



# State of Medway Report Chattenden



#### State of Medway Reports

This is one of a series of factual reports that were first produced in 2008 to inform the preparation of Medway's Local Development Framework or LDF. Each deals with a specific topic and draws together available information from a variety of sources.

The reports were intended to establish the current position and a baseline for further work. They also helped in highlighting gaps in the information base.

Each was updated in January 2012 to provide an updated baseline and inform the independent examination of the Medway Core Strategy.

To monitor progress being made on the LDF please regularly check our website at www.medway.gov.uk/ldf.

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## **Lodge Hill**

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The proposal for a new settlement at Lodge Hill (previously known as Chattenden) is a strategic issue for Medway. Before allocating the site in the draft Core Strategy, the Council had to consider its contribution to the overall strategy for Medway and also its sustainability. This included comparing Lodge Hill against other options for Medway's future development. The prepublication draft of the Core Strategy, including the proposal for Lodge Hill, was published for consultation in November 2010. The publication draft was published in August 2011 for the final round of consultation. The plan at Appendix 1 shows the area that has been allocated in the draft Core Strategy for this strategic development.
- 1.2 It was originally proposed that an Area Action Plan for the site would be produced once the Core Strategy was confirmed. This would expand on the strategic principles set out in the Core Strategy. The 2008 version of this SOM report confirmed this intention. However, the use of a strategic allocation means that Lodge Hill no longer needs to have an Area Action Plan. Instead, a Development Brief has been produced to provide the more detailed level of policy for the site.
- 1.3 The 2008 SOM report explained the background to the proposals for the new settlement and how it has been included in local, regional and sub-regional documents since 1995. This report is not intended to repeat the discussion in the previous version. It sets out the background briefly, but then focuses on changes and additional information since the 2008 paper.

# 2. Background

- 2.1 The Ministry of Defence, especially the Royal School of Military Engineering, have a strong presence in Medway. They have occupied Chattenden and Lodge Hill for well over 100 years. Most recently, the site has been used for a range of training activities, together with other land in the area including the depots at Wainscott and Upnor. Chattenden Barracks was vacated in 1995 and subsequently demolished. There has been an historic expectation that the site as a whole will be declared surplus and made available for redevelopment. Land Securities were selected as the Land Sales Delivery Partner for Defence Estates (now Defence Infrastructure Organisation, or DIO) in 2008, demonstrating commitment to this process. Many activities have already been transferred from the site to other parts of Medway and further afield, and the transfer of the remaining activities is expected to be complete by 2013.
- 2.2 The site's potential as a new village-scale settlement was first highlighted in RPG9a in 1995. This has been consistently reaffirmed in every relevant planning policy document since then, up to and including the South East Plan. Full details of the policy background are given in Appendix 2.
- 2.3 Land Securities have engaged a large team of consultants who have been working closely with the Council to draw up proposals for the site. There have also been several rounds of public consultation on the masterplan as it develops. This has led to the recent submission of an outline planning application for the site, which is currently being considered by the Council.

#### 3. The Site

- 3.1 The site is located on the Hoo Peninsula to the northeast of the Medway urban area. It is surrounded by open countryside and smaller rural settlements, including the existing village of Chattenden, which is effectively wrapped around by the allocation.
- 3.2 The name Lodge Hill refers to the site as a whole. In fact this area comprises several adjacent sites including the Lodge Hill Training Area, Chattenden Barracks, Lodge Hill Camp and part of the Chattenden Training Area.
- 3.3 Land Securities have undertaken a series of studies and reports looking at the existing site, and considerable amounts of consultation and engagement with the local community. These have provided additional baseline information to inform the strategic allocation and the Development Brief. These documents form part of the evidence base for the LDF. A list of the topics covered is included at Appendix 3; it is very extensive and demonstrates the deliverability and capacity of the site. The current planning application includes further supporting information including a full Environmental Statement.
- 3.4 There is a significant amount of information contained in these reports and it is not intended to repeat it here. However, in order to understand the site's current situation, it is useful to draw attention to the broad findings of the Built Heritage report and the Ecology report.

#### **Built Heritage**

- In the 2008 SOM report's description of the site, it was stated that there were no existing buildings of special historic interest. Since then, Land Securities have undertaken a detailed survey of all buildings and structures on site. The results have been shared with English Heritage. Four buildings (all World War I sentry posts) have been Grade II listed and a number of others remain under review by English Heritage. There are also buildings of less significance but which still contribute to the area's military heritage.
- 3.6 These include a number of magazine sheds, which were built for manufacture and storage of munitions. There are magazine sheds spaced throughout the main Lodge Hill Training Area, and a complex of five magazines in a walled compound immediately south of Chattenden Woods (the Chattenden Magazines). Each magazine sits within an embankment that was designed to contain any explosion from the munitions stored there. These buildings were originally linked by a light rail system, which also linked the site to Upnor.
- 3.7 Sadly, the magazine sheds have been much altered from their original state and many of them are in poor condition. The five Chattenden Magazines have been severely damaged by slippage in the surrounding embankments, which are formed of heavy clay soils. It is therefore unlikely that most of them can be retained and re-used as part of the development.
- 3.8 The other most significant buildings and structures on site date from the period of the First and Second World War. There are many examples of "pill boxes" or sentry posts including the four that have been listed. Some are associated with military facilities within the camps and others with the stop line that ran across the Hoo Peninsula, which was constructed as an anti-tank measure in case of invasion. It is very unlikely to be possible to re-use these small and often oddly-shaped buildings but many of them could be retained to reinforce the sense of history throughout the site.
- 3.9 Also associated with the First World War is an anti-aircraft station on Chattenden Ridge. This is currently in poor condition, but is historically very important. It may be the first anti-aircraft emplacement in the world, and is almost certainly the first in Britain. English Heritage are currently considering whether it should be listed or scheduled.

#### **Ecology**

- 3.10 Most of the site is classed as brownfield land due to its long history of military usage. However, there are significant sections that have not been developed. Wybornes Wood, Round Top Wood and Deangate Wood are all ancient woodland, and there are long-established shelterbelts along field margins to the north of the security fence around the Lodge Hill Training Area. There are also areas where semi-natural habitats have established around and between military uses, and where developed areas have begun to regenerate. Because of this, there is a lot of ecological interest within the site.
- 3.11 The site also adjoins the Chattenden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest. This is designated for woodland habitat and breeding birds, and also includes an area of grassland at Rough Shaw, which has a number of locally scarce species and provides foraging habitat for some of the bird species living in the woodland.

- 3.12 A number of protected species are found within or adjacent the site, including reptiles, bats, badgers, great crested newts, common toads and some bird, invertebrate and plant species. There are also many more species which are not formally protected by legislation but are still of ecological interest. This includes a large population of breeding nightingales, potentially around 1% of the total UK population of this declining species.
- 3.13 The local area also includes internationally important wetlands along the Thames and Medway rivers, which designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites. The main ecological interest of these sites is their birdlife, particularly over-wintering birds.
- 3.14 There has been some evidence of declining bird numbers in the SPAs for a number of years. Medway Council along with partner organisations including Natural England, the Environment Agency, other north Kent Local Authorities and conservation bodies, have commissioned an extensive piece of research into this decline in an attempt to discover the reasons behind it. The results of Phase 1 of this survey suggest that use of the shoreline by walkers, dog walkers and others is disturbing the birds using these habitats. However, later phases of the work are needed to confirm exactly what the impact is for the overall bird populations, and whether there are also other factors at play.
- 3.15 Lodge Hill is within 2km of both of the SPA/Ramsar Sites and therefore within the distance where residents may well use these areas for recreation. Any impact from the development will have to be thoroughly assessed and mitigated.

# 4. Production of a Development Brief

- 4.1 It was previously envisaged that the development at Lodge Hill would require an Area Action Plan, given the strategic importance of the site and the scale of development that was likely. At the time the 2008 SOM was produced, Government guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) supported this approach.
- 4.2 Since then, revisions to PPS12 have given Local Authorities the option of including Strategic Allocations within their Core Strategies, where a site or sites are fundamental to the strategy for the area. Paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 of PPS12 confirm that this approach should not, however, mean the inclusion of "site specific detail that can date quickly". It also confirms that while a formal Development Plan Document (such as an Area Action Plan) is needed to allocate new sites, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can be used to provide the further level of detail required under a strategic allocation.
- 4.3 This approach has a number of advantages over the original proposal to produce an Area Action Plan. The inclusion of a Strategic Allocation within the Core Strategy, together with the provision of the evidence needed to support it, will give certainty to prospective developers at an earlier stage, and will also enable much more detailed infrastructure planning to be undertaken in respect of the development. The production of an SPD has a shorter timescale than an Area Action Plan, therefore also assisting in bringing forward this important site with its much-needed housing and economic development. As the Lodge Hill site is forecast to be one of the earlier major

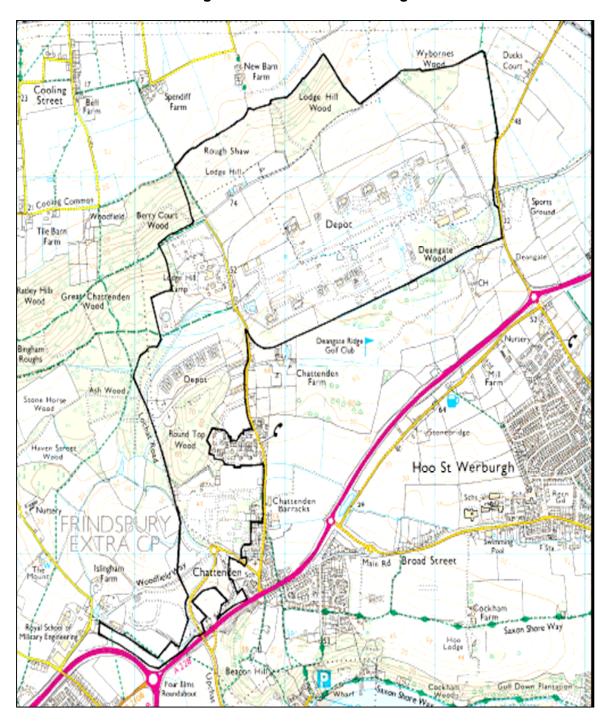
sites to come forward with housing, this approach is also important for the Council to avoid having to release additional large greenfield sites in order to meet its housing need.

- 4.4 The Development Brief for Lodge Hill has now been produced and was adopted by the Council on 20 December 2011. In advance of the adoption of the Core Strategy it is not possibly to adopt it as a full SPD. A six-week public consultation into the draft version of the Brief was held from 30 August to 14 October 2011 following the same procedures that would have been necessary for an SPD, so it will have similar weight in the planning system. It is intended to formally upgrade it to a full SPD once the Core Strategy has been adopted.
- 4.5 The Development Brief looks at the site itself and also its relationship with the surrounding rural areas and smaller settlements. It considers the issues relating to the development in six broad themes:
  - Community
  - Economy
  - Environment
  - Transport
  - Character; and
  - Delivery

#### 5. Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 The policy context for the proposed new settlement is summarised in detail in Appendix 2. It is not intended to repeat this detail here. However, it is worth re-stating the length of time over which there has been consistent policy recognition of the potential of this site.
- 5.2 The earliest mention of the site's potential was in the Regional Planning Guidance RPG9a The Thames Gateway Planning Framework in 1995. Most recently, the South East Plan identified Chattenden as the main focus for development in Medway other than the waterfront regeneration sites. For the present this is still part of the Development Plan for the area, following the rulings on the various Cala Homes challenges to its revocation. The inclusion of the strategic allocation in the Core Strategy is therefore in accordance with the regional plan for the area.
- 5.3 The existing Medway Local Plan 2003, which will be partially replaced by the Core Strategy once adopted, has a strategic policy (S14) relating to the site, known as Chattenden at that stage. This policy re-states its potential for accommodating development needs in Medway post-2006, for "business, educational and/or residential uses". It also makes clear that the arena for this potential to be properly considered is through the next review of the Local Plan. The production of the Core Strategy is therefore fulfilling this requirement.

APPENDIX 1: Plan showing Defence Estate landholdings to be released



# APPENDIX 2: Extracts from Planning Policy Documents relating to Chattenden/Lodge Hill

# 1. RPG9a Thames Gateway Planning Framework (1995)

- 6.10.16 The release of land from the Defence estate at Chattenden could allow a more sustainable relationship to be fashioned between employment and homes on the Hoo Peninsula. Beyond the option for a campus style development focusing on the re-use of existing buildings, there could be scope for expanding the community into a new village. This would depend in part on the extent of the release from the areas used for defence training. It is therefore important for there to be a comprehensive response to the full potential of Chattenden, based on a thorough consideration of the contribution that might be made in the longer term development needs of the Medway Towns. It is equally important to avoid an incremental erosion of the opportunity.
- 6.10.17 Preferably, this strategic consideration should be through a review of the development plan. This could provide scope for the improvement of the large areas currently used for defence training and could take advantage of improvements to the road and rail access to the Isle of Grain. A new village would need to be closely related to existing settlements to provide the most efficient size.

## 2. Kent Structure Plan (1996)

Medway Towns

- 3.92 The Strategic Objective for the Medway Towns, in the context of the Thames Gateway initiative, is one of redeveloping and recycling areas of under-used and damaged land within the urban framework of the towns. This is confirmed by RPG9a which identifies waterfront sites as the main focus of attention. The provision of the Medway Towns Northern Relief road (and improvements to A228) are important pieces of infrastructure needed to improve the flow of through traffic and support regeneration of the towns and riverside sites. Redevelopment proposals for riverside sites should make the most of their potential for facilitating river transport. Also important is the completion of the Southern Peripheral Road linking neighbourhoods between Bridgewood and Hempstead.
- 3.93 Attention should therefore be centred on the urban area for the bulk of the Towns' development needs, with expansion onto fresh land limited to 'rounding off' and peripheral sites well related to the framework of the urban area and not conflicting with strategic landscape, conservation or Green Belt policies. In particular, no case is seen for major fresh land release beyond the urban framework at Gillingham, nor for significant new development on the Hoo Peninsula. The latter is tightly constrained by nature conservation, agricultural and Green Belt considerations, other than at the present industrial and commercial allocations at Grain, Thamesport and Kingsnorth. The only other potential major opportunity for development outside the existing urban area likely to arise is at Chattenden. Release of defence land already in built use is likely to provide a short term opportunity. Beyond that options involving fresh land would contribute to the strategic development requirements of the Medway Towns in the medium and long term. These will be considered in the review of

the Development Plan, though review of the Kent Structure Plan and the Medway Towns Local Plan.

# Policy NK2:

At the Medway Towns it is strategic policy to promote development through reinvestment in the urban fabric including redevelopment and recycling of under-used and derelict land within the urban framework, with a focus on the riverside areas, in the interests of upgrading the environmental quality and image of the area and to restrict outward peripheral expansion on fresh land, in particular to the East of Gillingham. The provision of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road and improvements to the A228 are key pieces of infrastructure needed to support regeneration of the town centres and riverside sites and will be promoted. Long term protection will be afforded to areas of national, international or other strategic importance for nature conservation.

3.94 Local plan preparation for the Medway Towns will need to take account of the functions and appropriate designation of the strategic gap proposed by this Plan (Policy MK5) to maintain separation between the urban areas of Maidstone, the Medway Towns and the Medway Gap (see paragraph 3.106). Consistent and comprehensive definition of the gap may require designation of limited areas within the Rochester upon Medway City and Gillingham Borough areas.

# 3. Medway Local Plan (2003)

Chattenden

- 2.5.70 Although the Chatham Naval Dockyard closed in 1984 there is still a strong military presence in Medway, represented by the Royal School of Military Engineering based at Brompton. There are a number of training facilities scattered through the area including Upnor and Chattenden. Kitchener Barracks on Dock Road, Chatham is also occupied by the military.
- 2.5.71 Recent cutbacks in military expenditure have seen a reduction in the Royal Engineers' operations in Medway. Chattenden Barracks, north of the village of Chattenden, became vacant in 1995 and there is a possibility that the site could be declared surplus by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The large Lodge Hill and Islingham Farm training areas are still used by the Royal Engineers, together with smaller operations at Lower and Upper Upnor. The MoD is still, therefore, both a major landowner and a major stakeholder in the area.
- 2.5.72 The publication of the Thames Gateway Planning Framework (RPG9a) in 1995 highlighted the development potential of the Defence Estate at Chattenden. If this land were to be released it could allow a more sustainable relationship to be fashioned between employment and homes on the Hoo Peninsula. It inferred that the existing barracks could be the basis for a campus-style development, but that there could also be scope for expanding the community into a new village, depending on the extent of land released. At this stage no land, including the barracks, has been declared surplus and no proposals can therefore be included in this plan.
- 2.5.73 Chattenden Barracks comprises a range of buildings including residential accommodation, workshops, recreational and medical facilities, teaching

facilities, hard standings, open space and woodland. This 20 hectare (50 acre) site has potential for a number of institutional uses including higher education (which would be almost identical to its former military use), and a high quality but small scale industrial park. There may also be scope within the site for some new housing development or for conversion of military housing to general housing use, but no firm allocation is included to this effect due to the uncertainties about the release of the site.

- 2.5.74 The location of the training areas owned by the MoD is not ideal if the complex is to be expanded into a new settlement. Land to the west falls within the visually prominent and important Hogmarsh Valley Area of Local Landscape Importance, while the land to the north and north east would not facilitate a natural extension or "rounding off" of the existing built-up area. Development to the east of the Barracks would be on agricultural land outside the MoD's ownership and would raise fears about possible coalescence with the settlement of Hoo St. Werburgh. The council has specifically rejected development proposals to the west of Hoo, in favour of an allocation to the east to avoid potentially prejudicing long-term development options associated with the defence estate.
- 2.5.75 However, the council recognises the severe constraints on development in other areas surrounding the urban area of Medway. Land to the west is included in the Metropolitan Green Belt while that to the south-west and south is part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Capstone, Lidsing and Darland area is protected as an area of local landscape importance in recognition of the important role that this has in separating Lordswood from Hempstead and the benefits that accrue because the countryside penetrates almost to the heart of the conurbation. Undeveloped land in the urban fringe to the east of Rainham and along the riverside north of Twydall and Rainham is vitally important, as the Thames Gateway Planning Framework recognises.
- 2.5.76 In these circumstances the potential of the relatively unconstrained Defence Estate at Chattenden cannot be disregarded. The council believes that the long-term (i.e. post-2006) development needs of Medway could be met in this area, subject to further detailed studies and the land being made available by the MoD. The council will continue to work to retain the Royal Engineers in Medway although the future of Chattenden needs to be considered within the context of RPG9a.
- 2.5.77 A comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, response to the potential at Chattenden will be needed, once a decision is made on its future, as RPG9a recognises. This should be based on a thorough consideration of the contribution that it might make to the longer-term development needs of the Medway area. RPG9a states that any incremental erosion of this major opportunity should be avoided, and suggested that options should preferably be considered through a review of the development plan. The Kent Structure Plan now reflects the Planning Framework in stating that the site has the capacity to add to the strategic development requirements of Medway in the medium to longer term.
- 2.5.78 The barracks and the training areas have significant potential and are strategically important to the future of the local plan area. The council's interim position is that it would wish to consider the role and development

potential of any defence lands released at Chattenden in the first review of the Medway local plan.

# POLICY S14: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ESTATE, CHATTENDEN

The council will not permit the piecemeal redevelopment of the Chattenden Barracks and military training areas during the lifetime of this plan.

The site has long term development potential for business, educational and/or residential uses and this will be considered in the next review of the Medway local plan.

#### 4. Thames Gateway Inter Regional Planning Statement (2004)

## Other Zones of Change

7.7 Medway has a range of employment and housing opportunities on the river, in the existing centres of Chatham and Rochester and on the Isle of Grain. These would be assisted by the provision of CTRL domestic services to relieve the North Kent line and proposals that would increase public transport capacity and reduce congestion in the urban area. A mixed new community is envisaged at Chattenden/Lodge Hill in the medium to long term.

# 5. Medway Waterfront Renaissance Strategy (2004)

Page 3: What is Medway Waterfront?

Relationship to other regeneration opportunities in Medway

This strategy is the first part of an overall regeneration strategy for Medway. We have chosen Medway Waterfront as the focus for our regeneration programme because it contains the greatest concentration of brownfield sites. A new settlement of approximately 5,000 houses is proposed for an area of Ministry of Defence land at Chattenden, on the Hoo Peninsula. Development is likely to take place after 2006, but it will contribute significantly to achieving housing targets in Medway and will require effective transport links to the waterfront and other centres.

# 6. Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006)

3.18 The urban area will be the focus for the majority of Medway's development needs and there should be no outward growth that conflicts with strategic restraint policies. The role of substantial areas of potentially surplus land within the boundary of the defence site at Chattenden/Lodge Hill has been identified in Supplementary Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9a) as having potential for development. The Structure Plan gives priority to the development of previously developed land within the boundary of this site to provide a new, village scale mixed use community in this area in the period to 2016 and beyond once the Ministry of Defence has departed. This is the only substantial area of previously developed land outside the urban area of

Medway that could support development on such a scale. Alternative land may be identified, however, if the defence land fails to come forward when necessary to provide for the planned employment or housing provision for Medway.

- 3.19 The development of Chattenden/Lodge Hill as a Strategic Development Location should take place alongside the major urban regeneration sites and, in view of its scale, delivery is anticipated to extend beyond 2016. Chattenden and the larger sites within the urban area will need to be provided with job opportunities, social and community facilities and appropriate infrastructure within a comprehensive development. Providing new jobs will also help to meet Medway's strategic objective of reducing its dependency on commuting out of the area.
- 3.20 Housing provision for Medway (Policy HP1) takes account of the large element of locally generated household growth, together with the likely timescale for the delivery of all the major regeneration sites in the Medway urban area and at Chattenden/Lodge Hill. Given Medway's contribution to the Kent Thames Gateway growth area, a higher rate of housing provision, based on an accelerated rate of development at these strategic sites, will be considered, where this is shown to be feasible, as indicated by Policy HP1.
- 3.21 Transport priorities for Medway include completing improvements to the A228 and providing rail access to the regionally significant deep water port of Thamesport. Such improvements are important to take forward strategic scale industrial and commercial land allocations involving previously developed land at Grain and Kingsnorth and the way they link with the Medway urban area and Chattenden/Lodge Hill. The site at Grain is also nationally important for the energy sector, including for liquid gas storage.
- 3.22 Although Medway has the largest labour force In Kent, many of its residents commute to London for work. There is a continuing need to support local economic development and the growth of higher value added economic activity. The development of the technology and knowledge sectors will be encouraged at Chatham Maritime, Chattenden/Lodge Hill and at the commercial area adjacent to Rochester Airfield.

#### Policy ME1: Medway

Proposals to regenerate Medway should focus upon the Medway Waterfront including central Chatham, Rochester Riverside and at Strood. Expansion beyond the Medway urban area to meet development requirements should be concentrated at a new, mixed-use community at Chattenden/Lodge Hill on previously developed land or such alternative land as may be identified in Local Development Documents in the event that the former defence land fails to come forward when necessary to provide for the planned employment or housing provision for Medway.

Development for the Higher and Further Education sectors including a full-scale university campus, will be supported.

Provision will be made for the technology and knowledge sectors adjacent to Rochester Airfield, at Chatham Maritime and Chattenden/Lodge Hill.

Completion of improvements to the A228 together with rail access improvements to support growth of Thamesport and industrial and commercial development at Grain and Kingsnorth will be promoted.

Major new town centre investment at Chatham on a scale appropriate to one of the region's principal urban centres will be supported, particularly in relation to new public transport capacity, employment provision, retail, cultural, tourism and leisure facilities.

As part of a comprehensive greenspaces strategy, provision will be made for a network of open land ('Green Grid') which will link major areas of open space with the Thames and Medway and with existing and new communities.

# 7. Thames Gateway Interim Plan: Development Prospectus (2006)

B2.13 The majority of housing sites are riverside sites, which will be promoted for mixed-use developments. These include a range of sites in the town centres: Rochester and Strood Riverside, Strood Temple Waterfront, St Mary's Island and Gillingham Waterfront. In addition, the MOD-owned land, particularly sites at Chattenden and Lodge Farm, will deliver over 5,000 new homes.

#### 8. South East Plan 2009

Sub-Regional policies: Kent Thames Gateway

- **19.5** The main locational effects of the core strategy and related policies will be:
  - i. concentrations of new dwellings, employment and services at major regeneration locations:
  - at Thameside, notably at the strategic sites of Eastern Quarry, North Dartford, Ebbsfleet and the Thames riverside, and
  - within the Medway urban area at riverside sites, and to the north on Ministry of Defence land at Chattenden.

Within the above, development will be particularly concentrated near the transport hubs of Ebbsfleet and the Medway Towns.

ii. new development to revitalise Sittingbourne/Sheppey in Swale, where some greenfield land has also been released.

The scale of reclamation and investment, the pace of new house building and creation of new jobs, and the provision of new infrastructure is challenging and will need continuous support.

# APPENDIX 3: List of site specific evidence base documents produced to support the strategic allocation and Development Brief for Lodge Hill

- Air quality
- Archaeology
- Built Heritage
- Construction Waste
- Contaminated Land and Remediation
- Ecology
- Employment
- Energy Centres and District Heating
- Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage
- Foul Drainage
- Green Infrastructure
- Linkages Study
- Market Report, including sales rate assumptions
- Masterplan Evolution
- Noise
- Operational Waste
- Retail
- Social Infrastructure
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Sustainability
- Transport
- Utilities