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Thanet District Council

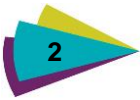
Local Plan Preferred Options

Information to support an assessment under Regulation 102 of the
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)



July 2016

Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
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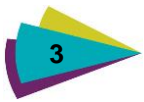
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Thanet District Council Local Plan

Thanet District Council (TDC) began preparing a new Local Plan in 2013 following two significant changes in national planning policy:

- ▶ The government decision to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategies, including the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East; and
- ▶ The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaced the previous Planning Policy Statements and Local Development Framework.

These changes substantially altered the requirements for local planning policy documents. TDC's new Local Plan will include **strategic planning guidance, development management policies** and **site allocations**; these elements will guide development and regeneration decisions and investment over the period to 2031. Once adopted, the Plan will form the statutory planning framework for determining planning applications and will replace the 'saved' policies from the Thanet Local Plan 2006.

TDC carried out a consultation on the Issues and Options for the new Local Plan between 3 June and 14 August 2013. This consultation considered the level of development needed in Thanet and broadly where this should go, as well as options for detailed policies on housing, employment, environment, quality of life and transport. The results of the Issues and Options consultation were used to inform the development of the Preferred Options, which were subject to public consultation in 2015. Following this [Timeline for additional works TBC].

1.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment

Regulation 102 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010* (as amended) (the 'Habitats Regulations') states that if a land-use plan is "(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site¹ or a European offshore marine site² (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site" then the plan-making authority must "...make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives" before the plan is given effect.

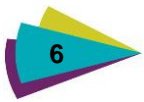
The process by which Regulation 102 is met is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)³. An HRA determines whether there will be any 'likely significant effects' (LSE) on any European site as a result of a plan's implementation (either on its own or 'in combination' with other plans or projects) and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on the site's integrity. TDC has a statutory duty to prepare the Local Plan and is therefore the Competent Authority for an HRA.

Regulation 102 essentially provides a test that the final plan must pass; there is no statutory requirement for HRA to be undertaken on draft plans or similar developmental stages (e.g. issues and options; preferred options). However, as with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) it is accepted best-practice for the

¹ Strictly, 'European sites' are: any Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from the point at which the European Commission and the UK Government agree the site as a 'Site of Community Importance' (SCI); any classified Special Protection Area (SPA); any candidate SAC (cSAC); and (exceptionally) any other site or area that the Commission believes should be considered as an SAC but which has not been identified by the Government. However, the term is also commonly used when referring to potential SPAs (pSPAs), to which the provisions of Article 4(4) of Directive 2009/147/EC (the 'new wild birds directive') apply; and to possible SACs (pSACs) and listed Ramsar Sites, to which the provisions of the Habitats Regulations are applied a matter of Government policy (NPPF para. 118) when considering development proposals that may affect them. "European site" is therefore used in this report in its broadest sense, as an umbrella term for all of the above designated sites. Additional information on European site designations is provided in Appendix A.

² 'European offshore marine sites' are defined by Regulation 15 of *The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007* (as amended); these regulations cover waters (and hence sites) over 12 nautical miles from the coast.

³ The term 'Appropriate Assessment' has been historically used to describe the process of assessment; however, the process is now more accurately termed 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA), with the term 'Appropriate Assessment' limited to the specific stage within the process; see also Box 1.



HRA of strategic planning documents to be run as an iterative process alongside the plan development, with the emerging policies or options continually assessed for their possible effects on European sites and modified or abandoned (as necessary) to ensure that the subsequently adopted plan is not likely to result in significant effects on any European sites, either alone or 'in combination' with other plans. This is undertaken in consultation with Natural England (NE) and other appropriate consultees.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

TDC commissioned AMEC E&I UK Ltd. to assist with the HRA of its Local Plan following the completion of the Issues and Options consultations. This report summarises AMEC's assessment of the Preferred Options for the Local Plan against the conservation objectives of any European sites that may be affected, and summarises the iterative HRA process that has been undertaken to support the plan development and ensure that it meets the requirements of Regulation 102.

As noted, there is no statutory requirement for HRA to be undertaken on the Preferred Options. The report does not therefore provide a formal conclusion to the HRA process; rather, it identifies potential mechanisms by which the Preferred Options could affect European sites and (if necessary) suggests measures that could be employed to avoid significant effects occurring. The report then provides a preliminary conclusion on the likely effects of the Plan, which will inform future stages of the plan development and assessment process.

2. Approach to the HRA of the Local Plan

2.1 Overview

An HRA involves determining whether there will be any LSEs on any European sites as a result of a plan's implementation (either on its own or 'in combination' with other plans or projects) and, if so, whether it can be concluded that these effects will not have an adverse effect on the sites' integrity. European Commission guidance⁴ suggests a four-stage process for HRA, although not all stages will always be required (see Box 1).

Box 1 – Stages of Habitats Regulations Assessment

Stage 1 – Screening:

This stage identifies the likely impacts upon a European Site of a project or plan, either alone or 'in combination' with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment:

Where there are likely significant effects, or where this is uncertain, this stage considers the effects of the plan or project on the integrity of the relevant European Sites, either alone or 'in combination' with other projects or plans, with respect to the sites' structure and function and their conservation objectives. Where it cannot be concluded that there will be no adverse effects on sites' integrity, it is necessary to consider potential mitigation for these effects.

Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions:

Where adverse effects remain after the inclusion of mitigation, this stage examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of European Sites.

Stage 4 – Assessment Where No Alternative Solutions Exist and Where Adverse Impacts Remain:

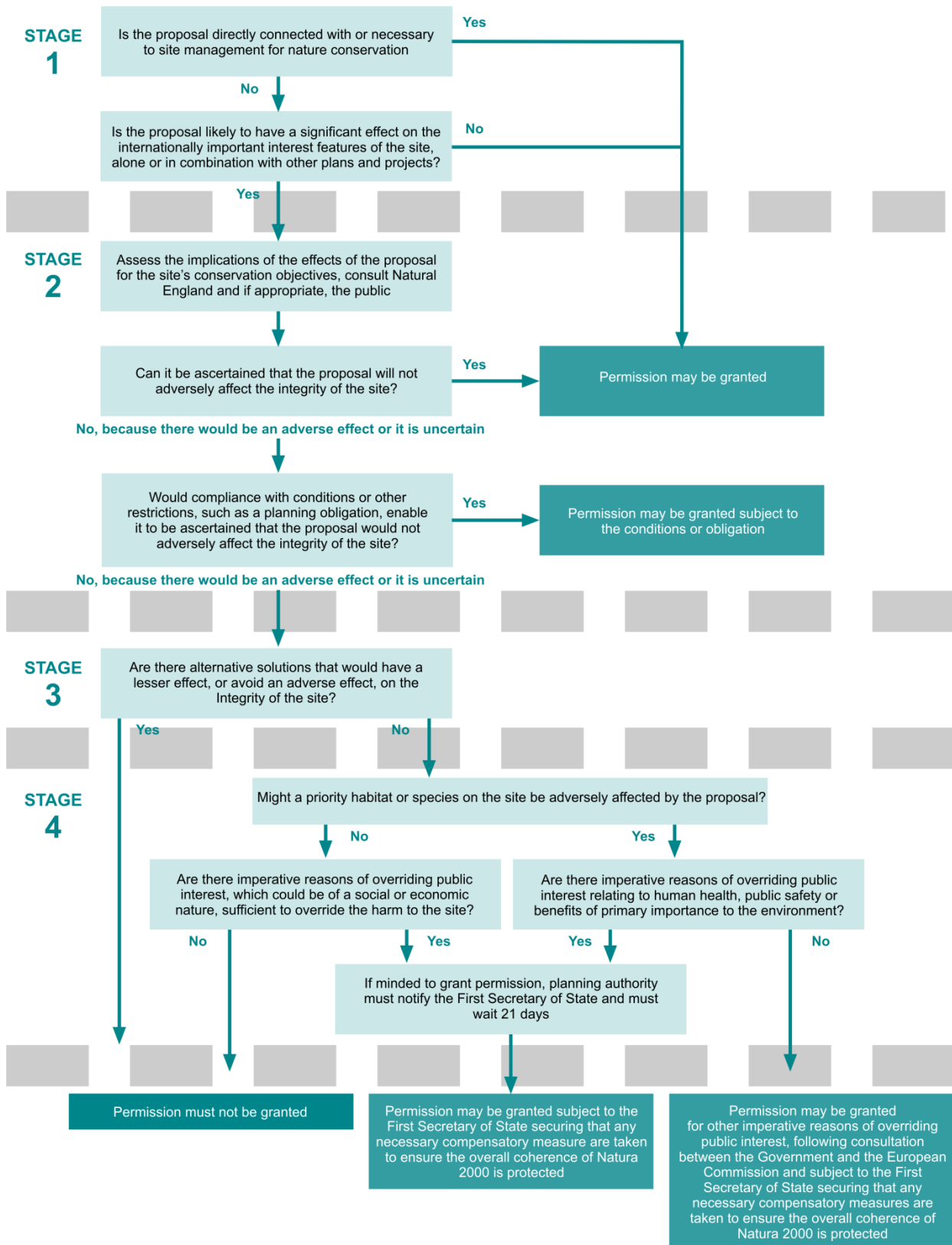
This stage assesses compensatory measures where it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI). The EC guidance does not deal with the assessment of IROPI.

The approach summarised in Box 1 works well at the project-level where the scheme design is usually established and possible effects on European sites can be assessed (usually quantitatively) using a linear stepwise process. In contrast, land-use plans and similar strategies present a number of distinct challenges for HRA and rigid application of the 'staged' approach to assessment suggested by Box 1 is not always appropriate. In particular, it is preferable for sustainable policies to be developed from the beginning of the plan-making process rather than HRA being a purely retrospective assessment exercise towards the end. Therefore, it is important to recognise that the *process* of strategic HRA is as much about guiding the development of the plan (and demonstrating that effects on European sites have been considered appropriately) as it is about (ultimately) assessing its effects. The process is summarised in Figure 1.1.⁵

⁴ *Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC 2002).

⁵ Note, from a strict procedural perspective the 'screening' and 'appropriate assessment' stages can only be formally applied to the finalised plan, and not to its various phases or iterations; therefore the term 'screening' is used advisedly within this document.

Figure 1.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment Process



2.2 Guidance

The following guidance has been used to during the review and assessment of the TDC Local Plan:

- ▶ DTA Publications (2013) *The Habitats Regulation Handbook* [online]. Available at: <http://www.dtapublications.co.uk/handbook/>. Accessed 11.11.14;
- ▶ SNH (2012) *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for plan-making bodies in Scotland*. Scottish Natural Heritage / David Tyldesley Associates;
- ▶ Tyldesley D (2010). *Draft Guidance for Plan Making Authorities in Wales: The Appraisal of Plans Under the Habitats Directive*. David Tyldesley and Associates, for the Countryside Council for Wales;
- ▶ DCLG (2006). *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents*. Department for Communities and Local Government, HMSO, London;
- ▶ English Nature, (1997-2001). *Habitats Regulations Guidance Notes 1-9*, Natural England, Peterborough;
- ▶ European Commission, (2002). *Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels;
- ▶ European Commission, (2001). *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites*. European Commission, Brussels;
- ▶ European Communities, (2007). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels.

2.3 Summary of Approach

Screening and appropriate assessment

The principles of 'screening' are applied to the emerging plan or its components (i.e. policies and allocations) to allow the assessment stage to focus on those aspects that are most likely to have potentially significant or adverse effects on European sites, as well as shape the emerging strategy. Screening aims to determine whether the plan will have any 'likely significant effects' (LSE) on any European site as a result of its implementation. It is intended to be a coarse filter for identifying effects (positive and negative) that may occur, to allow the assessment stage to focus on the most important aspects. A plan should be considered 'likely' to have an effect if the competent authority is unable (on the basis of objective information) to exclude the possibility that the plan could have significant effects on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; an effect will be 'significant' if it could undermine the site's conservation objectives. TDC is the competent authority for the purposes of the Habitats Regulations, and is therefore responsible for completing the HRA.

Screening can be used to 'screen-out' European sites and plan components from further assessment, if it is possible to determine that significant effects are unlikely (e.g. if sites or interest features are clearly not vulnerable (both exposed and sensitive) to the outcomes of a plan due to the absence of any reasonable impact pathways). For the TDC plan, the screening process has been used on the plan 'as a whole'; on the European sites themselves; and on the key components of the plan (the policies and allocations). The screening takes account of measures included in the plan to avoid significant effects. The 'appropriate assessment' stage provides a more detailed examination of policies or allocations where the effects are likely to be significant, or they are uncertain. Note that undertaking a more detailed assessment of policies or sites does not necessarily imply a conclusion of 'significant effects' for those sites / aspects that are 'screened in' since controls within the plan (i.e. policy measures) will also operate to minimise these effects and in many cases the assessment is completed due to a residual uncertainty; rather, it allows for the assessment of effects to focus on those issues that are potentially important.

'In combination' assessment

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that the potential effects of the plan on European sites must also be considered 'in combination with other plans or projects'. The 'in combination' assessment must also consider within-plan effects (i.e. between policies or allocations). Consideration of 'in combination' effects is not a separate assessment, but is integral to the screening and appropriate assessment stages and the development of avoidance/ mitigation measures. There is limited guidance available on the scope of the 'in combination' element, particularly which plans should be considered. However, the assessment should not necessarily be limited to plans at the same level in the planning hierarchy and there is consequently a wide range of plans that could have potential 'in combination' effects with the TDC plan due to its regional scale. There is also limited guidance on the mitigation that may be appropriate if a European site is already being significantly affected by other plans; this is possible, since some plans will pre-date the requirement for HRA of plans, and therefore cannot be relied on to have no significant effect in their own right.

The plans identified by the SA have provided the basis for the assessment of 'in combination' effects; these plans were reviewed to identify any potential effects and these were then considered (as necessary) within the screening or appropriate assessment. The assessment did not generally include national strategies, national policy or legislation since the Local Plan must be compliant with these. It is considered that in combination effects are most likely in respect of other regional and sub-regional development plans and strategies. The plans considered 'in combination', and the results of the screening, are summarised in Appendix C. Completion of the 'in combination' assessment is directly related to the policy wording, and it will often be possible to remove any risk of 'in combination' effects through careful construction of the policy (inclusion of 'avoidance measures' during policy development).

Mitigation and avoidance

The development of avoidance or mitigation measures is key to the HRA and plan development process. Avoidance measures are those that are incorporated into the plan during its development to prevent significant effects on European sites occurring; mitigation measures are used where significant effects are identified in order to prevent adverse effects on a site's integrity.

Avoidance or mitigation measures should aim to reduce the probability or magnitude of impacts on a European site until 'no likely significant effects' are anticipated, and will generally involve usually the development and adoption of (for example) wording changes or additional policies. Measures must be specific and targeted, and likely to work: it is not appropriate to re-state existing legislation or policy, such as by adding "*and must have no significant effect on any European site*" (or similar) to every policy. The avoidance or mitigation should also account for the limited influence that TDC can exert on non-planning issues, and should not generally exceed requirements set by national planning policy or guidance.

Uncertainty and 'down the line' assessment

For most policies, even at the strategic level, it will be clear if adverse effects are likely, and in these instances the policy should not be included within the plan since plans should not include proposals which would be likely to fail the Habitats Regulations tests at the project application stage. For other options, however, the effects may be uncertain and it is therefore important that this uncertainty is addressed either through additional investigation or (if this is not possible) appropriate mitigation measures.

It is usually possible to incorporate caveats or 'avoidance measures' within policy text that are sufficient to ensure that significant adverse effects will not occur. However, for other policies this may not be possible because there is insufficient available information about the nature of the development that is being proposed through the policy to enable a robust conclusion to be reached about whether there will be any LSEs. In these instances, current guidance indicates that it may be appropriate and acceptable for assessment to be undertaken 'down-the-line' at a lower tier in the planning hierarchy. For this to be acceptable, the following conditions must be met:

- ▶ The higher tier plan appraisal cannot reasonably predict the effects on a European site in a meaningful way; whereas;
- ▶ The lower tier plan, which will identify more precisely the nature, scale or location of development, and thus its potential effects, retains enough flexibility within the terms of the

higher tier plan over the exact location, scale or nature of the proposal to enable an adverse effect on site integrity to be avoided; and

- ▶ Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the Plan at the lower tier is required as a matter of law or Government policy⁶.

⁶ SNH (2012) *Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans: Guidance for plan-making bodies in Scotland*. Scottish Natural Heritage / David Tyldesley Associates

3. Scope of Assessment and Baseline Summary

3.1 Study Area

The spatial scope of any HRA should be based on the likely environmental outcomes of the plan and its 'zone of influence'; and the interest features of the European sites that may be affected and their potential vulnerabilities.⁷ It is therefore not usually appropriate to employ 'arbitrary' spatial buffers to determine those European sites that should be considered within an HRA. However, as distance is a strong determinant of the scale and likelihood of most effects the considered use of a suitably precautionary search area as a starting point for the screening (based on a thorough understanding of both the plan outcomes and European site interest features) has some important advantages. Using buffers allows the systematic identification of European sites using GIS, so minimising the risk of sites or features being overlooked, and also ensures that sites where there are no reasonable impact pathways can be quickly and transparently excluded from any further screening or assessment. It also has the significant advantage of providing a consistent point of reference for consultees following the assessment process, allowing the 'screening' to focus on the potential effects, rather than on explaining why certain sites may or may not have been considered in relation to a particular aspect of the plan.

This study considers potential effects on all European sites within 15km of the TDC boundary, together with any additional sites that may be hydrologically linked to the plan's zone of influence. This is considered to be a suitably precautionary starting point for the assessment of the plan. The sites listed in Table 3.1 are therefore included in the assessment (see also Figure 3.1).

Table 3.1 European sites within study area

| Site | Approximate location relative to TDC area |
|---|--|
| Blean Complex SAC | Approximately 4.8km west of TDC boundary. |
| Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC | Approximately 14.9km south of TDC boundary. |
| Sandwich Bay SAC | On southern boundary of TDC area. |
| Stodmarsh SAC | Approximately 2.4km south west of TDC boundary. |
| Thanet Coast SAC | Northern and eastern coastlines of TDC area. |
| Margate and Long Sands SAC | Offshore SAC approximately 1.1km from northern coast of TDC area. |
| Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe SAC | Approximately 9.5km west of TDC area, on North Kent Coast. |
| Outer Thames Estuary SPA | On TDC boundary; offshore SPA extending from northern coast of TDC area. |
| Stodmarsh SPA | Approximately 2.8km south west of TDC boundary. |
| Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA | Northern and eastern coastlines of TDC area, plus Sandwich Bay on the southern boundary. |
| The Swale SPA | Approximately 12.8km west of TDC area, on North Kent Coast. |
| Stodmarsh Ramsar | Approximately 2.8km south west of TDC boundary. |
| Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar | Northern and eastern coastlines of TDC area, plus Sandwich Bay on the southern boundary. |
| The Swale Ramsar | Approximately 12.8km west of TDC area, on North Kent Coast. |

⁷ The vulnerability of an interest feature will depend on its 'sensitivity' and 'exposure' to a potential effect.

Data on the European site interest features, their distribution, and their sensitivity to potential effects associated with the plan were obtained from various sources and reports, including the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England (NE) websites (citations; boundaries; etc.); site condition was based on the NE condition assessments for corresponding SSSI units. Additional information on particular sites or features was obtained from other sources where available, including the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS).

3.2 European Site Features and Condition

The interest features of the European sites within the study area, and the current factors affecting them, are summarised in Table 3.2. A summary of the Conservation Objectives is provided in the Section 3.2.1. The percentage of the site in favourable or unfavourable condition was estimated using the NE condition assessments for the corresponding SSSI units, although it must be noted that the boundaries of the component SSSI units (to which the condition assessments relate) do not always match the European site boundaries exactly (i.e. the SSSIs are usually larger) and it is not always possible to split SSSI units to determine the precise area of the European site (or interest feature) that is in each condition category⁸. The current pressures on and threats to the sites are identified, based on the Site Improvement Plans (SIPs).⁹

There are many factors currently affecting the European sites over which the local plan will have no or little influence: analysis of the available site data indicates that the most common reasons for an 'unfavourable' condition assessment of the component SSSI units are inappropriate management of some form (e.g. over- or undergrazing, scrub control, water-level management etc.) or secondary effects from agriculture (e.g. local drainage, run-off, grazing pressure etc.). The potential mechanisms by which the Local Plan could affect these sites are discussed in Section 3.3. Note that the following sites are grouped together for presentation purposes due to the similarity of the interest features and/or the factors and processes affecting them:

- ▶ Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar ('Thanet Coast sites'); and
- ▶ Stodmarsh SAC, Stodmarsh SPA and Stodmarsh Ramsar ('Stodmarsh sites');
- ▶ The Swale SPA and The Swale Ramsar ('The Swale sites').

⁸ This is evident in Table 3.1, where the proportion of the site area in each condition category does not always total 100%.

⁹ Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5458594975711232>

Table 3.2 European sites and interest features within 15km of Thanet District

| Site and interest features† | Condition (%)** | Summary of current threats and potential vulnerabilities to outcomes of Thanet Local Plan |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Blean Complex SAC | | |
| <u>Annex I features</u> : Oak-hornbeam forests* | F: 100.5% UR: 0.2% | This woodland SAC is almost entirely in favourable condition; coppice management is the key issue in the site unit that is unfavourable. The site is an NNR and managed in partnership by NE, RSPB and the Woodland Trust which helps ensure its favourable status. The site is nearly 5km from Thanet and direct impacts on this site as a result of the Thanet plan are likely to be limited. It could potentially be vulnerable to changes in air quality or visitor pressure that may be associated with the overall quantum of development, although it should be noted that neither of these aspects is currently identified as a pressure at the site, based on the SIP. However, air quality (specifically N-deposition) is identified as a potential threat in the SIP, and further investigations into this aspect are proposed. |
| Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC | | |
| <u>Annex I features</u> : Calcareous dry grassland and scrub; Vegetated sea cliffs* | F: 56.5% UR: 36.4% UF: 7.2% | The SAC citation states that this site "...is an 8 km stretch of undefended sea cliff subject to natural coastal erosion. The main pressure is on cliff-top grassland, which is being squeezed between the eroding cliff and arable land behind." Most of the site SSSI units are in favourable condition; those in unfavourable condition are primarily affected by poor or limited management of encroaching scrub and grazing of the calcareous grassland; as a result, the main issues affecting this site are coastal squeeze and management, which will not, at this site, be influenced by the Thanet plan. The SIP indicates that the main pressures at the site are associated with management (inappropriate scrub control and undergrazing) and air quality (N deposition), although the latter factor will not change substantially as a result of the Thanet plan (the HRA of the Dover District Local Development Framework concluded that this plan would not affect the site in this regard). |
| Margate and Long Sands SAC | | |
| <u>Annex I features</u> : Sub-tidal sandbanks* | Uncertain: 100% | There is limited information on the current condition of this recently designated offshore SAC. The Regulation 35 advice states that " <i>the interest features and associated biological communities of the Margate and Long Sands cSAC are sensitive to physical loss, physical damage, toxic and non-toxic contamination, and biological disturbance</i> ". However, it should be noted that the site is at least 1km offshore from Thanet and the Thanet Plan will not generally exert any influence over the most damaging activities (i.e. offshore activities such as dredging): the Regulation 35 advice notes that the exposure of the interest features to aspects associated with land-based activities (e.g. toxic and non-toxic contamination) is low. The SIP identifies commercial fisheries as the main pressure on the site, although the Thanet plan will not directly influence this aspect. |

Table 3.3 (cont'd) European sites and interest features within 15km of Thanet District

| Site and interest features† | Condition (%)** | Summary of current threats and potential vulnerabilities to outcomes of Thanet Local Plan |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Sandwich Bay SAC | | |
| <u>Annex I features</u> : Dunes with creeping willow*; White dunes*; Grey dunes*; Embryonic shifting dunes*; Humid dune slacks | F: 62.2% UR: 27.4% UF: 10.6% | <p>This site supports the most important sand dune system and sandy coastal grassland in south east England. The SAC SSSI units that are in unfavourable condition are affected by management (Unit 22, associated with a golf course) and hydro-ecological changes that have degraded some fixed dunes (Unit 18), the causes of which are currently under investigation (although these are likely to be due to local hydrological changes). The features of the SAC are vulnerable to a range of potential impacts including direct encroachment; coastal squeeze or developments (etc.) that alter the natural geomorphological processes; visitor pressure; management; air quality changes; and local water quality / quantity changes (note, current abstraction and discharges consents are not having an adverse effect on the site, based on Review of Consent data). The SIP identifies a number of current pressures to the SAC interest features including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ public access (Embryonic shifting dunes; Grey dunes) ▶ hydrological changes (Grey dunes); ▶ air pollution (Embryonic shifting dunes; White dunes; Grey dunes; Dunes with creeping willow; Humid dune slacks. |
| Stodmarsh SAC | | |
| <u>Annex II features</u> : Desmoulin`s whorl snail* | F: 75.8% UR: 21.1% UF: 2.5% | <p>This wetland site is predominantly in 'favourable' condition; the 'unfavourable' SSSI units are in this condition due to localised management issues, either of scrub encroachment or water levels (note, the water level issues are not due to over-abstraction). Most of the site is an NNR or managed under stewardship agreements, and so most potential impacts have suitable control mechanisms (e.g. control of water levels; management; visitor pressure; etc.). However, the interest features of the site (and their habitats) are vulnerable to diffuse 'quantum of development' impacts which the Thanet plan may contribute to, notably water abstraction (increases in development may require increased abstraction from local sources, which could affect the SAC) and air quality changes. However, the SIP does not currently identify any threats or pressures relating to the SAC interest feature.</p> |
| Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe SAC | | |
| <u>Annex II features</u> : Fisher's estuarine moth* | F: 100% | <p>Fisher's estuarine moth <i>Gortyna borellii lunata</i> has a localised population distribution in the UK, due to its specific habitat requirements; this site supports its food plant hog's fennel (<i>Peucedanum officinale</i>), together with areas of neutral grassland also required by the species for egg laying. The SSSI unit that forms the SAC is in favourable condition but is heavily used by dog walkers and is vulnerable to under-management. The site is approximately 10km outside Thanet and so unlikely to be directly affected by the outcomes of the Thanet plan. There is currently no SIP for this site.</p> |

Table 3.4 (cont'd) European sites and interest features within 15km of Thanet District

| Site and interest features† | Condition (%)** | Summary of current threats and potential vulnerabilities to outcomes of Thanet Local Plan |
|--|--|---|
| Thanet Coast SAC | | |
| <u>Annex I features</u> : Sea caves*; Reefs* | F: 11.1% UR: 8.0% Uncertain: 80.9% | This site is partly within Thanet and potentially vulnerable to the outcomes of the plan. The condition of most of the site is 'uncertain', since most of the offshore areas are not SSSI units and detailed information on condition is not available; however, the Regulation 33 advice for the site indicates that the features would be vulnerable to physical damage (removal, erosion, smothering); developments (etc.) that alter the natural geomorphological processes; toxic or non-toxic contamination; and invasive species. As a result, the features will be mainly sensitive to direct effects only (i.e. encroachment or factors that alter the geomorphological processes that otherwise dominate the condition of the features). The SIP indicates that the invasive Pacific oyster (<i>Crassostrea gigas</i>) species is a current pressure on the Reefs feature, although the spread of this cannot be directly influenced by the TDC plan. |
| Outer Thames Estuary SPA | | |
| <u>Article 4.1 qualification</u> : Red-throated diver (W) | Uncertain: 100% | Red throated divers are sensitive to non-physical disturbance by noise and visual presence during the winter; generally they will not be particularly exposed to disturbance associated with the Thanet plan (or within Thanet's control) due to their preference for offshore areas, although some aspects (e.g. recreational boating) may have an effect. The SIP indicates that commercial fishing is a current pressure, although this is not controlled by TDC. |
| Stodmarsh sites | | |
| Stodmarsh SPA <u>Article 4.1 qualification</u> : Bittern (W); Hen harrier (W) <u>Article 4.2 qualification</u> : Gadwall (B-,W-); Shoveler (W-); Breeding bird assemblage (B-) | F: 72.7% UR: 24.8% UF: 2.9% | As with Stodmarsh SAC, this wetland site is predominantly in 'favourable' condition; the 'unfavourable' SSSI units are in this condition due to localised management issues, either of scrub encroachment or water levels (note, the water level issues are not due to over-abstraction). There are thought to be local disturbance issues associated with angling and shooting in some units. However, most of the site is an NNR or managed under stewardship agreements, and so most potential impacts have suitable control mechanisms (e.g. control of water levels; management; visitor pressure; etc.). However, the interest features of the SPA (and their habitats) are vulnerable to diffuse 'quantum of development' impacts which the Thanet plan may contribute to, notable water abstraction (increases in development may require increased abstraction from local sources, which could affect the SAC) and air quality changes. The SIP notes the following pressures for the SPA bird interest features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ water pollution (bittern, gadwall) ▶ invasive species (<i>Crassula helmsii</i> – bittern, gadwall, shoveler, hen harrier; breeding bird assemblage; waterbird assemblage); ▶ air pollution (N deposition – bittern, gadwall, shoveler, hen harrier; breeding bird assemblage; waterbird assemblage). |
| Stodmarsh Ramsar <u>Criterion 2</u> - Endangered etc species / communities (6 RDB invertebrates; 2 nationally rare plants; 5 nationally scarce species; a diverse assemblage of rare wetland birds inc. gadwall, bittern, hen harrier, shoveler) | | |

Table 3.5 (cont'd) European sites and interest features within 15km of Thanet District

| Site and interest features† | Condition (%)** | Summary of current threats and potential vulnerabilities to outcomes of Thanet Local Plan |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay sites | | |
| Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA <u>Article 4.1 qualification:</u> Golden plover (W-); Little tern (B-) <u>Article 4.2 qualification:</u> Turnstone (W) | F: 68.3% UR: 30.4% UF: 1.7% | <p>The main current pressure to the integrity of this site is disturbance of feeding and roosting birds by recreational activities (particularly dog walking, although other activities, such as kite sailing, are thought to have local impacts); this is reflected in the condition assessments for the the SSSI units that are in unfavourable condition (Sandwich Bay SSSI units 3, 35 – 39, 63 and Thanet Coast SSSI units 11, 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20): the SSSI condition assessment for Unit 3 of Sandwich Bay SSSI notes that the “<i>Bird Disturbance Study 2010-11 published by Kent Wildlife Trust Oct 2012 provides strong evidence indicating that recreational and commercial activities including dog walking, walking without dogs, bait digging and kite surfing are having a detrimental impact on bird populations in Pegwell Bay. The most disturbing activity, particularly in the north section of the bay, is dog walkers with dogs off leads</i>”; the assessments for the unfavourable Thanet Coast SSSI units all state that the units “...[remain] unfavourable recovering due to effects of dog walkers on birds feeding and roosting”.</p> <p>The SIP notes the following pressures on the SPA interest features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ changes in species distributions (regional scale changes that may be influencing numbers of turnstone and little tern, that are unlikely to be connected to activities directly within or near the sites); ▶ invasive species (Pacific oyster affecting turnstone foraging); ▶ public access and disturbance (turnstone, little tern, golden plover); ▶ commercial fisheries (turnstone, little tern, golden plover). <p>The habitats of the SPA will be vulnerable to the same aspects as Sandwich Bay SAC and Thanet Coast SAC (see above) although the relationship between the habitat condition and the status of the SPA interest features is complex, and effects on the habitats will not always directly and negatively affect the SPA interest features (for example, nutrient enrichment would degrade some habitats but probably enhance foraging conditions for tunstone). The main Local Plan issue for this site is therefore the overall quantum of development in Thanet (and neighbouring authorities) and the consequent potential for recreational use of the beaches to increase during key periods. The plan will need to develop mitigating policies and safeguards to minimise the effect of this.</p> |

Table 3.6 (cont'd) European sites and interest features within 15km of Thanet District

| Site and interest features† | Condition (%)** | Summary of current threats and potential vulnerabilities to outcomes of Thanet Local Plan |
|--|---|---|
| The Swale sites | | |
| <p>The Swale SPA</p> <p><u>Article 4.1 qualification:</u> Avocet (B+,W+); Marsh harrier (B+); Mediterranean gull (B+); Bar-tailed godwit (W+); Golden plover (W+); Hen harrier (W+)</p> <p><u>Article 4.2 qualification:</u> Dark-bellied brent goose (W-); Ringed Plover (P+); Black-tailed godwit (W+); Dunlin (ssp. alpina) (W-); Knot (W+); Pintail (W+); Shoveler (W+); Waterfowl assemblage (W); Breeding bird assemblage (B-)</p> <p>The Swale Ramsar</p> <p><u>Criterion 2</u> - Endangered etc species / communities (nationally scarce plants; seven RDB invertebrates)</p> <p><u>Criterion 5</u> - 20,000 or more waterbirds (77501 waterfowl in winter)</p> <p><u>Criterion 6</u> - 1% of a waterbird population (Redshank, Dark-bellied brent goose, Grey Plover)</p> | <p>F: 67.9%</p> <p>UF: 2.2%</p> <p>Uncertain: 29.9%</p> | <p>There is evidence of rapid erosion of intertidal habitat within the site due to natural processes and the effects of sea defences and clay extraction. Research on mudflat recharge using dredging spoil is being investigated as a means of countering the erosion.</p> <p>The intertidal area is also vulnerable to disturbance from waterborne recreation. This is being addressed as part of an estuary management plan.</p> <p>The terrestrial part of the site depends on appropriate grazing and management of water quality and quantity. The availability of livestock for grazing may be addressed through management agreements. The effects of abstraction on the availability of water for other land uses and drainage for arable cultivation will be addressed through the consent review process under the Habitats Regulations. Impacts on this site are less likely as a result of the Thanet plan due to the distance (>12km) but in combination effects with other plans may occur.</p> |

Key

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| † | Interest features are abbreviated; see also Appendix B |
| * | Interest features (habitats or species) that are a primary reason for designation; all other habitats and species are qualifying features |
| W | Wintering species |
| P | Passage migrants |
| B | Breeding species |
| - | Species included on original SPA citation but proposed for removal following the SPA Review |
| + | Species not included on the original SPA citation but added following the SPA Review |
| Annex I / II | Habitats or species listed on Annex I or II (respectively) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') |
| Article 4.1 / 4.2 | Bird species qualifying under Article 4.1 or 4.2 of Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the 'new Wild Birds Directive') |
| Criterion 2, 5, 6 | Ramsar criteria; there are nine criteria used as a basis for selecting Ramsar sites; see Appendix B |
| ** | Based on the condition assessments of the SSSI units that correspond to the relevant European sites. Note: the total percentage does not always equal 100% as the boundaries of the component SSSI units (which the condition assessments relate to) do not always match the European site boundaries exactly (i.e. the SSSIs are usually larger, but it is not possible to split SSSI units to determine the precise quantity of the European site that is in each condition category). |
| F | Favourable |
| UR | Unfavourable recovering |
| UF | Unfavourable no change |
| UD | Unfavourable declining |
| Uncertain | Uncertain (due to absence of data, typically where parts of the site are not associated with an SSSI). |

Conservation Objectives

The conservation objectives for all of the sites have been revised by NE in recent years to increase consistency of assessment and reporting. As a result, the high-level conservation objectives for all sites are effectively the same:

For SACs:

- ▶ With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features'...), and subject to natural change; ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring [as applicable to each site];
 - ▶ The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;
 - ▶ The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;
 - ▶ The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats;
 - ▶ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
 - ▶ The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely;
 - ▶ The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;
 - ▶ The populations of qualifying species; and,
 - ▶ The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

For SPAs:

- ▶ With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features'...), and subject to natural change; ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:
 - ▶ The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
 - ▶ The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;
 - ▶ The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;
 - ▶ The population of each of the qualifying features; and
 - ▶ The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

The conservation objectives for Ramsar sites are taken to be the same as for the corresponding SACs / SPAs (where sites overlap). The conservation objectives are considered when assessing the potential effects of plans and policies on the sites; information on the sensitivities of the interest features also informs the assessment.

3.3 Outcomes of Local Plan and Impact Pathways

Analysis of the available European site data and the SSSI condition assessments indicate that the most common reasons for an 'unfavourable' condition assessment of the component SSSI units are inappropriate management of some form (e.g. over- or undergrazing, scrub control, water-level management etc.) or secondary effects from agriculture (e.g. local drainage, run-off, grazing pressure etc.). These are aspects over which the TDC local plan will have no or little influence, although it is important to understand the pressures currently experienced (particularly when considering 'in combination' effects).

The main mechanism by which the Local Plan could affect these sites are through spatial allocations that have direct or indirect effects on European sites; or through policies that direct development (or do not control development) such that significant effects are likely. The main environmental aspects, and the pathways by which the Local Plan could potentially affect European sites, are summarised in the following sections together with any available baseline data on those aspects to inform the assessment. European sites that are particularly vulnerable to a particular aspect (i.e. sensitive and likely to be exposed due to the Local Plan) are identified.

Recreational Pressure

Many European sites will be vulnerable to some degree of impact as a result of recreational pressure, although the effects of recreational pressure are complex and very much dependent on the specific conditions and interest features at each site: for example, some bird species are more sensitive to disturbance associated with walkers or dogs than others; some habitats will be more sensitive to trampling or mechanical disturbance than others; some sites will be more accessible than others.

The most typical mechanisms for recreational effects are through direct damage of habitats, or disturbance of certain species. Damage will most often be accidental or incidental, but many sites are particularly sensitive to soil or habitat erosion caused by recreational activities and require careful management of recreational activities to minimise any effects – for example, through provision and maintenance of ‘hard paths’ (boardwalks, stone slabs etc.) and signage to minimise soil erosion along path margins.

Disturbance¹⁰ of species due to recreational activities can also be a significant problem at some sites, although the relationship (again) is highly variable and depends on a range of factors including the species, the time of year and the scale, type and predictability of disturbance. Most studies have focused on the effects on birds, either when breeding or foraging. Of particular relevance to this study is a long term monitoring project by Natural England on the Thanet Coast that has found that turnstones (a shoreline-feeding waterbird) are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from dogs, which interrupts their feeding behaviour and can prevent them from gaining sufficient body fat for overwintering or migration. Similarly, Finney et al. (2005) noted that re-surfacing the Pennine Way significantly reduced the impact of recreational disturbance on the distribution of breeding golden plover, by encouraging walkers to remain on the footpath. In contrast, some species are largely unaffected by human disturbance (or even benefit from it) which can result in local or regional changes in the composition of the fauna. The scale, type and predictability of disturbance is also important; species can become habituated to some disturbance (e.g. noise) particularly if it is regular or continuous. Unpredictable disturbance is most problematic.

With regard to sites within the study area, all will be sensitive to recreational pressure to some extent, although the most sensitive to the outcomes of the TDC plan will be **Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA** and **Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar** (disturbance of bird species, particularly turnstones); and **Sandwich Bay SAC** (disturbance of sand dune habitats).

Most recreational activities with the potential to affect European sites are ‘casual’ and pursued opportunistically (e.g. walking, walking dogs, riding) rather than structured (e.g. organised group activities or trips to specific discrete attractions), which ensures that it can be harder to quantify or predict either the uptake or the impacts of these activities on European sites and (ultimately) harder to control or manage. It also means it is difficult to explore in detail all of the potential aspects of visitor pressure at the strategic level. However it is possible for plans and strategies to influence recreational use of European sites through the planning process, for example by increasing the amount of green-space required within or near developments if potentially vulnerable European sites are located nearby.

Attempts to predict the effects of increased recreation on European sites that may be associated with development or allocations derived from strategic plans generally aim to identify the distance within which a certain percentage of visits originate. Several studies have used site-specific questionnaire surveys to identify visitor catchments and characterise the typical use of a site; these data are then used to identify ‘buffer zones’ within which new development would be considered likely to have significant effects on a site, unless appropriately mitigated. Natural England, as part of its input to the County Durham Plan, has noted that it adopts a ‘75% rule’ to determine significance, whereby recreational buffers are based on the distance

¹⁰ In this case, literal disturbance by human activity; in ecology, ‘disturbance’ is a more complex concept used in models of ecosystem equilibrium.

within which 75% of visits originate (i.e. taking account of frequency of visits as well as distance travelled); for the Durham Coast SAC, Northumbria Coast SPA / Ramsar and Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA / Ramsar this distance was 6km.

Other studies have identified or used those distances within which approximately 70 - 75% of visitors live when considering recreational buffer areas. Some examples are summarised in [Table X.X](#), although note that these are necessarily selective as not all studies considering visitor pressure have necessarily reported percentiles; however, they provide some good examples for European sites that have similarities to sites near Thanet, including the presence of nearby urban areas.

Table 3.7 Travel distances for ~70 – 75% of visitors recorded by previous studies

| Study | European sites | Summary of findings |
|---|---|---|
| Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project (Fearnley et al. 2010) | Solent Maritime SAC Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA Pagham Harbour SPA Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar Pagham Harbour Ramsar (Coastal sites; major urban areas; disturbance of birds) | Half of all visitors arriving on foot lived within 0.7km; half of all visitors arriving by car lived more than 4km away. Average travel distance (excluding holidaymakers): 5.04km. 75% of visits from postcodes within 5.6km. |
| Thames Basin Heaths (Liley et al. 2005) | Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Heathland sites; urban areas; disturbance of birds) | 70% of visitors travel 5km or less to access sites |
| Whitehall and Bordon Ecotown (EPR 2012) | Wealden Heaths SPA Shortheath Common SAC Woolmer Forest SAC Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC Thursley and Ockley Bogs Ramsar site (Heathland and woodland sites; urban areas; disturbance of birds; damage to heath) | Average travel distance: 6.7km. 70% of visitors travel 4.3km or less to access sites. 70% distance values for following component sites: - Frensham Common: 10.7km - Kingsley Common: 7.4km - Bramshott Common: 4.5km - Woolmer Forest: 3.4km - Longmoor Enclosure: 3.2km - Ludshott Common: 2.9km - Broxhead Common: 2.1km - Hogmoor Inclosure: 0.9km - Shortheath Common: 0.6km - Bordon Enclosure: 0.5km |
| Ashdown Forest (UE / University of Brighton 2009) | Ashdown Forest SPA (Heathland sites; urban areas; disturbance of birds) | 76% of visitors travel 5km or less to access sites |

For most sites, the distance that 70 – 75% of visitors travel is typically less than 6 – 7km. Given that most studies have demonstrated that reported visit frequency increases with proximity to a site, it is reasonable to assume that the '75% distance'¹¹ for visits to most sites is likely to be less than this. However, it is important to recognise that visitor behaviour is complex and generalised statistics can hide important variations in the use of a site (for example, the 75% distance is likely to vary depending on the access point surveyed; this may be particularly relevant for larger sites such as the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar). Any derived buffers must be applied cautiously as the precise distance will depend on the site: a remote upland European site favoured by recreational walkers will probably have a substantially larger 75% distance for visits than the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar that is adjacent to Margate.

Secondary buffers are also sometimes identified to reflect the variation in visitor behaviour, particularly for those that live in close proximity to a site; for example, the studies supporting the County Durham Plan

¹¹ i.e. the distance within which 75% of visits are made

adopted a 400m buffer also, since 59% of respondents living within the 0 – 400 metre buffer were high risk users, i.e. visit the coast between one and three times a day (see also 'Urbanisation', below).

Some visitor survey data are available for Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Bay, based on recent studies for Dover District Council (DDC 2012; Milnes 2012). These data indicate that most visits to Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Bay are made by individuals living within 5km (Ramsgate, Sandwich, Deal, Cliff's End, Broadstairs, Margate). However, the survey methodologies were different in each case and therefore the results must be treated cautiously and are not entirely suitable for the derivation of typical travel distances or distances within which 75% of visits originate. No appropriate visitor survey data are available for the remainder of the Thanet Coast (i.e. Ramsgate to Herne Bay).

Although distance and journey time are major factors influencing recreational use of a site, generic distances for recreational buffer zones are not usually employed, and there is limited consistency between studies when it comes to rationalising buffer zone size largely due to the site-specific variables that are factored in to the assessment. However, in the absence of specific data for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar and Sandwich Bay SAC the available data from other studies can be used as a proxy; therefore, this HRA has identified all allocations within 6km of a European site for possible recreational impacts, with allocations within 500m of an access point being considered as potentially high-risk. However, given the geography of Thanet, all allocations are within 6km of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar, and most are within 6km of Sandwich Bay SAC; therefore all allocations are likely to contribute to increased visitor pressure on these sites 'in combination', even if individually their contribution is limited.

Urbanisation

Urbanisation is generally used as a collective term covering a suite of often disparate risks and impacts that occur due to increases in human populations near protected sites. Typically, this would include aspects such as fly-tipping or vandalism, although the effects of these aspects again depend on the interest features of the sites: for example, predation of some species by cats is known to be sizeable¹² and can be potentially significant for some European sites. Recreational pressure is arguably one type of effect associated with urbanisation, although is usually considered separately as it is less closely associated with proximity: as a broad guide urbanisation effects are more likely when developments (etc) are within 1 km of a designated site, whereas people will typically travel further for recreation. Where sensitive sites are involved development buffers of around 500m are typically used to minimise the effects of urbanisation: for example, the Natural England has identified a 400m zone around the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA within which housing development should not be located due to the potential effects of urbanisation (particularly the risk of chick predation by cats, which cannot be mitigated); similarly, councils around the Thames Basin Heaths SPA identify a 400m zone around the SPA where there is a presumption against new residential development as the impact on the SPA is considered likely to be adverse. None of the condition assessments for European sites within the study area identify this as a particular issue and in reality there is sufficient distance between most sites and the nearest settlement boundaries for this to not be a significant threat, with the notable exception of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay sites where the urban areas of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate are immediately adjacent to the sites. Having said that, these are already large urban areas and 'urbanisation' effects are not noted as a significant issue for the European sites. The Local Plan can minimise the effects of this through appropriate policy controls.

Atmospheric Pollution

A number of pollutants have a negative effect on air quality; however, the most significant and relevant to habitats and species (particularly plant species) are the primary pollutants sulphur dioxide (SO₂, typically from combustion of coal and heavy fuel oils), nitrogen oxides (NO_x, mainly from vehicles) and ammonia (NH₃, typically from agriculture), which (together with secondary aerosol pollutants¹³) are deposited as wet or dry deposits. These pollutants affect habitats and species mainly through acidification and eutrophication. Acidification increases the acidity of soils, which can directly affect some organisms but which also promotes

¹² Woods, M. *et al.* 2003. Predation of wildlife by domestic cats *Felis catus* in Great Britain. *Mammal Review* **33** (2): 174-188

¹³ Secondary pollutants are not emitted, but are formed following further reactions in the atmosphere; for example, SO₂ and NO_x are oxidised to form SO₄²⁻ and NO₂⁻ compounds; ozone is formed by the reaction of other pollutants (e.g. NO_x or volatile organic compounds) with UV light; ammonia reacts with SO₄²⁻ and NO₂⁻ to form ammonium (NH₄⁺).

leaching of some important base chemicals (e.g. calcium), and mobilisation and uptake by plants of toxins (especially metals such as aluminium). Air pollution contributes to eutrophication within ecosystems by increasing the amounts of available nitrogen (N)¹⁴. This is a particular problem in low-nutrient habitats, where available nitrogen is frequently the limiting factor on plant growth, and results in slow-growing low-nutrient specialists being out-competed by faster growing species that can take advantage of the increased amounts of available N.

Table 3.8 Main Air Pollutants, Pathways and Effects

| Pollutant | Pathway | Summary of Effects |
|---|---|--|
| Ammonia (NH₃) | Primarily from agriculture through decomposition of animal manure and slurry. | Emissions contribute to acidification and (particularly) eutrophication. |
| Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) | All combustion processes produce oxides of nitrogen (NO _x) in air; road transport is the main source, followed by the electricity supply industry. NO _x emissions have decreased with increased fuel efficiency and catalytic converters | Emissions contribute to acidification and eutrophication; contribute to formation of secondary particles and ground level ozone. |
| Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) | Sulphur dioxide is released when fuels containing sulphur are burnt, especially coal and heavy fuel oils. The energy industry was the primary source, although this has decreased as use of coal has decreased. | SO ₂ dissolves readily in water to form an acid which contributes to acidification of soils and water. |

Overall in the UK, there has been a significant decline in SO_x and NO_x emissions in recent years and a consequent decrease in acid deposition; in England, SO_x and NO_x have declined by 90% and 65% respectively since 1990 (NAEI 2014), the result of a switch from coal to gas and nuclear for energy generation, and increased efficiency and emissions standards for cars. These emissions are generally expected to decline further in future years, although use of coal may begin to increase in the power generation sector in the long-term. In contrast, emissions of ammonia have remained largely unchanged: they have declined by 20% in England since 1990 (NAEI 2014), but have remained largely stable since 2008 (1% decrease from 2008 – 2011; 2.8% increase from 2011 – 2012).

The effect of SO_x and NO_x decreases on ecosystems has been marked, particularly in respect of acidification; the key contributor to acidification is now thought to be deposited nitrogen, for which the major source (ammonia emissions) has not decreased significantly. Indeed, although it is estimated that the proportion of UK semi-natural ecosystems that exceed the critical loads for eutrophication will decline from 40% to 32% by 2010 (NEGTAP 2001), eutrophication from N-deposition (again, primarily from ammonia) is now considered the most significant air quality issue for many habitats.

The UK Air Pollution Information System (APIS) has been interrogated to identify those European sites and features where critical loads¹⁵ for nutrient-N deposition and acidification are met or exceeded. APIS provides a comprehensive source of information on air pollution and the effects on habitats and species and although there are limitations to the data (see SNIFFER 2007), particularly related to the scale at which data can be modelled, this provides the best basis for assessing the impacts of air emissions in the absence of site-by-site monitoring data.

Table 3.X summarises the APIS data for European sites with features that are sensitive to air quality in the study area. All other sites are either not sensitive to air emissions, or do not have the CL exceeded. It should be noted that CL values are generally provided for habitats rather than species, and that watercourses are not included as eutrophication of most watercourses due to air emissions is negligible compared to run-off from agricultural land.

¹⁴ Nitrogen that is in a form that can be absorbed and used by plants.

¹⁵ 'Critical Loads' are the threshold level for the deposition of a pollutant above which harmful indirect effects can be shown on a habitat or species, according to current knowledge (APIS 2009).

Table 3.9 Summary of APIS Interrogation

| Site | Air quality sensitive features | Over CL? | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-----|
| | | Acid | N |
| Blean Complex SAC | Oak-hornbeam forests | + | ++ |
| Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC | Calcareous dry grassland and scrub | - | + |
| | Vegetated sea cliffs | n/a | n/a |
| Sandwich Bay SAC | Dunes with creeping willow | + | + |
| | White dunes | n/a | + |
| | Grey dunes | + | ++ |
| | Embryonic shifting dunes | n/a | + |
| | Humid dune slacks | + | + |

Table Notes:

| | |
|------|---|
| CL | Critical load |
| Acid | Acidification |
| N | Eutrophication |
| n/a | Critical load not set for feature / feature not sensitive |
| - | below minimum CL for that habitat |
| + | minimum CL for that habitat is exceeded |
| ++ | maximum CL for that habitat is exceeded |

The proposals within the plan may indirectly contribute to local air pollution and wider diffuse pollution, but quantifying these effects is difficult. In practice, the principal source of air pollution associated with the plan will be associated with changing patterns of vehicle use due to the promotion of new development and housing sites (since the plan does not provide for any new significant point-sources). The Department of Transport's *Transport Analysis Guidance*¹⁶ states that "beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant" and therefore this distance is used to determine the potential significance of any local effects associated with the plan. Environment Agency guidance (EA 2007) also states that "Where the concentration within the emission footprint in any part of the European site(s) is less than 1% of the relevant long-term benchmark (EAL, Critical Level or Critical Load), the emission is not likely to have a significant effect alone or in combination irrespective of the background levels". With regard to the sites in **Table X.X**, only **Sandwich Bay SAC** is within the TDC boundary, or within 200m of it; within the TDC area, Sandwich Bay has two A- or B-roads within 200m of it (A256 and A299).

More broadly, the plan proposals may indirectly contribute to wider diffuse pollution within and beyond the TDC boundary, in combination with other developments, plans and programmes. There is little guidance on the assessment of diffuse pollution, although NE have previously indicated to Runnymede Borough Council that the HRA of its local plan "can only be concerned with locally emitted and short range locally acting pollutants" as wider diffuse pollution is beyond the control or remit of the authority. This is arguably correct, since trans-boundary air pollution can only be realistically addressed by national legislation or higher-tier plans, policies or strategies. As a result, any assessment must focus on the development of suitable mitigating policy that will minimise the contribution of plan-supported development to overall diffuse pollution.

Water Resources and Flow Regulation

The exploitation and management of water resources is connected to a range of activities, most of which are not directly controlled or influenced by the Local Plan; for example, agriculture, flood defence, recreation, power generation, fisheries and nature conservation. Much of the water supply to water-resource sensitive European sites is therefore managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of the Local Plan.

It is clear that development promoted or supported by the Local Plan is likely to increase demand for water, which could indirectly affect some European sites. When assessing the potential effects of increased water

¹⁶ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/documents/expert/unit3.3.3.php#013>; accessed 15/06/14

demand it is important to understand how the public water supply (PWS) system operates and how it is regulated with other water-resource consents. Southern Water (SW) is responsible for supply to the Thanet area, which is within its Eastern Supply Area (Kent Thanet Water Resource Zone (WRZ)). Thanet receives most of its supply from groundwater (75%) with the remainder from the River Medway, River Stour or pipeline transfer from the Kent Medway WRZ.

Under the Water Act 2003 all water companies must publish a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) that sets out their strategy for managing water resources across their supply area over the next 25 years. WRMPs use calculations of Deployable Output (DO) to establish supply/demand balances; this enables them to identify those Water Resource Zones (WRZs) with potential supply deficits over the planning period¹⁷. The calculations account for any reductions in abstraction that are required to safeguard European sites¹⁸ and so the WRMP process (with other regulations) helps ensure (as far as is achievable) that future changes in demand will not affect any European sites¹⁹.

SW have accounted for the growth predicted by TDC and other LPAs in its forecasting, and have identified small supply-demand deficits in the Kent Thanet WRZ over the planning period. SW will meet this predicted deficit through a combination of leakage reduction; water efficiency; and catchment management to reduce nitrate levels in abstracted water. The WRMP has been subject to HRA, which has concluded that the preferred options will have no significant effect on any European sites, including those water-resource sensitive sites within the study area (e.g. **Stodmarsh SAC / SPA / Ramsar**). The WRMP provides the best estimate of future water resource demand, and therefore it is reasonable to assume that the growth predicted within the TDC plan can be accommodated without significant effects on any European sites due to PWS abstractions. Furthermore, since the WRMP explicitly accounts for the growth predicted by TDC and other LPAs, 'in combination' effects between the Local Plan and the WRMP are unlikely to occur. Having said that, the Local Plan can obviously help manage demand and promote water efficiency measures through its policy controls.

Water Quality

Most waterbodies and watercourses in Thanet are affected to some extent by point or diffuse sources of pollutants, notably nitrates and phosphates. Point sources are usually discrete discharge points, such as wastewater treatment works (WTW) outfalls, which are generally managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of the Local Plan; the major treatment works serving the Thanet area are located at Minster and Weatherlees, discharging to the Stour and to sea via a Long Sea Outfall (LSO) at Foreness Point. In contrast, diffuse pollution is derived from a range of sources (e.g. agricultural run-off; road run-off) that cannot always be easily traced or quantified. Development promoted or supported by the Local Plan is likely to increase demand on wastewater treatment works, and potentially increase run-off which could indirectly affect some European sites. The South East River Basin Management Plan identifies a number of water quality issues in the Thanet area, notably contamination of groundwater sources by diffuse agricultural pollution and control of discharges from Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). With regard to effects on European sites, it should be noted that the Environment Agency's Review of Consents determined that there was no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, including the Thanet Coast sites, from nutrient enrichment due to Environment Agency consents (i.e. associated with sewerage treatment). The TDC plan does not promote any developments that are individually likely to result in

¹⁷ Forecasts are completed in accordance with the Water Resources Planning Guidelines (published by the Environment Agency) and take into account (inter alia) economic factors (economic growth, metering, pricing), behavioural factors (patterns of water use), demographic factors (population growth, inward and outward migration, changes in occupancy rate), planning policy (LPA land use plans), company policies (e.g. on leakage control and water efficiency measures) and environmental factors, including climate change. The WRMP therefore accounts for these demand forecasts based on historical trends, an established growth forecast model and through review of local and regional planning documents.

¹⁸ For example, sustainability reductions required by the Review of Consents (RoC) or the Environment Agency's Restoring Sustainable Abstractions (RSA) programme. It should be noted that, under the WRMP process, the RoC changes (and non- changes to licences) are considered to be valid over the planning period. This means that the WRMP (and its underlying assumptions regarding the availability of water and sustainability of existing consents) is compliant with the RoC and so the WRMP can only affect European sites through any new resource and production-side options it advocates to resolve deficits, and not through the existing permissions regime.

¹⁹ Calculations of DO include for Target Headroom (precautionary 'over-capacity' in available water) to buffer any unforeseen variation in predicted future demand; the WRMP is also reviewed on a five-yearly cycle to ensure it is performing as expected and to account for any variations between predicted and actual demand.

significant effects due to increased sewerage requirements and, provided that the planning process allows for timely delivery of additional treatment capacity, new developments should not have any 'in combination' quantum of development effects.

Run-off from impermeable surfaces can have considerable effects on waterbodies and watercourses, and is a notable issue in both urban and rural areas. Development has traditionally sought to capture and divert rain and run-off to the nearest watercourse or treatment facility as quickly as possible, and extensive drainage networks have been developed to facilitate this. However, as developed areas have increased so the total volumes and flow rates of run-off have increased also. This has two principal effects: firstly, impermeable surfaces provide very little resistance to the mobilisation and transport of pollutants within run-off; and secondly, flow rates and volumes often exceed the capacity of the receiving drains or watercourses, causing localised flooding or the operation of combined sewer overflows (CSOs)²⁰. The effect of run-off from developed areas can be mitigated or reduced by the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and by increasing the area of permeable surfaces (both natural and artificial) within developed areas. These measures offer effective attenuation by reducing the volumes of surface run-off. They also increase the retention of pollutants and, in the case of some SuDS, can allow for treatment of pollutants.

With regard to European sites, those most vulnerable to water quality impacts due to development in Thanet will be the 'downstream receptors' – i.e. the Thanet Coast sites and Sandwich Bay SAC. There is no risk of other water quality sensitive sites in the study area being affected (e.g. Stodmarsh SAC / SPA / Ramsar) due to the absence of impact pathways. Having said that, the interest features of the Thanet Coast sites and Sandwich Bay SAC are themselves not especially vulnerable to potential effects of water quality changes associated with population growth, either because they are not particularly sensitive to water quality issues (e.g. Sea Caves), or not likely to be exposed to any effects (e.g. the dune features of Sandwich Bay SAC). Since the water quality effects of the plan are ultimately either controlled by existing consents regimes (which must undergo HRA) or have diffuse 'in combination' effects that are difficult to quantify any assessment must focus on the development of suitable mitigating policy that will minimise the impacts of plan-supported development on water quality.

Flooding and Water Level Management

The implementation of the European Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC) in England and Wales is being co-ordinated with the Water Framework Directive. Catchment Flood Management Plans (prepared by the Environment Agency) and Shoreline Management Plans (prepared by coastal Local Authorities and the Environment Agency) set out long term policies for flood risk management. The delivery of the policies from these long term plans will help to achieve the objectives of this and the River Basin Management Plans.

Much of the TDC area has a relatively high flood risk, although this is generally associated with the flooding of low-lying coastal areas by the sea rather than fluvial flooding. Development supported by the Local Plan is unlikely to significantly alter the regional flood risk levels, but may exacerbate the effects of local flooding: run-off from impermeable surfaces can have considerable effects on waterbodies and watercourses, meaning that flow rates and volumes often exceed the capacity of the receiving drains or watercourses. This can lead to local water quality impacts on European sites. The effect of run-off from developed areas can be mitigated or reduced by the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and by increasing the area of permeable surfaces (both natural and artificial) within developed areas.

Effects on Functional Habitats Outside of European Sites

The provisions of the Habitats Regulations ensure that 'direct' (encroachment) effects on European sites as a result of land use change (i.e. the partial or complete destruction of a European site) are extremely unlikely under normal circumstances, and this will not occur as a result of the TDC Local Plan. However, many European interest features (particularly animal species) may use or be reliant on non-designated habitats outside of a European site during their life-cycle. Developments some way from a European site can therefore have an effect if its interest features are reliant on the habitats being affected by the development.

²⁰ All sewerage pipes have a certain capacity, determined by the size of the pipe and the receiving WTW. At times of high rainfall this capacity can be exceeded, with the risk of uncontrolled bursts. CSOs provide a mechanism to prevent this, by allowing untreated sewerage to mix with surface water run-off when certain volumes are exceeded. This is then discharged to the nearest watercourse.

All of the above aspects (recreation, water resources, etc.) can therefore also affect European site integrity indirectly through effects on functional habitats outside of the site boundary.

With regard to the European sites within the study area this is only potentially an issue for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar, specifically in relation to golden plover and turnstone which are known to use areas outside of the SPA boundaries for foraging and roosting. In summary:

- ▶ Golden plover: Studies suggest that some lowland farmland areas may be more important for this species than many coastal and wetland areas typically associated with wintering waders, with birds often spending a few days foraging in farmland away from coastal and wetland areas before returning. The species' use of farmland appears variable according to cropping patterns, with limited field fidelity from year to year (Mason & MacDonald 1999). This behaviour is not well-recorded by the standard Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) monitoring technique.
- ▶ Turnstone: turnstone are more tied to coastal areas than golden plover, and do not make significant use of inland terrestrial habitats for foraging. Some high-tide turnstone roosts are outside the boundaries of the designated site although the known major roosts are all immediately adjacent to the site.

4. Initial Screening Assessments

4.1 Initial Screening of European Sites

All European sites within 15km of the TDC boundary have been included in the scope of the HRA. Often, however, sites or interest features within a study area can be excluded from further assessment at an early stage ('screened out') because the plan or project will self-evidently have either 'no effect' or 'no significant effect' on these sites (i.e. the interest features are not sensitive to likely effects of plan or project; or are not likely to be exposed to those effects due to the absence of any reasonable impact pathways). The following sections provide a brief summary of the screening of the European sites and their interest features based on the baseline data summarised above and the preferred options and policies. It should be noted that this aspect of the screening process is a 'low bar', with sites, aspects or features only 'screened out' if they will self-evidently be unaffected by the TDC plan (i.e. it is aiming to identify those aspects that will clearly have 'no effect' or 'no significant effect' (alone or in combination) due to an absence of impact pathways). It does not necessarily imply a conclusion of 'significant effects' for those sites that are 'screened in' since controls within the plan (i.e. policy measures) will also operate to minimise these effects (these are considered in the next section); rather, it allows for the policy development to focus on those effects that are potentially important, and which may require bespoke policy measures to prevent significant effects in addition to the general protective policies.

The screening of the sites and interest features takes account of those general protective policies that are proposed as part of the plan, notably (from the preferred options) Policy SP25 (Protection of the European Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves). In addition, it is appropriate to assume that all relevant lower tier consents and permissions (etc.) will be correctly assessed and controlled, and that any activities directly or indirectly supported by the plan will adhere to the relevant legislative requirements and all normal best-practice (e.g. it would be inappropriate to assume that normal controls on, say, the installation of new discharge to a watercourse would not be correctly followed).

Blean Complex SAC

Blean Complex SAC is a woodland site approximately 4.8km west of the TDC boundary. The site is an NNR and managed in partnership by NE, RSPB and the Woodland Trust, and is almost entirely in favourable condition; coppice management the key issue in the site unit that is unfavourable. No other factors are identified as having an effect on the site.

Table 4.1 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | Site over 6.8km from nearest TDC allocation, and further (>10km) taking into account road access routes. Access to the site is managed via footpaths and by the Woodland Trust and visitor pressure is not identified as having any negative effect on the condition of the interest features. People from Thanet will visit the woodland but this is unlikely to result in a measurable increase in recreational pressure on the site, alone or in combination, such that the interest features could be significantly affected. | No |
| Urbanisation | No TDC development proposals within 500m of the site, therefore TDC plan will have no effect via this pathway. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | Oak-hornbeam forests are not particularly sensitive to atmospheric pollutants and the major road routes into Thanet (the A299 and A28) which are likely to experience increased traffic volumes are over 2km from the woodland. The TDC plan is unlikely to significantly influence the use of roads within 200m of the site. Effects on air quality at this site as a result of the TDC plan will not be significant and are not considered further. | No |
| Water resources | Oak-hornbeam forests are not considered to be water-resource sensitive features and therefore will not be affected by growth within the TDC area. | No |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| Water quality | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Flooding / water management | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | Site does not support any mobile interest features. | No |

Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC

This site is an undefended sea cliff approximately 14.9km south of TDC boundary. The main issues affecting this site are coastal squeeze and grassland management. The site is mostly in favourable condition; those in unfavourable condition are primarily affected by poor or limited management of encroaching scrub and grazing of the calcareous grassland. Part of the SAC is owned by the National Trust (the 'White Cliffs of Dover' estate); access is well-managed and visitor pressure is not identified as an issue at the site.

Table 4.2 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | Site over 15km from nearest TDC allocation, and further taking into account road access routes. Access to the site is available by the existing coastal path, although visitor pressure is not identified as having any negative effect on the condition of the interest features. Development within Thanet is unlikely to result in a measurable increase in recreational pressure on the site, alone or in combination, such that the interest features could be significantly affected. | No |
| Urbanisation | No TDC development proposals within 500m of the site, therefore TDC plan will have no effect via this pathway. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | The minimum critical load for nitrogen deposition is currently exceeded at the site, although data from APIS suggests that the major source for this is shipping (mainly associated with the port at Dover). The majority of the site is well over 200m from the nearest roads; modelling undertaken for the HRA of the Dover Land Allocations Local Plan (DDC 2012) indicated that development in Dover will not result in N deposition over 1% of the long-term benchmark (so no adverse effect) and development within Thanet will not significantly influence the use of roads within 200m of the site. Effects on air quality at this site as a result of the TDC plan will not be significant and are not considered further. | No |
| Water resources | The Calcareous dry grassland and scrub feature is not considered to be a water-resource sensitive features and so will not be affected by growth within the TDC area. Vegetated sea cliffs are theoretically water-resource sensitive (partly dependent on cliff seepages often associated with local aquifers) but there is no linkage between abstraction in the Dover area and consumption in Thanet, and so there will be no effects on this feature. | No |
| Water quality | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Flooding / water management | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | Site does not support any mobile interest features. | No |

Sandwich Bay SAC

This site is on the southern boundary of TDC area and supports important sand dune systems and sandy coastal grassland, although the interest features (dune habitats) are generally associated with Sandwich Bay rather than Pegwell Bay (which is the closest part of the SAC to Thanet). The site is mostly in favourable condition, with unfavourable areas due to management and hydro-ecological changes that have degraded some fixed dunes (although these are likely to be due to local hydrological changes). The features of the SAC are vulnerable to a range of potential impacts including direct encroachment; coastal squeeze or developments (etc.) that alter the natural geomorphological processes; visitor pressure; management; air quality changes; and local water quality / quantity changes (note, current abstraction and discharges consents are not having an adverse effect on the site, based on Review of Consent data).

Table 4.3 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|---|--|--|
| Recreational pressure | Interest features are vulnerable to recreational pressure, particularly trampling / damage of dune habitats. There is limited data on the effects of this on the SAC but this aspect may require more detailed consideration in the HRA. | Yes |
| Urbanisation | There are few TDC allocations within 500m of the site and none are near the more sensitive dune habitats, and therefore the TDC plan is unlikely to have any significant effects via this pathway. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | The minimum critical load for nitrogen deposition is currently exceeded at the site for all of the features, although the majority of the site is over 200m from the nearest roads. | Yes |
| Water resources | Some of the dune features (e.g. humid dune slacks) are water-level sensitive terrestrial ecosystems, although current abstraction and discharges consents are not having an adverse effect on the site, based on Review of Consent data, and source protection zones for the abstractions that partly supply Thanet do not intersect the most sensitive areas of the site; it is therefore considered that the TDC plan is unlikely to affect this SAC via this mechanism. | No |
| Water quality | Development in Thanet could potentially affect the lower reaches of the Great Stour, which forms part of the SAC through diffuse pollution and discharges from WTWs; and through direct run-off and discharges to the Pegwell Bay section of the site. The management of this is largely determined by Southern Water and the EA, although the Thanet plan policies should allow for the early identification of infrastructure requirements to minimise the risks of sewerage headroom being compromised. | Ensure policies reflect need to plan for sewerage provision. |
| Flooding / water management | Development in Thanet could potentially affect the lower reaches of the Great Stour although most development is located outside this catchment and significant effects as a result of changes to the flooding regime would not be expected; however, the Thanet plan policies should allow for flood risk to be mitigated. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | The SAC does not have any mobile interest features. | No |

Stodmarsh SAC / Stodmarsh SPA / Stodmarsh Ramsar

Stodmarsh SPA and Stodmarsh Ramsar are approximately 2.8km south west of the TDC boundary; Stodmarsh SAC is larger and so approximately 2.4km south west. Stodmarsh is a wetland site associated with the River Great Stour, and supports a range of wetland habitats including open water, extensive reedbeds, grazing marsh and wet woodland. The site supports a number of uncommon wetland invertebrates and plants, and provides wintering habitats for wetland bird species. The interest features of the sites are all water-resource dependent to some extent. The site is predominantly in 'favourable' condition; the 'unfavourable' SSSI units are in this condition due to localised management issues, either of scrub encroachment or water levels (note, the water level issues are not due to over-abstraction). Most of the site is an NNR or managed under stewardship agreements, and so most potential impacts have suitable control mechanisms in place (e.g. control of water levels; management; visitor pressure; etc.).

Table 4.4 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|---|---|---|
| Recreational pressure | The site is within 6km of the nearest TDC allocation. Visitor pressure is not identified as an issue affecting the site, and the wetland nature of the site and controlled access ensures visitor pressure is appropriately managed; increasing the population of Thanet is likely to increase visitors to this site, but this will not increase damage to the habitats supporting the SAC / Ramsar interest features, or increase direct disturbance of the SPA features due to these controls. Development within Thanet is unlikely to result in a measurable increase in recreational pressure on the site, alone or in combination, such that the interest features could be significantly affected. | No |
| Urbanisation | No TDC development proposals within 500m of the site, therefore TDC plan will have no effect via this pathway. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | No critical loads are set for the features at this site; effects on air quality at this site as a result of the TDC plan will not be significant and are not considered further. | No |
| Water resources | The site features are water resource sensitive, and potentially vulnerable to increased abstraction (although this is not currently affecting the site). However, the WRMP for Southern Water will not have any significant effects on this site, based on its HRA and therefore growth within Thanet can be accommodated. The Thanet plan will have no significant effect on this aspect, although policies should allow for the early identification of infrastructure requirements. | Ensure policies reflect need to plan for water resource provision. |
| Water quality | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Flooding / water management | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | Some of the mobile interest features will use habitats outside the site, potentially including some reedbed habitats associated with parts of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar. However, it is not thought that there is significant interdependency between these sites and development in Thanet will therefore have only weak indirect effects on the mobile interest features of this SPA. This is considered further but it is likely that the mitigation required for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar will be sufficient to prevent indirect effects on Stodmarsh SPA / Ramsar also. The feature of the SAC (Desmoulin's whorl snail) will not be affected. | Yes (in association with effects on Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar) |

Thanet Coast SAC

The Thanet Coast SAC covers the northern and eastern coastlines of the TDC area. The site features are essentially marine or intertidal habitats (sea caves, reefs) and are mainly sensitive to direct effects only (i.e. encroachment or factors that alter the geomorphological processes that otherwise dominate the condition of the features). As a result they will have a limited exposure and sensitivity to the effects of the TDC plan despite their proximity.

Table 4.5 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | Recreational impacts are theoretically possible although the marine and intertidal nature of the interest features and their location ensures that they are neither particularly exposed or sensitive. Any effects are unlikely to be significant, although the measures required for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar will also benefit the SAC. | No |
| Urbanisation | There several TDC allocations within 500m of the site and so urbanisation impacts are possible, although the marine and intertidal nature of the interest features and their location ensures that they are unlikely to be exposed to any significant urbanisation pressures, or be particularly sensitive. | No |
| Atmospheric | Features are not sensitive to air quality effects. | No |

| pollution | | |
|---|---|--|
| Water resources | Features are not sensitive to effects on water resources. | No |
| Water quality | Some reef features are potentially sensitive to water quality changes, particularly if this results in eutrophication or smothering although the tidal fluxes attenuate local effects to some extent. Impacts from WTW discharges are very unlikely (these enter the sea via LSOs) and so effects on this feature are only really possible from diffuse pollution or local point sources such as CSOs or unconsented discharges. These will largely be controlled by the EA although the Thanet plan policies should aim to ensure that run off is managed appropriately. | No, although ensure policies reflect need to manage run-off. |
| Flooding / water management | Features not sensitive to changes in flooding regime etc. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | The SAC does not have any mobile interest features. | No |

Margate and Long Sands SAC

This is a marine SAC approximately 1.1km offshore from northern coast of the TDC area designated for its sub-tidal sandbanks. It will not be exposed or sensitive to the likely effects of the TDC plan (no effects) and therefore is not considered in further detail; the general protective policies of the TDC plan will be sufficient to ensure the integrity of this site is not affected.

Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe SAC

This coastal grassland site is approximately 9.5km west of TDC area, on the North Kent Coast. It is designated for its population of Fisher's estuarine moth *Gortyna borelii lunata* which has a localised population distribution in the UK due to its specific habitat requirements; this site supports its food plant hog's fennel (*Peucedanum officinale*), together with areas of neutral grassland also required by the species for egg laying. The SSSI unit that forms the SAC is in favourable condition but is heavily used by dog walkers and is vulnerable to under-management.

Table 4.6 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | Site over 10km from nearest TDC allocation, and further taking into account road access routes. Access to the site is available by the existing footpaths and the site is vulnerable to visitor pressure due to its location within Herne Bay, although it is a small site the will not attract significant additional recreation from Thanet. Development within Thanet is unlikely to result in a measurable increase in recreational pressure on the site, alone or in combination, such that the interest features could be significantly affected. | No |
| Urbanisation | No TDC development proposals within 500m of the site, therefore TDC plan will have no effect via this pathway. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | No critical loads are set for the features at this site; effects on air quality at this site as a result of the TDC plan will not be significant and are not considered further. | No |
| Water resources | The feature is not water resource sensitive (the food plant, hog's fennel <i>Peucedanum officinale</i> is a coastal plant favouring moist conditions) and the Thanet plan will have no effect on this aspect. | No |
| Water quality | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Flooding / water management | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| Effects on mobile species away from site | Interest feature is particularly sedentary, and rarely found more than 10m from its food plant which itself is uncommon; the integrity of this population will not be dependent on any habitats in Thanet. | No |
|---|--|----|

Outer Thames Estuary SPA

This site is an offshore SPA extending from northern coast of the TDC area. The site is designated for its red throated divers, which are sensitive to non-physical disturbance by noise and visual presence during the winter; however, this is very much an offshore species and they will not be particularly exposed to disturbance associated with the Thanet plan (or within Thanet's control) due to their preference for offshore areas.

Table 4.7 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | Site on TDC boundary but interest features will not be exposed to disturbance (etc) effects due to the TDC plan, or within the control of TDC. Effects on the site integrity will not occur. | No |
| Urbanisation | Features not exposed to urbanisation effects. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | No critical loads are set for the features at this site; features not sensitive to changes in air quality that may occur due to development in the TDC area. | No |
| Water resources | The feature is not water resource sensitive. | No |
| Water quality | Site receives discharges from the Thanet area which may affect prey species, although this is a weak effect and water quality effects associated with pollution from shipping are far more notable. Impacts due to the Thanet plan are unlikely, based on available information, and general policy protections will be sufficient to protect this site. | No |
| Flooding / water management | Features not vulnerable. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | Interest feature is mobile but not reliant on terrestrial habitats during winter, and so will not be vulnerable to effects due to the TDC plan. | No |

Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar

The Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar cover most of the coastal areas of Thanet, extending from north of Deal to Herne Bay on the North Kent coast. The sites are not entirely concurrent, mainly south of Sandwich Bay where the Ramsar site includes some local wet grasslands in the Lydden Valley, although they are effectively the same within the Thanet area.

Table 4.8 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | The main current threat to the integrity of these sites is the disturbance of feeding and roosting waders, notably overwintering turnstones, by recreational activities (particularly dog walking, although other activities, such as kite sailing, are thought to have local impacts). The habitats of the SPA and Ramsar will be vulnerable to the same aspects as Sandwich Bay SAC and Thanet Coast SAC (see above) although the relationship between the habitat condition and the status of the SPA / Ramsar bird interest features is complex, and effects on the habitats will not always directly and negatively affect these features (for example, nutrient enrichment would degrade some habitats but probably enhance foraging conditions for turnstone). The main Local Plan issue for this site is therefore the overall quantum of development in Thanet (and | Yes |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | neighbouring authorities) and the consequent potential for recreational use of the beaches to increase during key periods. The plan will need to develop mitigating policies and safeguards to minimise the effect of this. | |
| Urbanisation | As for recreational pressure | Yes (with recreational pressure) |
| Atmospheric pollution | No critical loads are set for the features at this site; the bird interest features and the Ramsar habitats are not sensitive to changes in air quality that may occur due to development in the TDC area. | No |
| Water resources | The Ramsar habitat features are water resource sensitive. The site features are water resource sensitive, and potentially vulnerable to increased abstraction (although this is not currently affecting the site). However, the WRMP for Southern Water will not have any significant effects on this site, based on its HRA and therefore growth within Thanet can be accommodated. The Thanet plan will have no significant effect on this aspect, although policies should allow for the early identification of infrastructure requirements. | Ensure policies reflect need to plan for water resource provision. |
| Water quality | Development in Thanet could potentially affect some features of these sites (particularly the Ramsar habitats) through diffuse pollution and discharges from WTWs; and through direct run-off and other discharges. The management of this is largely determined by Southern Water and the EA, although the Thanet plan policies should allow for the early identification of infrastructure requirements to minimise the risks of sewerage headroom being compromised. | Ensure policies reflect need to plan for sewerage provision and water quality management. |
| Flooding / water management | Development in Thanet could potentially affect the lower reaches of the Great Stour although most development is located outside this catchment and significant effects as a result of changes to the flooding regime would not be expected; however, the Thanet plan policies should allow for flood risk to be mitigated. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | The bird interest features are mobile and some high-tide turnstone roosts may be outside the boundaries of the designated site, although the known major roosts are all immediately adjacent to the site. | Yes (with recreational pressure) |

The Swale SPA / The Swale Ramsar

These sites are approximately 12.8km west of TDC area at their closest point. The sites are a large complex of brackish and fresh water, floodplain grazing marsh with ditches, and intertidal saltmarshes and mud-flats extending. They are potentially vulnerable to a range of environmental aspects, including visitor pressure (thought to be having a significant effect); abstraction and water quality associated with point discharges (not thought to adversely affect the sites, based on the EA Review of Consents); water quality associated with diffuse pollution (possible significant effect on terrestrial components); coastal squeeze and erosion of intertidal habitat; and management.

Table 4.9 Summary of site screening based on impact pathways

| Aspect | Screening summary | Consider further? |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Recreational pressure | Sites over 12km from the TDC boundary at its closest point; the majority of the sites is substantially further. Recreational pressure is considered a significant issue at these sites although visitor surveys by Footprint Ecology (2012) recorded only two visitors from Thanet out of 521 visitors surveyed. Development in Thanet is unlikely to result in a measurable increase in recreational pressure on the sites, alone or in combination (note, it is thought that proposed development in North Kent area will have a significant effect on the sites, but this cannot be made 'more significant' in combination with other development). | No |
| Urbanisation | No TDC development proposals within 500m of the site, therefore TDC plan will have no effect via this pathway. | No |
| Atmospheric pollution | The terrestrial features of the Ramsar site are potentially sensitive to atmospheric pollutants although the major road routes into Thanet (the A299 and M2) which may experience increased traffic volumes as a result of development in Thanet are over | No |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 200m from the sites, with the exception of a very small part of the Seasalter Level, west of Whitstable). Effects on air quality at this site as a result of the TDC plan will not be significant and are not considered further. | |
| Water resources | Features are water-resource dependent and potentially linked to the Thanet area since abstractions in North Kent can be used to support Thanet through transfer from the Kent Medway WRZ. | Yes (in combination) |
| Water quality | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Flooding / water management | The site is not hydrologically connected to the Thanet area and so will not be affected by the outcomes of the TDC plan. | No |
| Effects on mobile species away from site | Some of the mobile interest features will use habitats outside the site, including some intertidal habitats around Thanet; golden plover are an interest feature of both The Swale SPA and the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA. However, it is not thought that there is significant interdependency between these sites and development in Thanet will therefore have only weak indirect effects on the mobile interest features of The Swale SPA. This is considered further but it is likely that the mitigation required for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar will be sufficient to prevent indirect effects on The Swale also. | Yes (in association with effects on Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar) |

Summary

Most sites and features within the study area will not be significantly affected by the TDC plan, due either to the feature or site not being exposed and/or sensitive to the likely effects of the plan; or because the standard protective policies included within the plan, and operation of lower tier legislative and consenting regimes, can be relied on to ensure that significant effects will not occur. The main exceptions to this are:

- ▶ The Thanet Coast sites, which are exposed and sensitive to recreational pressure particularly as well as general proximity effects; and
- ▶ The water resource sensitive sites (the Stodmarsh sites and The Swale sites), which may be sensitive to increased water resource demands (although it must be noted that the Southern Water WRMP does not predict a deficit within Thanet that would require resolution with additional abstraction).

4.2 Policies

Overview of Screening

The emerging policies were reviewed during their development (see [Appendix X](#)), and again at the preferred options stage (Section 4.3.4 below). The review and screening process considered the European sites potentially vulnerable to the TDC plan and the likely outcomes of the policies as drafted. Policies may have effects in their own right, or they may be used to control potential effects or prevent them occurring. A policy should be considered 'likely' to have an effect if the competent authority is unable (on the basis of objective information) to exclude the possibility that the plan could have significant effects on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; an effect will be 'significant' if it could undermine the site's conservation objectives. However, it is important that the policy assessment focuses on effects that are objectively possible, rather than just imaginable; furthermore, it is not appropriate for policies to simply re-state existing legislation.

When considering the likely effects of a policy, it is recognised that some policy 'types' cannot result in impacts on any European sites. Different guidance documents suggest various classification and referencing systems to help identify those policies that can be safely screened out; the general characteristics of these policy types are summarised in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Policy 'types' that can usually be screened out

| Broad Policy Type | Notes |
|--|---|
| General statements of policy / aspiration | The European Commission recognises* that plans or plan components that are general statements of policy or political aspirations cannot have significant effects; for example, general commitments to sustainable development. |
| General design / guidance criteria or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development | A general 'criteria based' policy expresses the tests or expectations of the plan-making body when it comes to consider proposals, or relates to design or other qualitative criteria which do not themselves lead to development (e.g. controls on building design); however, policies with criteria relating to specific proposals or allocations should not be screened out. |
| External plans / projects | Plans or projects that are proposed by other plans and are referred to in the plan being assessed for completeness (for example, Highways Agency road schemes; specific waste development proposals promoted by a County Minerals and Waste Plan). |
| Environmental protection policies | Policies designed to protect the natural or built environment will not usually have significant or adverse effects (although they may often require modification if relied on to provide sufficient safeguards for other policies). |
| Policies which make provision for change but which could have no conceivable effect | Policies or proposals the which cannot affect a European site (no impact pathways and hence no effect; for example, proposals for new cycle path several kilometres from the nearest European site) or which cannot undermine the conservation objectives, either alone or in combination, if impact pathways exist (no significant effect). |
| General statements of policy / aspiration | The European Commission recognises* that plans or plan components that are general statements of policy or political aspirations cannot have significant effects; for example, general commitments to sustainable development. |

* EC, 2000, Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC April 2000 at 4.3.2

It must be noted that it is inappropriate to apply a policy classification tool uncritically to all policies of a certain type: there will obviously be some occasions when a policy or similar may have potentially significant effects, despite being of a 'type' that would normally be screened out. The criteria in Table 4.10 were applied critically to the screening of the draft policies within the Local Plan to identify the following policy groups:

- ▶ **'No effect'** policies: policies that will have 'no effect' (i.e. policies that, if included as drafted, self-evidently would not have any effect on a European site due to the type of policy or its operation; for example, a policy controlling town centre shop signage; a policy setting out sustainable development criteria that developments must meet). Note that 'no effect' policies cannot have in combination effects;
- ▶ **'No likely significant effect'** policies: policies where impact pathways exist but the effects will not be significant (alone or in combination);
- ▶ **'Uncertain effect'** policies: policies where the precise effects on European sites (either alone or in combination) are uncertain, and hence additional investigation (appropriate assessment) or policy modification is required. Note that further investigation will often demonstrate that there is no significant effect or allow suitable mitigation or avoidance measures to be identified to ensure this;
- ▶ **'Likely significant effect'** policies: policies which are likely to have a significant effects (either alone or in combination) and hence which require additional investigation (appropriate assessment) or policy modification. Note that 'likely significant effect' policies are more likely to require that the policy be amended, abandoned or re-worked to avoid significant effects.

Overarching Protective Policies

The screening of the draft and preferred option policies accounts for overarching or cross-cutting protective policies that may potentially be relied on to ensure that other policies, particularly those that promote or support development but which do not specify the scale or location of that development, do not have

significant effects. Note that these policies will not automatically be sufficient to prevent significant effects for all policies, and some policies may require bespoke measures to ensure that significant effects do not occur.

Draft Policy Review

The review of the draft policies is detailed in Appendix C. This review was undertaken during the policy development phase to assist TDC with the drafting of the policies and any appropriate mitigation or avoidance measures; suggestions for policy changes or amendments were made although these were not intended to be prescriptive and a number of approaches for ensuring 'no significant effects' would be acceptable (for example, a policy with a potential significant effect could have been abandoned; or modified; or cross-referenced to an over-riding protective policy). The colour coding used in the Appendix X tables is as follows:

Table 4.11 Colour coding for initial review of policies

| | |
|--|--|
| | No LSE – policy will not or cannot affect any European sites and can therefore be screened out (subject to brief review of final policy) |
| | No LSE, but amendments recommended; policies that will not affect any European sites but which could be enhanced or strengthened |
| | Policy requires changes to avoid significant effects (e.g. minor re-wording; referencing mitigating policies), or effects are uncertain. |
| | Significant effects likely; policy should be abandoned or re-worked to include specific mitigation (may apply to groups of policies) |

Note that the inclusion of a policy in the 'red' or 'yellow' categories does not mean that significant effects are certain since in many instances the assessments reflected an uncertainty that needs to be explored through further assessment (and it would be possible to undertake an appropriate assessment stage and still conclude (following a further screening) that there will be no significant effects). The review also included an assessment of 'in combination' effects between policies. In summary, the vast majority of the draft policies were categorised as 'no effect' or 'no significant effect' policies.

Preferred Options Review

The strategic and non-strategic policies proposed at the preferred options stage have been reviewed and screened using the same principles, taking into account the outcomes of the draft policy review; this screening is summarised in Table 4.12 and Appendix X. This included a review of the Strategic Priorities for Manston Airport document, which was not previously available. The preferred options review accounts for the key mitigating policies, notably [POLICY NOS TBC]:

- ▶ SP23 (Green Infrastructure) – requires provision / enhancement of green infrastructure in developments;
- ▶ SP24 (Biodiversity Enhancements) – protects Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Green Wedges from development;
- ▶ SP25 (Protection of the European Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve) – sets out requirements and expectations regards effects on European sites, including the need for development to meet the requirements of the SPA Mitigation Strategy (agreed with Natural England);
- ▶ SP26 (Protection of Open Space); and
- ▶ SP27 (Provision of Accessible Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds) – requires that developments include suitable green space or access to this.

In summary, the key issues for European sites (effects of recreational pressure on the Thanet Coast sites) will be mitigated through the SPA Mitigation Strategy.

Table 4.12 Summary of review of strategic and non-strategic policies [TO BE UPDATED TO REFLECT RECENT CHANGES – NOTE, MOST OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY PLAN]

| Policy status | Policies / Groups of policies | | Notes and recommendations |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| No LSE, but amendments recommended | SP02 | Economic Growth | General statement of aspirations; no significant effect but policy could be strengthened to reference environmental protection also. Recommendations: e.g. "Development is supported that enhances the rural economy subject to protecting the character, quality and function of Thanet's rural settlements and natural environments " |
| | SP08 | Margate | The policy will direct development to within the existing developed areas of Margate. These are inevitably close to the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and effects are therefore possible although the protective policies elsewhere should be sufficient to prevent incidental significant effects. More broadly, it is a general statement of policy rather than a specific direction or allocation, although it is possible that Dreamland will be developed residentially; the policy includes safeguards re. visitor pressure but these could be strengthened as per the protective cross reference in the Westwood policy. Recommendations: amend policy to refer to SP25 and the SPA mitigation strategy. |
| | SP09 | Ramsgate | As for SP08 |
| | SP10 | Broadstairs | As for SP08 |
| | SP17 | Land fronting Nash and Haine Roads (site reference S141) | Policy should reference SP25 as per SP13 – SP16 |

Table 4.13 Summary of review of strategic and non-strategic policies

| Policy status | Policies / Groups of policies | | Notes and recommendations |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | SP25 | Protection of the European Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve | Protective policy; no significant effects. Note this is the key protective policy to which all developmental policies refer and therefore it is important that the safeguards currently required by it are not diluted or reduced. Recommendations: - The policy refers to SP23 but should refer to the requirements of SP27 also. - The second paragraph could be modified to emphasise the importance of the quantum of development in affecting the sites, for example: "Planning permission will only be granted when it can be demonstrated that any potential harm to internationally and nationally designated sites resulting from that development on its own, or cumulatively with other developments , will be avoided or suitably mitigated." |
| | SP27 | Provision of Accessible Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds | Protective policy; no significant effects. The policy could usefully be strengthened to encourage the integration of new greenspace with existing networks to maximise its value. Recommendations: "...to accommodate the demands for passive recreation generated by residential development. New greenspace provision must be linked to existing greenspace, green wedges and / or the wider countryside and ProW network away from the coast to maximise its value. " |
| | CC02 | Coastal development | Requirement for SuDS in new developments; mitigating policy; no significant effects; policy could be strengthened by requiring that new developments on greenfield sites maintain greenfield levels of run-off etc with SuDS or similar. |
| LSE possible; re-wording required | H02C | Land fronting Park Lane, Birchington. (site reference | General statement of policy / criteria; should include reference to Policy SP25 to protect European sites from recreational pressure |

| Policy status | Policies / Groups of policies | Notes and recommendations |
|--|---|--|
| | ST3) | |
| | H02G Land at Melbourne Avenue, Ramsgate (site reference SS22) | As H02C |
| | CC03 Coastal development | Policy sets criteria for development near the coast; this should be strengthened to include potential effects on European sites as a specific criteria requiring consideration, for example: "3) will not adversely affect the interest features of any designated nature conservation sites, particularly by exacerbating coastal squeeze or otherwise restricting the capacity of the coastline to adjust to sea-level rise and climate change." |
| 'No effect' or 'no significant effect' | All other policies | All other policies, as drafted, as considered unlikely to result in significant effects on any European sites or their interest features (alone or in combination), primarily due to the nature of the policy; most, in this regard, are 'no effect' policies. |
| Significant effects likely | No policies | None of the policies are likely to result in significant adverse effects based on the incorporated mitigation measures including, notably, the commitment to the SPA mitigation strategy. |

4.3 Site Allocations

The possible allocation sites considered by TDC, and their proposed uses, were reviewed to identify those which (if developed) could result in significant effects on a European site. The review largely focused on the identification of specific effects that might be associated with specific allocations (and which may therefore require the inclusion of allocation-specific mitigation within the plan) rather than the broader 'quantum of development' effects²¹. The risk of effects is obviously strongly dependent on how a particular development is implemented at the project stage and in most cases potential effects can be avoided using best-practice and standard scheme-level avoidance measures which do not necessarily need to be specified for each allocation (for example, scheduling construction works near the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA for the summer period to avoid potential disturbance of over-wintering turnstones). However, in some instances there may not be sufficient flexibility or safeguards provided within the plan to ensure that a particular allocation could be delivered without significant effects, if bought forward.

The review of the allocations concluded that most of the allocation sites would not, if developed, have any significant effects on their own that could not be avoided or mitigated using standard measures, and that the plan provided sufficient flexibility (and protective policies) to ensure this. However, the larger residential allocation sites (e.g. Westwood (SHLAA references S511, S553, S447); Birchington (S515, S498, S499, ST3); Westgate (ST1, ST2); Manston Green (no reference) could arguably, due to their size, result in significant effects on their own due to increases in recreational pressure, particularly on the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA. However, all of the Thanet allocations are within 6km of the Thanet Coast sites and therefore will have 'in combination' effects due to recreational pressure. Bespoke mitigation within the plan (or referred to by it), rather than general protective policies, is therefore appropriate to help prevent this occurring. Other 'quantum of development' in combination effects may occur in respect those aspects that operate regionally, notably water resources and water quality. Plan policies will need to include suitable mitigation to prevent adverse effects occurring as a result of allocation development.

There may be a specific risk of some allocations affecting fields used by golden plover away from the SPA boundaries; the potential effects of this are considered further in Section 6.

²¹ Effects due to the overall quantum of development are essentially a within-plan 'in combination' effect.

5. Sandwich Bay SAC

5.1 Current Issues and Threats to Interest Features

Sandwich Bay SAC is designated for its sand dune habitats, which will be mainly sensitive to direct damage (trampling, erosion etc.) and localised eutrophication (e.g. associated with dog faeces) although the sensitivity of the habitats to direct disturbance varies. To some extent, the dune systems rely on disturbance to maintain the various successional stages, and the early successional stages are essentially disturbance communities; however, the later successional stages are more sensitive to trampling and localised erosion since this can result in otherwise stable dune habitats being re-mobilised. Kent Wildlife Trust, which manages parts of the SAC, has noted that cars are frequently parked on the dunes, damaging some of the habitats, as official car parking is limited.

The minimum critical load for nitrogen deposition is currently exceeded at the site for all of the air quality sensitive features (Dunes with creeping willow; White dunes; Grey dunes; and Embryonic shifting dunes). The Local Plan does not include any proposals for developments that are likely to result in potentially significant new point-sources of emissions, therefore the main mechanism by which the Local Plan may influence the baseline air emissions locally will be through changes in patterns of vehicle use associated with the growth promoted by the Plan²². Having said that, it is important to note that there has been a significant decline in NOx emissions in recent years, partly due to increased efficiency standards for cars, and this decline is expected to continue.

5.2 Recreational Pressure and Urbanisation

Key Policies / Allocations

[TBC]

Proposed / Incorporated Mitigation

[TBC]

Assessment of Effects

Public access to the dune systems is limited by the number of public footpaths and the presence of private golf clubs, which ensure that there are restrictions to off-track usage. Natural England note that the SSSI units that are in unfavourable condition within the SAC are affected primarily by management (Unit 22, associated with a golf course) and hydro-ecological changes that have degraded some fixed dunes (Unit 18); recreational pressure is identified as a risk, but not as a factor currently affecting the integrity of the site.

The growth of Thanet will increase visitor numbers to the site, although it is likely that any increase will be relatively easily to manage since the site is not access land and the effects will generally be local to the existing PRoWs and Permissive Paths; the absence of open access therefore limits the exposure of the interest features to effects associated with visitor pressure. Consequently, there are a number of factors that are likely to limit the exposure of the interest features to additional recreational pressure, and significant effects are not likely.

With regard to mitigation, the plan includes a number of policies that will help minimise additional recreational pressure, such as SP23 (Green Infrastructure) and SP27 (Provision of Green Space). There may also be opportunities to enhance the management of the SAC alongside the delivery of the SPA

²² The plan proposals may indirectly contribute to wider diffuse pollution within and beyond the TDC boundary, in combination with other developments, plans and programmes, by requiring new energy generation. However, diffuse and trans-boundary air pollution can only be realistically addressed by national legislation or higher-tier plans, policies or strategies; this has been confirmed by NE, which indicated to Runnymede Borough Council that the HRA of its local plan "can only be concerned with locally emitted and short range locally acting pollutants" as wider diffuse pollution is beyond the control or remit of the authority.

Mitigation Strategy, since there will be many areas of overlap, although identifying specific additional funding mechanisms for the protection of the SAC from visitor pressure is not necessarily supported by the available data.

5.3 Atmospheric Pollution

Key Policies / Allocations

[TBC]

Proposed / Incorporated Mitigation

[TBC]

Assessment of Effects

The Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance²³ states that "*beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant*" and therefore this distance is used to determine the potential significance of any local effects associated with the plan. There are two A- or B-roads within Thanet and within 200m of Sandwich Bay SAC, the A256 between Sandwich and Cliff's End, and the A299 in Ramsgate. However, these roads are some distance from the emissions-sensitive features of the SAC: the dune systems are primarily associated with the section of coast between the Great Stour estuary and Deal, and so are at least a kilometre from the nearest section of main road. In addition, none of the major allocations are within 2km of the dune systems, so local air quality changes associated with these developments are unlikely to affect the integrity of the SAC. It is therefore unlikely that any increases in emissions from vehicles that could be associated with the Thanet plan (alone, or in combination with other local plans) would adversely affect the integrity of this SAC²⁴.

5.4 Conclusion

No significant effects, alone or i/c.

²³ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/documents/expert/unit3.3.3.php#013>; accessed 15/06/14

²⁴ It is worth noting that modelling undertaken for the Dover Land Allocations Local Plan (DDC 2012) indicated that development in Dover will not result in N deposition over 1% of the long-term benchmark (so no adverse effect) on the Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC, which is substantially closer to main population areas and roads than the emissions-sensitive features of Sandwich Bay.

6. Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar

6.1 Current Issues and Threats to Interest Features

Turnstone

Recent investigations by the Kent Wildlife Trust have provided evidence that some recreational and commercial activities around the Thanet coastline may be having a detrimental effect on the populations of overwintering waders associated with the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, especially overwintering turnstones, due to disturbance. The most notable disturbing activity, particularly in the north section of Sandwich Bay, is thought to be dog walking where the dog is off the lead (although other activities such as walking, bait digging, and kite surfing are thought to have local impacts): studies have shown that turnstones are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from dogs, which interrupt their feeding behaviour so affecting their ability to gain sufficient body fat for overwintering or migration.

Population increases associated with new housing provision in Thanet and its neighbouring districts will increase recreational pressure on the SPA as more people are likely to make use of the coastline for leisure and work; however, most recreational activities are 'casual' and pursued opportunistically (e.g. walking, walking dogs, bike riding) rather than structured (e.g. organised group activities or trips to specific discrete attractions), which ensures that it can be difficult to quantify the impacts of these activities on European sites and (ultimately) harder to control or manage. Natural England have suggested that, in the absence of mitigation, the quantum of growth facilitated by the Thanet Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the SPA (notably turnstone) which could adversely affect the integrity of the site.

Golden Plover

Whilst golden plover are a feature of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, they are less dependent on the coastal SPA habitats than turnstone. Several studies suggest that some lowland farmland areas may be as important for this species as the coastal and wetland SPAs typically associated with wintering waders (e.g. Mason & MacDonald 1999; Gillings 2003), and perhaps even more so. Birds appear to retain an association with wetland or coastal sites, typically remaining within a few kilometres of these (except where significant regional movements of flocks occur in response to (for example) weather conditions), but will often spend several tidal cycles (or more) foraging and roosting in farmland, both during the day and night. This behaviour is known to be under-recorded by the standard Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) monitoring technique, with the result that increasing attention is being paid to the use of agricultural areas by overwintering golden plover. Indeed, the 2016 SPA Review (JNCC 2016) includes golden plover in a broad group of species that are known to be reliant on cropped habitats, which are under-represented in the SPA network (although the SPA Review suggests that this should be addressed outside the SPA Review process through "*wider countryside measures to preserve and promote permanent pasture as feeding and roosting habitat for the species*").

However, whilst there is evidence of regional site fidelity (i.e. birds associated with the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA will predominantly use available habitats within a few kilometres of the site), the species' use of farmland appears variable according to cropping patterns and rotations, with limited field fidelity from year to year (Mason & MacDonald 1999) except where favoured habitats are consistently or intentionally maintained. There is evidence that certain crops may be favoured, and larger fields are favoured over smaller ones but distributions will often be variable from year to year. Gillings et al. (2007) found that flocks occupied only a fraction of the available fields in a given area, concentrating most in large fields with open boundaries and where manure had been applied. The Thanet plan could arguably affect golden plover using the SPA through direct disturbance of birds using the SPA due to increased recreational pressure (as per turnstone), or by affecting associated functional habitat and favoured non-SPA areas due to the allocations themselves (direct loss of functional habitat) or increased recreational pressure associated with developments.

Little Tern

The SPA is designated in part for its breeding little terns, which had colonies on Shell Ness at the mouth of the Great Stour in Pegwell Bay, and at Plum Pudding Island on the north coast of the peninsula, near Minnis Bay. Around 30 pairs regularly nested in Pegwell Bay at the time of designation, although this had dropped from a peak of over 60 pairs in the mid-80s; this decline has continued in recent years such that the SPA Review suggested that little tern might be removed as an interest feature, and the SIP notes that “*previous attempts at habitat conservation and management to encourage this species to breed within the site again have been unsuccessful*”. The reasons for the decline are uncertain; it was thought that recreational disturbance was affecting the breeding sites but the decline in breeding has occurred despite management measures to moderate this, and recent surveys (e.g. for the Richborough grid connection project) have not recorded little tern breeding at Shell Ness. It is possible that wider population-scale changes have resulted in local declines, or there may have simply been a minor shift in site conditions or preferences which has led to abandonment of the breeding locations.

Little terns are thought to be effectively absent from the SPA at the moment (the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory identifies them as ‘migrants’ rather than breeders in its sightings list), although the conditions at former breeding colonies appear to remain suitable and habitat conservation and management measures have been employed to ensure this. The reasons for their absence are not clear, and although recreational pressure may have had an impact historically the localised distribution of little terns ensures that this pressure can be relatively easily managed, should terns choose to use the site. Despite this, population increases associated with new housing provision in Thanet and its neighbouring districts will increase recreational pressure on the SPA as more people are likely to make use of the coastline for leisure and work; if this is not managed then it is unlikely that favourable conditions for future re-colonisation of the site by little terns will be achieved.

6.2 Recreational Pressure and Urbanisation

Key Policies / Allocations

[TBC]

Proposed / Incorporated Mitigation

Disturbance effects on birds within the SPA

As noted, one of the most common approaches to mitigation for recreational impacts involves developer contributions, usually linked to catchment areas and development size. Natural England has indicated to TDC that provision of a wardening scheme would provide a suitable approach to mitigation, supported by funding for other access management measures such as rationalisation of access points, car park location, and the provision of interpretation.

Dover District Council (DDC) has, within its Land Allocations Document, proposed a Mitigation Strategy for the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA that is funded from a tariff system of developer contributions. DDC is drafting a charging schedule setting out four different residential contribution rates based on location, although the employment of similar contribution catchment areas for Thanet are likely to be of little value due to the proximity of all allocations to the SPA.

There are several policies within the Thanet Local Plan that will help minimise or manage additional recreational pressure on the SPA. The most notable of these is **SP25**, which refers to the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM) for the Thanet coast (essentially, a plan for mitigating the potentially adverse effects of housing growth in Thanet on the SPA), and requires that developers demonstrate how they are meeting this. The SAMM (TDC 2016) has been finalised in consultation with NE, and is available from the TDC website²⁵. In summary, the mitigation package presented in the SAMM comprises:

²⁵ Available at: <https://www.thanet.gov.uk/media/3307595/Thanet-DC-SAMM-MAIN-REPORT-Final-21st-April-2016.pdf>

- ▶ a wardening service between October and April, providing an on-site presence throughout the SPA within Thanet District when turnstones and golden plover numbers are at their peak;
- ▶ educational measures to support longer-term compliance;
- ▶ a co-ordination role to manage the wardening presence and to coordinate activities throughout the year;
- ▶ localised access-management; and
- ▶ regular monitoring of birds and visitors will be required.

These measures will be funded by a developer tariff, based on the number of new dwellings, which will cover annual mitigation costs (i.e. seasonal wardening, coordination, monitoring, etc.) and any capital investment required (e.g. signage etc.) in perpetuity. The SAMM will be reviewed after a period of no more than ten years, or sooner if monitoring results identify potentially significant issues which are not being addressed by the SAMM. The SAMM will be principally targeted at the wintering interest features using the SPA itself (i.e. turnstone and golden plover), although could potentially be extended to support little tern should future monitoring suggest that a population recovery is underway that would benefit from these measures.

This strategic mitigation approach covers strategic housing allocations included in the plan, plus likely windfall sites. The SAMM was initially drafted on the basis of an allocation of 12,000 new homes over the planning period; the appropriateness of the SAMM to the revised allocation (15,660 by 2031) has been evaluated, and it is considered that the measures proposed can be scaled up to address the higher housing figures; this is consistent with NE's position on other strategic mitigation schemes (for example, in relation to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, or the SPAs associated with the Solent and nearby harbours). Other development which may come forward may require separate assessment at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority. TDC is also working with neighbouring Canterbury City Council on a co-ordinated mitigation approach for the SPA, in order both to secure the best outcome for the SPA and meet requirements under the 'duty to co-operate'.

The policies within the Local Plan are appropriately geared to the SAMM. Financial contributions will address the cumulative 'in combination' impact of the smaller developments allocated for development in this Plan. Project-level HRA will also be required in order to confirm any site specific details that may trigger a requirement for additional measures, notwithstanding the requirements of the SAMM.

Effects on functional habitats

Effects on associated functional habitats in close proximity to the SPA (principally roost sites adjacent to the SPA) will be managed and minimised by the measures proposed within the SAMM. However, golden plover are known to make significant use fields outside of the SPA, and potential effects on this interest feature in these locations are unlikely to be directly mitigated by the SAMM. Areas that are known to regularly support significant aggregations of plover (e.g. fields around Pegwell Bay) have been avoided through the allocations process, but the key difficulty in designing appropriate mitigation for this aspect is the variability in the use of many fields by golden plover, depending on annual cropping patterns: simply avoiding certain fields in the allocation process is unlikely to guarantee no effects. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that species that are known to be reliant on cropped habitats can only really be supported by "*wider countryside measures to preserve and promote permanent pasture as feeding and roosting habitat for the species*" (JNCC 2016), which TDC can have limited influence over. **Having said that,**

The TDC plan therefore adopts a policy-led mitigation approach to this aspect, to ensure that this potential issue is appropriately considered at the site level when developments are brought forward. In this regard, policies for strategic allocations (e.g. **Policies X, X, X**) require that developers "*Include an assessment of the site's functionality as a roosting or feeding resource for the interest features of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Special Protection Area, including areas within 400m of the development site's boundary, and provide mitigation where necessary*". The supporting text then notes the reasoning for this, i.e.:

- ▶ that wintering birds associated with the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, particularly golden plover, can use terrestrial habitats outside the SPA boundary for roosting or feeding;

- ▶ no evidence of allocations coinciding with favoured sites supporting notable aggregations away from the coast has been found at this stage, but usage of terrestrial habitats varies over time; and so
- ▶ it is appropriate for applicants to establish whether the proposed development site, and other areas within 400m, have any functional linkages with the SPA that may be significantly affected by the development.

Assessment of Effects

Turnstone

Turnstone population surveys undertaken in 2013 and 2014 by the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust (SBBOT) for NE recorded notable declines in turnstone numbers, compared to surveys undertaken between 2001 and 2010. This appears to be reflected in WeBS sector count data. Although recreational disturbance has been cited as a potential factor in this decline, the studies of recreational disturbance on the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA have not established a relationship between the observed disturbance levels and reduced productivity or increased mortality of the SPA interest features (although for many migratory and passage species it would be very difficult (in reality) to isolate local disturbance effects on the Thanet Coast from wider pressures on populations). However, that is not to say that recreational disturbance is not a potentially significant factor that needs to be appropriately managed and addressed, or that potential increases in visitor pressure are not an issue.

With regard to the prediction of effects, it is not possible to accurately model the likely increase in the number of visits to the site without substantial investigations into the current behaviour of residents in the Thanet area (including those that do not regularly visit the sites). As noted, most attempts to predict the significance of increased recreation on European sites generally aim to identify the distance within which a certain percentage of visits originate (i.e. taking account of frequency of visits as well as distance travelled), typically 75%. Analysis of the literature suggests that, for most European sites studied, this distance is usually around 5 – 7km from the site boundary. However, the merits of this for Thanet are limited: all of Thanet is within 6km of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and, as the peninsula is only around 6km from north to south and the main population centres are clustered around the coast, the majority of the population is within 2km. The vast majority of visitors during winter will therefore originate from Thanet, and all of the allocations will be within the typical travel distance for casual recreation. It is possible that some allocations may have a disproportionate effect due to their proximity; the allocations that are closer to the SPA (within 1 – 2 km) may be of more concern, partly as many of these are within existing urban areas and so there will be limited space to provide alternative local recreational opportunities, and partly as they are so close to the SPA that the site will almost always be the first choice location for casual recreation.

This is not to say that additional visits cannot be controlled and managed: for example, Guillemain *et al.* (2007) investigated the effects of ecotourism in the Camargue and found that waterbodies with more tourists did not support fewer birds in the medium-term; and that in the long term, wildfowl numbers were not related to the number of visitors. Obviously there will always be site-specific variations, but it is known that management can minimise disturbance, provided sufficient funds are available. It is therefore important that the Local Plan provides control mechanisms for monitoring, managing and mitigating any potential effects. Other plans have adopted a range of measures in similar situations, but most commonly these involve developer contributions to site management; and the provision of well-designed green infrastructure that integrates with the developments and allows easy walking access to local greenspace and the wider countryside (i.e. attractive local areas that are more convenient than protected areas). Studies have repeatedly shown that the most important factors influencing dog owners' choice of recreational area are the ability to take their dog off its lead; the proximity to home; and it being traffic-free. Measures that reduce the attractiveness of the Thanet Coast in this regard and increase the accessibility and value of local greenspace are likely to be successful in mitigating potential increases in recreational pressure.

The proposed mitigation (the SAMM) is considered likely to be successful in managing the effects of population growth and recreational pressure, such that adverse effects will not occur.

Little Tern

The potential effects of the Thanet Plan on little tern are difficult to quantify (as per turnstone), particularly considering the current absence of the species despite apparently suitable conditions for breeding. In the absence of future management or control measures it is unlikely that favourable conditions for tern breeding would be maintained. However, the relatively discrete distribution of little tern at the site ensures that any potential disturbance due to recreation can be easily managed; the mitigation measures for turnstone (the SAMM) in this regard are likely to be equally applicable for little tern also, and so the same mechanism can be relied on to help ensure that favourable conditions (as far as these are influenced by the Thanet plan) are maintained. On this basis, the plan would have no adverse effect on the little tern interest feature.

Golden Plover

As noted, golden plover are less dependent on the coastal SPA habitats than turnstone, so whilst the SAMM will have some benefit for this species, this will principally relate to its use of the SPA (although improving the condition of this by reducing and managing disturbance will logically increase resource availability within Thanet and hence increase the resilience to loss of some terrestrial foraging opportunities). Assessing the effects of population growth on this aspect is difficult at the strategy level, as:

- ▶ there is limited data on the distributions of the species and key foraging areas; and
- ▶ distributions and use of fields will vary year to year according to local and regional conditions, and cropping patterns (e.g. cold winters may increase use of some terrestrial habitats).

The principal sources of data on the use of terrestrial habitats by golden plover in Thanet are the English Nature Research Report No. 569 (*Numbers and distribution of the wintering golden plover population in and around the Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA 2002/2003*; EN 2004); ad hoc surveys and records; and ongoing surveys of the allocation sites, completed in early 2016 and being repeated in 2016 / 2017. These data indicate the following broad patterns:

Known important areas: There are around X areas in Thanet that appear to regularly support larger numbers of golden plover, notably:

- ▶ three sites in close proximity (within 1km) of Pegwell Bay (these either form part of the Ramsar site, or are immediately adjacent to the SPA).
- ▶ [TBC based on 2016 / 17 surveys]

These are all within 3 miles (5km) of the SPA boundary, but over 1 km from the nearest allocations.

Allocation sites: Urbanisation or high-frequency disturbance effects are typically considered likely if development takes place within around 400m of a designated site²⁶. Although not directly applicable in this instance²⁷, if the allocation sites and a 400m 'zone of influence' are considered then small numbers (approximately 28) of golden plover were recorded in these areas during surveys in 2016, with around X recorded in 2002/2003 (based on EN 2004) [TBC – digitising 2003 data]. Peak counts of golden plover, based on existing data, suggest that wintering populations in Thanet are substantially greater than identified within the SPA citation (e.g. EN (2004) notes that the five year peak mean for golden plover in Pegwell Bay alone is 6332 birds, compared with 411 noted in the citation). On this basis, the numbers of golden plover recorded within the zone of influence of the allocation sites represents an extremely small, arguably insignificant, proportion of the local population.

Analysis of land use can be used to estimate potential impacts, although this must be used cautiously due to the scale of the data available. Approximately X% of the land within 5km of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA is undeveloped agricultural land [TBC based on latest Agri Census Database plus CORINE], which is arguably available to golden plover for roosting and foraging depending on annual cropping patterns; the allocations within the TDC plan will reduce this to approximately X%. Not all of these areas will be available

²⁶ For example, 400m has been identified as the distance from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Solent and Harbours SPAs within which development should not occur due to the risk of significant effects on the SPAs themselves.

²⁷ SPAs typically support higher value and more unique habitats where concentrations of (usually dependent) species are found; agricultural land is more ubiquitous and so pressure on, say, an individual field would not typically carry the same degree of risk as pressure on an equivalent area of an SPA.

to or preferred by golden plover, due to local factors that cannot be easily identified at the strategic or landscape scale²⁸; and the use of most areas will vary annually with cropping patterns. Nevertheless it is unlikely that the proposed allocations or population growth will significantly reduce the functional land potentially available to golden plover.

Although it is difficult to precisely determine the effects of allocations on local golden plover populations at the strategy level, it is clear that the proposed allocations avoid known non-designated areas that are of value to golden plover. Whilst some golden plover are likely to periodically use allocation fields, there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest that potentially significant annual aggregations will be displaced, and the development proposals in the TDC plan will not substantially reduce the habitat areas potentially available to the species. Having said that, the variability in the use of many fields by golden plover, often depending on annual cropping patterns, creates a risk of potential effects that cannot be avoided by simply excluding certain fields in the allocation process.

The mitigation within the plan creates a policy structure whereby assessments for impacts on golden plover are specifically required for the various allocations as they are brought forward by developers, with a requirement for appropriate mitigation should significant effects be identified. The plan is not prescriptive on this point, as the mitigation requirements will depend on the scale and type of effects, although it may be appropriate for a policy mechanism to be put into place to support landscape-scale measures, including offsetting, in addition to the existing policy requirements. Notwithstanding this, the TDC plan will have no adverse effects on golden plover using functional land, based on the wider availability of habitats, the relatively localised effects of the allocations, and the measures incorporated within the plan.

[TO BE UPDATED WITH INFO ON KNOWN GOLDER PLOVER ROOSTING AREAS – ALTHOUGH THESE DO NOT COINCIDE WITH ALLOCATIONS A PRECUATIONARY APPROACH TO POLICY WOULD REQUIRE DEVELOPERS CONFIRM THIS AS PART OF THEIR ENV. ASSESSMENTS TO ENSURE THAT NO BASELINE CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED POST-ADOPTION].

Additional mitigation recommendations

The plan is not prescriptive on mitigation requirements, although as although as species that are known to be reliant on cropped habitats can only really be supported by “*wider countryside measures to preserve and promote permanent pasture as feeding and roosting habitat for the species*” (JNCC 2016) it may be appropriate for a policy mechanism or advisory text to be put included to support such an approach, in addition to the existing policy requirements.

6.3 Water Resources

Southern Water (SW) is responsible for supply to the Thanet area, which is within its Eastern Supply Area (Kent Thanet Water Resource Zone (WRZ)). Thanet receives most of its supply from groundwater (75%) with the remainder from the River Medway, River Stour or pipeline transfer from the Kent Medway WRZ. Some of the features of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Swale SPA / Ramsar are water-resource dependent, notably those associated with the Ramsar site and the lower reaches of the River Stour; they are therefore potentially exposed to growth within the Thanet area.

However, it is important to note that Southern Water’s WRMP for the next 25 years explicitly accounts for any reductions in abstraction that are required to safeguard European sites (see Section 0) and for the growth predicted by TDC and other LPAs in its forecasting. Therefore, the future water resource requirements of Thanet are factored into the abstraction regime, such that they will not affect European sites (i.e. the growth provided for by the Thanet plan is in line with SW predictions and will not increase water resources pressure on any European sites, alone or in combination).

²⁸ For example, Mason & MacDonald (1999) found that fields over 15 ha. were favoured by golden plover, with fields of less than 10 ha. being used less often than their proportion in the study area and fields greater than 15 ha used more often; this may suggest that targeting allocations at fields less than 10 ha. in size might help minimise impacts although these would not necessarily be well located in respect of other environmental impacts.

6.4 Water Quality

Some of the non-avian Ramsar features are associated with the lower reaches of the Great Stour, and the nearby marshes. Development promoted or supported by the Local Plan is likely to increase demand on wastewater treatment works, and potentially increase run-off which could indirectly affect some European sites. The major treatment works serving the Thanet area are located at Minster and Weatherlees, discharging to the Stour and to sea via a Long Sea Outfall (LSO) at Foreness Point; these are managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of the Local Plan, although it is important that the plan requires that suitable wastewater infrastructure and capacity be in place prior to the occupation of any developments. This is achieved through policies in the plan. With regard to effects on European sites, it should be noted that the Environment Agency's Review of Consents determined that there was no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, including the Thanet Coast sites, from nutrient enrichment due to Environment Agency consents (i.e. associated with sewerage treatment). The effect of run-off from developed areas can be mitigated or reduced by the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and by increasing the area of permeable surfaces (both natural and artificial) within developed areas.

6.5 In combination effects

[TBC following review of current plans and programmes]

6.6 Summary

No adverse effects alone or i/c

7. The Swale SPA / The Swale Ramsar

7.1 Current Issues and Threats to Interest Features

7.2 Recreational Effects

Key Policies / Allocations

Proposed / Incorporated Mitigation

Assessment

Some of the mobile interest features of the Swale SPA will use habitats outside the site, including some intertidal habitats around Thanet; golden plover are an interest feature of both The Swale SPA and the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA. Disturbance on the Thanet coast could therefore have indirect effects on the integrity of the The Swale SPA / The Swale Ramsar. The SPA populations in Thanet and the Swale are part of a wider North Kent. However, it is not thought that there is significant interdependency between these sites and development in Thanet will therefore have only weak indirect effects on the mobile interest features of The Swale SPA.

The mitigation employed to minimise disturbance to the interest features of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA (e.g. SP25 and the SPA Mitigation Strategy) will also help mitigate or avoid potential indirect effects on mobile interest features of the The Swale SPA / The Swale Ramsar that may use the site. Significant adverse effects would not therefore be expected as a result of the Thanet plan.

7.3 Water Resources

Key Policies / Allocations

[TBC with final plan – policies relating to quantum of development]

Proposed / Incorporated Mitigation

[TBC with final plan – policies relating to planning process and requirements]

Assessment

The features of The Swale SPA / Ramsar are water-resource dependent and so potentially exposed to growth within the Thanet area since abstractions in North Kent can be used to support Thanet through transfer from the Kent Medway WRZ. However, as with the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA / Ramsar, effects on this site are unlikely to occur due to the long-term planning and assessment in Southern Water's WRMP: the future water resource requirements of Thanet are factored into the abstraction regime, such that they will not affect European sites (i.e. the growth provided for by the Thanet plan is in line with SW predictions and will not increase water resources pressure on any European sites, alone or in combination). Therefore



7.4 In combination effects

[TBC following review of current plans and programmes]

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Appendix A

European Site Designations

| Box A1 | | European sites |
|-------------------------------|------|---|
| Special Area of Conservation | SAC | Designated under the EU <i>Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</i> , and implemented in the UK through the <i>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010</i> (as amended), and the <i>Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995</i> (as amended). |
| Sites of Community Importance | SCI | Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) are sites that have been adopted by the European Commission but not yet formally designated by the government of each country. Although not formally designated they are nevertheless fully protected by <i>Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</i> , the <i>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010</i> (as amended), and the <i>Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995</i> (as amended). |
| Candidate SAC | cSAC | Candidate SACs (cSACs) are sites that have been submitted to the European Commission, but not yet formally adopted as SCIs. Although these sites are still undergoing designation and adoption they are still fully protected by <i>Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</i> , the <i>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010</i> (as amended) and the <i>Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995</i> (as amended). |
| Possible SACs | pSAC | Sites that have been formally advised to UK Government, but not yet submitted to the European Commission. As a matter of policy the Governments in England, Scotland and Wales extend the same protection to these sites in respect of new development as that afforded to SACs. |
| Draft SACs | dSAC | Areas that have been formally advised to UK government as suitable for selection as SACs, but have not been formally approved by government as sites for public consultation. These are not protected (unless covered by some other designation) and it is likely that their existence will not be established through desk study except through direct contact with the relevant statutory authority; however, the statutory authority is likely to take into account the proposed reasons for designation when considering potential impacts on them. |
| Special Protection Area | SPA | Designated under <i>EU Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds</i> (the 'old Wild Birds Directive') and <i>Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds</i> (the 'new Wild Birds Directive', which repeals the 'old Wild Birds Directive'), and protected by Article 6 of <i>Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</i> . These directives are implemented in the UK through the <i>Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981</i> (as amended), the <i>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010</i> (as amended), the <i>Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985</i> , the <i>Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985</i> and <i>The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1995</i> (as amended) and the <i>Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 2007</i> . |
| Potential SPA | pSPA | These are sites that are still undergoing designation and have not been designated by the Secretary of State; however, ECJ case law indicates that these sites are protected under Article 4(4) of <i>Directive 2009/147/EC</i> (which in theory provides a higher level of protection than the Habitats Directive, which does not apply until the sites are designated as SPAs), and as a matter of policy the Governments in England, Scotland and Wales extend the same protection to these sites in respect of new development as that afforded to SPAs, and they may be protected by some other designation (e.g. SSSI). |
| Ramsar | | The <i>Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat</i> (Ramsar Convention or Wetlands Convention) was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in February 1971. The UK ratified the Convention in 1976. In the UK Ramsar sites are generally underpinned by notification of these areas as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (or Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) in Northern Ireland). Ramsar sites therefore receive statutory protection under the <i>Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981</i> (as amended), and the <i>Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985</i> . However, as a matter of policy the Governments in England, Scotland and Wales extend the same protection to listed Ramsar sites in respect of new development as that afforded to SPAs and SACs. |

Appendix B

Interest Feature Abbreviations

Table B.1 Interest Feature Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Interest Feature Formal Name |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Calcareous dry grassland and scrub | Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) |
| Desmoulin`s whorl snail | <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> |
| Dunes with creeping willow | Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) |
| Embryonic shifting dunes | Embryonic shifting dunes |
| Grey dunes | Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes") |
| Humid dune slacks | Humid dune slacks |
| Oak-hornbeam forests | Sub-Atlantic and medio-European oak or oak-hornbeam forests of the <i>Carpinion betuli</i> |
| Reefs | Reefs |
| Sea caves | Submerged or partially submerged sea caves |
| Vegetated sea cliffs | Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts |
| White dunes | Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes") |
| Avocet | <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> |
| Bar-tailed godwit | <i>Limosa lapponica</i> |
| Bittern | <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> |
| Black-tailed godwit | <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> |
| Breeding bird assemblage | Breeding bird assemblage |
| Dark-bellied brent goose | <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> |
| Dunlin (ssp. alpina) | <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> |
| Gadwall | <i>Anas strepera</i> |
| Golden plover | <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> |
| Hen harrier | <i>Circus cyaneus</i> |
| Knot | <i>Calidris canutus</i> |
| Little tern | <i>Sterna albifrons</i> |
| Marsh harrier | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> |
| Mediterranean gull | <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> |
| Pintail | <i>Anas acuta</i> |
| Shoveler | <i>Anas clypeata</i> |
| Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> |
| Waterfowl assemblage | Waterfowl assemblage |



Appendix C

Preferred Option Policy Review



Table 6.2 Strategic Policies Review

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|--|--|
| SP01 National Planning Policy Framework | <p>Policy SP01 - National Planning Policy Framework – Presumption in favour of sustainable development</p> <p>When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.</p> <p>Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or - Specific policies | General statement of policy |
| SP02 Economic Growth | <p>A minimum of 5,000 additional jobs is planned for in Thanet to 2031.</p> <p>The aim is to accommodate inward investment in job creating development, the establishment of new businesses and expansion and diversification of existing firms. Sufficient sites and premises suited to the needs of business are identified and safeguarded for such uses. Manston Business Park will be the key location for large scale job creating development. Land is identified and allocated to accommodate at least 65ha of employment space over the period to 2031. Land and premises considered suitable for continued and future employment use will be identified and protected for such purpose. Thanet's town centres are priority areas for regeneration and employment generating development, including tourism and cultural diversification, will be encouraged.</p> <p>The growth of the Port of Ramsgate is supported as a source of employment and as an attractor of inward investment. New tourism development, which would extend or upgrade the range of tourist facilities particularly those that attract the staying visitor, increase the attraction of tourists to the area and extend the season, will be supported.</p> <p>Development is supported that enhances the rural economy subject to protecting the character, quality and function of Thanet's rural settlements.</p> | General statement of aspirations; no significant effect but policy could be strengthened to reference environmental protection also. Recommendations: e.g. "Development is supported that enhances the rural economy subject to protecting the character, quality and function of Thanet's rural settlements and natural environments " |
| SP03 Land Allocated for Economic Development | <p>At the following sites land is allocated for business and employment generating purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manston Park, Manston 2. Eurokent Business Park, Ramsgate 3. Thanet Reach Business Park, Broadstairs 4. Hedgend Industrial Estate, St Nicholas <p>At Manston Park and Hedgend Industrial Estate development will be restricted to use classes B1 (business), B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution). Thanet Reach Business Park is also suitable for education uses.</p> | Allocations unlikely to have significant effects on their own, although may operate in combination with residential developments to increase recreational pressure on European sites; this is avoided by Policy SP25. |



| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
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| <p>SP04 Manston Business Park</p> | <p>Manston Business Park is allocated and safeguarded for business purposes within classes B1 (business), B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution). Development proposals will need to comply with all of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide green infrastructure to create an attractive environment compatible with its location and boundaries adjoining the countryside. 2) Be accompanied by a transport assessment and travel plan unless the development is considered too small to have a significant impact. This should specifically consider improvements to public transport to enable access from Thanet's main residential areas to Manston Business Park by a range of means of transport. 3) Safeguard land traversing the site to accommodate a new road alignment from Columbus Avenue to the Airport and to take account of the need to safeguard the operational capability of Manston Airport. 4) Safeguard land within the site to enable future extension of Columbus Avenue northwards to link directly with the B2050. | <p>Site specific policy; however, site is located at least 3km from the nearest designated sites and the proposed development for this site is unlikely to have any significant effects on any European site interest features.</p> <p>Recommendations: None</p> |
| <p>SP05 Manston Airport</p> | <p>The site of Manston Airport and the adjoining area will be designated as an "Opportunity Area" for the purposes of preparing the Manston Airport Area Action Plan" Development Plan Document. The Manston Airport AAP will explore through the development plan process the future development options for the site of the airport and the adjoining area. A consideration of the AAP should be the retention, development and expansion of the airport and aviation operations where supported by a feasibility study and a viable Business Plan, while exploring alternative options for the future development of the area for mixed-use development.</p> <p>While the Manston Airport Area Action Plan is being prepared and until adopted by the Council as a development plan for the Manston Airport area, the following policy for the Manston Airport will apply.</p> <p>Proposals at the airport, that would support the development, expansion and diversification of Manston Airport, will be permitted subject to all of the following requirements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That there be demonstrable compliance by the applicants with the terms of the current agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended or subsequent equivalent legislation. 2) That new built development is to be designed to minimise visual impact on the open landscape of the central island. Particular attention must be given to roofscape for the purposes of minimising the mass of the buildings at the skyline when viewed from the south. 3) The provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme, to be designed and implemented as an integral part of the development. 4) That any application for development for the purpose of increasing aircraft movements in the air or on the ground, auxiliary power or engine testing, be supported by an assessment of cumulative noise impact and the effectiveness of mitigation measures to be implemented in order to minimise pollution and disturbance. The acceptability of proposals will be judged in relation to any identified and cumulative noise impact, the effectiveness of mitigation and the social and economic benefits of the proposals. 5) The provision of an air quality assessment in compliance with the Air Quality Management Plan to demonstrate that the development will not lead to a harmful deterioration in air quality. Permission will not be given for development that would result in national air quality objectives being exceeded. 6) That any new development which would generate significant surface traffic must meet requirements for surface travel demand. 7) That it must be demonstrated both that new development cannot contaminate groundwater sources and that appropriate mitigation measures will be incorporated in the development to prevent contamination. 8) There will be no significant harm to Thanet's SSSI/SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. A Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required. | <p>Policy includes safeguards</p> |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
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| SP06 Thanet's Town Centres | Provision is made for a range of town centre uses reflecting the individual role, character and heritage of the town centres, including provision for retail development as referred in Table 1 above. | General criteria policy / statement of expectations; no significant effects. |
| SP07 Westwood | <p>The Council will seek to support the evolution and development of Westwood as a mixed use business and residential community in line with the following area based policies, indicated on Map 7. Development (in the vicinity of Westwood) will be required to have regard to and contribute towards implementation of a Westwood Relief Scheme. Development that would prejudice implementation of the Scheme will not be permitted. New development should also seek to improve pedestrian connectivity.</p> <p>1) Westwood Town Centre Retail development will be directed to the core town centre area at Westwood and complementary town centre uses will be accommodated within the wider town centre boundary, as defined by the primary and secondary frontages. Any development proposals should ensure there is no net loss in overall commercial floorspace.</p> <p>2) Eurokent Mixed Use Area Development of Eurokent will be for a mix of residential and business purposes, in accordance with a comprehensive development masterplan linking and integrating the development into the wider Westwood community. Land at Eurokent will provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · in the region of 350 new dwelling houses, and · the development and retention of 15.5 ha of land for flexible business uses. Town centre uses that cannot be accommodated within the designated town centres due to format and scale can be located here. <p>The masterplan shall incorporate, be informed by and/or address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Small scale convenience retail provision required to accessibly serve the day to day needs of the community · A minimum of 34 ha of publicly accessible natural/semi natural open space in accordance with the requirements of Policy SP27 · A minimum of 30% of all dwellings will be affordable homes in accordance with Policy SP19. The design brief should feature and reflect investigation of the need to incorporate an element of housing to meet the needs of particular groups including specifically sheltered and extra care homes. The proportion of houses as opposed to flats should exceed as much as possible that in Policy SP18 · Contribute to new, or improvements to existing community facilities at Newington · Liaison with service providers to investigate the need to upgrade the capacity of any utility services and infrastructure · Archaeological assessment and the need to preserve and enhance the setting of heritage assets adjoining the site. · A wintering and breeding bird survey to assess impact upon bird populations (including farmland birds) and the need to mitigate/compensate · Clearly demonstrate how the SPA mitigation strategy as set out in Policy SP25 is being met and how it will ensure that development does not increase recreational pressure on designated sites <p>Proposals will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment informing the masterplan and including assessment of impact of development on the local road network and demonstrating measures to promote multi-modal access, including footway and cycleway connections and an extended bus service accessible to the development. Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution to offsite highway improvements in respect of Westwood Relief Scheme, improvements to the A256 from Lord of the Manor and any other improvements identified in the Transport Assessment.</p> <p>3) Thanet Reach Mixed Use Area In accordance with Policy SP03, part of Thanet Reach is allocated for employment and education uses. The southern part of the site is allocated for residential development.</p> | <p>The policy will direct development to the Westwood town centre area (or the proposed Eurokent employment allocation) and hence away from any European sites. Direct effects are therefore unlikely as a result of the policy. The policy reflects the wider strategic issue of 'total quantum of development' and possible impacts on (particularly) the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA with reference to the SPA mitigation strategy and Policy SP25.</p> <p>Recommendations: None</p> |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
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| <p>SP08 Margate</p> | <p>The Council will seek to support the continued regeneration and development of Margate as a contemporary seaside resort in line with the following area based proposals, indicated on Map 8.</p> <p>1) Margate Town Centre The focus for retail development will be in and around the High Street as defined by the Primary and Secondary Frontages.</p> <p>2) Margate Old Town Margate's Old Town area will continue in its complementary role, contributing to the vitality and viability of Margate's town centre, increasing footfall and enhancing quality and choice of facilities in the town centre. It will be a focal location for creative and cultural industries. Residential development will be permitted above ground floor level only and the Council will resist the loss of existing commercial premises in the area.</p> <p>3) Margate Seafront and Harbour Arm Within the seafront area of Margate and the Harbour Arm as indicated on Map 8, leisure and tourism uses will be permitted, including retail, where they enhance the visual appeal of these areas and protect the seafront character and heritage. Residential development above ground floor will be permitted.</p> <p>4) Dreamland Dreamland will be developed as an amusement park and be a significant visitor attraction supporting the regeneration of the town. Proposals that seek to extend, upgrade or improve the attractiveness of Dreamland as an amusement park will be permitted. Development that would lead to a reduction in the attractiveness, leisure or tourist potential will be resisted. Exceptionally, development of a limited part of the site may be accepted as a part of a comprehensive scheme for the upgrading and improvement of the amusement park. The scheme will be required to demonstrate that the future viability of the amusement park can be assured and the Council will negotiate a legal agreement to ensure that the proposed development and the agreed investment in the amusement park are carried out in parallel. In the event that evidence, in the form of an independent professional assessment, is submitted (and accepted by the Council) as demonstrating that it is not economically viable to operate an amusement park on the whole or majority of the site in the foreseeable future, then proposals for redevelopment may be accepted subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proposals demonstrating that such redevelopment would sustainably contribute to the economic wellbeing and rejuvenation of Margate, and being supported by a business plan demonstrating that such proposals are economically viable; - the predominant use of the site being for leisure purposes. (an element of mixed residential would be appropriate but only of such a scale needed to support delivery of the comprehensive vision for the site); - compatibility with the context and proposals of the strategic urban design framework, and integration with appropriate proposals for redevelopment/refurbishment of neighbouring sites; - proposals delivering a new road along the southern site boundary to enable the diversion of vehicular traffic from Marine Terrace. (A legal agreement will be required to ensure that a proportionate contribution will be made towards the cost of providing the new road and to appropriate improvements to create a pedestrian priority environment along Marine Terrace); - retention of the Scenic Railway in situ as an operating feature within a green park setting appropriate to its character as a listed building; and - proposals being accompanied by a traffic impact assessment. | <p>The policy will direct development to within the existing developed areas of Margate. These are inevitably close to the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and effects are therefore possible although the protective policies elsewhere should be sufficient to prevent incidental significant effects. More broadly, it is a general statement of policy rather than a specific direction or allocation, although it is possible that Dreamland will be developed residentially; the policy includes safeguards re. visitor pressure but these could be strengthened as per the protective cross reference in the Westwood policy.</p> <p>Recommendations: amend policy to refer to SP25 and the SPA mitigation strategy.</p> |
| <p>SP03 Margate</p> | <p>5) Opportunity Sites There are Opportunity Sites identified on Map 8 which are considered suitable for mixed use town centre development. Residential development will be considered acceptable where this does not conflict with the area based criteria above.</p> <p>6) The Lido Proposals for leisure and tourism related uses will be supported at the Lido. Any development must respect and restore the site's status as a significant heritage asset. Any development permitted by this policy must not adversely affect any designated nature conservation sites either directly or as a result of increased visitor pressure.</p> | |



| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
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| SP09 | <p>Policy SP09 – Ramsgate</p> <p>The Council will seek to support the continued regeneration and development of Ramsgate focusing on its maritime heritage and developing leisure role, in line with the following area based proposals, indicated on Map 9.</p> <p>1) Ramsgate Town Centre</p> <p>The main focus for retail shall be the central High Street/Queen Street/King Street/Harbour Street area of the town, and complementary town centres uses will be permitted in the wider town centre area, as defined by the primary and secondary frontages.</p> <p>2) Ramsgate Waterfront and Royal Harbour</p> <p>Land at and adjacent to Ramsgate Royal Harbour, as indicated on Map 9, is identified for development for a mixture of leisure, tourism, retail and residential purposes.</p> <p>Any such proposals should have regard to the emerging Ramsgate Maritime Plan or any subsequent plan adopted by the Council. The following activities and development will be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Eastern Undercliff - mixed leisure, tourism and residential uses; and- Ramsgate Royal Harbour - continued development of mixed leisure and marina facilities, in particular at the Military Road arches. <p>All proposals must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take particular care in the design, location, use of materials and relationship of land-based facilities with open water, such as to protect important views and preserve or enhance the historical character of the Royal Harbour and seafront.- Ensure that the integrity of nature conservation interests within the adjacent SSSI-SPA-SAC-Ramsar site is maintained. <p>3) Opportunity Sites</p> <p>There are Opportunity Sites identified on Map 9 which are considered suitable for mixed use town centre development. Residential development will be considered acceptable where this does not conflict with the area based criteria above.</p> <p>4) Ramsgate Port</p> <p>The Council supports further development at Ramsgate Port which would facilitate its improvement as a port for shipping, increase traffic through the port, and introduce new routes and complementary land based facilities including marine engineering, subject to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a demonstrable port-related need for any proposed land based facilities to be located in the area of the port, and a demonstrable lack of suitable alternative inland locations; and- compatibility with the character and function of Ramsgate waterfront and the Royal Harbour as a commercial leisure facility; and- an acceptable environmental assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon the harbour, its setting and surrounding property, and the impact of any proposed land reclamation upon nature conservation, conservation of the built environment, the coast and archaeological heritage, together with any proposals to mitigate the impact. <p>Land reclamation will not be permitted beyond the western extremity of the existing limit of reclaimed land.</p> <p>Any development permitted by this policy must not adversely affect any designated nature conservation sites either directly or as a result of increased visitor pressure.</p> | As for Policy SP08 |



| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
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| SP10 Broadstairs | <p>The Council will seek to support proposals that maintain and enhance the role and character of Broadstairs as a popular attractive small seaside town in line with the following area based proposals, indicated on Map 10.</p> <p>1) Broadstairs Town Centre The focus for retail will be the lower High Street and Albion Street with complementary town centre uses in the wider area, in accordance with the Primary and Secondary Frontages. New retail development will be acceptable on the edge of Broadstairs town centre, subject to Policy E05. Proposals will be required to provide direct pedestrian links to the High Street, be well related to the retail core, centres of population and be accessible by a range of means of transport.</p> <p>2) Broadstairs Promenade and Beach Front Opportunities to enhance the use and attractiveness of the promenade, seafront and beach are welcomed, particularly where they achieve improved connectivity between the town centre and beach front. Within this area, small scale leisure and tourism uses will be permitted, including retail, where they do not harm the character and heritage interest of the surrounding area. Within Victoria Gardens, open space policies will prevail. Change of use of existing commercial premises in this area will be resisted.</p> <p>Any development permitted by this policy must not adversely affect any designated nature conservation sites either directly or as a result of increased visitor pressure.</p> | <p>As for Policy SP08</p> |
| SP11 Housing Provision | <p>Provision is made for a total of 12,000 additional homes in the period to 2031, with notional delivery across the period as indicated below.</p> | <p>General statement of policy; the quantum of development proposed is achievable without significant effects on the SPA, assuming implementation of SP25 and the SPA Mitigation Strategy. Recommendations: None</p> |
| SP12 Strategic Housing Site Allocations | <p>The sites listed below are identified as Strategic Housing Sites. Applications to develop such sites shall be accompanied by a detailed development brief including an illustrative site masterplan featuring all elements of the proposal and indicating phasing of development and supporting infrastructure. Applications will be determined in light of the following site specific policies:</p> <p>A - Westwood B - Birchington C - Westgate on Sea D - Manston Green</p> | <p>The strategic housing allocation sites have been reviewed and it is considered that none, on their own, are likely to result in significant effects on any European sites with the possible exception of the larger allocations. The key issue is the overall quantum of development in the area rather than single sites; this is thought to be achievable without significant effects on the SPA, assuming implementation of SP25 and the SPA Mitigation Strategy. The Strategic Housing Site policies (SP13 - SP16) reference SP25, although SP17 should do this also. Recommendations: SP17 to reference SP25</p> |



| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| SP13 Strategic Housing Sites - Manston Green (sites referenced SS33) | <p>Land is allocated for up to 700 new dwellings at a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare net at land known as Manston Green. Built development will be focused at the northern part of the site taking account of the considerations below. Proposals will be judged and permitted only in accordance with a development brief and masterplan for the whole site incorporating</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) a minimum of 9 ha of open space in accordance with the standards set out in Table 7,2) a fully serviced area of 2.05 ha (to be provided at the cost of the developer) to accommodate a new two-form entry primary school,3) small scale convenience retail provision required to accessibly serve day to day needs of the development. <p>Phasing of development will be in accordance with Policy H01(1). The development shall provide for construction of the school to one-form entry at such stage of development as required by the County Council as education authority. Masterplanning will be informed by and address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) pre-design archaeological assessment taking account of presence of significant and sensitive remains,2) the setting of listed buildings at Ozengell,3) the need for disposition of development and landscaping to enable a soft edge between the site and open countryside and minimise impact on long views southwards toward Pegwell Bay,4) predicted aircraft noise,5) the alignment of the runway and the operational needs of the airport,6) sustainable urban drainage taking account of the site's location in the Groundwater Source Protection Zone,7) the need to clearly demonstrate how the SPA mitigation strategy as set out in Policy SP25 is being met and how it will ensure that development does not increase recreational pressure on designated sites,8) a wintering and breeding bird survey to assess impact on bird populations within the district and the need to mitigate/compensate,9) liaison with service providers to investigate the need to upgrade the capacity of any utility services and infrastructure,10) a statement of social impacts arising from the development and how any increased demand on community facilities will be addressed. <p>A minimum of 30% of all dwellings will be affordable homes in accordance with Policy SP19. The design brief should feature and reflect investigation of the need to incorporate an element of housing to meet the needs of particular groups including specifically sheltered and extra care homes. The proportion of houses as opposed to flats should exceed that in policy SP18 as much as possible.</p> <p>Proposals will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment informing the Masterplan including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) assessment of the impact of development on the local road network; in particular capacity issues affecting junctions along Haine Road including that with Staner Hill,2) demonstrating measures to promote multi-modal access, including footway and cycleway connections and an extended bus service accessible to the residential development. <p>Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution to off-site highway improvements.</p> | See Policy SP12 |



| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
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| SP14 Strategic Housing Site at Birchington (comprising sites referenced S515, S498 & S499) | <p>Land is allocated for up to 1,000 new dwellings at a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare net at Birchington. Proposals will be judged and permitted only in accordance with a development brief and masterplan for the whole site including provision within the site of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) a new link road to serve the development and extending from Minnis Road and the A28,2) a minimum of 11 ha of open space in accordance with the standards set out in Table 7,3) a fully serviced site of 2.05 ha (to be provided at the cost of the developer) for a two-form entry primary school,4) small scale convenience retail provision required to accessibly serve day to day needs of the development. <p>Phasing of development will be in accordance with Policy H01(1). The access road and serviced school site shall be programmed for delivery as agreed by the county council as highway and education authority respectively. Masterplanning will be informed by and address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) the need to clearly demonstrate how the SPA mitigation strategy as set out in Policy SP25 is being met and how it will ensure that development does not increase recreational pressure on designated sites,2) a wintering and breeding bird survey to assess impact on bird populations within the district and the need to mitigate/compensate,3) pre-design archaeological evaluation,4) liaison with service providers to investigate the need to upgrade the capacity of any utility services and infrastructure including gas supply,5) a statement of social impacts arising from the development and how any increased demand on community facilities will be addressed,6) the need to preserve the listed buildings on the site and respect the setting of Quex Park,7) the need for disposition of development and landscaping to enable a soft edge between the site and open countryside. <p>A minimum of 30% of all dwellings will be affordable homes in accordance with Policy SP19. The design brief should feature and reflect investigation of the need to incorporate an element of housing to meet the needs of particular groups including specifically sheltered and extra care homes. The proportion of houses as opposed to flats should exceed that in policy SP18 as much as possible.</p> <p>Proposals will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment informing the masterplan including assessment of impact on the A28, including at its junction with Park Lane, and of impact on the junction of Manston Road, Park Lane and Acol Hill and demonstrating measures to promote multi-modal access, including footway and cycleway connections and an extended bus service accessible to the residential development. Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution to off-site highway improvements including for Birchington Square/Park Lane.</p> | See Policy SP12 |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| <p>SP15 Strategic Housing Site at Westgate-on-Sea (comprising sites referenced ST1 & ST2)</p> | <p>Land to the east and west of Minster Road, Westgate is allocated for up to 1,000 new dwellings at a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare net. Phasing of development will be in accordance with Policy H01(1). Proposals will be judged and permitted only in accordance with a development brief and masterplan for the whole site including provision within the site of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a minimum of 11.1 ha of open space in accordance with the standards set out in Table 7, 2) provision for small scale convenience retail provision required to accessibly serve day to day needs of the development, 3) a fully serviced area of 2.05 ha (to be provided at the cost of the developer) to accommodate a new two-form entry primary school. <p>Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution to off-site highway improvements.</p> <p>A minimum of 30% of all dwellings will be affordable homes in accordance with Policy SP19. The design brief should feature and reflect investigation of the need to incorporate an element of housing to meet the needs of particular groups including specifically sheltered and extra care homes. The proportion of houses as opposed to flats should exceed that in policy SP18 as much as possible.</p> <p>Masterplanning will be informed by and address</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a transport assessment (including modelling of junctions of the A28 with Minster Road, Briary Close and Garlinge High Street, the junction of Minster Road with Shottendane Rd the junction of Brooke Avenue with Maynard Avenue), and incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · measures to promote multi-modal access, including footway and cycleway connections, and an extended bus service accessible to the new dwellings, · appropriate road and junction improvements and signalling, 2) an archaeological evaluation, 3) the need to safeguard the setting of scheduled ancient monuments and the listed Dent de Lion Gateway, 4) the need to clearly demonstrate how the SPA mitigation strategy as set out in Policy SP25 is being met and how it will ensure that development does not increase recreational pressure on designated sites, 5) a wintering and breeding bird survey to assess impact on bird populations within the district and the need to mitigate/compensate, 6) liaison with service providers to investigate the need to upgrade the capacity of any utility services and infrastructure including gas supply, 7) a statement of social impacts arising from the development and how any increased demand on community facilities will be addressed, 8) appropriate arrangements for surface water management in line with Margate Surface Water Management Plan, 9) the need for disposition of development and landscaping to take account of public rights of way and enable a soft edge between the site and open countryside. | <p>See Policy SP12</p> |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| <p>SP16 Policy SP16 Westwood Strategic Housing (comprising sites referenced S511, S553 & S447)</p> | <p>Land is allocated for up to 1,450 new dwellings at a maximum density of 40 dwellings per hectare net at Westwood. This allocation adjoins land already subject to planning permission for 1,020 dwellings at the junction of Nash Lane/Haine Road. Proposals will be judged and permitted only in accordance with a development brief and masterplan for the whole site integrating with development at the adjoining site. The masterplan shall incorporate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) highway improvements including widening of Nash Road and links to Nash Road and Manston Road, 2) a minimum of 16.63 ha of open space in accordance with the standards set out in Table 7, 3) small scale convenience retail provision required to accessibly serve day to day needs of the development. <p>Phasing of development will be in accordance with Policy H01(1). The access road shall be programmed for delivery as required by the county council as highway authority.</p> <p>Masterplanning will be informed by and address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) pre-design archaeological assessment, 2) the need to preserve heritage farm buildings on the site, 3) the need to clearly demonstrate how the SPA mitigation strategy as set out in Policy SP25 is being met and how it will ensure that development does not increase recreational pressure on designated sites, 4) a wintering and breeding bird survey to assess impact on bird populations within the district and the need to mitigate/compensate, 5) liaison with service providers to investigate the need to upgrade the capacity of any utility services and infrastructure, 6) a statement of social impacts arising from the development and how any increased demand on community facilities will be addressed, 7) appropriate arrangements for surface water management in line with Margate Surface Water Management Plan. <p>A minimum of 30% of all dwellings will be affordable homes in accordance with Policy SP19. The design brief should feature and reflect investigation of the need to incorporate an element of housing to meet the needs of particular groups including specifically sheltered and extra care homes. The proportion of houses as opposed to flats should exceed that in policy SP18 as much as possible.</p> <p>Proposals will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment informing the Masterplan including assessment of impact of development on the local road network and demonstrating measures to promote multi-modal access, including footway and cycleway connections and an extended bus service accessible to the residential development. Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution to off-site highway improvements including in respect of Westwood Relief Scheme.</p> <p>Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution to provision, where required, of a new school off-site.</p> <p>Disposition of development and landscaping will be expected to take account of the presence of the overhead electricity transmission lines, retain an undeveloped corridor as an extension of the open area of Green Wedge to the east of the site, and enable a soft edge between the site and open countryside.</p> | <p>See Policy SP12</p> |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>SP17 Policy SP17 - Land fronting Nash and Haine Roads (site reference S141)</p> | <p>Land fronting Nash and Haine Roads is allocated for residential development with a notional capacity of 1,020 new dwellings or such capacity as may be demonstrated appropriate in light of the need to provide a school on site and/or any subsequent masterplan reflecting a maximum notional density of 40 dwellings per hectare net. The proportion of houses as opposed to flats should exceed that in policy SP18 as much as possible. The development will incorporate an element of affordable housing in line with policy SP19.</p> <p>Development shall be permitted only in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the whole site and shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide for any highway improvements identified as necessary in a traffic assessment and the development masterplan. Individual phases of development will be required to make provision pro-rata towards such improvements, 2) as required provide a fully serviced area of 2.05 ha (to be provided at the cost of the developer) for a new two form entry school as an integral part of the development, 3) incorporate and provide for connections and improvements to footpath and cycle networks facilitating walking, cycling and public transport to, from and within the site, including provision of or contribution to improvements to public transport services, 4) reserve a minimum of 2 ha to enable provision of a medical centre and provide a community assembly facility, 5) reserve and provide a minimum of 1.75 ha as local open space (including an equipped play area and casual/informal play space) together with an area of usable amenity space as an integral part of the design of the development. Where feasible, the area of local open space should be larger than the minimum indicated above having regard to the standards set out in Table 7, 6) incorporate landscaped buffer zones adjacent to any new road infrastructure and along the boundaries to adjacent to open farmland, 7) provide and maintain appropriate equipment for continuous monitoring of local air quality to inform the Council's ongoing air quality review and assessment programme. <p>Applications for successive phases of development will have regard to the need to integrate as far as feasible with any approved masterplans relating to neighbouring areas addressed in this policy and with Westwood Relief Scheme.</p> | <p>See Policy SP12; this policy should also reference SP25</p> |
| <p>SP18 Type and Size of Dwellings</p> | <p>Proposals for housing development will be expected to address the SHMA recommendations regarding the make-up of market and affordable housing types and sizes needed to meet requirements.</p> <p>The Council will encourage proposals incorporating a higher proportion of houses as opposed to flats than recommended in the SHMA. Proposals for developments incorporating a higher proportion of flats than recommended in the SHMA will be expected to include site specific justification for the proportion and mix proposed.</p> <p>Proposals to revert or convert properties currently used as flats to use as single family or single household accommodation will be permitted where a satisfactory standard of accommodation can be provided.</p> <p>Residential development proposals involving the net loss of dwelling houses suited to modern living requirements will not be permitted, unless the proposal complies with Policy H9 (Houses in Multiple Occupation).</p> <p>In the event of conflict between this policy and the Cliftonville DPD the latter shall prevail.</p> | <p>General statement of policy re. housing mix; no significant effects</p> |
| <p>SP19 Affordable Housing</p> | <p>Residential development schemes will be expected to include an element of affordable housing of 30%.</p> | <p>General statement of policy; no effects</p> |
| <p>SP20 Development in the Countryside</p> | <p>Development in the countryside outside of the urban and village confines, as identified in the Thanet Local Plan 2006, and not otherwise allocated for development, will not be permitted unless there is a need for the development that overrides the need to protect the countryside and any adverse environmental effects can be avoided or fully mitigated.</p> | <p>General statement of policy; will not negatively affect any European sites; has been strengthened following review of draft.</p> |



| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|---|--|--|
| SP21 Safeguarding the Identity of Thanet's Settlements | <p>Within the Green Wedges new development (including changes of use) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the development is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) not detrimental or contrary to the stated aims of the policy; or 2) essential for the proposed development to be located within the Green Wedges. <p>Open sports and recreational uses will be permitted subject to there being no overriding conflict with other policies, the wider objectives of this plan and the stated aims of this policy.</p> <p>Proposals for development that include measures that will create or enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity within the Green Wedges, or will improve the quality of the green wedges by providing high quality public amenity space will be supported.</p> | Protective policy; no significant effects |
| SP22 Protection and Enhancement of Thanet's Historic Landscapes | <p>Development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Thanet's local distinctiveness including historical, biodiversity and cultural character, 2) gaps between Thanet's towns and villages, 3) visually sensitive skylines and seascapes, <p>Within the landscape character areas identified, the following policy principles will be applied:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At Pegwell Bay, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape over other planning considerations; 2) In the former Wantsum Channel area, new development will not normally be permitted; 3) In the Wantsum Channel North Shore Area, development will only be permitted that would provide opportunities for enhancement and would not damage the setting of the Wantsum Channel, and long views of Pegwell Bay, the Wantsum Channel, the adjacent marshes and the sea; 4) On the Central Chalk Plateau, a number of sites are identified for various development purposes. Where development is permitted by other policies in this plan, particular care should be taken to avoid skyline intrusion and the loss or interruption of long views of the coast and the sea, and proposals should demonstrate how the development will take advantage of and engage with these views; 5) At Quex Park, new development proposals should respect the historic character of the parkland and gardens; and 6) At the Urban Coast, development that does not respect the traditional seafront architecture of the area, maintain existing open spaces and long sweeping views of the coastline will not be permitted. <p>Development proposals that conflict with the above principles will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they are essential for the economic or social well-being of the area or for reasons where the need for the development outweighs the detriment to the landscape. The developer may be required to submit a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with any development proposals likely to have a significant landscape impact.</p> | Protective policy; no significant effects |
| SP23 Green Infrastructure | <p>Thanet's green infrastructure network is an integral part of the design of all major development. Opportunities to improve Thanet's green infrastructure network by protecting and enhancing existing green infrastructure assets and the connections between them, should be included early in the design process for major developments.</p> <p>Development should make a positive contribution to Thanet's green infrastructure network by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creating new wildlife and biodiversity habitats · Providing and managing new accessible open space · Mitigating against the loss of any farmland bird habitats · Providing private gardens and play space; and/or · Contributing towards the enhancement of Thanet's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas or the enhancement of the Green Wedges <p>Investment and developer contributions should be directed to improve and expand green infrastructure and provide connecting links where opportunities exist.</p> | Enhancement policy; no significant effects; will operate with SP25 and SP27 to reduce impacts on SPA |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|---|---|--|
| SP24 Biodiversity Enhancements | Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and the Green Wedges are protected from inappropriate development, and proposals which would provide enhancements and contribute to a high quality biodiverse environment will be supported. | Protective policy; no significant effects |
| SP25 Protection of the European Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve | <p>Development that would have a detrimental impact on the European Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserve will not be permitted.</p> <p>Planning permission may only be granted when it can be demonstrated that any harm to internationally and nationally designated sites resulting from that development will be suitably mitigated.</p> <p>Proposals for residential development must include an assessment of significant effects and measures to mitigate against the effects of potential increased recreational pressure on protected sites.</p> <p>Proposals for major residential developments must include provision of open space suitable for dog walking and general recreation, in accordance with policy SP23.</p> <p>In developing these measures, regard must be had to the SPA Mitigation Strategy which requires a financial contribution towards wardening, and applicants must demonstrate clearly how they are meeting the strategy and how they will ensure that development will mitigate against any increase in recreational pressure on designated sites.</p> | <p>Protective policy; no significant effects. Note this is the key protective policy to which all developmental policies refer and therefore it is important that the safeguards currently required by it are not diluted or reduced.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The policy refers to SP23 but should refer to the requirements of SP27 also. - The second paragraph could be modified to emphasise the importance of the quantum of development in affecting the sites, for example: "Planning permission will only be granted when it can be demonstrated that any potential harm to internationally and nationally designated sites resulting from that development on its own, or cumulatively with other developments, will be avoided or suitably mitigated." |
| SP26 Protection of Open Space | <p>Built development or change of use will not be permitted on areas of open space identified as part of Thanet's green infrastructure network (including Public Rights of Way) unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It is for an open recreation or tourism uses and is of appropriate scale and design for its setting. Any related built development should be kept to the minimum necessary to support the open use, and be sensitively located. 2) There is an overriding need for development that outweighs the need to protect open space and cannot be located elsewhere, in which case provision of alternative open space of an equivalent size must be made elsewhere. <p>New development that is permitted by virtue of this policy should make a positive contribution to the area in terms of siting, design, scale and use of materials.</p> <p>Built development in any areas designated as Local Green Spaces will only be permitted if the proposal meets the exception criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> | Protective policy; no significant effects |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|--|---|
| SP27 Provision of Accessible Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds | <p>The Council will require suitably and conveniently located areas of usable amenity space, adequate to accommodate the demands for passive recreation generated by residential development.</p> <p>Sites of 50 dwellings or more will be required to provide natural and semi natural green space and local parks, formal gardens, allotments and recreation grounds to meet the standards set out in Table 7.</p> <p>The Council will expect appropriate arrangements for maintenance and management, responsibility for which will be vested in a particular individual, or, subject to commuted payment to meet such costs, in the district, town or parish council. Such arrangements will be secured by entering into a planning agreement.</p> <p>Any areas of accessible natural and semi natural green space, parks, gardens and recreation grounds created by virtue of this policy will be protected from development by policy SP26 – Protection of Open Spaces.</p> | <p>Protective policy; no significant effects. The policy could usefully be strengthened to encourage the integration of new greenspace with existing networks to maximise its value.</p> <p>Recommendations: "...to accommodate the demands for passive recreation generated by residential development. New greenspace provision must be linked to existing greenspace, green wedges and / or the wider countryside and PrOW network away from the coast to maximise its value."</p> |
| SP28 Quality Development | <p>New development will be of a high quality inclusive design. Developers will be required to seek an independent Design Review for development proposals on sites with a prominent visual impact, or which are of national significance.</p> | <p>Design criteria; no significant effects</p> |
| SP29 Conservation and Enhancement of Thanet's Historic Environment | <p>The Council will support, value and have regard to the significance of Heritage Assets by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) protecting the historic environment from inappropriate development, 2) encouraging new uses where they bring listed buildings back into use, encouraging their survival and maintenance without compromising the conservation of the building, 3) seeking the provision of appropriate research for all applications relating to the historic environment on key sites as identified through the Heritage Strategy, 4) facilitating the review of Conservation Areas and the opportunities for new designations, 5) recognising other local assets through Local Lists, 6) offering help, advice and information about the historic environment by providing guidance to stakeholders, producing new guidance leaflets, reviewing existing guidance leaflets and promoting events which make the historic environment accessible to all, 7) agreeing Article 4 Directions which will be introduced and reviewed as appropriate, 8) supporting development that is of high quality design and supports sustainable development. <p>All reviews and designations will be carried out in consultation with the public in order to bring a shared understanding of why asset and areas are being designated.</p> | <p>Protective policy; no significant effects</p> |
| SP30 Climate Change | <p>New development must take account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Adapting to climate change by minimising vulnerability, providing resilience to the impacts of climate change and complying with the Government's Zero Carbon Policy · Mitigating against climate change by reducing emissions | <p>Protective policy; no significant effects</p> |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|---|--|---|
| SP31 Healthy and Inclusive Communities | <p>The Council will work with relevant organisations, communities and developers to promote, protect and improve the health of Thanet's residents, and reduce health inequalities. Proposals will be supported that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) bring forward accessible community services and facilities, including new health facilities, 2) safeguard existing community services and facilities, 3) safeguard or provide open space, sport and recreation and enable access to nature, 4) promote healthier options for transport including cycling and walking, 5) improve or increase access to a healthy food supply such as allotments, markets and farm shops, 6) create social interaction and safe environments through mixed uses and the design and layout of development, 7) create a healthy environment that regulates local climate | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP32 Community Infrastructure | <p>Development will only be permitted when provision is made to ensure delivery of relevant and sufficient community and utility infrastructure. Where appropriate, development will be expected to contribute to the provision of new, improved, upgraded or replacement infrastructure and facilities.</p> | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP33 Expansion of Primary and Secondary Schools | <p>The Council will support the expansion of existing and development of new primary and secondary schools in Thanet to meet identified needs and will work with Kent County Council in identifying, allocating and safeguarding land as appropriate.</p> | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP34 Safe and Sustainable Travel | <p>The Council will work with developers, transport service providers, and the local community to manage travel demand, by promoting and facilitating walking, cycling and use of public transport as safe and convenient means of transport. Development applications will be expected to take account of the need to promote safe and sustainable travel. New developments must provide safe and attractive cycling and walking opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car.</p> | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP35 Accessible location | <p>Development generating a significant number of trips will be expected to be located where a range of services are or will be conveniently accessible on foot, by cycle or public transport. The Council will seek to approve proposals to cluster or co-locate services at centres accessible to local communities by public transport and on foot.</p> | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP36 Transport Infrastructure | <p>Development proposals will be assessed in terms of the type and level of travel demand likely to be generated. Development will be permitted only at such time as proper provision is made to ensure delivery of relevant transport infrastructure. Where appropriate, development will be expected to contribute to the provision, extension or improvement, of walking and cycling routes and facilities and to highway improvements.</p> <p>Subject to individual assessments, schemes may be required to provide or contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Capacity improvements/connections to the cycle network · Provision of pedestrian links with public transport routes/interchanges · Improvements to passenger waiting facilities · Facilities for display of approach time information at bus stops along identified quality bus corridors · Improvement and expansion of public transport services · Improvements to the road network in line with schemes identified through the Transport Strategy. | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP37 Connectivity | <p>The Council will continue to lobby for investments to secure further improvements to rail journey times for CTRL including domestic services between Ashford and Ramsgate.</p> | General statement of policy; no effects |
| SP38 Strategic Road Network | <p>In conjunction with neighbouring districts, the Council will prepare a joint assessment of planned development and the expected volume and direction of road traffic movement it would generate, to understand its potential impact on these junctions and how this may, if appropriate, be mitigated.</p> | General statement of policy; no effects |

| Strategic Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| SP39 New Rail Station | <p>Planning permission will be granted for a new railway station at a suitable location on land west of Ramsgate alongside the existing railway line. Land west of Cliffsend (shown on Map 15) is safeguarded for this purpose. Proposals will be required to specifically demonstrate all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Satisfactory vehicular access arrangements from East Kent Access 2) Suitable level of car parking 3) Integration with wider public transport services 4) Mitigation of any noise impacts on sensitive receptors 5) Compatibility with the landscape character of its location 6) Located to minimise the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land | <p>The precise location of the Parkway Station is not stated, but it is likely to be within 1km of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA. The interest features of this site are unlikely to be particularly vulnerable to direct disturbance (etc) as a result of this development but the policy should ideally include reference to the need for scheme-level HRA (or cross-reference other relevant protective policies regarding HRA). However, there is nothing to suggest that this development could not be accommodated without significant effects on the SPA.</p> |

Table 6.3 Summary of Preferred Options Non-strategic Policies Review

| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|------------|---|
| E01 Retention of existing employment sites | | Policy lists sites to be retained for employment purposes |
| E02 Home Working | | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E03 Digital Infrastructure | | General statement of policy / no effects |
| E04 Primary and Secondary Frontages | | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E05 Sequential and Impact Test | | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E06 District and Local Centres | | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--------------------|--|---|
| E07 | Serviced Tourist Accommodation | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| E08 | Self Catering Tourist Accommodation | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E09 | Protection of Existing Tourist Accommodation | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E10 | Major Holiday Beaches | Criteria policy; includes safeguards relating to the protection of the European sites |
| E11 | Intermediate Beaches | Criteria policy; includes safeguards relating to the protection of the European sites |
| E12 | Undeveloped Beaches | Criteria policy; includes safeguards relating to the protection of the European sites |
| E13 | Language Schools | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E14 | Quex Park | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E15 | New build development for economic development purposes in the rural area | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E16 | Conversion of rural buildings for economic development purposes | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E17 | Farm Diversification | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E18 | Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| E19 | Agricultural Related Development | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| H01 | Housing Development | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H02A | Land on west side of Old Haine Road, Ramsgate (comprising site references S535 & S549) | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--------------------|---|---|
| H02B | Land fronting Nash Road and Manston Road (site reference S540) | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H02C | Land fronting Park Lane, Birchington. (site reference ST3) | General statement of policy / criteria; should include reference to Policy SP25 to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H02D | Land south of Brooke Avenue Garlinge (site reference S505) | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H02E | land at Haine Road and Spratling Street, Ramsgate (site reference SR60) | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H02F | Land south of Canterbury Road East, Ramsgate (site reference S415) | General statement of policy / criteria; includes provision to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H02G | Land at Melbourne Avenue, Ramsgate (site reference SS22) | General statement of policy / criteria; should include reference to Policy SP25 to protect European sites from recreational pressure |
| H03 | Cliftonville West and Margate central | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| H04 | Housing at Rural Settlements | General statement of policy / criteria; references H01 which includes requirement to meet Policy SP25, therefore no significant effects will occur. |
| H04A | Land at Tothill Street, Minster | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP25 |
| H04B | Land at Manor Road, St Nicholas at Wade | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP26 |
| H04C | Land at 71-75 Monkton Street, Monkton | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP27 |
| H04D | Land at Walter's Hall Farm, Monkton | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP28 |
| H04E | Land south side of A253, Cliffsend | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP29 |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--------------------|--|--|
| H04F | Land north of Cottington Rd, Cliffsend | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP30 |
| H04G | Land south side of Cottington Rd, Cliffsend | Subsidiary to H04 and so safeguards provided by H04, H01 and SP31 |
| H05 | Rural Housing Need | Criteria based policy associated with exceptions for affordable housing in rural areas; no significant effects |
| H06 | New agricultural dwellings | Criteria based policy associated with exceptions for agricultural housing; no significant effects |
| H07 | Care and Supported Housing | Support for care homes and supported housing; no significant effect |
| H08 | Accessible Homes | Requirements for accessible homes in developments; no effects |
| H09 | Non self-contained residential accommodation | Criteria for non-self contained residential accommodation; no effects |
| H10 | Accommodation for Gypsy and Travelling Communities | General statement of policy / criteria; no effects |
| H11 | Residential use of empty property | Criteria for making residential use of vacant homes; no effects |
| H12 | Retention of existing housing stock | General statement of policy re. retention of existing housing; no effects |
| GI01 | Locally Designated Wildlife Sites | Protective policy; no significant effects |
| GI02 | Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) | Protective policy; no significant effects |
| GI03 | Protected Species and other significant species <input type="checkbox"/> | Protective policy; no significant effects |
| GI04 | Amenity Green Space and Equipped Play Areas <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy re. provision of green space within new developments; will work with other mitigating policies to help reduce effects of development on European sites. |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--------------------|---|---|
| GI05 | Protection of Playing Fields and Outdoor Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy re. provision of green space within new developments; will work with other mitigating policies to help reduce effects of development on European sites. |
| GI06 | Landscaping and Green Infrastructure | Criteria for landscaping on developments; no significant effects |
| GI07 | Jackey Bakers | Proposals for Jackey Bakers sports ground; no significant effects |
| QD01 | General design principles | General design criteria / principles; no significant effects |
| QD02 | Living Conditions | General design criteria / principles; no significant effects |
| QD03 | Advertisements | General design criteria / principles; no significant effects |
| QD04 | Telecommunications | General design criteria / principles; contains protective clauses; no significant effects |
| HE01 | Archaeology <input type="checkbox"/> | General statement of policy re. archaeology requirements for developments; no effects |
| HE02 | Development in Conservation Areas <input type="checkbox"/> | General statement of policy re. developments in conservation areas; no effects |
| HE03 | Local Heritage Assets <input type="checkbox"/> | General statement of policy; no effects |
| HE04 | Historic Parks and Gardens <input type="checkbox"/> | Protective policy; no effects |
| HE05 | Works to a heritage asset to address climate change <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy supporting works to heritage assets to improve performance re. climate change; no effects. |
| CC01 | Fluvial and Tidal Flooding | Re-iterates NPPF sequential and exception tests re. fluvial or coastal flooding; requires flood risk assessments; no effects. |
| CC02 | Surface Water Management | Requirement for SuDS in new developments; mitigating policy; no significant effects; policy could be strengthened by requiring that new developments on greenfield sites maintain greenfield levels of run-off etc with SuDS. |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| CC03 Coastal Development | | Policy sets criteria for development near the coast; this should be strengthened to include potential effects on European sites as a specific criteria requiring consideration, for example: "3) will not adversely affect the interest features of any designated nature conservation sites, particularly by exacerbating coastal squeeze or otherwise restricting the capacity of the coastline to adjust to sea-level rise and climate change. |
| CC04 Sustainable Design | | General design criteria / principles; no significant effects |
| CC05 Renewable energy installations | | Criteria for renewable energy installations on existing buildings; no significant effect. |
| CC06 District Heating | | General statement of policy re. district heating; no effects. |
| CC07 Solar Parks | | Criteria for solar farms; includes protective elements; no significant effect. |
| CC08 Richborough | | Support for renewable energy at Richborough; includes protective clauses; no significant effects. |
| SE01 Potentially Polluting Development | | Criteria for permitting potentially polluting development; provides protective clauses and safeguards; any development associated with this policy will be subject to other consenting regimes; no significant effect. |
| SE02 Landfill Sites and Unstable Land | | Policy relating to development near landfills and risk of gas etc.; general statement of policy; no significant effects. |
| SE03 Contaminated Land | | Policy relating to development of potentially contaminated sites; no significant effects. |
| SE04 Groundwater Protection | | Policy protecting groundwater; no significant effects |
| SE05 Air Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy safeguarding air quality; requires consideration of cumulative effects; no significant effects. |
| SE06 Noise Pollution | <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy protecting against noise pollution; no |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--------------------|---|--|
| | | significant effects. |
| SE07 | Noise Action Plan Important Areas | Requirement for noise action plan; no effect |
| SE08 | Aircraft Noise | Policy relating to residential development in areas potentially affected by aircraft noise; no significant effects |
| SE09 | Aircraft Noise and Residential Development | Policy relating to residential development in areas potentially affected by aircraft noise; no significant effects |
| SE10 | Light Pollution | Policy providing safeguards against light pollution from ew development; no significant effects. |
| CM01 | Provision of New Community Facilities | General design criteria / principles; no significant effects |
| CM02 | Protection of Existing Community Facilities | General design criteria / principles; no significant effects |
| CM03 | Expansion of Margate Cemetery | Allocation for expansion of cemetery; no effects |
| CM04 | Expansion of Minster Cemetery | Allocation for expansion of cemetery; no effects |
| TP01 | Transport assessments and Travel Plans | Requirements for Travel Plans; no significant effects |
| TP02 | Walking | Policy requiring provision for pedestrians; no significant effects |
| TP03 | Cycling | Policy requiring provision for cyclists; no significant effects |
| TP04 | Public Transport | Policy requiring provision for public transport; no significant effects |
| TP05 | Coach Parking | Allocation of coach parking; no significant effects |
| TP06 | Car Parking | Car parking requirements for new developments; no significant effects |
| TP07 | Town Centre Public Car | Retention of existing car parking and criteria; no |



| Development Policy | Draft text | Review and recommendations |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Parks | | significant effects |
| TP08 | Freight and service delivery | Requirement for off-street servicing for new development; no significant effects. |
| TP09 | Car parking provision at Westwood | Criteria for car parking provision at Westwood; no significant effects. |
| TP10 | Traffic Management | General statement of policy re. traffic management; no effects |



Appendix D In Combination Plans

