

Decision of Cabinet on 7 September 2005**SOUTH EAST PLAN**

On housing distribution, Option 2 for the Rest of Kent sub-region **BE PREFERRED** but that SEERA and the County Council **BE INFORMED** this is on the following basis

- i) The provision figure of 8,500 dwellings in the period 2006-2026 represents a 'once and for all' reflection of land supply.
- ii) The housing supply in Tonbridge & Malling is likely to reduce significantly once key brownfield sites are developed. Consequently the pattern and scale of future housing provision figures should reflect this and the highly constrained nature of the Borough.
- iii) New development in and around Maidstone should be confined to Maidstone Borough and there should be no erosion of the strategic gap between Maidstone and the Medway Gap.
- iv) The position on housing land supply and future provision in the Kent Thames Gateway be noted. SEERA and the County Council be advised that the future development envisaged for that area must be planned for and contained within it and unmet growth not be redirected to adjacent areas.

Support **BE GIVEN** to the identification of the Medway Gap and in particular Kings Hill, as a location for new employment.

Objections **BE RAISED** to the inclusion of East Malling Research Station in the same category as Kings Hill as a location for the intensification or expansion in the technology and knowledge sector.

That Tonbridge **BE IDENTIFIED** as one of the centres in Kent to be recognised as locations for the expansion of Higher and Further Education.

The critical infrastructure requirements for the 'Rest of Kent' sub-region **BE SUPPORTED**, subject to the inclusion of improved rail services to London destinations on the Maidstone/West Malling line.

Subject to further clarification from SEERA, the role of Tonbridge town centre as an important transportation hub or interchange should **BE FULLY RECOGNISED** in the advice to SEERA. In particular the need to increase accessibility by transportation investment and the potential for employment and appropriate commercial development should be highlighted.

Further representations as appropriate arising from the consultation exercise and within the general context of this report **BE DELEGATED** to the Director of Planning & Transportation in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation.

Proposed Policy RK1

Spatial Strategy for the Rest of Kent and Sevenoaks

Local Development Frameworks will make provision for development at the major urban areas of Maidstone-Medway Gap, and at Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells as follows :

The Green Belt will be maintained and protection will be given to the nationally important landscapes of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Maidstone – Medway Gap ⁽¹⁾ urban areas are located outside the MGB and accordingly :

They will provide the majority of the housing provision for the Rest of Kent area. Employment growth will be encouraged to match housing numbers, replace older industry and provide opportunities for business growth. Existing employment sites that are well located and otherwise well suited to employment use should be retained for this purpose

Within Tonbridge & Malling Borough, housing and employment growth will be concentrated at the strategic brown field development locations already allocated, and these will be husbanded for the duration of the plan.

At Maidstone there will be new provision for housing, and employment of sub regional significance with an emphasis on higher quality jobs. This will include mixed use regeneration sites, and new land allocations in suitable locations with good access to the primary road network and public transport.

Land release at Maidstone should not prejudice the Strategic Gap separating Maidstone from the Medway Towns and the Medway Gap urban areas, nor the North Downs Special Landscape Area. Options to accommodate urban extensions and/or a new community to the east and south of the urban area will be evaluated in the LDF.

Maidstone will be developed as a transport hub and in its role as the County town through the concentration of retail, leisure and service uses at the centre, giving close integration between employment, housing and public transport. Improved central area circulation and access to the new development allocations will be provided.

The Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells urban areas are located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and therefore :

Full and effective use of development capacity within the urban areas of Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells will be pursued. This should provide for a balance of business, commercial and residential development with particular attention paid to meeting locally based needs for housing and business premises.

The prime consideration at the urban area of Tunbridge Wells will be the conservation of the built and natural environment, the setting of the town and its location within the Green Belt. At Tonbridge development will be concentrated on substantial regeneration sites in and near to the town centre.

Existing employment sites that are well located and otherwise well suited to employment use should be retained for this purpose.

*The transport hub of Tonbridge-Tunbridge Wells will be developed including the concentration of retail, leisure and service uses at the town centres to provide close integration between employment, housing and public transport, **and improved connections between the towns.***

- (1) the Medway Gap urban area is in the eastern part of Tonbridge and Malling Borough, outside the green belt.