

Vision for Kent



Kent people in partnership for a better tomorrow

Kent working in Partnership

There are 10 LSPs in Kent that have developed community strategies, including the Kent Partnership, which spans the county. As a unitary authority, Medway also has an LSP and its own community strategy. Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells have a joint LSP for their local area known as the West Kent Partnership. Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells both have their own Community Planning Partnership which is responsible for delivering their district community plan. Dartford and Gravesham have a joined LSP and community strategy.

Each community strategy is unique to the area that it covers, although there are often issues that are common to all. It is important that the Kent Partnership works closely with the district LSPs and other partnerships, such as those in the growth areas, to ensure we complement each other's work and do not duplicate effort.

The Vision for Kent will be implemented alongside the local community strategies, through their local strategic partnerships, which generally follow district boundaries.

Outlined on this map is a snapshot of district priorities from their community strategies in their own words. The detail of these can be seen by following the weblinks.

Dartford & Gravesham www.dartford.gov.uk www.gravesham.gov.uk

- Part of the Thames Gateway
- Close proximity to London
- One of the UK's largest Sikh populations

Key issues for the districts are:

- Delivering sustainable regeneration that benefits local communities
- Improving housing and cultural facilities and preserving the green belt
- Improving local skills base to match employment opportunities

Sevenoaks www.sevenoaks.gov.uk

- High quality natural and built environment
- Good transport links to London, but lack of local transport and access to services for some communities
- An affluent and attractive place to live, but with significant pockets of deprivation

Key issues for the district are:

- Safe and caring communities
- A green and healthy environment
- A dynamic and sustainable economy

Tonbridge & Malling www.tmbc.gov.uk

- Attractive urban/rural mix
- Good quality of life but with pockets of deprivation
- Focus for growth at Kings Hill

Key issues for the district are:

- Providing affordable housing
- Keeping crime and disorder low
- Caring for the local environment

Tunbridge Wells www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

- High quality natural and built environment
- Strong cultural and historical links
- Thriving town centres and rural villages

Key issues for the district are:

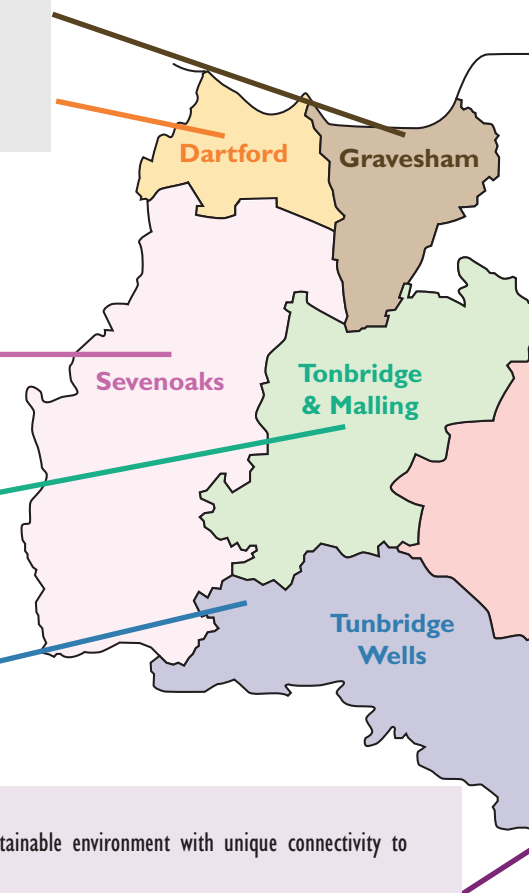
- Affordable housing and retaining skilled workers
- Community safety and fear of crime
- Traffic congestion, parking and public transport

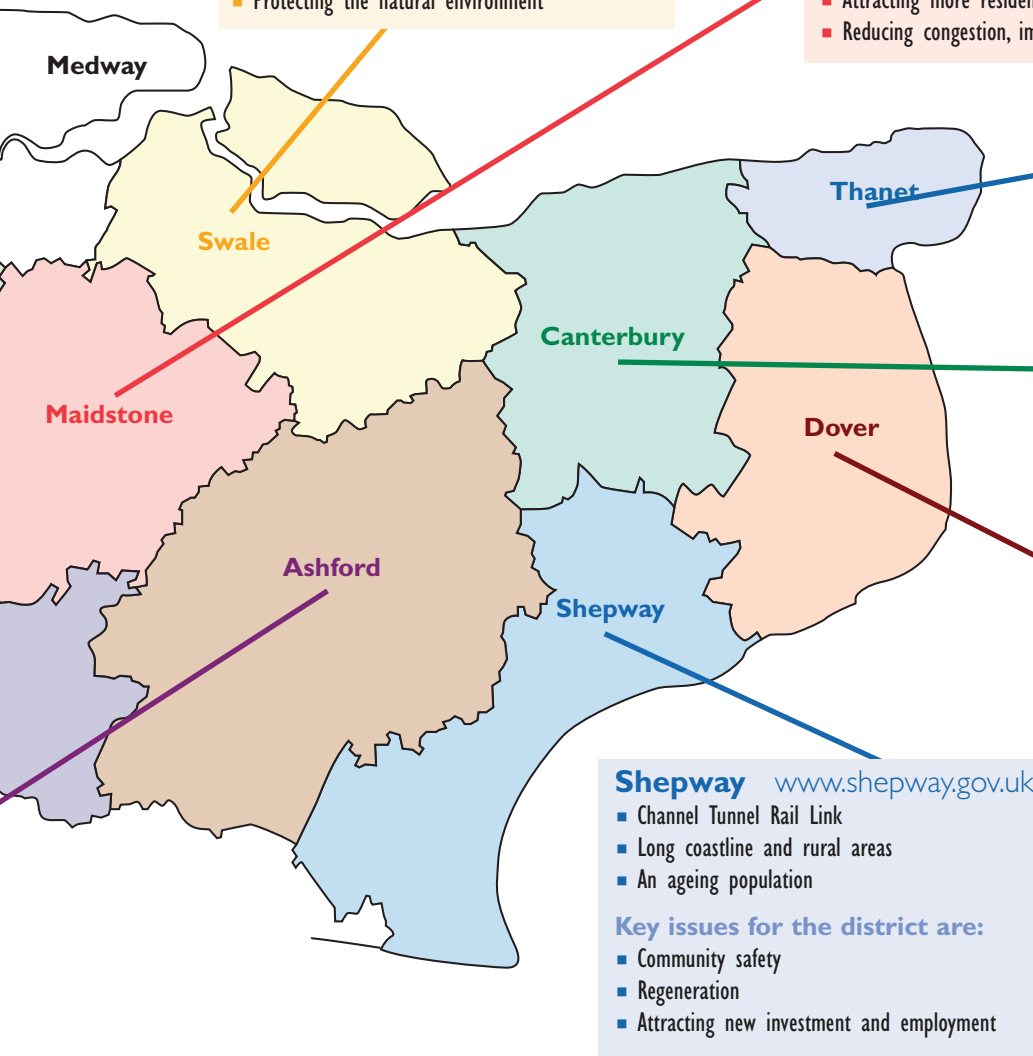
Ashford www.ashford.gov.uk

- Major growth point for quality housing in a sustainable environment with unique connectivity to mainland Europe
- Complementary balance of rural and urban communities delivering quality of life
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with some of finest recreational facilities in the South East

Key issues for the district are:

- Continuing the transformation of Ashford Town Centre and providing a wider cultural offering
- Securing modern sustainable employment opportunities
- Using innovative private and public funding mechanism to source infrastructure at the time of growth





Swale www.swale.gov.uk

- Part of the borough is in the Thames Gateway
- Stunning coastal and wetland habitats
- Areas of deprivation and lowest wages in Kent

Key issues for the district are:

- Large proposed housing growth
- Improving skills, learning and education
- Protecting the natural environment

Maidstone www.maidstone.gov.uk

- Thriving leisure and retail economy
- The natural place to do business in Kent
- Key rural service centres

Key issues for the district are:

- Influence of the growth areas of Ashford and the Thames Gateway
- Attracting more residential and high quality development
- Reducing congestion, improving infrastructure and public transport

Thanet www.thanet.gov.uk

- Famous seaside towns
- Diverse coastal habitats
- Pockets of deprivation and social problems

Key issues for the district are:

- Tourism, retail and cultural economy
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Improving transport links to London

Canterbury www.canterbury.gov.uk

- Historic Cathedral City
- Centre for higher and further education
- Small seaside towns and rural villages

Key issues for the district are:

- Tourism and cultural economy
- Improving public transport and reducing congestion
- Matching local skills to local jobs

Dover www.dover.gov.uk

- Busiest passenger ferry port in the world
- Deprived areas in need of regeneration
- Gateway to Europe

Key issues for the district are:

- Traffic and pollution (especially from freight)
- Encouraging investment and new jobs
- Tackling social problems in deprived areas

Shepway www.shepway.gov.uk

- Channel Tunnel Rail Link
- Long coastline and rural areas
- An ageing population

Key issues for the district are:

- Community safety
- Regeneration
- Attracting new investment and employment



Economic success - Opportunities for all



Courtesy of Locate in Kent

the vision

A Kent where a vibrant and successful economy and targeted regeneration are delivered and sustained by innovative and creative businesses, self-reliant and skilled people and supportive and responsive organisations in private, public and community sectors.

Current situation

Kent is uniquely located as a gateway between continental Europe, London and the rest of the south east but has not yet fully capitalised on this position. In the global economy, Kent will need to improve its performance, particularly in terms of skills, innovation and productivity, to ensure its long-term economic success and prosperity.

The opportunities facing Kent are huge. A growing European Union means bigger markets but more competition for investment and jobs. The Ashford and Thames Gateway growth areas are taking shape, but the current national focus on housing-led growth needs to be balanced by an equal focus on high quality jobs and infrastructure. Higher education in Kent is also rising to the challenge of reaching out to Kent's communities and businesses, a key factor in developing the knowledge economy – but fewer graduate job opportunities are found in Kent than elsewhere. The introduction of Channel Tunnel Rail Link domestic services will help change market, investor and entrepreneur perceptions of the county, with the London 2012 Olympics providing further opportunities for Kent's economic development. Kent's regeneration areas have the potential for significant growth, particularly when compared to the more congested and costly parts of the south east and London. The presence of a skilled workforce and

supporting infrastructure will have a major influence on the county's future success. Demographic change and an ageing population bring a need to ensure the skills and experience of older generations are used to help Kent prosper.

Economic growth has in the past often been associated with environmental degradation - but prospects for 'smarter, greener growth' are evolving fast. Kent should position itself as a leader in this area, developing a low-carbon economy with improved resilience to the rigours of climate change while taking advantage of the opportunities it may bring. Kent's high quality environment is an asset that not only sustains employment in leisure, tourism, agriculture and the like, but also offers a key resource to underpin future prosperity. Regeneration that revitalises our coastal towns and engages communities can also serve to demonstrate how tensions between economic development and the environment can be resolved.

Kent's businesses across public, private and voluntary sectors can all make major contributions to addressing the county's growth, regeneration and environmental challenges. The role of small businesses, in particular, is and will be a key factor in shaping Kent's future prospects, given companies with fewer than 100 employees account for 98% of the total stock of firms.



Recent progress

The health of Kent's economy has improved, with for example:

- A 10.8% increase in employment opportunities¹
- A 9.7% rise in the number of VAT-registered businesses²
- A 19% increase in the number of people employed in knowledge-intensive sectors³
- An increasing trend for Kent to attract high quality and knowledge-intensive jobs⁴
- Improving market perceptions of Kent's property markets⁵

However, key issues remain to be addressed, including:

- Lower rates of economic productivity than nationally and in the south east⁶
- Levels of skills and qualifications which fall below national and south east levels⁷
- Continuing disparities between some disadvantaged parts of Kent (e.g. East Kent, the coastal towns, parts of North Kent) and some of the more prosperous parts of the county which still feature pockets of deprivation (e.g. North Kent, West Kent and the Channel Corridor), including lower employment rates
- The continuing need to attract new investment and job opportunities

Long term goals

Our long-term goals include:

- Developing a 'mosaic economy' made up of individual components which are important and distinctive in their own right and which work together to create a larger, cohesive picture.
- Developing successful and innovative businesses, especially within our diverse and vibrant small business community, that respond to global and local opportunities and challenges and have access to:
 - high quality business development support, sector and cluster networks
 - flexible business accommodation
 - supply chains and market opportunities
 - public sector goods and service procurement opportunities
 - best practice, knowledge and technology, including links with the higher education community and research base
 - a skilled workforce whose career aspirations are met through a range of learning and vocational training opportunities
- Making Kent a key location for inward investment and high quality jobs that takes advantage of our main urban centres and our links to London, the south east, the rest of Europe and the global business community
- Making 'smart development' in public and

- private sectors the norm rather than the exception, generating less waste and making more efficient use of energy, natural resources, previously-developed land and infrastructure
- A vibrant rural economy where an invigorated farming industry meets market needs for food and non-food crops and takes advantage of opportunities in sustainable land management and local produce
- Achieving a high quality infrastructure and an integrated transport network that serves the needs of businesses, the workforce and communities
- Economic renewal in urban areas and rural centres, especially Kent's priority regeneration areas and coastal towns, where people's health and wellbeing is enhanced by access to learning, employment, business and leisure opportunities
- Increasing employment rates (especially amongst disadvantaged groups and areas), reducing poverty and encouraging social inclusion through innovative and flexible approaches and collaborative working at the local level
- Realising a knowledge-rich economy and centre for entrepreneurship where people are motivated to learn and acquire new skills for their own personal development and career aspirations
- Developing leading edge sectors, clusters, organisations and businesses (e.g. land-based, construction, creative and cultural industries, tourism, eco-enterprises and social enterprises)

¹ 1998-2002 (Kent Economic Report 2004)

² 1994-2003 (Kent Economic Report 2004)

³ 1998-2002 (Kent Economic Report 2004)

⁴ Locate in Kent monitoring reports

⁵ Kent Property Market Review 2004

⁶ Kent Economic Report 2004

⁷ Kent Economic Report 2004

- Realising an economy where more flexible ways of working, enabled by new communication technologies, make a significant contribution to Kent's prosperity and productivity
- Valuing the contribution of the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors, faith groups, and unpaid workers to community cohesion, regeneration and employability
- Valuing the contribution skilled incomers and temporary workers make to Kent's economy
- Promoting independence through employment for those who are able to work

Short term priorities

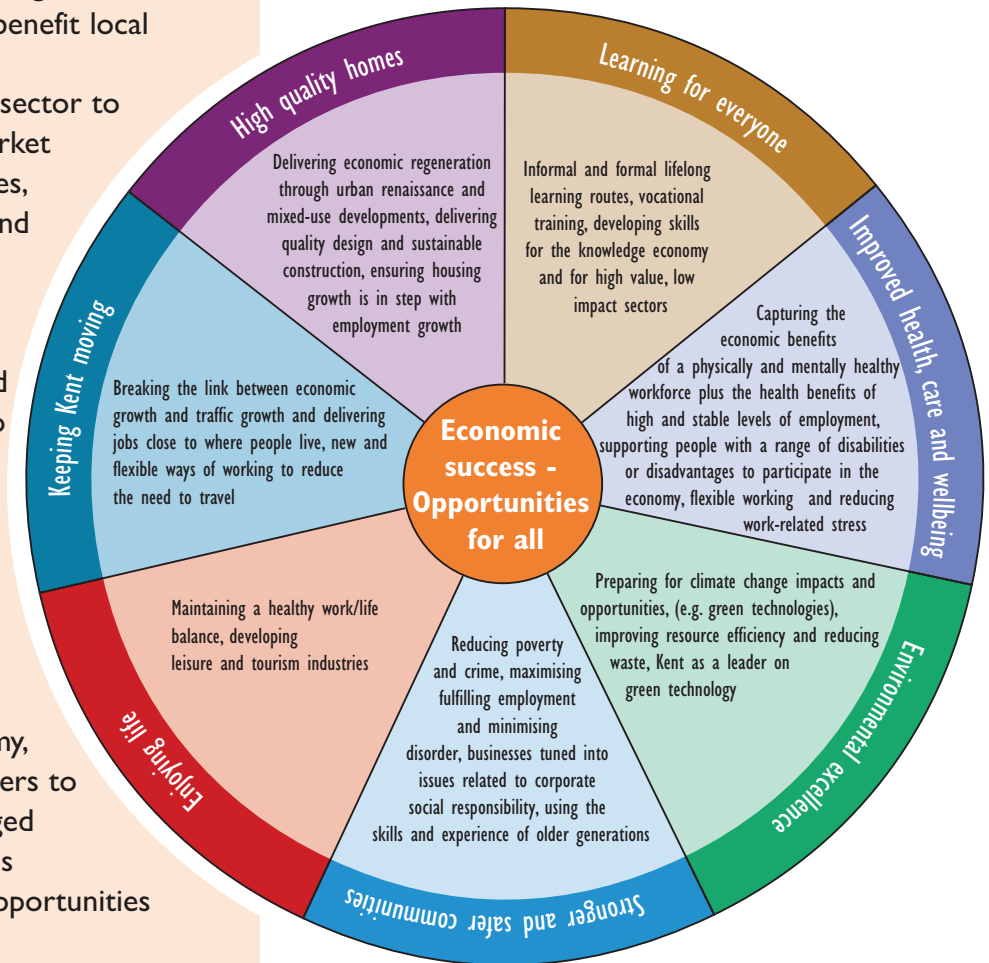
To meet these long-term goals, we need to give short-term priority to:

- Helping Kent's people reach their full potential through workforce development and enhanced skills in all sectors e.g. construction, eco-enterprise, tourism, the land-based sector, creative and cultural industries, logistics, healthcare and engineering
- Developing the economic prosperity of Kent
- Developing links with key markets in the UK and beyond and attracting high quality inward investment, projects and jobs
- Capturing potential benefits from the London 2012 Olympics, especially those with the potential to last beyond 2012
- Delivering high quality, sustainable design

solutions, especially in Kent's growth and regeneration areas, which benefit local businesses and people

- Supporting the land-based sector to help it respond to new market challenges and opportunities, including non-food crops and locally produced food
- Providing flexible business accommodation in growth and regeneration areas, and in other urban locations, to meet a range of business needs – from incubators to local businesses and inward investors
- Developing the Supporting Independence Programme and associated activities, including the social economy, which aim to remove barriers to work for more disadvantaged individuals and communities
- Developing employment opportunities for graduates
- Improving efficiency in the logistics chain and encouraging local supply chains to reduce the economic costs of congestion and stimulate the local economy
- Targeting of older workers to address their learning and skills issues to enable them as a group to make a significant contribution to a 'knowledge rich' economy

Joining up our thinking



If you would like to find out more please see page 44.

