK Housing Awards 2022. Entrants were asked to demonstrate how they used their strategic role to provide leadership, facilitate housing development and meet local housing need, evidencing partnership working and joining up their housing offer with other services for the benefit of residents.

Further bids are to be submitted to the Growing Places Fund.

For further information:

www.nue.org.uk

INFRASTRUCTURE FIRST: THE KENT & MEDWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSITION

The Kent & Medway Infrastructure Proposition was developed to secure early infrastructure investment, planning flexibilities and a new way of working with Government in return for an acceleration of planned delivery. In response to a joint submission to the Secretary of State from Kent & Medway Leaders last year, the Housing Minister welcomed this "shared focus on placemaking" and commitment to high quality housing and wider growth and confirming "the continued importance of well-directed funding for the early provision of infrastructure to enable and gain local support for housing delivery".

Working closely with the Kent Housing Group, the Kent Planning Officers Groups and the Kent Housing & Development Group, the Infrastructure Proposition continues to be adapted and developed in response to emerging Government policy and investment opportunities, building on best practice locally in making the case for an "infrastructure first" approach to the delivery of planned, high quality, strategic growth.

GREATER NORTH KENT (GNK)

Greater North Kent exists to promote economic prosperity, social wellbeing and sustainable place-making in North Kent. Our shared goal is to harness our collective strengths and influence through cross-boundary collaboration and evidence-based engagement with stakeholders to bring positive change across the whole of North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham, Maidstone, Medway and Swale) and enable GNK partners better to deliver their own strategic visions.

THE THAMES ESTUARY GROWTH BOARD

Established by the Government in 2020 and led By Thames Estuary Envoy and Chair Kate Willard OBE, the Thames Estuary Growth Board is responsible to the Secretary of State for driving economic growth, investment and innovation in the Thames Estuary – the UK's number one Government-backed growth opportunity. It is charged with delivering the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission's vision of increased productivity, high value jobs and high-quality homes for local people. The Board:

- Champions projects for investment
- Convenes local agencies and partners
- Removes obstacles to making things happen
- Acts as an investment partner in early-stage projects as a catalyst for significant new private sector investment.

Major workstreams at present include the establishment of a hydrogen ecosystem capable of attracting multi-billion pound investment, making better use of the river for light freight and championing the Estuary globally for investment. Thames Estuary Growth Board members include the Leaders of Kent County Council, Medway Council and Dartford Borough Council.

LONDON RESORT

London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) proposed a world-class, sustainable, next generation entertainment resort known as the 'London Resort', on the banks of the River Thames at Swanscombe Peninsula in north Kent, set over 465 hectares (1,150 acres). It was the first commercial project to be designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. A Development Consent Order application was made to obtain planning permission, to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate but was subsequently withdrawn in March, with the stated intention of resubmitting before the end of 2022.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

Continued

Transportation

Government Funding Opportunities

The long-term Local Growth Fund programme commenced in 2015 and provided £128.66m of investment to deliver 36 projects in Kent. KCC is responsible for the programme management of the fund, though some of the projects have been delivered by third party organisations. The programme, now closing, has a small number of projects which will continue up to 2024/25.

In 2020, The Getting Building Fund was launched with £37.43m to deliver a further 10 projects in Kent to stimulate economic growth after the pandemic. These will be completed in March 2023.

The government launched the Levelling Up Fund, which has £4.8bn to tackle the economic differences between different parts of the UK and is open to every local area. There are three themes:

- Transport investment;
- Regeneration;
- Town centre and cultural investment.

In Round 1, three projects in Kent were successful, bringing about £40.9m of investment to deliver regeneration projects in Ashford, Margate and Ramsgate. Round 2 bids were submitted in August 2022, and the funding announcements for successful bids are expected in autumn 2022.

Lower Thames Crossing

The Secretary of State for Transport announced the preferred route for the Lower Thames Crossing in 2017 to form a new strategic route from the M25 to the M2/A2. It will comprise twin bored tunnels under the River Thames east of Tilbury and Gravesend and will to connect to the A2 in Kent. It will add more than 70% to road capacity between Essex/

Kent, unlock investment and create thousands of jobs. When complete, it will be the longest road tunnel in the UK. The 70mph, 14-mile route and crossing will be built to the highest safety standards incorporating the most up-to-date engineering and information technology.

Consultations have been undertaken and in 2022 another local refinement consultation was held on amendments to the scheme and development boundary. The scheme requires a Development Consent Order (DCO) for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Highways England expect to submit the DCO to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of 2022.

Construction is due to start in 2024 and is expected to open by 2030. A commitment to deliver the scheme was announced with the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) by the Department for Transport in March 2020.

Operation Brock/Stack

Operation Brock was introduced as a measure to queue cross-channel freight vehicles on the approach to the Port of Dover and Channel Tunnel when there is disruption as a result of the end of the UK's transition out of the EU. It consists of a contraflow on the M20 between Junctions 9-8 on the London-bound carriageway enabling 2-way flows for local traffic and non-EU bound HGVs. The coastbound carriageway is then used to manage cross-channel freight vehicles. The barrier to enable this contraflow is stored at the roadside when not in use (allowing both carriageways to operate as normal) and being moved into position when needed. Brock is part of a multi-agency traffic management plan that also includes the Dover Traffic Access Protocol (TAP) on the A20 and parts of the Sevington Inland Border Facility.

Overnight lorry parking

Kent County Council has been working with the private sector to promote the delivery of a network of overnight lorry parks. Ashford International Truck Stop has recently expanded from 390 to 660 spaces and other sites are being considered by the private sector. KCC is also working with the Department for Transport, district councils and Kent Police on stronger enforcement action to address inappropriate lorry parking across Kent.

Local Transport Plan

Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth Without Gridlock 2016 – 2031 (LTP4) was adopted by Kent County Council in July 2017. It aims to deliver transport priorities for Kent which will contribute to a safe and efficient transport system. Since the adoption of LTP4, there have been rapid changes in both local and national government policy around the environment, significant changes to how we work and travel due to COVID-19 and advancement of technology for electric vehicles and personal mobility. A new Local Transport Plan 5 seeks to use the latest transport and carbon modelling to develop an integrated plan for how KCC will meet the needs of residents, tourists and business travellers. The plan will look forward to 2038 to match Local Plans and consider impacts through to 2050 to meet decarbonisation targets.

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

This body consists of Kent, Medway, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Brighton & Hove, Southampton, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and the Berkshire local authorities, plus the five Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

In 2022 TfSE is consulting on its draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) which provides a framework for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services, and regulatory interventions in the next thirty years. The SIP is underpinned by a credible, evidence based technical programme.

TfSE is already making the case to government for investment in rail and the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and submitted its priorities for the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which informed the government's announcement on RIS in March 2020. In Kent, RIS priorities that received commitment from government include the new Lower Thames Crossing and the development of pipeline schemes for improvements to the M2/A2 corridor at M2 Junction 7 (Brenley Corner) and improved access to Dover via the A2.

Improvements to the connection between the M2 at Junction 3 with the M20 at Junction 6 via the A229 (Bluebell Hill) were not included in RIS but are being developed by Kent County Council for a bid through TfSE to the Department for Transport (DfT) for Large Local Major (LMM) scheme funding. This bid was part of the work that TfSE were asked to do by the DfT to prioritise schemes for the Major Road Network (MRN), a new category of road announced by government

in December 2018 for the most important local authority A roads. A new relief road for the A28 around Birchington, Westgate and Acol to enable growth in the Thanet Local Plan has also been funded through the MRN fund for development work to proceed to Outline Business Case.

Rail network improvements in Kent

Projects in progress to support economic growth through improvements to the rail service in Kent are:

Journey Time Improvement (JTI) Scheme

Phase 1 of this scheme to improve the journey time between Ashford and Canterbury West is now almost completed. There is one further enhancement required to deliver the full 2 minutes' saving in both directions on this section, and this is programmed for completion by May 2023. Phase 2 of this scheme between Canterbury West and Ramsgate is focused on an intervention between Sturry and Minster, which is planned to deliver a further ½ minute saving in both directions by May 2023. The whole JTI scheme is essential to support the entry into service of the new Thanet Parkway station. The total journey time saving in both directions will be 2½ minutes, which will mitigate the time penalty of trains calling at the new station.

Thanet Parkway Station

The delivery of Thanet Parkway, a new station near Cliffsend, is on course for operation by May 2023. This will significantly improve rail access to and from London for

local communities, Discovery Park and Manston business parks with London just over an hour away. Network Rail is delivering the new station through their contractor BAM Nuttall following completion of the new road junction by Eurovia working for KCC.

Southeastern area: new concession

Train services in Kent remain with Southeastern working directly for the DfT due to the continued reduction in rail demand following successive lockdowns. The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail in May 2021 outlined the future for the industry. A new body, Great British Railways, will absorb Network Rail and other DfT functions. Franchising will be replaced by new Passenger Services Contracts. Great British Railways will specify timetables, branding, fares and agree a fee with a service operator via a commercial procurement. KCC will comment on any consultations on future train services in the area.

Ebbsfleet International: Ebbsfleet Garden City

The existing High Speed One service at Ebbsfleet had been forecast to be unable to meet the projected demand from the planned housing growth in the new garden city, prior to the impacts on rail demand post-pandemic. All peak High Speed One services which served Ebbsfleet prior to the pandemic were full to capacity. This is a major issue if demand returns to pre-pandemic levels and will be addressed by lengthening trains on the High Speed One network, running more services and supporting travel demand by improving the wider National Rail and local transport networks.

Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet: Future Provision of Public Transport

The Elizabeth Line (Crossrail 1) opened on 24th May 2022. It is not expected to be fully operational for through running from Abbey Wood to Heathrow and Reading until the autumn. The full timetable of 24 trains an hour between Paddington and Whitechapel is expected by May 2023.

KCC and other local authorities are considering, with Transport for London and the Greater London Authority, options for future provision of public transport between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet, one of which could be an extension of the Elizabeth Line to Ebbsfleet. Public consultation took place in 2021 on options to support growth in the north Kent corridor between Abbey Wood

and Gravesend. In late 2021, a new Strategic Outline Business Case was submitted to government for funding the development of preferred options. A response from government is awaited.

For further information on those consultations:

<https://www.abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com/>

Westenhanger Station: Otterpool Park Garden Town

Otterpool Park Ltd, the developer, is working with Network Rail and the rail operator to secure station and service upgrades. KCC, as the local transport authority, is inputting to the plans to help ensure transport impacts of the development are as sustainable as possible by improving the network. One proposal is to upgrade the station to enable High Speed One services to stop. The plans include lengthened platforms, new footbridge and lifts, a new station building and facilities and a dedicated car park. The service would likely only commence when an agreed level of dwelling occupations has been achieved.

High Speed One service enhancement

KCC has engaged in discussions with High Speed One and the East Kent Delivery Board (district councils in east Kent, KCC and local businesses) about the need to enhance capacity and service levels. The working scenario has been a post-pandemic environment, from about 2025 onwards, where demand has returned to previous levels and outstrips supply due to the growth in housing and population across the county.

There are two key elements essential to the delivery of such an enhanced level of service and capacity:

- The need for an increase in High Speed One rolling-stock;
- The lead-time of four years for the installation of a new connection between High Speed One and the mainline west of Folkestone West.

This would deliver the capacity required to meet the growth in demand and further improve journey times from the coast and ensure that growth into the 2030's and beyond would be accommodated by the high-speed network.

Network Rail has also developed a business case setting out options to government for the potential electrification and extension of High Speed services to Hastings and Eastbourne. A response is awaited from government.



Proposal for the new Thanet Parkway Station.

Investment Zones

As part of The Growth Plan 2022, the Chancellor announced discussions with 38 local authorities including Kent County Council to establish investment zones in England.

On 14 October Kent County Council submitted a series of Expressions of Interest in which up to 20 sites were identified across the county as potential Investment Zones. In the letter it was stated:

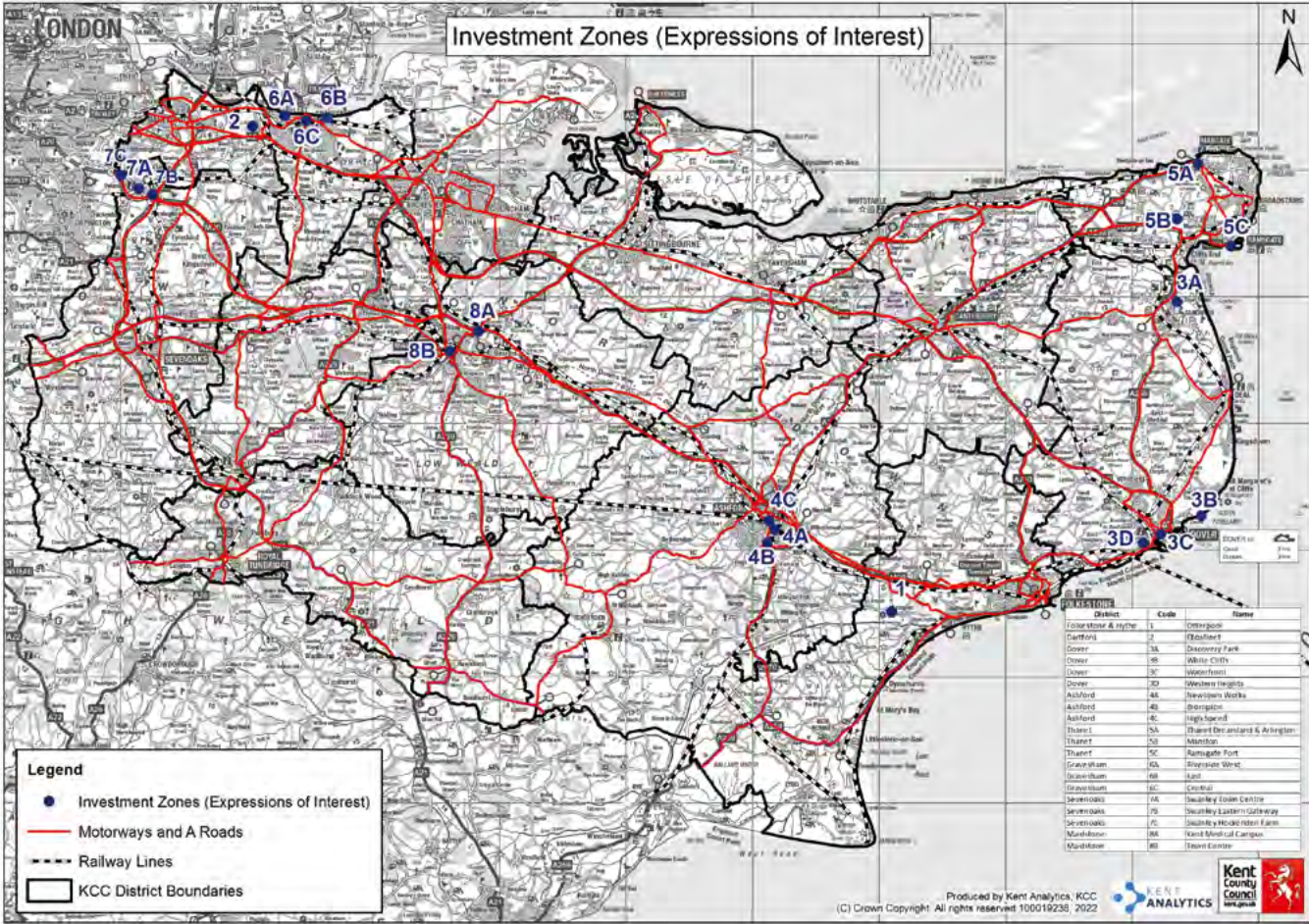
‘Building on Kent’s distinctive assets and opportunities, all the sites that we have identified also contribute to one or more of the following themes:

- **International Gateway:** Kent is the UK’s gateway to Europe. While this brings infrastructure challenges, our connectivity has long been central to our investment proposition;
- **Nationally significant growth at scale:** Kent contains some of the UK’s most important locations for long-term, sustainable, housing and employment growth;
- **Sector strengths:** Our Investment Zone proposals will help to advance those sectors in which Kent has a comparative advantage, and which are also UK strengths;
- **Growth at the heart of levelling up:** Accelerated housing and employment growth is central to our levelling up aspirations.’

When Kent County Council submitted these Expressions of Interest to government, the point was made that “Investment Zone designation must also be part of a package of measures supporting growth that will work for future generations and which delivers the skills, infrastructure, innovation and community services that we need to thrive. It will be important to maintain positive dialogue with government on future investment in transport, infrastructure and economic growth.”

The submission was made with the agreement and of every local planning authority in Kent (ie the Districts and Boroughs) and the support of local Members of Parliament.

Government intends to work with the devolved administrations and other local partners to deliver Investment Zones across all parts of the UK as quickly as possible.



District	Code	Name
Folkestone & Hythe	1	Otterpool
Dartford	2	Ebbsfleet
Dover	3A	Discovery Park
Dover	3B	White Cliffs
Dover	3C	Waterfront
Dover	3D	Western Heights
Ashford	4A	Newtown Works
Ashford	4B	Brompton
Ashford	4C	High Speed
Thanet	5A	Thanet Dreamland & Arlington

District	Code	Name
Thanet	5B	Manston
Thanet	5C	Ramsgate Port
Gravesham	6A	Riverside West
Gravesham	6B	East
Gravesham	6C	Central
Sevenoaks	7A	Swanley Town Centre
Sevenoaks	7B	Swanley Eastern Gateway
Sevenoaks	7C	Swanley Hockenden Farm
Maidstone	8A	Kent Medical Campus
Maidstone	8B	Town Centre

Source: Kent County Council letter to Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Green Infrastructure

Low Carbon Kent

Kent County Council is prominent in the green infrastructure arena with renewed levels of support for those already in and looking to enter the sector in the South East. Kent firms have benefitted from Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE) funding for SMEs with projects to improve the efficiency and performance of their buildings and operations as well as business development grants for those in this growing sector. This year alone over £1.14m of grants for 167 Kent & Medway SMEs have supported lighting, glazing, insulation, heating upgrades and renewable energy generation as well as helping local installers, architects and suppliers to the sector.

Despite the end of EU funding in late spring 2023 there are other ways which Low Carbon Kent can help:

- SELEP funded Clean Growth South East project for businesses in the Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Economy (LCREE) and Environmental Goods and Services Sector (EGSS);
- Steps To Environmental Management scheme to support construction and green infrastructure supply chains;
- Inn2POWER engagement platforms for green hydrogen infrastructure opportunities.

Businesses of all shapes and sizes can get support on their journey to Net Zero – the Low Carbon Kent team run a host of projects that can provide help.

Decarbonising KCC buildings

A huge amount of work has been completed on the path to net zero emissions for KCC's estate by 2030 including acquisition of a solar park and recent improvements across council buildings.

This year alone over £1.14m of grants for 167 Kent & Medway SMEs have supported lighting, glazing, insulation, heating upgrades and renewable energy generation.

Funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) meant KCC was awarded a 100% grant for solar installations on six KCC buildings and one school. These renewable energy installations were completed in April at Sunrise Centre, Swanley Link, Kent Scientific Services, Rainbow Centre, Brook House, St Peter's House and Herne Bay High School. In addition, 657 solar panels have been installed on buildings, projected to save £50,000 a year in energy costs. KCC also gained funding to change lighting at Henwood Offices/Highway Depot in Ashford to light emitting diodes (LEDs) as well as for the car park, storage building, flood lights and streetlights. Five libraries have also moved to LED lighting. The total energy savings for these projects was estimated as over £96,000 per year. These savings are before the energy price increases this year. The total estimated carbon dioxide equivalent savings to date is over 129 tonnes per year.

KCC was also successful in securing funding of £208,627 from Salix's Low Carbon Skills Fund to commission:

- A heat decarbonisation plan for KCC's top 35 energy consuming sites;
- Feasibility studies, decarbonisation plans and energy efficiency measures, such as solar and LED, for 13 buildings;
- Heat decarbonisation plans with feasibility studies and designs for 11 further council buildings and one school.

Sustainable Urban Drainage at St Katherine's School, Snodland

KCC has completed phase one of the scheme, part funded by the Department for Education's Decarbonisation Programme. The project was developed after flooding in 2019 which temporarily closed the school. It comprises swales and a basin designed to reduce the flood risk to the school and also benefit and enhance the landscape value of the playing fields. The basin, which will remain dry in all but large rainfall events, has been planted with a mixture

of native trees and wild flowers to develop an outdoor classroom space. A similar scheme for Barming School is being developed.

Biodiversity Net Gain Officer

Kent's district authorities, Medway Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation have supported a proposal from KCC to develop a shared Biodiversity Net Gain Officer, using grant funding recently received from Defra. This post holder will, over the next two years, support planning authorities in preparing for the introduction of the mandatory requirement for development to deliver a biodiversity net gain.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Drivers will benefit from more electric vehicle charging points as the County Council was announced as one of nine local authorities to be enrolled in a government pilot. The Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme will see KCC receive a share of the £10m funding, which is part of a wider £450m scheme. It is expected to deliver 26 public charge points across four different locations: The Turner Gallery, Kings Hill, Paddock Wood Community Centre and Gravesend Cyclopark. Crucially, the pilot will allow KCC to test out new technologies to bring forward charge points in areas constrained by electricity supply.



Funding is expected to deliver 26 public charge points across four different locations in Kent.

CREDIT: ADOBE STOCK

Contributor



Post-pandemic resilience depends on the right insurance approach as much as anything else

Now that the shadow of the pandemic has passed, the need for longer-term strategic investment in housing, schools, hospitals, care homes, and infrastructure is plain to see. Our new government needs to stimulate and promote growth in these critical areas and other construction projects if the economy is to return to pre-pandemic strength. And while there are opportunities to be seized post-pandemic, property development still faces significant headwinds for the foreseeable future.

Material shortages and rising costs

First and foremost is the escalating cost of building materials. Prices have soared over the past two years and continue to climb due to the war in Ukraine and rising inflation in the UK. This situation is exacerbated by the high global demand for raw materials, leading to severe supply chain delays, which in turn impact delivery and application. On top of that, we are witnessing labour shortages and wage inflation within the construction sector, with skilled workers in short supply.

The hardening insurance market

Then there is the spiralling cost of insurance. Securing cover for all classes of insurance in the current hardening market has become much more demanding for construction specialists, with insurers seeking to tighten policy wording, reduce limits and impose exclusions, particularly around design, fire safety and Covid 19. Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) concern insurers too. While appreciating the merits of new materials, construction methods and processes, they are nevertheless wary about how effective MMC are against risks such as fire, flooding, or escape of water and how these new materials will cope with general wear and tear.

Property development insurance is a task for specialists

It goes without saying that a development project is a complex and multifaceted operation. By the same token, its insurance can be equally complicated, requiring careful handling and coordination from planning and design to completion and beyond. Appointing insurance specialists at the earliest opportunity (and preferably even before development begins) to oversee a development project's construction insurance requirements makes perfect sense, given the magnitude of the task at hand.

A specialist broker will work with all parties (whether that's funders, architects, surveyors, contractors and sub-contractors) to arrange insurance that reflects everyone's respective rights and interests, avoids costly duplication and prevents potential gaps in cover. This programme would include Rights of light insurance, indemnities and covenants, construction works, consequential loss/delay start-up, latent defects, property asset protection and rental/revenue protection.

This end-to-end approach provides protection against a contractor, for example, failing to ensure that they are adequately insured, which could result in litigation, loss and potential insolvency. Such an event would have a severe detrimental effect on the building project's progress and, ultimately, its financial yield. It can't be overstated, in our view, how important it is to seek specialist help and address risk-related issues at the earliest opportunity. The earlier the risks are considered, and contractual and insurance issues correctly aligned, the better the outcome for all concerned.

Phillip Lamb

Associate Director

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Contributor



Kent planning and development update

The planning landscape across Kent continues to offer opportunities for residential and commercial development, the challenge is working out how best to navigate the system. DHA, the South East's largest independent planning consultancy, uses its in-depth local knowledge to consider the property market outlook for 2023 and the key planning issues facing the county.

Changing market

Demand for new homes continues. Logistics and distribution space, driven by the ongoing growth of online sales, was turbocharged during the pandemic. This has driven up land values, narrowing the gap with residential values – sometimes even exceeding it. As a result, there is a growing number of large-scale commercial property applications, many on brownfield sites, coming forward to provide the jobs, create sustainable communities and the delivery of new homes.

DHA has also seen an increase in owners of existing industrial sites reviewing their options for residential development, or redevelopment for other businesses.

National challenges

Across the county, many local authorities continue to



Proposal for Paddock Wood Community Centre.

wrestle with finalising an NPPF policy-compliant Local Plan that achieves the objective of meeting their area's full development needs. In what could be described as a patchwork quilt of Local Plans, some authorities are putting out calls for sites, some are being examined by Inspectors, and others are fully compliant.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils continue to promote the options of new settlements, both of which are at different stages of examination. Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have both commenced work on evidence gathering and consultation on new plans following their respective unsound previous plans.

The struggle to demonstrate a five-year land supply by many councils creates further opportunities to bring forward development proposals. This is particularly prevalent in areas beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt without the blanket policy protection afforded to west Kent planning authorities.

The Green Belt continues to frustrate development, with councils having to balance housing targets against planning policies, which is a challenge. DHA's planning teams have successfully argued the case and secured permissions for many Green Belt projects.

Environmental constraints continue to influence local development, notably the nutrient neutrality in relation to the water quality of the Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve. While there may be a solution in sight, the ramifications of the delays to development have been felt beyond its immediate area. With residential and commercial projects having been put on hold, councils and developers are having to consider bringing forward other sites for development.

Skills gap

The other significant issue facing everyone involved in the development environment is the need to recruit and retain skilled planning officers, whether by local authorities or planning consultants.

There's an urgent need for trained planning officers who, as well as making the plan, can apply planning policy, engage with developers and see applications all the way to committee.

Kent is no different from any other county in requiring a greater number of planners, so DHA has set about ensuring it is recruiting graduates and has put in place its own university-standard training system. This initiative is now sharing the knowledge and best practice with council planning officers.

To find out how DHA can support you visit:

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Contributor

Hollaway

Architects / Master Planners / Interior Designers

East Kent focus

As Architects, we are proud to work across the county on projects that will build community, create jobs and regenerate towns that have been under-invested for too long. However, in this article we are focusing in on east Kent.

Folkestone is going through a coastal renaissance; the town has not seen this level of change since the Victorian & Edwardian eras. This year we have seen work start on site for the Leas Pavilion scheme, designed by Hollaway Studio for Gustavia. This scheme and ACME's seafront scheme will hopefully raise the design bar for coastal towns. Folkestone Harbour with its many restaurants and bars along the Harbour Arm has now become the most visited destination in Kent. Earlier this year saw the opening of F51, the 'world's first multi-storey skatepark' putting Folkestone on the map, having received global recognition and which has been shortlisted for the World Architecture Awards.

Whilst east Kent is home to the UK's largest port at Dover, it is also incredibly rich in heritage assets. As well as Dover Castle it is also home to the less well known, scheduled ancient monuments, the Citadel and Dover Western Heights. It is here that Hollaway Studio are masterplanning to create a destination hotel and spa, and to redevelop a new residential site which will help to restore the heritage assets and allow

these forts to be open and enjoyed by the public. We are also working with SeaHive to design an exciting Wave Garden Hub, at Betteshanger, which has now been submitted for detailed planning with Quinn Estates. The project proposes to include a destination hotel and spa and has the potential to prove transformational for east Kent.

Margate & Ramsgate continue to attract creatives living by the sea, and this year Thanet District Council were successful in securing Levelling Up Funding. Margate has, up until now, successfully attracted the 'kiss me quick' day tripper, but can it attract the 'kiss me slow' visitor for a few nights and create destination hotels?

In Canterbury in September, the final phase of the Rhodaus Town student scheme facade was revealed which has created 1,000 high quality student beds in the city centre. We have also been assisting Canterbury City Council with their Levelling Up Funding bid, which it is hoped will help to support the towns' growth and investment.

The town where we are seeing the most positive change is Ashford. The town is benefitting from an active borough council which has entered into successful public/private partnerships. This includes work starting at the New Town Works in collaboration with Quinn Estates and Ashford Borough Council, assisted by a successful Levelling Up Fund bid. This partnership has also been successful in securing new global headquarters for bike manufacturer Brompton Bicycle Ltd over competitors Manchester and Birmingham, which we hope will obtain planning permission at the beginning of 2023.

Guy Hollaway

Principal Partner

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www.hollawaystudio.co.uk



Proposal for coastguard cottages and apartments in St Margarets Bay at Cliffe, designed by Hollaway Studio.



Proposal for residential development in Hythe designed by Hollaway Studio with Sunningdale Homes.



Proposal for Brompton Bicycles new Global HQ and factory designed by Hollaway Studio.

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY STUDIO

Contributor



Economic uncertainty

The current economic climate has galvanised families and businesses across the country to re-assess their finances and look for savings to mitigate against rising costs and economic uncertainty.

Businesses in the construction and real estate sectors are no exception and continue to experience a mixed bag in terms of growth. The construction sector is enjoying strong demand for both residential building and large public infrastructure projects and demand for new retail and office space is still subdued and work is now less profitable in light of rising inflation and interest rates.

UK Real Estate has benefitted from an extended period of low interest rates for mortgages and a welcome boost from the temporary Stamp Duty Land Tax holiday. However, the prospect of ever-increasing interest rates, the threat of recession, soaring inflation and the cost-of-living crisis are likely to influence the sector to some degree for the foreseeable future. There may be some mitigation as a result of the ongoing imbalance between supply and demand created by historically low stock levels. The 'Build-to-Rent' market has held up well, however the squeeze on household finances, especially for those in lower income brackets will limit what costs can be passed on.

Quarterly insolvency statistics are starting to paint a concerning picture, with the level of company insolvencies 112% higher than during the same period last year, and the highest since 2012. The three industries experiencing the highest number of insolvencies were construction (19% of cases), wholesale, retail trade and repair of vehicles (13%) and accommodation and food services (12%). As always, careful planning to manage cash flow and working capital will be crucial for many firms.

IR35 has already had a significant effect on contractors in the construction sector, contributing to a 10% fall in the number of self-employed workers, according to research conducted by IPSE in 2022. It found, overall, that more than a third of freelancers have moved away from contracting since the changes came into effect in April 2021. While the pandemic and Brexit will have contributed to the fall, IR35 has certainly created a barrier for the self-employed and a risk for companies using self-employed workers; with many opting to try and avoid the risk altogether by engaging workers through payroll companies.

MHA MacIntyre Hudson understands the nature of the construction industry and the challenges faced. We work with a wide range of clients in the sector.

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Let's face the future, together.



Contributor



Kent construction outlook

Total construction workloads continued to pick-up across Kent during the first half of 2022 according to the feedback received to the RICS UK Construction Monitor, with the private industrial sector leading the way in terms of construction output growth. Moreover, new business enquiries also saw a modest increase over the most recent survey period, albeit the pace of growth appears to have softened somewhat relative to earlier in the year.

Alongside this, employment levels across the local construction industry improved during Q2, evidenced by a net balance of +27% of respondents within the county citing a rise in headcount. Looking ahead, expectations for employment within the sector remain marginally positive in Kent for the coming twelve months, despite the weakening wider macroeconomic outlook. That said, the latest results in the local area are a little less upbeat than both the broader national average as well as across the South East in its entirety.

Although the current assessment of construction activity remains generally positive, respondents do report that there are several factors hindering the market at present. Indeed, 82% of contributors point to a shortage in materials to be weighing on activity, a trend that is evident not just across the rest of the UK but also at the global level. Meanwhile, 60% of contributors cite problems around sourcing labour which is again a concern raised across much of the country. An issue that appears especially prominent across Kent relative to the national feedback is that of problems/delays around planning and regulation. It found 90% of survey participants at the more local level highlighted this to be a factor constraining construction output – much higher than a share of 47% at the UK-wide level.

Looking further ahead, with interest rates rising and economic growth in general set to soften on the back of the cost-of-living crisis, the outlook across the construction sector is understandably turning more cautious. For Kent specifically, headline workloads are now seen as remaining broadly flat over the next twelve months, with the private commercial sector anticipated to see a slight pull-back in development activity over the same timeframe. Nevertheless, the picture for the residential sector as well as that for infrastructure appears more resilient regarding the next twelve months at least. Given the pressure on the industry from sharply rising material costs of late (with little immediate respite envisaged), profit margins are anticipated to be squeezed over the course of the year ahead.

Tarrant Parsons

Senior Economist
RICS



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[rics.org](https://www.rics.org)

Contributor

Thomson Snell & Passmore

What are the challenges to SME developers in today's market?

Today's property market is ever more competitive, with suitable development land in shorter supply and developers facing a growing number of rival bidders. In addition to this, once a site is secured, the planning and market challenges are creating constraints and viability issues, particularly for small and medium enterprise developers whose numbers have dwindled in the over the last few years.

Developers face a growing number of issues to add to the more traditional ones such as restrictive covenants, rights to light and access. One of which is nutrient neutrality. In recent years requirements handed down from Natural England (NE) to reduce nutrient pollution have been high on the planning agenda for many Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). Planning departments are required to ensure that a development site is only permitted where it has a neutral effect on nutrient pollution. In recent months the number of LPAs affected has more than doubled and now affects 74 LPAs. Dover District Council has confirmed that developments in its jurisdiction will not be affected by the NE advice, but we await confirmation that other LPAs will follow suit.

In addition to this is the requirement for development sites to use renewable energy sources, particularly in a market where fuel prices are increasing on a seemingly weekly basis. Renewable energy can be provided from a number of sources such as solar, wind and the ground but a requirement to provide renewable energy alternatives places constraints on the layout of a site and the space required to accommodate these. Renewable energy requirements might also be at odds with forthcoming regulations which are expected in connection with biodiversity.

Sites, or parts of sites, which are deemed suitable for the installation of renewable energy sources, such as wind turbines or ground mounted solar panels, will be in direct competition with areas which are also suitable to be 'set aside' for biodiversity requirements.

There is current uncertainty about Biodiversity Net Gains (BNG) requirements and the ultimate impact these will have on developments, such as whether off site areas will be permitted, how long will BNG areas be ring-fenced as a net gain area and what percentage of the site will need to be set aside.

When developers consider the impact of the above issues, they also need to be alive to the fact that there will still be requirements to provide affordable housing on the majority of sites. The current percentages of affordable housing required on development land coupled with the BNG and renewable energy regulations could have a significant impact on the profitability of sites.

We wonder whether the planning regimes will implement changes in respect of these requirements as quickly as may be required to take into account the lessening extent of a developable area of a site.

SME developers provide a valuable role in invigorating the market with their ambitious designs and alternative developments. While they may be facing a range of challenges, with the right support and advice, there are also real opportunities for these developers to be agile and adapt to changing market forces and get ahead of the curve.

Kate Turnham

Partner, Commercial Property team
Thomson, Snell & Passmore

When the only certainty is change

Uncertainty is part of life, but the property market has changed so rapidly that finding creative ways to keep pace is a huge challenge.

We provide ambitious businesses, developers and landlords with pragmatic legal advice to help them adapt and grow.



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Caxtons

Caxtons Property Consultants, is one of the largest, independent and long-established property practices in the South East. We offer market leading advice and expertise in property management, agency, lettings, valuation, lease advisory and insurance services across all property sectors.

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Locate in Kent Ltd

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CLEAR MPW is an insurance broker based in Maidstone. A specialist in the arrangement of insurance and risk management programmes for developers, funders, construction professionals, housebuilders, contractors and the wider construction sector, and, as part of the CLEAR Group, corporate and commercial clients throughout the UK.

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DHA

DHA is a creative team of professional Town Planners, Highways, Infrastructure, Design, Environmental and Land Consultants working from offices in Maidstone, Gatwick and London. We provide a comprehensive and integrated service to some of the UK's largest landowners and developers in both the private and public sector throughout the UK.

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Hollaway

Hollaway Studio is an RIBA award winning practice of architects, master-planners and interior designers working from studios based both in Kent and London. Hollaway Studio has highly motivated creative architects and designers working in a variety of sectors, from large scale mixed-use regeneration proposals through to smaller bespoke design focused projects.

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MacIntyre Hudson

MHA is a national Top 12 chartered accountancy and business advisory firm. Our Kent team offers a comprehensive range of services including tax, audit, business strategy, corporate finance and business recovery to owner-managed businesses, multinationals and high net worth individuals across the South East.

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Thomson Snell & Passmore is one of the largest firms in the South East, with over 260 people and over 150 lawyers advising, Directors, PLC's, subsidiaries of overseas companies, SME's, OMB's, housing associations, local authorities, charities, schools and individuals.

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CREDIT: HUFTON+CROW



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Back cover:
**Proposals for Brompton Bicycles new Global
HQ and factory designed by Hollaway Studio.**
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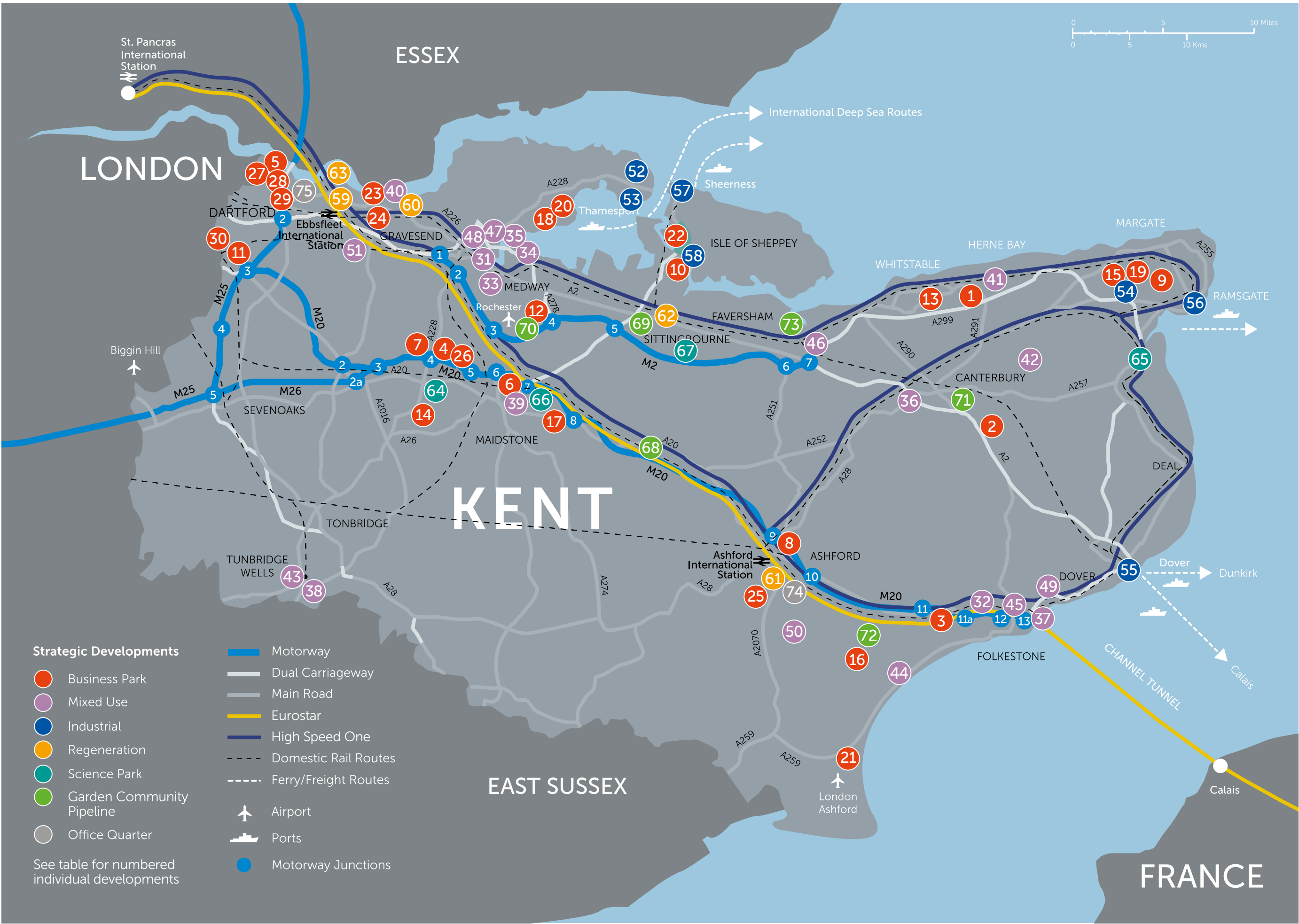


Hollaway



Thomson Snell & Passmore





● Business Parks ● Mixed Use ● Industrial ● Regeneration ● Science Park ● Garden Community Pipeline

A1 Shops & retail **B1** Offices, light industry **B2** General industrial **B8** Warehouses, distribution **C1** Hotels

Map	Scheme	Location	Usage	Contact	Website
1	Altira Business Park	Herne Bay	B1, B2, B8	Sinclair Clark 020 7494 9399 Core Commercial 01892 834483 Terrace Hill Urban & Civic 020 7509 5555	altirapark.com
2	Canterbury Business Park/ Highland Court	Canterbury	B1, B8	Quinn Estates 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
3	Cheriton Parc	Folkestone	B1	Motis Estates 01303 212020	Motis-estates.com
4	Click Aylesford	Aylesford	B2, B8	Wrenbridge	clickaylesford.co.uk
5	Crossways Commercial Park – Phase 2	Dartford	B8	Goodmans 020 3426 0800	uk.goodman.com/properties-for-lease
6	Eclipse Business Park	Maidstone	A1, B1, C1	Gallagher Group 01622 716543 Sibley Pares 01622 673086	eclipsepark.co.uk
7	Equites Park	Snodland	B2, B8	Newlands Developments 01788 422197	equitesparksnodland.co.uk
8	Eureka Business Park	Ashford	B1	Martine Waghorn 01622 672233	–
9	EuroKent Business Park	Ramsgate	A1, B1, B2, B8, D2	Rosefarm Estates plc 01243 785151	–
10	G Park Sittingbourne	Sittingbourne	B1, B8	Savills 020 7499 8644	gpark-sittingbourne.com
11	Goya Distribution Hub	Swanley	B2, B8	Goya Developments 07950 823 750	goyadevelopments.co.uk
12	Innovation Park Medway	Rochester	B1, B2, B8	Locate in Kent 01732 520700	www.innovationparkmedway.com
13	Joseph Wilson Industrial Estate Extension	Whitstable	B1	George Wilson Developments 01227 263077	georgewilsonholdings.com
14	Kings Hill	West Malling	A1, B1, D2, R	Liberty Property Trust UK 01732 223426 Altus Edwin Hill 01322 285588 Knight Frank 020 7629 8171 Hanover Green 020 3130 6400	kings-hill.com
15	Land North West of Manston Airport	Ramsgate	B1, B2, B8, Sui Generis	Locate in Kent 01732 520700	–
16	Link Park	Lympne	B1, B2, B8	Core Commercial 01892 834483	–
17	Loc8 Maidstone	Hollingbourne	Mixed Use	Clearbell 020 7494 7620	loc8maidstone.co.uk clearbell.com
18	London Medway Commercial Park	Rochester	B1, B2, B8 Sui Generis	Goodman UK Logistics 0121 506 8100 CBRE 020 7182 2000 Colliers International 020 7344 6730 Caxtons 01474 567666	londonmedwaycp.com
19	Manston Business Park	Ramsgate	B1, B2, B8	East Kent Opportunities 01622 221380 Savills 01732 789716	–
20	Medway One	Hoo	Mixed use	Uniper 0121 329 4350	–
21	Mountfield Road Industrial Estate	New Romney	B1, B2, B8	Folkestone and Hythe Council 01303 853000	folkestone.works
22	Neats Court	Isle of Sheppey	B1, B2, B8, Ancillary	Savills 020 7499 8644	–
23	Northfleet Embankment East	Gravesham	B1, B2	Gravesham Borough Council 01474 337 258/Homes England	ebbsfleetdc.org.uk
24	Northfleet Embankment West	Gravesham	B1, B2, B8, R	David Lock Associates 01908 666276 EDC 0303 444 8831/GBC 01474 337258	ebbsfleetdc.org.uk
25	Orbital Park	Ashford	B1, B2, B8 Trade	Altus Group 01322 285588 BNP Paribas Real Estate 020 7629 7282	orbitalpark.co.uk
26	Panattoni Park	Aylesford	B1, B2, B8	JLL 020 7493 4933	–
27	Powerhouse	Dartford	B8	Bericote 020 7409 1544	thepowerhouse.london
28	Rennie Drive	Dartford	B8	Cushman and Wakefield 020 8033 7334	–
29	The Bridge	Dartford	B1, B8	JLL 01322 629230 Prologis 0121 2248700	thebridgedartford.co.uk
30	Upper Hockenden Farm	Swanley	B1, B2, B8, Sui Generis	Locate in Kent 01732 520700	–
31	Bardell Wharf	Rochester	A1-A5, B1-B2, D1-D2, Sui Generis	Quinn Estates 01622 684407	www.quinn-estates.com
32	Biggins Wood	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Folkestone and Hythe Council 01303 853000	folkestone.works
33	Chatham Centre and Waterfront	Chatham	A5, C1, C3	Medway Council 01634 333333	medway.gov.uk/business
34	Chatham Maritime	Chatham	B1, C1, C3	Chatham Maritime Trust 01634 891888	cmtrust.co.uk
35	Chatham Waters and Dock	Chatham	A1-A5, B1-B2, C1, D1-D2, Sui Generis	Peel Ports 01795 596596	chathamwaters.co.uk
36	Cockering Farm/ Thanington Park	Canterbury	Mixed Use, B1	Quinn Estates 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com

● Office Quarter

D1 Education, crèches **D2** Leisure **R** Residential **Sui Generis** Bespoke development

Map	Scheme	Location	Usage	Contact	Website
37	Folkestone Harbour	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Folkestone Harbour Company 01303 254597	folkestoneseafront.com
38	Former Cinema Site/ Belvedere	Tunbridge Wells	Mixed Use	Retirement Villages Group 0800 1303380	rtw-cinema-site.co.uk
39	Former Royal Mail Sorting Office	Maidstone	Mixed Use	Caxtons 01474 615615	–
40	Gravesend Riverside	Gravesend	Mixed Use	Joseph Homes 020 7499	–
41	Herne Bay Commercial Quarter	Herne Bay	B1	Quinn Estates 01227 831 212	quinn-estates.com
42	Hoplands Farm	Canterbury	Mixed Use, B1	Quinn Estates 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
43	Kingstanding	Tunbridge Wells	B2, B8	U+I Group Plc	uandi plc.com/our-places/kingstanding
44	Martello Lakes	Hythe	Mixed Use	Barratt Homes 0844 8549936	barratthomes.co.uk
45	Park Farm	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Q+A Planning 020 3542 2241	–
46	Perry Court	Faversham	Mixed Use	Hallam Land Management 0114 255 5444	perry-court.co.uk
47	Rochester Riverside	Rochester	A1-A5, B1-B2, C1, D1-D2, Sui Generis	Countryside 01634 776506	countrysideproperties.com
48	Strood Waterfront	Rochester	A1-A4, C1-C3, B1	Medway Council 01634 333333	medway.gov.uk/business
49	Terlingham Gardens	Hawkinge	Mixed Use	Pentland Homes 01303 864 590	pentlandhomes.co.uk
50	Waterbrook Park	Ashford	B1, B2, B8, Sui Generis	GSE Group 01233 501301 Sibley Pares 01622 673086 Knight Frank 020 7629 8171	waterbrookpark.co.uk
51	Whitecliffe (Eastern Quarry)	Dartford	A1,B1,C1,D1, R	Henley Camland 01483 617070	henleycamland.com
52	Former Grain Power Station	Hoo	Mixed use	Uniper 0121 329 4350	–
53	London Thamesport	Rochester	B1, B2, B8 Sui Generis	Hutchison Ports 01634 271511	londonthamesport.co.uk
54	Manston Airport	Manston Airport	Mixed use	RiverOak Ltd	rsp.co.uk
55	Port of Dover	Dover	Mixed Use	Dover Harbour Board 01304 240400	doverport.co.uk/dwdr
56	Port of Ramsgate	Ramsgate	B1,B2, B8, Sui Generis	Thanet District Council 01843 577000	–
57	Port of Sheerness	Isle of Sheppey	B1, B2, B8	Peel Ports 01795 596596	peelports.com
58	Ridham Dock	Sittingbourne	B1, B2, B8 Sui Generis	Caxtons 01474 567666	–
59	Ebbsfleet Central	Ebbsfleet	A1, B1, C1, D1, D2, R	EDC 0303 444 8831	ebbsfleetvalley.co.uk
60	Gravesend Town Centre	Gravesend	Mixed Use	Reef 020 7637 0601	–
61	Newtown Works	Ashford	Mixed Use	Quinn Estates 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
62	Sittingbourne Town Centre	Sittingbourne	Mixed use	Swale Borough Council/ U+I Group Plc/Quinn Estates and Essential Land 01227 831212	spiritofsittingbourne.com
63	Swanscombe Peninsula	Dartford/ Gravesham	B1,D1,D2,R	David Lock Associates 01908 666276 EDC 0303 444 8831 DBC 01322 343434	ebbsfleetdc.org.uk
64	Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone	East Malling	B R&D	NIAB EMR 01732 843833	emrt-planningforthefuture.co.uk
65	Discovery Park	Sandwich	B1, B2, B8	Discovery Park Ltd 01304 614060	discovery-park.co.uk
66	Kent Medical Campus	Maidstone	A1, B1, C2, D1	Torrinum 01908 660177	kentmedicalcampus.com
67	Kent Science Park	Sittingbourne	B1	Kent Science Park 01795 411500	kentsciencepark.com
68	Heathlands	Ashford/ Maidstone	Mixed Use	Maidstone Borough Council	www.heathlandsgc.co.uk
69	Highstead Park	Sittingbourne	Mixed Use	Quinn Estates 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
70	Lidsing	Gillingham/ Maidstone	Mixed Use	Hume Planning	www.humeplanning.co.uk
71	Mountfield Park	Canterbury	Mixed Use, B1	Corinthian Land	mountfieldpark.co.uk
72	Otterpool Park	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Folkestone and Hythe Council 01303 853000	ottepoolpark.org
73	South East Faversham	Faversham	Mixed Use	Duchy of Cornwall 0800 772 0475	sefaversham.co.uk
74	Commercial Quarter	Ashford	B1a	Quinn Estates 01227 831212/George Wilson Developments 01227 263077 Altus Group 01322 285588	–
75	Crossways	Dartford	B1	Caxtons 01474 537733 Watson Day 01634 668000 Altus Group 01322 285 588	crosswayskent.com