

## EMPLOYMENT



### Introduction

4.1 Shepway, as with most other East Kent coastal Districts, has problems of slow economic growth, long-term structural decline and relatively high unemployment levels. The District was granted Intermediate Assisted Area Status in 1993, which has been retained for the period 2000 to 2006. Romney Marsh is designated as a Rural Development Area. Both initiatives seek to improve local economic performance, principally through grants to encourage expanding local firms and inward investment.

4.2 Significant improvements to the transport network have taken place over recent years, providing enhanced access to the rest of the UK and mainland Europe. The final section of the M20 motorway between Ashford and Maidstone was completed in 1991, greatly reducing journey times to London. The opening of the Channel Tunnel Terminal at Cheriton in 1994 enables vehicle-borne freight and passenger traffic to reach mainland Europe in 35 minutes. Scheduled passenger and freight flights from Lydd Airport were established in 1997/98. Despite these improvements however, there is still often a perception of the District being peripherally located in terms of UK markets and London, reinforced by the relatively poor existing links with the national rail network, which restricts economic growth.

4.3 Recent changes with potential implications for the local economy have included the review of the Regional Aid map and European Structural Funds, abolition of duty free allowances and formation of the South East of England Development Agency. Together with future strategic developments such as construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, significant economic challenges and opportunities will be created for Shepway. In order to continue to remain competitive, the District will need to further improve and exploit the advantages offered by links to domestic and international markets and ensure that there is a good supply of new employment land which is attractive to business. This must be balanced with the need to protect and enhance the environment, including adhering to the criteria set out in Policy SD 1. An attractive environment is fundamental to improving the local tourism industry and in encouraging employment uses, particularly those that require high quality surroundings, to locate in Shepway. For these, and other reasons, the Plan seeks to ensure that due emphasis is given to qualitative considerations.

### Employment aims and objectives

4.4 The Plan's employment aims are:-

1. To ensure that the District Planning Authority does all it can to encourage the development of new and existing local businesses and inward investment to seek to realise full employment in the District and broaden local employment opportunities whilst protecting and enhancing the environment and meeting other sustainability objectives.
2. To ensure that employment uses are developed so as to minimise conflict with their environs.

4.5 The Plan's employment objectives are:-

1. To allocate sufficient land for industrial, warehousing and business uses having regard to Structure Plan Policy ED1 and market demand.

2. To identify a range of sites throughout the District capable of meeting the locational and other needs of industry and commerce in accordance with the sustainability framework provided by Policy SD1.
3. To protect new employment allocations, identified established industrial estates and important office uses in Folkestone from being developed for purposes other than appropriate business and commerce.
4. To ensure that employment developments minimise impacts on local amenity and the environment generally, and are developed in a co-ordinated manner to maximise their employment potential.
5. To permit more suitable alternative redevelopment of existing employment uses which are inappropriate because of intrusion into open countryside, noise, smell, health, excessive traffic generation, and other qualitative constraints.
6. To resist the development of low employment density generating uses, including large-scale open storage serving major distribution and transshipment.
7. To meet localised employment needs through encouraging the development of small firms and expansion of existing businesses.
8. To stimulate new employment opportunities to compensate for job losses, including those lost through any reduction in the scale of port operations (see Chapter 13 on Folkestone Town Centre) and the decommissioning of Dungeness A Power Station.
9. To encourage the development of Lydd Airport for aviation purposes in order to expand employment opportunities on Romney Marsh (see Chapter 11 on Transport).

## The supply of land for industry, warehousing and business development

4.6 Policy EK3 of the Kent Structure Plan promotes measures which will help tackle the economic problems of Dover, Deal, the former East Kent Coalfield and, Folkestone and Hythe. These include the provision of economic development opportunities well related to improved transport facilities. Guidance on the broad quantitative levels of net additions to existing floorspace for different employment uses to be provided through local plans for the period 1991 – 2011, is set out in Structure Plan Policy ED1. For Shepway, the levels are shown in the Table below: -

### Structure plan employment floorspace supply guidelines: 1991 – 2011

Use Class	1991 - 2001 (sqm)	2001 - 2011 (sqm)	Total (sqm)
Business Use (A2/B1)	60,000	30,000	90,000
General Industry & Warehousing (B2 - B8)	90,000	40,000	130,000

4.7 Policy ED1 also allows for flexibility, both in total amount of provision and in the precise mix of development to be provided between different employment use classes. The Policy allows for a generous supply of land and makes it possible to allocate a variety of sites throughout the District, in accordance with the employment objectives above.

4.8 Kent County Council, in conjunction with the District Council, monitors changes to employment land supply in Shepway. At mid 2000, total supply to 2011 is sufficient to meet 71% of the Structure Plan quantitative guidelines. New employment allocations identified in this Plan ensure that provision across the District exceeds the total guideline figure, albeit with a potential imbalance in supply compared with Structure Plan quantities, with an excess for office/business uses but a relatively modest under-supply for general industrial and warehousing.

## Established employment sites

4.9 The District contains a range of established employment areas that already help meet local employment needs. It is important that these are retained for employment use and, where possible, enhanced to attract further investment and improve environmental quality experienced by surrounding users.

4.10 The Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), sets out different employment use

classifications, based on the nature of different types of industrial and commercial activity.

#### Use Class Description

B1 (a)	Offices (not within Use Class A2)
B1 (b)	Research & Development
B1 (c)	Light Industry
B2	General Industrial
B8	Warehousing & Distribution

4.11 In determining the range of permissible uses for the different employment sites identified in Policies E1 and E2 below, regard has been had to a number of factors particularly location and potential impacts on surrounding residents arising from noise, dust, fumes, vibration, and traffic.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Permissible use classes</b> (Use Classes Order 1987 as amended)
<b>Folkestone</b>	
(a) Highfield Industrial Estate	B1
(b) Bowles Well Gardens	B1
(c) Park Farm Industrial Estate	B1, B8
(d) Shorncliffe Industrial Estate	B1
(e) Ingles Manor / Jinton Road	B1
(f) East Station Goods Yard	B1, B8
<b>Hythe</b>	
(g) Pennypot & Kengate	B1, B8
(h) Boundary Road & Range Road	B1
(i) Riverside, West Hythe	B1
(j) Lympne Industrial Estate	B1, B2, B8
<b>Lydd</b>	
(k) Kitewell Lane	B1
(l) Station Yard	B1, B2, B8
(m) Harden Road	B1, B8
(n) Dengemarsh Road	B1, B2, B8
<b>New Romney</b>	
(o) Mountfield Road Industrial Estate (North)	B1, B2, B8

Note: Table identifies established employment sites which includes developed sites and also vacant and part vacant sites not identified under Policy E2.

**POLICY E1** Planning permission for industrial and commercial development or redevelopment will be granted within the established employment sites shown on the Proposals Map for that purpose. The use classes indicated in the above table will be permitted at the sites listed, subject to Policy E5.

## New employment opportunities

4.12 In order to attract new investment and help tackle the economic problems outlined in paragraph 4.1 it is vital that a generous supply of land for new employment development is available. This should be capable of meeting the needs of business, general industrial and warehousing uses, including new and expanding local firms and those seeking to move into the District. The following table lists the District's key new employment opportunities and the approximate net area of vacant land as at mid-2000.

### Summary of the extent of key employment development opportunities

Location	Approximate 'net' vacant site area
(A) Shearway Business Park, Folkestone (formerly Biggins Wood Industrial Estate)	13 ha (32 acres)
(B) Cheriton Parc, Folkestone	4 ha (10 acres)
(C) Link Park, Lympne	23 ha (57 acres)
(D) Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney (Phases III & IV)	9 ha (22 acres)
(E) Hawkinge West	10 ha (25 acres)
(F) Nickolls Quarry, Hythe	5 ha (12 acres)

Note: The term 'net' in the above table discounts an estimate of land required for site infrastructure and landscaping. Figures are rounded to the nearest hectare / acre.

4.13 An objective of the District Planning Authority is to ensure that new employment development takes place in a co-ordinated manner, ensuring that environmental impacts are minimised and employment potential realised. Development briefs have been adopted or will be prepared to provide supplementary planning guidance for the District's key employment opportunities. Together with Policy E2, E5 and other Plan policies, this will ensure that this objective is realised.

## **Shearway Business Park, Folkestone**

(formerly Biggins Wood Industrial Estate)

4.14 This site is located on the urban fringe of Folkestone, directly adjacent to junction 13 of the M20, opposite the Channel Tunnel Terminal. Implementation of essential site infrastructure works, including drainage works and provision of balancing ponds, the first phase of a new internal site road and highway junction improvements has been completed. This will enable over 9 hectares of the Business Park, incorporating the site of the former Dormobile Coach works, to be developed.

4.15 A second phase of infrastructure improvements, including an extension to the new internal site road to Caesars Way, will allow the comprehensive development of the Business Park. The District Planning Authority will encourage and where appropriate, work with the South East of England Development Agency and other development partners to secure the early provision of these improvements. Prior to these works, it may be possible for sites currently accessed off Caesars Way to be developed, although it is envisaged that the Caesars Way/Tile Kiln Lane junction will be closed to industrial related traffic once these highway works are complete. Development that would prejudice the second phase of infrastructure works will be resisted.

4.16 The Pent stream bisects the site. The stream and its environs provides an opportunity to create an important site feature which together with other strategic landscaping, can create an environment which is attractive to both users and also non-users of the site. Strategic landscaping areas to be retained / provided are shown on the proposals map.

## **Cheriton Parc, Folkestone**

4.17 In order to maximise the potential for creating further employment in the financial and professional sector, Cheriton Parc has been identified for the development of Use Class B1(a & b) (office and Research & Development uses). The site is highly visible from the M20 and Channel Tunnel Terminal and a high quality of built environment on the site is essential to the creation of an attractive entrance to the Town and to ensure development is compatible with existing offices on site. Office uses can provide good quality buildings and the nature of the activity with high employment densities promotes a sense of prosperity. Industrial uses and buildings are unlikely to be able to meet these objectives

4.18 Improvements to the junction of Horn Street and Cheriton High Street have been completed. Comprehensive site development also requires further off-site highway improvements at the junction of Cheriton High Street and Cheriton Interchange link.

## **Link Park, Lympne**

4.19 This forms an extension to the established Lympne industrial estate. Locational advantages offered by close proximity to junction 11 of the M20 and access to the Channel Tunnel Terminal have been recognised by the domestic and international storage and distribution operators already located in the established estate.

4.20 Due to the levels of industrial traffic that will be generated, a number of highway works are necessary to enable the comprehensive development of Link Park. These include improvements to the site access with Otterpool Lane and improvements to the Otterpool Lane / Ashford Road (A20) and, Otterpool Lane / Aldington Road (B2076) junctions. In addition, to reduce negative environmental effects arising from industrial vehicles on surrounding roads, where practicable the District Council will seek to encourage this traffic to access and exit the site via the A20 from / towards Junction 11 of the M20 motorway.

4.21 Given the relatively close proximity of surrounding residential areas, most notably Lympne village, and the nature of uses likely to be attracted to the site, great care is needed to ensure that development is acceptable in terms of noise and other amenity impacts. Amongst other things, this will require: restrictions

on the amount and location of uses likely to generate high levels of noise; retention of existing earth bunds and; provision of additional landscaped acoustic barriers along the sites northern, eastern and southern boundaries within the landscape belts shown on the proposals map. Extensive landscaping around the site perimeter is required, to soften potential visual impacts of development for the benefit of local residents and the wider countryside in general. Policy U15 will be applied to control the level and form of outdoor lighting provided as part of development proposals to ensure the nocturnal comfort of local residents.

### **Phase III and Phase IV land, Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, New Romney**

4.22 This land extends the established industrial estate to the south and provides the largest industrial site on Romney Marsh and along with Lydd Airport, represents the greatest potential for new local employment generation. Implementation of necessary site highway and infrastructure works to serve the Phase III land was completed in May 1998, which allows its comprehensive development. To ensure the continued supply of employment land in the Romney Marsh area which is attractive to the needs of businesses, land is allocated to the south of the Phase III land. Development of this area (Phase IV) is however subject to access constraints and will only be acceptable with a range of improvements to the junction of Mountfield Road and Station Road including the provision of traffic signals.

### **Hawkinge West**

4.23 The site is located north of Folkestone and the M20. Hawkinge is identified as a strategic location for growth, making a major contribution to the development needs of Folkestone and Hythe to 2001 and beyond. Access to the employment site is dependent upon construction of a link to the Alkham Valley interchange, which was opened in 2001.

4.24 The site is situated on a scarp slope within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It forms part of a larger development scheme of the former aerodrome, comprising significant new residential development, open space and social and community facilities. The context of the site gives rise to several issues, particularly the need to minimise impacts on surrounding housing and the landscape of the AONB. Nickolls Quarry, Hythe (Also see Policy HO2 in the Housing Chapter)

4.25 The site presents an opportunity to create a comprehensive high quality mixed-use development, incorporating an area for employment use. Due to the site's proximity to (proposed) residential areas, the desire to create a high quality environment and the potential for development to be highly visible in the landscape, only B1 uses will be permitted. A detailed policy for the entire Nickolls Quarry site, including the employment allocation, is contained in Chapter 3 on Housing.

**POLICY E2** Planning permission for business and commercial development or redevelopment will be granted on the new employment opportunity sites listed below and shown on the Proposals Map. Development will be in accordance with adopted Development Briefs where appropriate, be subject to Policy E5 and also the following key requirements:

#### **A. Shearway Business Park, Folkestone**

- (i) Permissible uses restricted to Use Classes B1/B2/B8;
- (ii) Development of land accessed via Caesars Way will be acceptable prior to provision of the remainder of the internal site road where it:
  - can be demonstrated that it will not increase the risk of road accidents or delays;
  - does not prejudice the completion of the new site road or prevent any future closure of the Caesars Way / Tile Kiln Lane junction;
- (iii) Provision of structural landscape areas, as shown on the Proposals Map, and enhancement of the Pent stream and its environs through the site.

#### **B. Cheriton Parc, Folkestone**

- (i) Permissible uses restricted to Use Class B1(a & b);
- (ii) Provision of necessary junction improvements.

#### **C. Link Park, Lympne**

- (i) Permissible uses restricted to Use Classes B1/B2/B8;
- (ii) Provision of necessary site access and off-site highway improvements;
- (iii) Provision of structural landscape areas, as shown on the Proposals Map;
- (iv) Acceptability in terms of noise impacts on surrounding residents.

#### **D. Phase III and Phase IV Land, Mountfield Road, New Romney**

- (i) Permissible uses restricted to Use Classes B1/B2/B8;

(ii) Development of the Phase IV land will be subject to provision of necessary improvements to the junction of Mountfield Road and Station Road.

#### **E. Hawkinge West**

(i) Permissible uses restricted to Use Classes B1 and B8;

#### **F. Nickolls Quarry, Hythe**

(i) See Policy HO2 in Chapter 3 on Housing.

### **New office development in Folkestone Town Centre**

4.26 Office uses are employee intensive and it is therefore important that they are accessible by alternatives to the car. The quality of the built environment and, the need to project an image of success and flourishing economy means new office development may be appropriate in Folkestone Town Centre. Office uses contribute to creating a diversity of uses, helping to maintain and improve the health of the town centre. It is important however that office development does not result in the unacceptable loss of other important town centre uses such as shops and housing. The Folkestone Town Centre Chapter also identifies locations where new office development may be appropriate.

~~**POLICY E3** Within the Folkestone Town Centre Commercial Area, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for the development of offices [within Use Classes B1(a) and A2], including conversion of premises to provide office accommodation, provided that the proposal:~~

- ~~(i) Is consistent with Policy E5 and the Plan's Built Environment Policies;~~
- ~~(ii) Does not result in the loss of existing residential accommodation;~~

~~Policy S3 and S4 applies in the Folkestone primary and secondary shopping areas identified on the Proposals Map. Policy E3 does not apply to ground floors in these areas.~~

### **Loss of land for industrial, warehousing or office purposes**

4.27 In order to maintain a planned approach to the supply of land for employment purposes, identified sites should not be (re)developed for other purposes. Land to meet other needs is provided for elsewhere in this Plan. For the reasons set out in paragraph 4.26 above, in addition to promoting appropriate new office development in Folkestone town centre, existing important office space should also normally be protected.

**POLICY E4** Planning permission will be refused for the development of land or existing employment uses identified in Policies E1 and E2, and shown on the Proposals Map, other than for the use classes indicated. Within Folkestone town centre, development resulting in the loss of office space will not be permitted unless:

- i) It does not significantly impact on the quality or quantity of office accommodation in the area or;
- ii) The proposed alternative would be of greater benefit to the town centre in terms of enhancing the character and vitality of the area.

### **Control of industrial, warehousing and office development**

4.28 In order to protect the amenity of local neighbourhoods and the environment in general, the Council will ensure that the (re)development of identified employment sites, and other sites elsewhere in the District, is implemented in a way that is in sympathy with their surroundings.

~~**POLICY E5** Planning permission for development on employment sites identified on the Proposals Map or other sites which may come forward for employment development, will be permitted unless the proposal would result in one or more of the following:-~~

- ~~(i) Excessive noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit or, visual impact;~~
- ~~(ii) Inadequate access, parking and landscaping, over burden on roads, adverse environmental impact caused by excessive traffic;~~
- ~~(iii) The release of polluting substances that would adversely affect the current or future use of land.~~

4.29 Although they may be regarded as 'non-conforming uses', small-scale commercial and industrial development outside of identified employment areas, including the extension of existing uses, can, subject to appropriate controls, often be accommodated within urban and rural areas without harming amenity.

4.30 Proposals in excess of small-scale have the potential to create significant amenity and environmental impacts. Sustainability considerations, such as the need to reduce reliance on the private car, and countryside protection objectives place an additional constraint on commercial and industrial proposals in rural areas.

~~**POLICY E6** The District Planning Authority will grant planning permission for small scale new build business development, and the small scale expansion of existing firms on site, outside of allocated employment sites where all of the following criteria can be met:~~

- ~~i) Proposals can be satisfactorily accommodated in accordance with Policy E5, Policy CO1 and other Plan Policies;~~
- ~~ii) In the case of new business, development is located within the confines of the settlements shown on the proposals map or is located adjoining the built up area of an existing settlement or, forms part of an acceptable scheme of farm diversification;~~
- ~~iii) Proposals are acceptable in terms of scale and impact on the character and setting of the settlement~~

~~Development in excess of small scale outside of allocated employment sites will only be permitted where it accords with criteria i) – iii) above and; in the case of such proposals within or adjoining villages and rural towns, there is an identified local employment need or development essentially requires a rural location.~~

NB. In the terms of the above Policy 'small-scale' development is defined as that which can readily be absorbed into a settlement in visual, functional and employment terms.

## Promotion and protection of small businesses

4.31 Small-scale businesses play an important role in the local economy with potential for significant growth and job creation. Their needs are in part catered for within established industrial and commercial areas and the new employment opportunities listed in Policies E1 and E2, with associated development briefs often seeking to achieve a mix of building sizes, including small units with capability of expansion. Together with Policy E6 above, in accordance with Policies ED4, RS1, RS4 and RS5 of the Kent Structure Plan, and the provision made through countryside and tourism policies, ensures a generous supply of land and opportunities for small businesses throughout the District.

4.32 Within certain rural villages in the district, employment uses have been converted or redeveloped for other uses, particularly housing. The retention of local employment opportunities in such areas is important in terms of sustainability and the health of the rural economy and can also help prevent the encroachment of new development into the countryside. To prevent the inappropriate loss of existing employment uses, the following Policy will apply: -

**POLICY E6a** The District Planning Authority will not permit proposals that would result in the loss of employment uses within or adjoining rural villages unless the site or premises:

- i) Is not suitable or needed for a business use related to local employment needs, justified through a statement detailing the efforts made to secure a business re-use in the first instance, or;
- ii) Cannot be satisfactorily converted or redeveloped for an alternative employment use by virtue of impacts on the highway, infrastructure, local amenity and the environment.

## Bad neighbour development

4.33 Where existing industrial uses cause demonstrable harm to their neighbours or significantly conflict with the environmental objectives of this Plan, the Council wishes to encourage their relocation to more appropriate sites.

~~**POLICY E7** Planning permission will be granted for proposals to relocate business, general industrial and warehousing and distribution uses which are badly sited for reasons such as noise, smell, health, excessive traffic generation, inadequate access arrangements or visual amenity, on to more suitable land identified on the Proposals Map for that purpose.~~

~~Planning Permission for a change of use, from inappropriate employment uses, including redevelopment or conversion, will be granted where the proposed uses are compatible with surrounding uses and satisfy other Plan Policies.~~

## Extensive open storage

4.34 Structure Plan Policy ED3 identifies the need for major distribution and transshipment proposals to be accommodated in Dover, Thanet and Ashford. These sites are able to meet the strategic need for such uses within East Kent, based on the locational advantages offered by trans-channel links and the motorway network.

4.35 In comparison to other employment uses, particularly offices, employee densities of open storage developments are low and their appearance can have significant landscape implications. Despite the potential attraction of the District to open storage uses due to proximity to the Channel Tunnel Terminal, Port of Dover and the M20, the Council does not wish to see the supply of employment land squandered on such low employment density uses when they are provided for elsewhere in East Kent.

**POLICY E8** The District Planning Authority will refuse planning permission for major distribution and transshipment activities which involve large scale open storage of vehicles and other open storage resulting in low employment density.

## **Redevelopment of Folkestone seafront and harbour area**

(See Chapter 13 Folkestone Town Centre).

## **The development of Lydd international airport**

(See Chapter 11 on Transport)