

Introduction

- 6.1** Housing is a key issue for the Local Plan. By making the best possible use of existing housing stock, the Plan seeks to minimise the need to use greenfield sites for development. Priority is given to the re-use of previously-developed land, including the conversion, redevelopment and sub-division of existing buildings, with a target of 90% of new housing development to be generated from previously-used sites during the Plan period. The most sustainable location for housing is within, or close to, the existing town and neighbourhood centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough.
- 6.2** In order to meet the strategic dwelling requirement to 2011, some greenfield land will need to be identified, although such development is not expected to be required until the latter phase of the Plan period. The most sustainable location, close to employment, shops, schools, entertainment and other services would be an extension to the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough.
- 6.3** As the number of one-person households rises, it is important to respond to an increasing demand for smaller properties. The Plan also recognises the need for an adequate supply of affordable housing and accommodation for key workers.
- 6.4** The first section of this Chapter deals with general policies. The remainder of the Chapter sets out the amount, location and phasing of additional housing land to be provided, together with policies which seek to control residential development both within, and outside, the defined Limits to Built Development.

Aims

1. To retain and make the best possible use of existing housing stock within the defined Limits to Built Development, including those within, or close to, town, neighbourhood and village centres.
2. To retain and enhance the character and amenities of predominantly residential areas.
3. To ensure that an adequate supply of land for additional housing is available during the Plan period which allows housing development to proceed in line with the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the approved Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 proposals and Government advice in respect of site location and phasing.
4. To make the best possible use of previously-developed land and buildings within the defined Limits to Built Development, through conversion of existing buildings, redevelopment or infill development.
5. To monitor and manage the release of land such that greenfield land is not released for development whilst there is a satisfactory supply of previously-developed land.
6. To ensure an appropriate range of dwelling types is provided, including small dwellings and affordable housing.
7. To promote the good design and layout of new housing development, whilst making the most efficient use of land and to make adequate provision for open space and community facilities.

General Policies

THE RETENTION OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

- 6.5** In addition to the continuing yield from unidentified sites, the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 emphasise the importance of making the best possible use of the existing housing stock within existing built up areas. This includes the maintenance, renovation and adaptation of existing dwellings. This in turn will contribute to minimising the need for using greenfield sites for residential use.
- 6.6** The Borough Council remains committed to the retention of the existing housing stock. This is particularly important in relation to the cores of towns and villages where the proximity of residential properties to commercial buildings contributes to the special character and vitality of an area. This is a special characteristic of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. Although there may be instances, because of surrounding activities, where the premises are unsuitable for residential purposes, it is not considered that residential use is incompatible with the activities generally found within these centres. Indeed, residential development may be important to the vitality of a centre. This type of location may provide an attractive choice to those households who have limited personal mobility. Housing located at, or near, the centre of settlements represents a very sustainable form of development since it is normally close to a wide range of shops, services, employment opportunities and public transport. Development is also often at higher densities in central areas and represents a very efficient use of land.
- 6.7** It is preferable that small-scale community uses cluster within defined town, neighbourhood or village centres where they adjoin other community facilities and are well located to conveniently meet the population's needs (POLICY CR13). Where this is not feasible, small-scale community uses may be situated within a residential area in order to be close to the population they serve. Such uses include doctors' and dental surgeries, playgroups, nurseries, community buildings and small-scale local shops. In these cases it is desirable that some part of the building should be retained in residential use in order to retain a residential unit and help sustain the character and vitality of an area.
- 6.8** Other exceptions allowed within POLICY H1 include schemes coming forward within a settlement which would involve a comprehensive development with significant environmental gain or improvement which would benefit the wider community.
- 6.9** Where premises are located within a Primary Shopping Area, proposals for the change of use of a dwelling to a use which would enhance the vitality and viability of the shopping area may be allowed. Nevertheless, PPG3 emphasises the importance of retaining mixed uses, including residential uses in commercial centres and within individual sites or buildings to ensure the vitality of the area outside business hours and to contribute to the housing supply. Wherever practicable, residential use should be retained on the upper floors of buildings within shopping areas.
- 6.10** Exceptionally it may be the case that the change of use of a listed building from residential to an alternative use, ~~in compliance with POLICY EN3,~~ would be essential to ensure the preservation of the building.

POLICY H1

Proposals for the change of use from residential to other uses will only be permitted where at least one of the following criteria is satisfied:

- 1 The premises are unsuitable for residential use in respect of the standard of accommodation provided and are incapable of being made satisfactory at reasonable expense;
- 2 The environment is unsuitable for residential use, due to factors such as an un-neighbourly use, dust, smell or noise;
- 3 The use of part of a residential building is proposed for the accommodation of a small-scale community facility which requires to be located in a town, neighbourhood or village centre or a residential area close to the population it serves. Wherever practicable, some self-contained residential accommodation should be retained as part of the development;
- 4 The retention of the building or its use for residential purposes would prevent a comprehensive development with significant environmental gain or which would achieve a wider benefit to the community. In such cases, wherever practicable, residential development should be replaced within the proposed scheme; or
- 5 The change of use of a listed building to an alternative use is essential to ensure the preservation of the building.

SMALL AND INTERMEDIATE-SIZED DWELLINGS

- 6.11** Policies in the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 are aimed at meeting the needs of small households, including the elderly.

Demographic Change

- 6.12** Some 80% of the growth in the total number of households nationally over the next 15 years is expected to be due to the increase in one-person households.. A similar pattern will apply to the Plan area, with single person households accounting for over 70% of the increase in households to 2011 and this trend is expected to continue and intensify thereafter.
- 6.13** At the 1991 Census, the average household size in the Plan area was 2.5 persons per household, falling to 2.37 at 2001, and is expected to be 2.26 at 2011. Projections (2005 based) indicate that the average household size will continue to fall until at least 2021. The household size for the Plan area is below the average for both the Kent and Medway area and West Kent.
- 6.14** The composition of households is also changing. At 1991 in Kent, married couple households accounted for over 58% of the total, with one-person households making up 25% of the total. By 2001 the comparable Kent figures were 49% and 28%. In the Plan area at 2001, married couple households were 31% of the total and single person households were 31% of the total. The corresponding figures for the Plan area at 2011 will be 43% and 34% respectively, with the strong trend towards more single person households projected to continue for at least another 10 years beyond the Plan period. This arises from social trends such as an increase in those who never married, divorcees living alone, young people moving out of the family home to independent

accommodation and people living longer, often alone if they are widowed. There is likely to be a substantial increase in demand for smaller, easier-to-manage properties which are situated within easy reach of services and facilities for such households. It is important to make the best possible use of land and buildings in appropriate locations within built up areas to provide for this long-term population change.

Market Provision

- 6.15** Market pressures and changing demographic profiles indicate that allowing for an increasing proportion of smaller units in the housing stock will provide for wider choice, help meet special needs, extend accessibility to the housing market and confer planning benefits in efficient use of land and buildings. Empirical evidence in the Borough suggests that the market is supplying self-contained, two-bedroom units of around 80 square metres. This size of unit could accommodate either a larger two-bedroom unit or a small three-bedroom unit. This is particularly the case with the conversion and redevelopment of properties in Royal Tunbridge Wells to flats. There is also a need to widen this choice further through the provision of self-contained accommodation of up to 60 square metres, which will provide a one-bedroom unit. Such units could accommodate one or two-person households and will bring lower cost housing onto the market, allowing access for a greater number of households whilst also making efficient use of land.

Dwelling Mix to be Sought on Development Proposals over 15 Bedspaces

- 6.16** The number of bedspaces which may be assumed to be provided by a dwelling with a particular number of bedrooms is contained in the footnote to POLICY H2 below.
- 6.17** It is impractical to achieve a dwelling mix in very small development schemes. Over the period 1991-1999, development proposals for 15 or more bedspaces amounted to 15% of the total number of residential schemes developed, although this accounted for some 75% of the total number of dwellings provided. These larger schemes tended to be located at Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, with some at Paddock Wood and Cranbrook.
- 6.18** The remaining 85% of approved schemes (providing less than 15 bedspaces each) tended to be located at the rural settlements on small sites. They accounted for some 25% of the dwellings completed in the Plan area and showed a marked tendency to be 3+ bedroom dwellings. Using dwelling mix to increase residential density at rural settlements may not result in the most sustainable pattern of development in relation to the availability of jobs and services. Consequently, it is proposed to target a dwelling mix which contains smaller units on sites of 15 or more bedspaces.
- 6.19** The number of bedspaces in a property is only a rough guide to the size of dwellings provided and extremely generously proportioned dwellings are unlikely to achieve the densities and efficiency of land use outlined in Government guidance.
- 6.20** Records over the period 1991-1999 indicate that, of the total number of dwellings completed across the Borough, the market has provided some 26% as bedsit/one-bedroom accommodation. This has typically been in units of approximately 60 square metres or less internal floorspace. A further 31% has been as two-bedroom accommodation – this is in units of approximately 61-80 square metres internal floorspace.
- 6.21** In view of the longer-term household projections, the need to provide a choice of house size and to make the best possible use of the housing land opportunities available, the Local Planning Authority will seek to influence the number of small and intermediate dwellings provided in all schemes which would provide 15 or more bedspaces.
- 6.22** The Local Planning Authority is keen to maintain and extend this trend and consequently will negotiate with developers for the provision of an element of small

dwellings and a significant element of intermediate dwellings. The remainder of dwellings proposed may be of any size. Around 25% of the total dwellings proposed should be small dwellings, and around a further 50% of the total dwellings proposed should be small or intermediate dwellings, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that these requirements would seriously affect the viability of the development or would otherwise result in an unacceptable form of development. Where more than 25% of the total dwellings are proposed to be small dwellings, the percentage of the total provided as intermediate dwellings may be reduced proportionately, but small and intermediate dwellings together would still account for around 75% of the total. The remainder of dwellings proposed may be of any size.

- 6.23** The dwelling mix sought under this Policy and the element of affordable housing to be sought under ~~POLICY H3~~ need not be mutually exclusive.

POLICY H2

Proposals for residential development of 15 or more bedspaces (*1), will only be permitted if they incorporate an element of small dwellings (*2) and a significant number of intermediate dwellings (*3).

Notes:

- *1. Bedspaces will be calculated in the following way:**

Bedrooms per Property	Bedspaces per Property
1	2
2	3
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7

- *2. Small dwellings are defined as 60 square metres or less total internal floorspace.**
- *3. Intermediate dwellings are defined as 61-80 square metres total internal floorspace.**

~~AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITHIN DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES~~

- ~~**6.24** A major cause for concern in the Plan area is the lack of available housing at affordable prices. This is a widespread problem, recognised by the Government in PPG3, Circular 6/08 and RPG 9 for the South East. This guidance requires that the issue of affordable housing be taken into account when formulating Local Plan policies.~~

~~Definition of Affordability and Need for Affordable Housing~~

- ~~**6.25** The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) was carried out on behalf of the Borough Council.~~

6 Housing

~~6.26~~ The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) indicated that at June 2000 the minimum housing prices were as follows:

<u>Property Size</u>	<u>Minimum Price</u>	<u>Minimum Weekly Rent</u>
1 bedroom	£53,000	£90
2 bedroom	£84,000	£124
3 bedroom	£112,000	£160
4 bedroom	£171,000	£268

~~6.27~~ Average prices ranged from £60,000 (£108 weekly rental) for a one bedroom property to £248,000 (£331 weekly rental) for four bedroom properties.

~~6.28~~ The survey also revealed that the average gross household income in Tunbridge Wells Borough was £24,589 per annum compared with a national average of £20,500. The local average conceals wide differences – over 60% earn less than the average and over 10% of households had no earned income at all.

~~6.29~~ The test for mortgage affordability is derived from typical practice of mortgage providers and is a deposit of at least 5% of the house price and a gross annual income of at least one third of the property price minus the amount of the deposit. Rental affordability is defined such that a household should not spend more than a quarter of their net income on rent, which reflects common practice as assessed by the surveyors. A household would be defined as unable to afford private sector housing (either purchased or rented) if it does not have a deposit equivalent to 5% of the price of a suitable home; and it has a gross income less than one third its mortgage requirement and renting privately would take up more than 25% of its net household income.

~~6.30~~ Using this definition, and combining it with house prices for the Plan area, the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) revealed that (taking account of the likely known supply of affordable housing), an additional 1,847 affordable dwellings would be required between 2000 and 2005.

Meeting the Affordable Housing Need

~~6.31~~ The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) figure of 1,847 additional affordable houses would amount to over 70% of the total remaining strategic housing requirement for the Plan period (as defined in Table 2). Neither sufficient land resources, nor funding from the Housing Corporation and other sources will be available to meet the total affordable need during the Plan period. To meet the need in full would also encourage in migration to the Borough and, in practice, result in little reduction in the level of local need over the Plan period.

~~6.32~~ It is estimated that, over the Plan period, funding could be available from a variety of sources for some 80 additional affordable units per annum. In the period 2001-2005, almost 200 affordable dwellings have been achieved and a further 136 are subject to outstanding planning permissions at 2005. During the remainder of the Plan period a further 150 dwellings are expected to be provided by the Borough Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) through activities such as purchasing existing stock and developing or redeveloping RSLs' own stock and landholdings, including garage courts and under-utilised land within inefficient layouts.

~~6.33~~ The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) established that over 65% of the total housing need in the Borough was in the main urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough where the majority of larger scale new housing sites will be concentrated during the Plan period. The remainder is situated in the rural areas including Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. The opportunities for large-scale market housing in these areas will be limited and in these areas additional affordable housing may come forward as rural exceptions affordable housing (which is dealt with under POLICY H8). Where a site for rural exceptions housing may become

~~available, its release will be dependent on a detailed local needs survey. (The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) would not give a statistically significant estimate of the need at the level of the individual parish). From previous trends and progress 2001-2005, approximately 100 affordable units may be achieved from this source over the remainder of the Plan period.~~

- ~~6.34~~ Given the high land values in the Borough, it is unlikely that RSLs will have adequate funding to compete in the market for new housing sites. For this reason, a policy is included in the Plan which provides the Local Planning Authority with an opportunity to seek a proportion of affordable housing on market sites to assist in meeting the need identified in the Borough.
- ~~6.35~~ In the light of the identified need, the Council will seek to maximise the number of affordable housing units provided on development sites. The Policy requires a proportion of affordable housing to be provided on sites capable of accommodating 15 or more dwellings. The Council will seek to negotiate a maximum of 30% to be affordable, which is considered to represent a fair balance between the need for more affordable homes and the requirements of the development industry. The Policy recognises that on some sites it may not be possible to achieve 30% of affordable units because of site specific matters. In such circumstances, if it can be clearly demonstrated that site specific matters warrant a reduction from 30%, a lower proportion may be sought.
- ~~6.36~~ The overall dwelling capacity of a site will be assessed for the purposes of POLICY H3 by having regard to site location and sustainability; its character and context; any environmental constraint; and the design and amenity issues set out in POLICY EN1. Development proposals will also need to have regard to the advice in PPG3 (Housing) in respect of minimum densities and making best use of previously developed land. Applications which form part of a more substantial development site (on the same or adjacent land), which in its totality would exceed the 15 dwelling threshold, should be treated as an application for the more substantial site.
- ~~6.37~~ In accordance with national planning policy guidance on sustainable development patterns, it is appropriate to seek to ensure that all new housing development is within reasonable proximity to local services and public transport. Affordable housing tends to generate lower levels of car ownership than market housing, so the need for this to be located appropriately is emphasised. Within the Plan area, it is unlikely that appropriate development proposals for housing which would exceed the POLICY H3 threshold for affordable housing will occur outside existing towns and villages. Development schemes above the 15 dwelling threshold at such settlements are generally within a reasonable proximity to local services and public transport and should therefore be considered for an element of affordable housing in accordance with POLICY H3.

Type of Households in Need

- ~~6.38~~ Of the households in need, the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) indicated that some 58% required one bedroom accommodation and a further 25% required two bedroom accommodation. This reflects a general trend towards smaller households in the population at large. Consequently, most of the need is for small units. However, larger dwellings in the social rented sector tend to have a much lower turnover rate than smaller dwellings and small households may grow over time and their needs will change. As a consequence, the need for larger affordable housing units (3+ bedrooms, which forms 17% of the total households in need) is recognised and an element will be sought on sites where affordable housing is to be provided.
- ~~6.39~~ Of the households in need, almost 21% had no earned income and of those who did have an income, the annual average was £10,500. No households identified in the local survey as being in need are able to afford housing costing more than £109, £129 and £150 per week for one, two or three bedroom accommodation respectively.

~~6.40~~ The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) indicates that very few of the households in need (less than 2.5%) would be able to afford to purchase low cost new housing or shared ownership housing in the Borough. Given current Housing Corporation rent benchmarks, some 35.6% of those in housing need would be able to afford rented housing without the need for housing benefit. Although affordable housing includes low cost and shared equity housing, affordable housing need is therefore likely to be most effectively met by social rented accommodation. The type of provision and method of provision of the affordable housing will be a matter for negotiation according to the circumstances of each site.

~~POLICY H3~~

~~In respect of proposals for residential development or mixed-use schemes where the site is capable of accommodating 15 or more dwellings, the Local Planning Authority will negotiate with the developer to secure the provision of a reasonable proportion of affordable housing *(1) and *(2). 30% of the total number of dwellings to be provided within the development will be sought for affordable housing unless any of the matters set out below justify a lower proportion:~~

- ~~1. Local needs, based on up-to-date assessments;~~
- ~~2. The proximity of local services and facilities to the development and the level of its accessibility to public transport;~~
- ~~3. The development costs of the particular development and whether any exceptional circumstances in this regard have been demonstrated to exist; and~~
- ~~4. The need to realise any other priority planning objectives in the development of the site.~~

~~Except where a registered social landlord is involved, the Local Planning Authority will impose conditions and/or seek to enter into an agreement to control the initial and subsequent occupancy of the dwellings to ensure that the accommodation remains available in future to meet the purposes for which it is permitted.~~

~~Note:~~

~~*(1) "Affordable housing" means low cost market or subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure, ownership or financial arrangements.~~

~~*(2) The definition of affordability for the Plan area is flexible to allow for variation in the market, economic conditions and mortgage lender practice as follows:~~

~~The price of rented accommodation should not be more than 25% net average household income for the Plan area; and~~

~~The price of owner-occupied accommodation should not exceed the current mortgage lender multiple x average net household income for the Plan area minus current Plan area average house price (less 5% deposit).~~

GYPSY SITES

6.41 The enactment of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 repealed the statutory duties of local authorities to provide gypsy sites. The Secretary of State's power to

designate a local authority as having made adequate provision for gypsies was rescinded in November 1994. However, Circular 1/94 states that local authorities must continue to have regard to meeting the need for accommodation consistent with a nomadic lifestyle through locational or criteria-based policies in local plans.

- 6.42** Local authorities still have a duty to continue monitoring the adequacy of the gypsy site provision in relation to the gypsy population. This is undertaken at six-monthly intervals by the Borough Council (and by the Kent County Council in respect of sites which they manage). The regular counts show a peak of 13 families on unauthorised sites in the Borough in July 1993, and since then the counts have ranged from 3 to 9 unauthorised sites. The gypsy population and demand has remained almost static since the change in legislation. Only a few sites have been pursued through the planning process, suggesting a low demand for additional sites in the Borough.

Table 1

County Council Owned/Borough Council Operated Gypsy Sites at October 2005	
Cinderhill Wood, Matfield, Brenchley	4 plots
Heartenoak, Hawkhurst	3 plots
Privately Owned Sites at October 2005	
Newbridge Park, Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood	8 plots
Deanwood, Old Hay, Paddock Wood	1 plot
Hartley Lands, Swattenden Lane, Cranbrook	2 plots
Rockshill, Frittenden	1 plot
Heartenoak Bridge, Hawkhurst	2 plots
Oak Tree Farm, Wilsley Pound, Cranbrook	1 plot
Broomhill Nursery, Hartley, Cranbrook	1 plot

- 6.43** Circular 1/94 indicates that it will not be appropriate to make provision for gypsy sites in areas of open land where development is severely restricted, for example in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or other protected landscape and nature conservation areas. Gypsy sites are not regarded as appropriate in the Green Belt (see POLICY MGB1). Sites may be found in rural or semi-rural settings, but care needs to be taken to avoid encroachment into open countryside. Consistency with agricultural, archaeological, countryside and environmental policies is required by the Circular.
- 6.44** In view of the requirements to protect designated areas and the countryside, much of the Plan area is unsuitable for the allocation of gypsy sites. For these reasons, and the fact that demand for gypsy sites in the Borough has remained very low, a criteria-based policy for judging planning applications for gypsy sites is considered most appropriate for the Plan area.
- 6.45** Local planning authorities are advised, in setting policy, to have regard to the potential for noise and other disturbance from the movement of vehicles to and from the site, the stationing of vehicles on the site and on-site business activities. The proposal should not detract from the amenities or privacy of neighbouring uses. As with all other development proposals, sites will be required to comply with POLICY EN1 and all other relevant development plan policies, as required by Circular 1/94.
- 6.46** POLICY H4 will apply to proposals for all types of gypsy site (those which provide a permanent base for gypsies to return to, temporary stopping places and transit sites). Any accommodation provided on sites permitted under POLICY H4 should be consistent with a nomadic lifestyle.
- 6.47** Private sites are generally small, accommodating pitches for individual or extended families without on-site business activities. Small sites can often be less intrusive.

- 6.48** Landscaping and planting with trees and shrubs will help sites blend into their surroundings, give structure and privacy and maintain visual amenity.

POLICY H4

Proposals for the establishment of gypsy *(1) sites will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1 The size of the site and the number and distribution of pitches within it would be appropriate to its location;**
- 2 The configuration of the site would be satisfactory and its physical containment against unauthorised extension would be achievable;**
- 3 The proposal would not be visually intrusive and would be well-screened by existing vegetation and physically contained by landscaping *(2);**
- 4 Proposals would not be located within an exposed position in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or a Special Landscape Area or elsewhere where they would have more than a minimal impact on the rural character of the locality; and**
- 5 The location of the proposed site is appropriate in terms of proximity to essential local services such as shops, schools, public transport, medical and social services.**

Notes

***(1) For the purpose of this Policy, the definition of a gypsy is a person of nomadic habit, whatever race or origin, who travels for the purpose of making or seeking a livelihood, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showmen, or of persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such.**

***(2) In view of the need to prevent visual intrusion by additional caravans it may be necessary to condition an application to limit the number of caravans to be accommodated on the site and to remove permitted development rights.**

Housing Development

HOUSING PROVISION

- 6.49** This Local Plan has been drawn up within the framework of the Kent Structure Plan (1996) and the Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006), which supersedes it. Both documents set out the proposal for provision of 2,900 dwellings to be made within Tunbridge Wells Borough in the period 2001-2011. Any surplus or shortfall from this period will be rolled forward into the next Plan period, which will be covered by the Local Development Framework in accordance with the strategic dwelling requirement determined by the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

6.50 Housing provision will be made from a number of sources:

- development already completed between 1991-2001 which is surplus to the Kent Structure Plan 1996 requirements and rolled forward into this Plan period;
- development completed since 2001;
- planning permissions;
- unidentified previously-developed sites; and
- land allocated for housing on previously-developed sites.

Completions and Planning Permissions

6.51 There have been 2,834 dwellings completed in the Plan area over the period 1991-2001, giving a surplus of 34 dwellings to carry forward to the 2001-2011 Plan period. A further 1,341 have been completed during 2001-2005 and a further 1,212 dwellings were the subject of outstanding planning permissions at April 2005.

Additional Unidentified Previously-Developed Sites

6.52 Unidentified sites are those which have not been specifically identified as available in this Local Plan. They comprise previously-developed sites that unexpectedly become available. Previously-developed sites are defined (by PPG3, Annex C) as land which is, or was, occupied by a permanent (non-agricultural) structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition includes the curtilage of such a site.

6.53 Government advice (PPG3) indicates that local planning authorities should make specific allowances for all the different types of potential unidentified previously-developed sites in their Plans. Allowance should be made on the basis of examining past trends in unidentified previously-developed sites coming forward for development and on the likely future unidentified previously-developed site potential as assessed in an urban capacity study. No allowance should be made for unidentified greenfield sites.

6.54 Within the Plan area, the market is extremely pro-active in assembling sites not identified for housing and bringing them forward for development, partly as a result of the successful application of Green Belt and Limits to Built Development policies. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Urban Capacity Study (2001) suggests that there is considerable scope for this process to continue, particularly within the towns. In addition to those unidentified sites which already have the benefit of planning permission, it is estimated that a further 648 dwellings will be built on unidentified previously-developed land during the remainder of the Plan period. POLICY H5 aims to enable, encourage and guide this type of development.

Land Allocated for Housing on Previously-Developed Sites

6.55 Given the large number of small, unidentified sites likely to come forward for development during the Plan period, the Local Planning Authority sought to identify only sites of 0.4 hectares or greater as housing allocations in this Local Plan. Following the sequential approach, sites were initially sought within, or in reasonable walking distance of, the defined centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst prior to other brownfield opportunities being examined. ~~Such previously-developed sites have been allocated in POLICIES H6 and H7 of this Local Plan. Since the First Deposit stage of the Plan preparation, a number of allocations have achieved planning permission and are now within the relevant entry of Table 2. The remaining allocations within POLICY H6 are capable of accommodating a minimum of 360 dwellings~~

6 Housing

- 6.56 In summary, Table 2 below sets out how the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 housing requirement for 2001-2011 will be met.

Table 2

Source	Net Dwelling Completions
Surplus completions from 07/91 – 04/2001 period*	34
Completions 04/2001 – 04/2005*	1,340
Net planning permissions at 04/2005	1,364
Additional unidentified previously-developed sites 2005-2011	648
Housing allocations on previously-developed sites+	360
Total Provision	3,746

Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006) Requirement 2001-2011

2,900

- * Source: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Development Monitor April 2005
+ Excludes 200 dwelling allocation at the Kent and Sussex Hospital site which is expected to come forward for planning permission before the end of the Plan period, but it is unlikely that any dwellings will be completed on the site in that timescale.

Hierarchy of Settlements

- 6.57 In accordance with Government guidance (PPG3), Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 9) and the approved Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006, the Local Authority's Planning Strategy is to concentrate the majority of new housing development in the urban area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. Modest opportunities for new housing exist in the centres of the rural towns of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, but elsewhere only minor housing development is appropriate.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS AND SOUTHBOROUGH

- 6.58 There is a preference expressed in Regional Planning Guidance for locating new housing development at urban areas. Such settlements are generally well served by a wide range of facilities and a choice of means of transport. Journey distances are shorter and may not require the private car. In this respect, Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough is a more sustainable location for housing development in the Borough than other settlements. Equally, the opportunities for larger-scale brownfield development sites are greater in the urban area. As a consequence, the largest number of brownfield site allocations is made in Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough.
- 6.59 Sites within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Access Zone (Residential) represent the most sustainable locations for new housing development in the Borough. As well as proximity to services and a range of transport options, the density of surrounding developments is often higher, enabling the most efficient use of land.
- 6.60 Sites within a reasonable distance of the defined Neighbourhood Centres in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough are close to a range of local services, allowing travel by means other than the car, and bring the opportunity to increase patronage of the services. A wider range of facilities is available relatively closely within the centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough.

PADDOCK WOOD, CRANBROOK AND HAWKHURST

- 6.61 The definition of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst (Highgate) as settlements with scope for some housing in excess of minor development reflects both planning

consents and some limited development opportunities on brownfield sites, albeit at a much smaller scale to that of Royal Tunbridge Wells/Southborough. Brownfield sites within, or in reasonable walking distance of, the centre of Southborough, Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst represent appropriate sustainable locations for housing.

VILLAGES

- 6.62** Within the villages defined in Chapter 2 (Planning Strategy, para 2.28)) as Kent Structure Plan 1996 RS2 Settlements and Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 SS1(d), there is a limited range of local facilities to serve new development. There are opportunities for minor housing development through conversion, redevelopment or infill development. In addition, where a local need can be shown, there is the opportunity to provide affordable housing. Villages are considered to be inappropriate locations for expansion given the limited range of facilities available and as sufficient land is identified elsewhere within more sustainable locations.

COUNTRYSIDE

- 6.63** Whilst the countryside is generally the least sustainable location for development, special provision may be made for key workers, for whom it is essential to live at their place of work, and for the conversion of existing suitable rural buildings to housing use.

Making the Best Use of Land and Buildings Within Limits to Built Development

- 6.64** Government guidance (PPG3) requires that new housing should be located principally in existing towns and cities and make economic use of available land and existing buildings. In the interests of promoting urban regeneration as well as minimising the amount of greenfield sites released for development, Government guidance and the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 afford priority to the re-use of previously-developed land and under-used or empty sites as well as the conversion and sub-division of existing buildings.
- 6.65** This Local Plan follows this approach by enabling the conversion of existing buildings, continued use of infill sites and the redevelopment of land and buildings formerly in other uses, as well as through the allocation of sites. In addition, this Plan seeks the provision of small and intermediate-sized dwellings and the raising of densities to make the best use of land and buildings within the built up area without compromising the environmental quality of an area.
- 6.66** In accordance with past trends, national and regional policy and reflecting the capacity of the Borough's previously-developed sites and countryside constraints, a target has been set of 90% of new housing development to be built on previously-used sites during the Plan period.

UNIDENTIFIED SITES

Change of Use and Redevelopment to Residential Development

- 6.67** The change of use of premises to new dwellings continues to provide a regular supply of housing across the Plan area. Whilst since 1991 almost half of such development has arisen in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, around 25% has come forward in Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, with the remainder in the villages.
- 6.68** Where the existing use of a building is unsuited to either the building or to the area in which it is located, conversion to residential use of part or all of the building (for example, the upper floors above shops or offices) may be a viable option to help retain the building and/or make more efficient use of it. Such changes of use will continue to

provide additional, often smaller-scale, residential accommodation within the built up areas.

- 6.69** The redevelopment of non-residential premises has made a significant contribution to new housing provision throughout the Plan area. The supply source is derived from the closure or relocation of a wide spectrum of uses such as a factory, warehouse, school, shop, bank, nursing home, pub or place of worship. Similarly, the redevelopment of houses for more intensive residential developments such as flats has provided opportunities to generate new housing on previously-developed land. To date, the majority of such development has taken place in Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough.
- 6.70** Conversion or redevelopment of a building to residential use should not involve the loss of a valuable community service within a neighbourhood or village centre (for example a shop or pub), a community building or result in the loss of hotel accommodation in accordance with POLICIES CR13, T2 and CS6.
- 6.71** However, redevelopment is expected to continue to make a significant contribution towards the total housing provision within the Plan area.
- 6.72** In considering proposals for a change of use to residential, the Local Planning Authority will be mindful of the standard of accommodation provided and the quality of the surrounding environment.

Sub-division of Dwellings and Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 6.73** The sub-division of larger houses into flats or houses in multiple occupation is an important source of housing, particularly to meet the needs of one and two-person households, including young single people who experience difficulties in finding accommodation. The Borough Council considers it appropriate to maintain a supply of dwellings in multiple occupation provided that the standard of accommodation is improved and the criteria of POLICY EN1 are met. In granting planning consent for the sub-division of houses to flats or into HMOs, the Local Planning Authority will be concerned to ensure that a reasonable standard of accommodation and residential amenity is provided. Care must also be taken to ensure that proposals do not result in significant harm to the residential amenity or the character of the surrounding area.
- 6.74** The Victorian and Edwardian areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, together with the town centres of Royal Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook, have made a significant contribution to this type of housing in the past decade and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Urban Capacity Study (2001) suggests that there is still further scope for this type of development. As such, it represents a very efficient use of the existing housing stock and often affords the opportunity to live close to a range of services and public transport networks.
- 6.75** Sub-division of dwellings could become significant in rural settlements as a source of smaller dwellings and lower cost housing. However, proximity to services and the public transport network will be a consideration in these locations since large amounts of very high density housing in an isolated position would be likely to result in a high level of commuting by private car.
- 6.76** The Housing Act 1985 defines a House in Multiple Occupation as “a house which is occupied by persons who do not form a single household. (However, the Housing Act 2004 comes into force in October 2005 and the definitions may be subject to change after this date). Whilst the definition generally used includes buildings containing self-contained flats; hostels; guest houses and boarding houses, Houses in Multiple Occupation for the purposes of POLICY H5 relate only to:
- (i) Houses converted and adapted for use of flatlets, bedsitting rooms and single rooms;

- (ii) Houses occupied by over six people on a shared basis; or
- (iii) Houses of which part are let in lodgings, i.e. catering for lodgers not living as part of the main household.

6.77 The standard of accommodation found in Houses in Multiple Occupation is often low and they exhibit particular problems, including overcrowding, lack of basic household amenities and inadequate means of fire escape. A survey carried out on behalf of the Borough Council in 1995 of 1,000 HMOs has led to a strategy and programme for risk assessment and enforcement as part of the Borough Council's Housing Strategy. The condition of premises is monitored, with particular emphasis on the adequacy of kitchen facilities, levels of disrepair and the implication for fire safety.

Infill Development

6.78 Infill development has been a major contributor to housing supply throughout the Plan area. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Urban Capacity Study (2001) indicates a reduced capacity for such development during the Plan period compared with past trends.

6.79 Infill development often requires the careful design and layout of dwellings rather than relying on standard design patterns which, besides often being visually unsympathetic, may also not deliver higher densities.

6.80 Minor infill development often takes the form of one or two dwellings, including, in appropriate circumstances, further building within the curtilage of an existing site.

POLICY H5

Within the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, the following types of residential development will be permitted, provided that the comprehensive development of a site would not be prejudiced:

- 1 The sub-division of dwellings into smaller units or for multiple occupation;**
- 2 The change of use of a building to residential accommodation from other uses;**
- 3 At Royal Tunbridge Wells; Southborough; Paddock Wood; Cranbrook and Highgate, Hawkhurst:**
 - (i) infilling;**
 - (ii) the redevelopment of existing developed sites;**
 - (iii) the inclusion of an element of residential use within a mixed use development;**
- 4 At Benenden; Bidborough; Brenchley; Five Oak Green; Frittenden; Goudhurst; The Moor, Hawkhurst; Horsmonden; Iden Green; Kilndown; Lamberhurst; Langton Green; Matfield; Pembury; Sandhurst; Sissinghurst and Speldhurst:**
 - (i) minor infilling such as the filling of a narrow gap in an otherwise substantially built up frontage or development within the curtilage of an existing site;**
 - (ii) minor redevelopment; and**
 - (iii) redevelopment of redundant sites which are larger than minor development.**

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS ON PREVIOUSLY-DEVELOPED SITES

- 6.82** Housing sites have been allocated on the basis of the hierarchy of settlements which forms the basis for the Planning Strategy of this Local Plan.
- 6.83** The recent designation of the Metropolitan Green Belt boundaries around many of the Borough's towns and villages and the presence of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Areas around most settlements lead to the strong preference in the Borough for new housing development to be located on previously-developed sites. This Local Plan sets a target of 90% housing to be built on previously-developed sites. Whilst there are many opportunities for generally small-scale development to occur under POLICY H5, a number of larger-scale sites of approximately 0.4 hectares or more are allocated in this Local Plan.
- 6.84** In accordance with Government advice in PPG3, a review of existing economic development allocations was undertaken to examine potential for housing development. Two sites at Goods Station Road/Medway Road and St John's Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, which were allocated for economic development in the adopted Local Plan (1996) were extended and allocated for housing development in this Local Plan. The St John's Road site has been granted planning permission, which is being implemented. Both sites are within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Access Zone (Residential) within a close distance of a wide range of services and transport options. The remaining site at Goods Station Road/Medway Road is unlikely to meet the market requirements for the type of economic development originally proposed in that location.
- 6.85** The density of development for each site is specified as a net site density in compliance with Annexe C of PPG3. Hence, in calculating a net density, the site area includes access roads within the site, car parking areas, private gardens, incidental open space, children's play areas and landscaping. The site area excludes land given over to open spaces to serve a wider area, significant landscape buffer zones and primary schools. All proposed net densities are set to achieve that contained in Government guidance (PPG3).
- 6.86** The dwelling mix on each site should be in compliance with POLICY H2 ~~and an element of affordable housing will be sought in compliance with POLICY H3.~~
- 6.87** All previously-used sites represent a significant opportunity for urban renewal. In most cases the Local Planning Authority seeks the replacement of outworn and unattractive sites and buildings with new, high-quality designs. Where sites abut frequently-used routes and are of a large scale, the introduction of public art should be considered as an integral part of the development. Schemes within, or forming the setting of, conservation areas or abutting listed buildings should particularly respect their context. In accordance with POLICY EN1, new housing should not dominate surrounding residential development such that there are visually unacceptable impacts concerning overlooking, daylight and sunlight.
- 6.88** Important landscape features within development sites should be retained as an integral part of the design. Sites with well-established landscaping will require tree surveys and landscape management plans. Landscape will be an important element to the frontage of certain sites, including the approach routes of St John's Road and Church Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells. Landscape can also act as a buffer to less attractive views from development sites.
- 6.89** ~~Access and parking requirements are set out within POLICY H6 in accordance with the Transport and Parking Chapter. In the case of the former Springfield Garden Centre at Hawkhurst, a visibility splay of 4.5 x 120 metres will be required at the site access unless it can be clearly demonstrated that a lesser splay would have no harmful road safety consequences. As a result, it is likely that a new access to the site will be required in order to avoid damage to the mature trees close to the road to the north of the site. If a new access is required, the existing access should be closed. It would~~

~~also be desirable to provide a pedestrian access across the southern part of the site if feasible. A Transport Assessment is likely to be required for all sites of 50 dwellings or more. The threshold of 50 dwellings is in accordance with the current Kent Vehicle Parking Standards.~~

- ~~6.90 The additional recreational and educational demands generated from each development are set out in POLICIES H6 and H7 in accordance with the Recreation and Community Services Chapters.~~
- 6.91 Certain previously-developed sites may be contaminated by the previous use ~~and POLICY EN10 will apply in such cases.~~ Prior to acceptance of any new housing, the Borough Council will require developers to thoroughly investigate and, where necessary, comprehensively treat sites where there is potential contamination.
- 6.92 The nature of previously-used sites is that they are often located in areas with higher ambient noise levels. For example, some allocated sites adjoin operational railway lines, roads and economic development operations. Where there is a known noise source, designs should incorporate noise barriers, ensure the careful orientation of buildings and internal arrangement of rooms and include any necessary sound reduction measures.

Phasing of Housing Allocations

- 6.93 PPG3 requires that local planning authorities “manage the release of sites over the Plan period in order to control the speed and pattern of urban growth, ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing and delivers the Local Authority’s recycling target.”
- 6.94 POLICY H5 deals with permitting residential development on previously developed unidentified sites or conversion of existing buildings. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Urban Capacity Study (2001) and monitoring of this type of development over the last 15 years indicate that this source of new housing development is expected to make a significant contribution to the housing requirement over the remainder of the Plan period at an average rate of approximately 108 additional dwellings per annum.
- 6.95 ~~Over and above this, this Local Plan allocates land for residential development in order to meet the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 requirements for the Local Plan period and these are identified in POLICY H6. Not all of these sites may be immediately available for development due to current uses which occupy the site and possible remediation. Nevertheless, all but the Kent and Sussex Hospital site are considered capable of delivering dwellings before the end of the Plan period. The latter is expected to be the subject of a planning application well before the end of the Plan period.~~
- 6.96 The Plan period is now almost half expired and monitoring illustrates the following success:
- An adequate supply of housing land is being maintained in relation to the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 targets;
 - Bringing forward allocations in the most sustainable locations in the period to 2005;
 - The continuing achievement of targets in respect of the achievement of numbers and percentage (90%) of dwellings on unidentified previously developed sites;
 - Encouragement of the renewal and re-use of outworn or under-used land and buildings within urban areas; and
 - The remaining allocations in this Local Plan are not dependent on any substantial off-site planned infrastructure. South East Water states that

contributions for off-site works may be required if the network needs reinforcing as a result of the development. This would be identified at the planning application stage. Where the development itself would generate the need for other infrastructure, this is specified in the appropriate allocation policy and will be sought as part of the development.

- 6.97** The delivery of the housing land supply will continue to be monitored on an annual basis. Any surplus in provision at the end of the Plan period will be rolled forward into subsequent strategic housing provision periods (which will be covered in the emerging South East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy and the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework).

POLICY H6

~~The following sites, as defined on the Proposals Map, are allocated for residential development prior to 2011. The Local Planning Authority will seek the access, density, form, layout, dwelling mix, landscaping, recreation and education provision for these sites as set out below. Sites may come forward for development in phases, but proposals for development of part of a site which would prejudice eventual development of the whole allocation will not be permitted. Any proposals for development of part of the allocation will be required to demonstrate that they would not prevent the quantum of development set out below from being satisfactorily accommodated on the site.~~

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

a) — GOODS STATION ROAD

Site Area:

~~1.28 hectares (3.16 acres) net developable area.~~

Density:

~~The site should provide a minimum of 60 dwellings at a net density of approximately 50 dwellings per hectare.~~

Form, Layout and Landscaping:

~~The layout of the site should enable the strategic segregated cycle route to link with the section of this route proposed through the site allocated under POLICY H6(e) (Medway Road).~~

~~The development should incorporate noise attenuation measures in order to protect the residents from noise from the adjoining railway line. The introduction of public art should be considered as part of this development.~~

Recreation and Community Provision:

~~An equipped children's playspace of 0.04 hectares should be provided, and a contribution will be sought towards equipping it.~~

Remediation Measures:

~~The site will require investigation and possible treatment for contamination prior to development commencing.~~

Access:

~~A pedestrian access should be created from Stanley Road to the east of the site, to allow for direct access to Camden Road.~~

~~A segregated pedestrian and cycle link will be required throughout the~~

~~length of the site to form part of the route from the town centre to Longfield Road. A contribution may be sought towards the provision of the Goods Station Road section of the route, and the provision of cycle crossing facilities at the junction of Goods Station Road and Victoria Road.~~

~~Vehicular access should be in the form of a continuation of Goods Station Road into the site. There should be no through-access for motor vehicles into the site allocated under POLICY H6(e).~~

~~Within the site, roads should be designed for a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour.~~

~~A contribution may be sought towards the implementation of a Residents' Parking Zone.~~

~~b) MEDWAY DEPOT SITE, ST JAMES' ROAD~~

~~Site Area:~~

~~0.61 hectares (1.51 acres) net developable area.~~

~~Density:~~

~~The site should provide a minimum of 70 dwellings at a net density of 120 dwellings per hectare.~~

~~Form Layout and Landscaping:~~

~~The height of the scheme should step up to a landmark feature building at the prominent western corner of the site. At the southern and eastern ends of the site, development should reflect the scale of existing residential development.~~

~~A new landscaped approach should be created to the Grosvenor Recreation Ground from the site entrance off St James' Road. A landscaped area should be provided between Grosvenor Bridge and the recreation ground in order to enhance views into the park, provide a safe and secure environment and screen the railway.~~

~~Landscaping within private courtyards and in the car parking areas should be based on robust hard landscaping. The introduction of public art should be considered as part of this development.~~

~~Remediation Measures:~~

~~The site will require investigation and treatment for contamination prior to development commencing.~~

~~Access:~~

~~Access for pedestrians and cyclists should be provided from the site entrance off St James' Road to the enhanced entrance to the Grosvenor Road Recreation Ground. A segregated pedestrian and cycle link will be required through the site forming part of the town centre-Longfield Road cycle route. A contribution may be sought towards the Grosvenor Bridge-Longfield Road section of the route.~~

~~Vehicular access to the site will only be permitted at the corner of St James' Road and Grosvenor Bridge, where four-way traffic signals may need to be provided. Within the site roads should be designed for a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour.~~

~~A contribution may be sought towards provision of a Resident's Parking Zone.~~

~~c) TRAVIS PERKINS, UPPER GROSVENOR ROAD/TUNNEL ROAD~~

~~Site Area:~~

~~0.65 hectares (1.6 acres) net developable area.~~

~~Density:~~

~~The site should provide a minimum of 60 dwellings on the site at a net density of approximately 90 dwellings per hectare (but if it is necessary to relocate the existing church elsewhere on the site pursuant to POLICY CS6, the minimum density may be reduced accordingly).~~

~~Form, Layout and Landscaping:~~

~~The warehouse building to the north of Belgrave Road has potential for retention and conversion to flats.~~

~~Remediation Measures:~~

~~The site will require investigation and treatment for contamination prior to development commencing.~~

~~Access:~~

~~Pedestrian access should be provided through the eastern part of the site from Belgrave Road. Vehicular access to the western part of the site should be taken from Upper Grosvenor Road and to the eastern part of the site from the western and eastern sides of Tunnel Road.~~

~~A contribution may be sought towards the provision of the Goods Station Road section of the town centre-Longfield Road cycleway and provision of cycle crossing facilities at the junction of Goods Station Road and Victoria Road.~~

~~A contribution may be sought towards the implementation of a Residents' Parking Zone.~~

~~d) SITE OF STORMONTS, MOUNT EPHRAIM/CULVERDEN STREET/ROCK VILLA ROAD~~

~~Site Area:~~

~~0.48 hectares (1.19 acres) net developable area.~~

~~Density:~~

~~The site should provide a minimum of 60 dwellings at a net density of approximately 125 dwellings per hectare.~~

~~Form, Layout and Landscaping:~~

~~No. 15 Mount Ephraim should be retained for conversion to residential accommodation. Development on the site should be designed so as not to obscure or prevent adequate light from reaching the large stained glass window in the adjoining church. The introduction of public art should be considered as part of this development.~~

~~Remediation Measures:~~

~~The site is likely to require investigation and treatment for contamination prior to development.~~

Access:

~~Pedestrian access should be provided through the site from west to east linking the Kent and Sussex site to Rock Villa Road, and thence to Grosvenor Road and the town centre.~~

~~A contribution towards the provision of cycle routes to the town centre may be sought.~~

~~Improvements to the junction of Culverden Street and Mount Ephraim may be required to accommodate vehicular access to the site. A contribution may be sought towards the provision of a Residents' Parking Zone.~~

e) MEDWAY ROAD**Site Area:**

~~1.43 hectares (3.53 acres) net developable area.~~

Density:

~~The site should provide a minimum of 70 dwellings at a net density of approximately 50 dwellings per hectare.~~

Form, Layout and Landscaping:

~~A strong perimeter development should be provided to Quarry Road/Grosvenor Bridge at the north eastern corner of the site. Built development should respect the need to preserve views from Grosvenor Road Bridge towards St Barnabas Church.~~

~~The layout of the site should enable the strategic segregated cycle route to link with the sector of this route proposed through the site allocated under POLICY H6(a).~~

~~The development should incorporate noise attenuation measures in order to protect the residents from noise from the adjoining railway line.~~

~~The introduction of public art should be considered as part of this development.~~

Recreation and Community Provision:

~~A contribution will be sought towards equipping the children's playspace to be provided on the site allocated under POLICY H6(a).~~

Remediation Measures:

~~The site will require investigation and possible treatment for contamination prior to development commencing.~~

Access:

~~A segregated pedestrian and cycle link will be required throughout the length of the site to form part of the route from the town centre to Longfield Road. A contribution may be sought towards the provision of the Goods Station Road section of the route, and the provision of cycle crossing facilities at the junction of Goods Station Road and Victoria Road.~~

~~Vehicular access to serve the site should be taken from Medway Road subject to a junction improvement with Quarry Road. There should be no through access for motor vehicles into the site allocated under POLICY H6(a).~~

~~Within the site, roads should be designed for a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour.~~

~~A contribution may be sought towards the implementation of a Residents' Parking Zone.~~

~~f) SITE OF FORMER SPRINGFIELD GARDEN CENTRE, CRANBROOK ROAD, HAWKHURST~~

~~Site Area:~~

~~1.33 hectares (3.29 acres) net developable area.~~

~~Density:~~

~~The site should provide a minimum of 40 dwellings at a net density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare.~~

~~Form, Layout and Landscaping:~~

~~The land adjoining the site and designated as Area of Landscape Importance (POLICY EN22) should be retained and reinforced with additional planting. The northern and western site boundaries should also be reinforced with additional planting. Measures will be required to attenuate noise from the sub-station and substantial tree planting will be needed to the west and south of the sub-station to improve visual amenity.~~

~~Development on the lower parts of the site, which are immediately to the north of the POLICY EN22 area, could be of a greater height than the remainder of the development.~~

~~Access:~~

~~Pedestrian links should be completed to the Primary Shopping Area.~~

~~Access improvements will be required as part of any development.~~

~~Within the site, roads should be designed for a maximum speed of 20 mph.~~

~~A traffic calming gateway feature to Hawkhurst should be provided adjoining the entrance to the site on Cranbrook Road.~~

~~HOUSING ALLOCATION AT THE KENT AND SUSSEX HOSPITAL SITE~~

~~6.98 The Kent and Sussex Hospital site is likely to come forward for redevelopment towards the end of the Plan period when the new District General Hospital (at Pembury) is scheduled to open. Whilst it is unlikely that any development will be completed on the site prior to the end of the Plan period, it is expected that a planning application will be brought forward before then to facilitate early disposal and redevelopment of the Kent and Sussex site. The Local Planning Authority will be preparing a Supplementary Planning Document for this site and therefore it should be allocated for the relevant uses in an adopted Development Plan Document.~~

~~6.99 The site is in a prominent position at the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. The part of the site fronting Mount Ephraim is allocated for town centre uses under POLICY CR4(c) and the remainder is allocated for residential development under POLICY H7.~~

~~6.100 The main vehicular access to the site will be from Mount Ephraim, centrally located to the site frontage, with secondary access from Culverden Park. There should be no through-route for vehicles, other than emergency vehicles. A Transport Assessment will be necessary for any development proposals for this site.~~

POLICY H7**SITE OF KENT AND SUSSEX HOSPITAL (PART), MOUNT EPHRAIM**

~~Part of the Kent and Sussex Hospital site, as shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for residential development. The site is likely to come forward for development at the end of the Plan period. Any proposals for development of part of the allocation will be required to demonstrate that they would not prevent the quantum of development set out below from being satisfactorily accommodated on the site.~~

Site Area:

~~3.22 hectares (8.0 acres) net developable area.~~

Density:

~~The site should provide a minimum of 200 dwellings at a net density of approximately 60 dwellings per hectare.~~

Recreation and Community Provision:

~~An equipped children's playspace of 0.04 hectares should be provided at the western part of the site.~~

Remediation Measures:

~~Part of the site is likely to require investigation and treatment for contamination prior to development.~~

Access:

~~Pedestrian and cycle links should be provided to the surrounding area, particularly to the town centre and to Culverden Park to the north.~~

~~Improved pedestrian crossing facilities on Mount Ephraim (to help link the site with the town centre) may be required, and a contribution may be sought towards the provision of cycle routes to the town centre via Mount Ephraim/London Road and St John's Road/Grosvenor Road. Within the site, roads should be designed for a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour.~~

~~A financial contribution may be sought towards the provision of a Residents' Parking Zone.~~

Housing Development Outside the Limits to Built Development

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOCAL NEEDS OUTSIDE THE DEFINED LIMITS TO BUILT DEVELOPMENT

- 6.101** Tunbridge Wells Borough Council recognises the particular difficulties facing people in the Borough in securing suitable housing which meets their housing needs. Changes in mobility and work patterns, which have resulted in a high demand for housing, combined with restrictive development policies and a reduction in the stock of social housing, have put pressure on housing, particularly in rural areas, and reduced the supply of affordable accommodation for those on a modest income who live and work in the Borough. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) indicated that some 35% of the housing need in the Borough was in the rural areas, including the small towns of Paddock Wood, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. However, the precise level of need for any individual parish would need to be established by a

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comprehensive local survey (usually jointly carried out by the Borough and Parish Council concerned), as the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Housing Needs Survey (2000) is sample-based and would not be statistically significant at this level.

- 6.102** Where such a local need exists and has clearly been demonstrated by a comprehensive local survey, and the Council is satisfied that a particular scheme will meet the need, the Local Planning Authority will consider releasing small sites for development outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, where general market or speculative housing would not normally be permitted.
- 6.103** The intention of this Policy is to improve the quality of life by making it possible for people on modest incomes, including the elderly and young families, to remain in, or move back to, the local community in which they already live or work or with which they have strong connections. Making a stock of housing truly affordable to local people can assist the local economy and particularly village services to the benefit of all members of the local community. POLICY H8 applies to settlements within the designated Green Belt although Government guidance PPG3 notes that these should be very limited developments, permissible in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.104** As the development of such sites represents an exception to normal planning policies, the Borough Council will ensure that the housing provided will remain available for its original purpose to future occupiers through appropriate agreements with developers and Registered Social Landlords.
- 6.105** Proposals for rural exceptions schemes should about the village they are intended to serve if possible and possess good footpath links and connections to local services.
- 6.106** Schemes should be carefully designed to be in keeping with the style and character of their surroundings and particularly with local building styles. Sensitive locations bordering the countryside will need special attention to design, in accordance with POLICIES EN1, EN25, ~~EN26 and EN27~~, and impact on highway safety, in accordance with POLICY TP4.

POLICY H8

- 1 Where no alternative site is available to meet local housing needs within the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Local Planning Authority will permit residential development outside the Limits to Built Development provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:**
 - a) The site would be well related in scale and location to the village or town and its services;**
 - b) The local needs exist within categories identified in (4) below and are documented in a comprehensive appraisal of the parish or town;**
 - c) The local needs would not otherwise be met;**
 - d) The development would be of a suitable size and character in terms of layout, materials and landscaping in relation to the village or town; and**
 - e) The development does not contain any speculative or general demand housing;**
- 2 The Local Planning Authority will not grant planning permission for**

housing justified on the grounds of local needs, unless the initial and subsequent occupancy of such developments is controlled through planning agreements or conditions or Registered Social Landlords, to ensure that the accommodation remains available in the future to meet the purposes for which it is permitted;

- 3 A financial appraisal of the scheme, providing that it will meet the defined needs, shall accompany any planning application; and
- 4 In assessing local needs, regard will be had to households or persons in households, otherwise unable to gain access at affordable cost ^{*(1)} to existing local accommodation suited to their needs and who fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - (i) Those in the parish or town currently in accommodation unsuited to their circumstances through physical, medical or social reasons, and which is incapable of being improved or rendered suitable ^{*(2)} at reasonable cost, and who can demonstrate continuous residence in the parish or town for the previous three years, or residence for a total of at least five years out of the previous 10;
 - (ii) Those who formerly have been members of households which comply with the residential qualifications in (i) above and who have recognised local connections ^{*(3)}; and
 - (iii) Those in permanent, full time employment in the parish or town or who will be taking up permanent full time employment there, or who provide an important service requiring them to live locally ^{*(4)}.

Notes:

^{*(1)} The definition of affordability for the Plan area is flexible to allow for variation on the market, economic conditions and mortgage lender practice as follows:

The price of rented accommodation should not be more than 25% net average household income for the Plan area; and

The price of owner-occupied accommodation should not exceed the current mortgage lender multiple x average net household income for the Plan area minus current Plan area average house price (less 5% deposit).

^{*(2)} Improvement in this context means that this would not otherwise be achieved with grant assistance towards repairs, adaptations to the property for disabled people, etc.

^{*(3)} Local connections, as used in this context, are defined as continuous residence for a period of five years out of the last 10, or immediate family having lived in the area for a minimum of 10 years.

^{*(4)} This category may include the instance where an employer is setting up a new business or service. In this sub-paragraph the term “parish” may be taken to include adjoining parishes where those parishes are unable to satisfy their own needs. The intention is to assist those in long-term and lasting employment, rather than those in temporary, short-term or seasonal employment.

KEY WORKERS' DWELLINGS IN ASSOCIATION WITH RURAL EMPLOYMENT

- 6.107** The Local Planning Authority will from time to time be required to consider applications for dwellings in association with rural employment. By its very nature, the employment in question is normally located in the countryside outside the built up area of the town or village. However, one of the main objectives of both national and local planning policy continues to be to protect the countryside from sporadic and unnecessary development which is not sustainable. One exception to this, consistent with the need to sustain a healthy agricultural or forestry industry, is the provision of accommodation for agricultural or forestry workers where it is essential that they should reside close to their place of work. In the case of agricultural workers' dwellings, the Local Planning Authority will seek expert advice on the holding's viability.
- 6.108** Most forms of rural employment do not require the physical proximity of the employee to their work. It is not the intention to permit newly built dwellings in the countryside close to the place of work merely for the convenience of the occupant. Nor is the security of the site considered to be an essential reason for a new residential building. The use of CCTV could also reduce the need for additional on-site staff. However, in a limited number of instances, it may be considered essential for key workers to live on the site, such as in the case of housemaster/mistress in residential schools or a doctor/nurse required to provide emergency care at a hospital. In all cases, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that an exceptional case is demonstrated before permission for a new dwelling outside the Limits to Built Development is given.
- 6.109** The Local Planning Authority would wish to ensure that the practice of selling off dwellings separately from a holding and subsequently applying for permission for a new dwelling is curtailed.
- 6.110** Where acceptable in principle, the new dwelling should be carefully integrated within the landscape, in accordance with POLICIES EN1, EN25, ~~EN26 and EN27~~.

POLICY H9

Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposal Map, proposals for the erection of a key worker's dwelling will not be permitted unless all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1 It would be essential for a full time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the business, to reside on the site to provide essential or emergency on-site care for human life or for agricultural or business or forestry purposes which could not be carried out satisfactorily by the person living off-site;**
- 2 No existing accommodation suitable, or potentially suitable for the purpose, or suitable building that could be converted, would be available in the near vicinity;**
- 3 A dwelling has not been sold off separately from the site or holding during the previous 10 years, nor has the site formed part of a larger unit previously served by such a dwelling at any time during this period;**
- 4 The size and scale of the new dwelling would be appropriate for the purpose for which it would be required in relation to the income the unit can sustain;**
- 5 In the case of an agricultural or forestry worker's dwelling, a functional**

test will be necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise;

- 6 The unit and the business concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so; and
- 7 In all cases, the granting of planning permission will be subject to conditions restricting the occupancy of the dwelling.

REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS OUTSIDE THE DEFINED LIMITS TO BUILT DEVELOPMENT

- 6.111** Where it is proposed to replace dwellings in the countryside such as a dwelling damaged by fire or other accident, or where the cost of renovation of an existing dwelling would be uneconomic in comparison with its replacement, planning permission for its replacement may be granted subject to satisfying design and other environmental criteria. This will not apply where the habitable use of a dwelling has clearly been abandoned or where a property has been demolished.
- 6.112** In view of the strong environmental constraints and the general policy of restraint in the countryside, any increase in volume over the existing dwelling will be strictly controlled. Whilst PPG2 allows for replacement dwellings in the Green Belt, the new dwelling should not be materially larger than the one it replaces. The size of the existing dwelling and the visual impact of both the existing and proposed built form will be key factors to be taken into account in assessing the suitability of the replacement dwelling.

POLICY H10

- 1 **Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, the replacement of an existing dwelling will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:**
 - a) **The existing building enjoys a lawful residential use which has not been abandoned;**
 - b) **The replacement dwelling would be sited on, or as close as is reasonably practicable to, the site of the existing dwelling, unless an alternative position on the plot would result in clear landscape, access or local amenity benefits;**
 - c) **The replacement dwelling would be no more obtrusive in the landscape than the dwelling which is to be replaced; and**
- 2 **In appropriate cases, temporary accommodation such as a caravan may be permitted on-site during rebuilding, provided the works are continuous.**

EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS OUTSIDE THE DEFINED LIMITS TO BUILT DEVELOPMENT

- 6.113** In the countryside, the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 provides for modest extensions only and no definition is given of what may constitute “modest” or the “original” building.

- 6.114** Whilst owners should be allowed a reasonable amount of scope for improving their properties, repeated extension of the building could eventually impact on the character of the countryside and result in the reduction of the stock of smaller dwellings in a locality. PPG2 states that the limited extension of existing dwellings is appropriate development in the Green Belt, provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. For the purposes of POLICY H11, within the Green Belt, “original” is defined as the building as it existed on 1st July 1948, or, in the case of a building constructed after 1st July 1948, as it was first built. Outside the Green Belt, the size of the original dwelling will be interpreted as meaning its size on the date of first deposit of this Plan (May 2001); or for any new dwelling permitted after this date, as it is originally built.
- 6.115** The term “modest” has inevitably been open to a range of interpretations. The Local Planning Authority recognises that, in considering applications to extend existing dwellings in the countryside, no two situations will be identical. The following Policy therefore includes a series of criteria which proposals will be expected to meet. The Local Planning Authority places particular emphasis on the importance of assessing the impact of the extension on its rural location and on the character of the existing building. In considering such proposals, the Local Planning Authority would normally judge an application as modest if it would result in an increase of approximately 50% in the volume of the dwelling or 150 cubic metres (gross), whichever is the greater, subject to a maximum of 250 cubic metres (gross). The gross volume will be ascertained by external measurement taken above ground level and include the volume of the roof. All other buildings, including detached garages, will be excluded from the calculation of the volume of the dwelling. The guidance as to the term “modest” should not be seen as a maximum to be sought in each case. It is likely that, depending on the particular situation of the building, and the circumstances of each proposal, the size of the extension will fall in a range around the figures listed.
- 6.116** In the case of listed buildings and buildings whose loss would be detrimental to the character of the countryside (such as barns and oasts), special consideration will be given to the architectural and historical integrity of the building or groups of buildings.
- 6.117** Particular attention to size and design will be required when a property is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where development rights permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (1995) are less than elsewhere, and within the High and Low Weald Special Landscape Areas.
- 6.118** All proposals should take account of POLICIES EN25, ~~EN26 and EN27~~ and the advice contained in the Local Planning Authority’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on alterations and extensions and that contained in Kent Design – a guide to sustainable development (2000), particularly in respect of local distinctiveness and the quality of design.

POLICY H11

Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, extensions *(1) to an existing dwelling or additional ancillary buildings within the curtilage of the original building(s) will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1 The existing dwelling was designed, constructed or converted for residential use and was built on permanent foundations on the site;**
- 2 The extension would be modest and in scale with the original dwelling and would not dominate it visually or result in a poorly-proportioned building**

or detract from its character or setting; and

- 3 The dwelling as extended would not lend itself to future sub-division to form a separate dwelling.

Note:

- *(1) In the context of this policy 'extensions' will include all new buildings suitable or potentially suitable for use as habitable accommodation and situated within the curtilage of the building.

~~EXTENSIONS TO CURTILAGES OUTSIDE THE DEFINED LIMITS TO BUILT DEVELOPMENT~~

~~6.119 An increasing number of proposals are being made involving the extension of residential curtilages into the countryside, for example in connection with the keeping of horses or providing additional garden land. This is likely to continue as farmers may find it increasingly attractive to sell off parcels of agricultural land or woodland as a result of trends in agriculture. These proposals may immediately or subsequently involve new buildings, structures or enclosures, including fencing. Where these buildings or structures are ancillary to the enjoyment of the original dwelling, such as open air swimming pools, greenhouses, tennis courts or storage sheds, development may take place under the provisions of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, without the need to obtain planning consent. This also applies to fencing of two metres or less height where this does not abut the highway.~~

~~6.120 Whilst the Local Planning Authority is not opposed to the extension of residential curtilages in principle, it is concerned about the overriding need to safeguard the character of the countryside, and also to protect local amenity. Particular consideration will be given to the visual impact of any proposal, including the proposed means of enclosure, in accordance with POLICIES EN25, EN26 and EN27.~~

~~6.121 Any planning permission may be conditional on the removal of permitted development rights to prevent the future erection of buildings or means of enclosure, in order to avoid the suburbanisation of the countryside. Where planning permission is granted to extend a residential curtilage on the edge of a settlement, this will not alter the Limits to Built Development or any Green Belt boundary during the Plan period and boundaries will remain as defined on the Proposals Map.~~

~~POLICY H12~~

~~Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, extensions to residential curtilages will be permitted provided both of the following criteria are satisfied:~~

- ~~1 The proposal would not be intrusive by virtue of visual appearance and would not adversely affect the character, appearance, landscape or topography of the countryside; and~~
- ~~2 The proposed means of enclosure would be sympathetic to the character of the adjoining countryside.~~

CONVERSIONS OF RURAL BUILDINGS TO RESIDENTIAL USE OUTSIDE THE DEFINED LIMITS TO BUILT DEVELOPMENT

- 6.122** Many buildings in the countryside, including barns, oast houses and institutional buildings are now unsuited, or no longer required, for the purpose for which they were originally built. Many of these existing buildings are of historic or architectural interest and in themselves add to the character of the Kent countryside.
- 6.123** Reference should be made to the advice contained in the Local Planning Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to the conversion of rural buildings, which offers advice on the suitability of buildings for conversion, the standards of design which will be expected and how the proposal should fit into the setting.
- 6.124** Whilst Government guidance (PPS7) and the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006 policies are aimed at restricting residential development in the countryside in favour of more sustainable patterns of development, an exception may be made where the change of use is proposed to an existing structurally sound building.
- 6.125** Government advice in PPG2 also makes it clear that conversion of rural buildings to residential use will also be acceptable within the Green Belt, subject to certain safeguards to ensure the openness of the Green Belt is maintained.
- 6.126** Not all buildings will be suitable for re-use or adaptation for residential use. For example, temporary insubstantial buildings requiring substantial reconstruction, alteration or extension are not suitable unless they are of special architectural or historic interest. Proposals for conversion will need to demonstrate how the implications of complying with appropriate Building Regulations will affect the building. In most cases this will entail the submission of a structural appraisal of the existing building together with details of any proposed new work.
- 6.127** There is considerable concern, given the high quality of much of the rural environment of the Plan area and the pressures for development that exist, that permitted development rights in respect of agricultural buildings should not be abused as a way of obtaining residential development in the countryside. The Local Planning Authority will, in accordance with Government advice, examine the history of buildings recently erected under agricultural permitted development rights, where these come forward with proposals for changes of use. Where such a building has been erected and falls out of agricultural use within 10 years, the building should be removed and the site restored to its condition before the building was erected. If a building has been recently erected (within the last four years) for a specific agricultural purpose and then proposals are brought forward for a change of use out of agriculture, the Local Planning Authority will carefully investigate the history of the building and consider the consequences of its conversion. Where the conversion of existing buildings would lead directly to a need for a replacement building and this could have a significant detrimental effect on the landscape, the Local Planning Authority will consider the need to attach a condition to the permission removing permitted development rights for the erection of new buildings.
- 6.128** POLICIES ~~EN14~~ and EN15, covering nature conservation issues, may apply to proposals to re-use rural buildings, particularly if they would affect protected species.
- 6.129** Access and car parking associated with rural buildings are an important factor in considering the impact of change of use proposals on the character of the countryside.

POLICY H13

Outside the Limits to Built Development, as defined on the Proposals Map, the change of use or conversion to residential use of a listed building, a building whose loss would be detrimental to the character of the countryside, or a building whose form, bulk, general design, materials and scale is in keeping with its surroundings, will only be permitted provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1 The building would be capable of conversion without extensive alteration or rebuilding and/or extension;
- 2 The conversion can be achieved without detrimental effect on the building's fabric or character;
- 3 The creation of a residential curtilage, access and car parking facilities could be achieved without harm to the character of the countryside;
- 4 The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that, in the case of a recently constructed building, there was a genuine agricultural justification for the erection of the building originally;
- 5 Re-use of the building for economic development purposes would be inappropriate by reason of its location or its scale or design; and
- 6 The conversion would meet an identified local need for housing which does not conflict with a need to retain local employment opportunities, and is in a location that has good accessibility to a range of services in a nearby settlement.

Implementation

6.130

Policy Number	Implementing Agency
H5	Private Sector and Housing Associations
H6	Private Sector and Housing Associations
H7	Private Sector and Housing Associations

- 6.131** Other policies and paragraphs in this Chapter will be applied by the Local Planning Authority to encourage the provision of appropriate types of housing, including small dwellings and affordable homes and to promote a high standard of development consistent with the sustainable objectives of this Plan.

