



**Kent Thameside
Green Grid**

*Kent Thameside Green Grid Design Strategy
and Guidelines*

Kent County Council

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Character Areas:

Dartford Heath
Dartford Suburbs
Dartford Town Centre
Darent Valley
North Dartford and Crossways
Stone Lodge and Surrounding Land
Stone
Bluewater and St Clements/Eastern Quarry
Development
Area incorporating Darent Country Park
with ancient woodland (SSSI)
Greenhithe/Ingress Park Riverside
Swanscombe and Knockhall
Eastern Quarry
Swanscombe Peninsula
Ebbsfleet

Gravesend Industrial Riverside
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Gravesend/Shorne Marshes
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Kent Thameside Green Grid Design Strategy and Guidelines (the Strategy) was commissioned in 2003 by Kent County Council. It develops the many existing policies and initiatives adopted and promoted by, among others, Kent County Council and Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs, and the Kent Thameside Green Grid Framework Planning - Turning Vision into Reality, prepared by Groundwork Kent Thameside and Landscape Design Associates in May 2000.

Kent Thameside is an area designated for major growth by the Government with a projected increase of 27,000 new houses over the next 25-30 years. It covers an area of 22sq. miles comprising the boroughs of Dartford and Gravesham situated within the wider Thames Gateway and with an extensive area designated for development (Figure 1: Study Area).

Figure 2: Development and Transport Infrastructure, indicates designated areas of development land, proposed Fasttrack routes, and the Channel Tunnel Rail link (CTRL). If the planned growth of Kent Thameside and its associated infrastructure - CTRL, roads and 'Fast track' is to be sustainable and create desirable places, where people choose to live, work and play, it is imperative that a wider environmental infrastructure - the Green Grid - is also developed.

1.2 Greening the Gateway

ODPM's Greening the Gateway¹ sets out the core principles that the Government believes should be adopted in the planning and design of green spaces in the Thames Gateway. It calls for a network of attractive and accessible green spaces that can link inner urban areas to rural areas. A network that is multi-functional and helps to improve health, provides for flood storage, filters pollution, encourages wildlife, provides shelter and a green framework within which people can enjoy living and working.

1.3 PPG17: Open Space, Sports and Recreation

At the Borough level, PPG17: open space, sports and recreation promotes:

- Networks of accessible high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities which meet the needs of residents and visitors, and are fit for purpose and economically and environmentally sustainable.
- An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision.
- Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and landowners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space.

It is intended to provide guidance for the parks and green space strategies that will be prepared by Dartford and Gravesham boroughs as required by PPG17, and which will contribute to the implementation of this Strategy.

1.4 Objective

The over-arching objective of the Strategy is to promote a high quality, well-designed multi-functional, and integrated environmental infrastructure of existing and new parks, open spaces and links, developed alongside and in tandem with transport, utilities and development infrastructure, providing the environmental context and settings for new and existing communities and their needs for:

- sports;
- leisure;
- recreation;
- culture;
- healthy living;
- education;
- biodiversity;
- tourism;
- flood-risk management; and
- the economy.

¹ Creating Sustainable Communities: Greening the Gateway, ODPM, January 2004

The Strategy focuses on the Kent Thameside, however, it is important that the Green Grid connects to the wider surrounding countryside of Kent, consequently, links beyond are also promoted.

The Strategy promotes a connected system of new and existing destinations and links. It:

- identifies existing footpath networks
- identifies missing links in the network
- promotes a connected network of existing and proposed parks and associated cultural, leisure, recreational destinations
- promotes a strategic framework plan and design guidance based on character types
- promotes landmarks, signage and way marking of strategic destinations and green links
- promotes design framework plans and design guidance, and a 'checklist' for developers and

development control planners for four detailed areas.

1.5 Format

The Strategy comprises four sections. This introductory Section One. Section Two - *Design Strategy* describes the spatial design concept for the Green Grid, and the Design Strategy Framework Plan which is the key plan defining the connected system of open spaces, named routes, and landmarks and way markers. Section Three provides strategic design guidance based on the twenty-one character areas defined in the *Kent Thameside Green Grid Framework Planning, Turning Vision into Reality*. Section Four provides more detailed Area Design Guidance for Dartford Marshes, Swanscombe and the Peninsula, Shorne Woods and Environs, and Gravesend to Shorne Marshes.

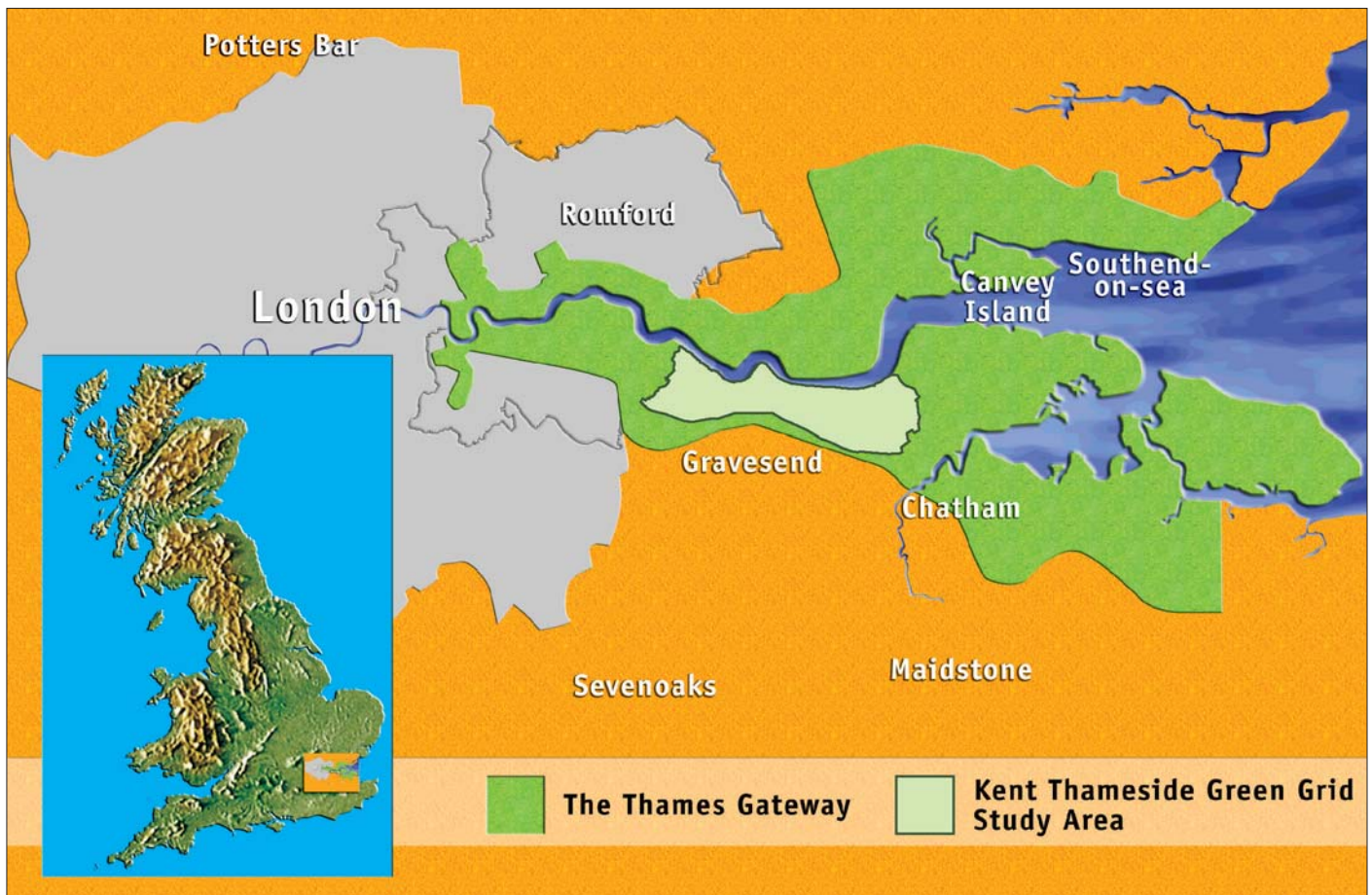


Figure 1: Study Area

2.0 The Strategy

2.1 Introduction

The Design Strategy and Guidelines have emerged from:

- An understanding of the landscape types as documented in Kent Thameside Green Grid Framework Planning - Turning Vision in to Reality
- A desk-top analysis of parks and open space provision provided in GIS format by Kent County Council
- An understanding of the proposed development and transport infrastructure
- An understanding of problems created by former industrial activity, some urban waterfronts, roads and new developments
- A recognition of poor management and maintenance in some areas
- Site reconnaissance
- A public consultation exercise held in Gravesham on 6 May 2003, and
- Feedback from the Steering Group throughout the course of strategy preparation.

2.2 Landscape Character

The existing landscape character types within the area vary widely due to a combination of past and present industrial activities, urban and transport infrastructure, and natural landforms, vegetation, soils, habitats and hydrology.

It is a fragmented landscape that presents many barriers to access and movement for humans and wildlife where roads, railways, industrial activity and development create obstacles.

Existing and prominent landscape features are Dartford Creek, Craylands Gorge, the Ebbsfleet Valley, the Gravesham Canal basin, the line of the Medway Canal, and Shorne Ridge. Each have partial existing routes along them and can be classified according to one or more 'character types'; and should provide the basis for continuous links and connections. Summary descriptions of landscape character are given in Section 3, Strategic Design Guidance.

2.3 Existing parks and green space

Information on types and location of existing parks and open spaces was provided by Kent County Council in Geographic Information System (GIS) format. This is documented on Figure 3: Existing Parks and Open



Examples of ex-industrial artefacts to provide waymarkers



Commissioning graffiti artists can aid signage strategies and engage local people



Example of bespoke signage marking Newham's Greenway

Spaces. It does not constitute a full survey of existing parks and open spaces but does provide a general overview of the current situation.

Analysis of the distribution of types of parks and open spaces based on size and walking distance criteria in the Greater London Authority's (GLA) *Guide To Preparing an Open Space Strategy*, March 2004 (Regional Park, 8.2km; District Park, 1km; Local Park, 200m) points to deficiencies.

The Boroughs of Dartford and Gravesham will refine this data and further analyse deficiencies in preparing and updating their PPG17: Open Space, Sports and Recreation compliant strategies.

2.4 Existing green space, development land, transport infrastructure and connections

The extent of existing green space, development land, transport infrastructure and existing and missing links and connections is summarised on the composite plan Figure 4.

The issues that this plan raises are:

- Lack of continuous path along the River Thames
- Lack of continuous east-west connections linking existing and proposed communities to the strategic open space network
- Unequal distribution of designated types of parks and open spaces as promoted by the GLA Guidelines
- Too few designated links between parks and open spaces
- Many country parks are accessible primarily by car
- Poor north-south connections from the River Thames linking existing and proposed communities to the north Kent Weald.

The plan also illustrates the need to formally designate and develop some existing open spaces such as Dartford Marshes, Dartford Heath, Stone-Darent-Beacon Wood, Swanscombe Heritage Park, Ebbsfleet Valley, Mid Kent Park, Claylane Wood and Stone Marshes. Some of these are currently being promoted by organisations such as Groundwork Kent Thameside.

2.5 Other issues that need to be addressed

Former Industrial Activity

- Barriers are caused by the sharp levels changes of disused quarries
- New development within these areas become isolated communities
- Connectivity and movement between existing and new communities is restricted
- Infrastructure to link these areas back with others can be expensive



Urban Waterfronts

- Housing developments often detract from amenity use of river

Flood Defence Design

- Often blocks views of river
- Often blocks access to river
- Often prevents riverside amenity use



Major Roads

Design of new roads has created:

- Inhospitable environments for pedestrians and cyclists

- Barriers between communities, green spaces and recreation facilities
- Over reliance on car based transport

New Developments

- Blocked off roads cause lack of integration with existing urban fabric
- Open spaces often do not connect with wider networks and surroundings
- New soft landscape often does not reflect the character of the area in choice of plant species, and character of the landscape design. This leads to bland new developments with little local identity or distinctiveness
- Landscape maintenance programmes do not enhance ecological and amenity value

Areas suffering poor management maintenance

- Under-used or poorly connected routes are too often dominated by motorbikes and by fly tipping
- Poorly designed, undermanaged or neglected routes make them feel unsafe.



2.6 Summary

Kent Thameside has a wide variety of landscape types from natural to post-industrial. There are several prominent landscape features from Dartford Marshes to the Shorne Ridge that provide the basis for connections.

There are extensive, open undeveloped areas in addition to the designated development land with potential for development as part of the Green Grid.

The distribution of existing green space, development land, transport infrastructure and connections illustrates the need for connections between existing

foot and cycle paths, and potential new ones. Much of the available designated development land comprises former industrial sites, quarries or landfills which are fenced off and inaccessible.

The fragmented nature of existing settlements and some of those proposed, interspersed with industry of varying types justifies the need for a radical plan that reconnects existing communities, and connects those proposed, into a sequence of parks and open spaces from the small local park to district and regional parks, via high quality, safe and attractive foot and cycle paths. This connected system should link east and west through Kent Thameside, and north-south from the Thames to the North Kent Weald.

2.7 The Concept

In response to this understanding of the issues, the strategy concept is simple and robust. It is illustrated in Figure 5, The Concept. It shows the layering of existing urban and landscape form, existing open spaces, and an interlinked network of:

- Blue ribbons - based on river corridors linking to the Thames
- Green Grid - based on existing and proposed connections and links; and
- Red landmarks - comprising a co-ordinated system of existing and proposed cultural, leisure and recreational destinations as landmarks that will identify and become part of the Green Grid infrastructure. These landmarks in certain areas could be landmark buildings or structures - such as the Dartford Bridge, or a new building marking the development proposed on the Swanscombe Peninsula. They could be visitor centres, rangers lodges, bike hire facilities, cafes, education and interpretation facilities. At their most modest, they could be simple signs at junctions of footpaths.

2.8 Design Strategy Framework Plan

The Design Strategy Framework Plan illustrated in Figure 6 proposes major and secondary strategic links based on existing prominent landscape features, and where routes are needed to connect existing and proposed communities. These constitute the main

north-south links, which connect the Thames to the North Kent Weald south of the A2, links along the 'blue ribbons' of existing rivers, and east-west links which connect with the north-south links. These routes will connect existing and proposed communities to the diverse destinations for leisure, recreation, education, biodiversity, etc.

Named Routes

The main routes shown in Figure 6 have been given specific names so that, like roads, they can be easily identified and referred to in high quality Green Grid maps. This will aid way-finding and way-marking, and give the routes distinctive identities within the Green Grid network. The Green Grid maps should have equivalent status to a road map to instil confidence in all users that the routes shown are safe, attractive, well-signed and continuous.

Signage Strategy

The signage strategy derives from the landmarking and way-marking proposals illustrated in Figure 7, Signage and Landmark Plan. It is proposed to create a unified sub-regional series of signs and way-markers. They are intended to mark all junctions within the Green Grid both existing and proposed. There are nine broad types of signage according to the landscape they are in and their purpose. For example, signs may be mounted on timber bollards within marshland habitats or developments, but may be mounted on stone or items of industrial archaeology for instance, within ex-quarrying or industrial sites. They will, however, all be part of a recognised 'design family' whether small, medium or large-scale. Existing landmarks such as the Dartford Crossing, pylons and other artefacts could all be badged as part of the Green Grid. Lighting, sculpture, buildings and beacons should all form a part of the matrix of landmarks and waymarks which build a characteristic image for Kent Thameside Green Grid.

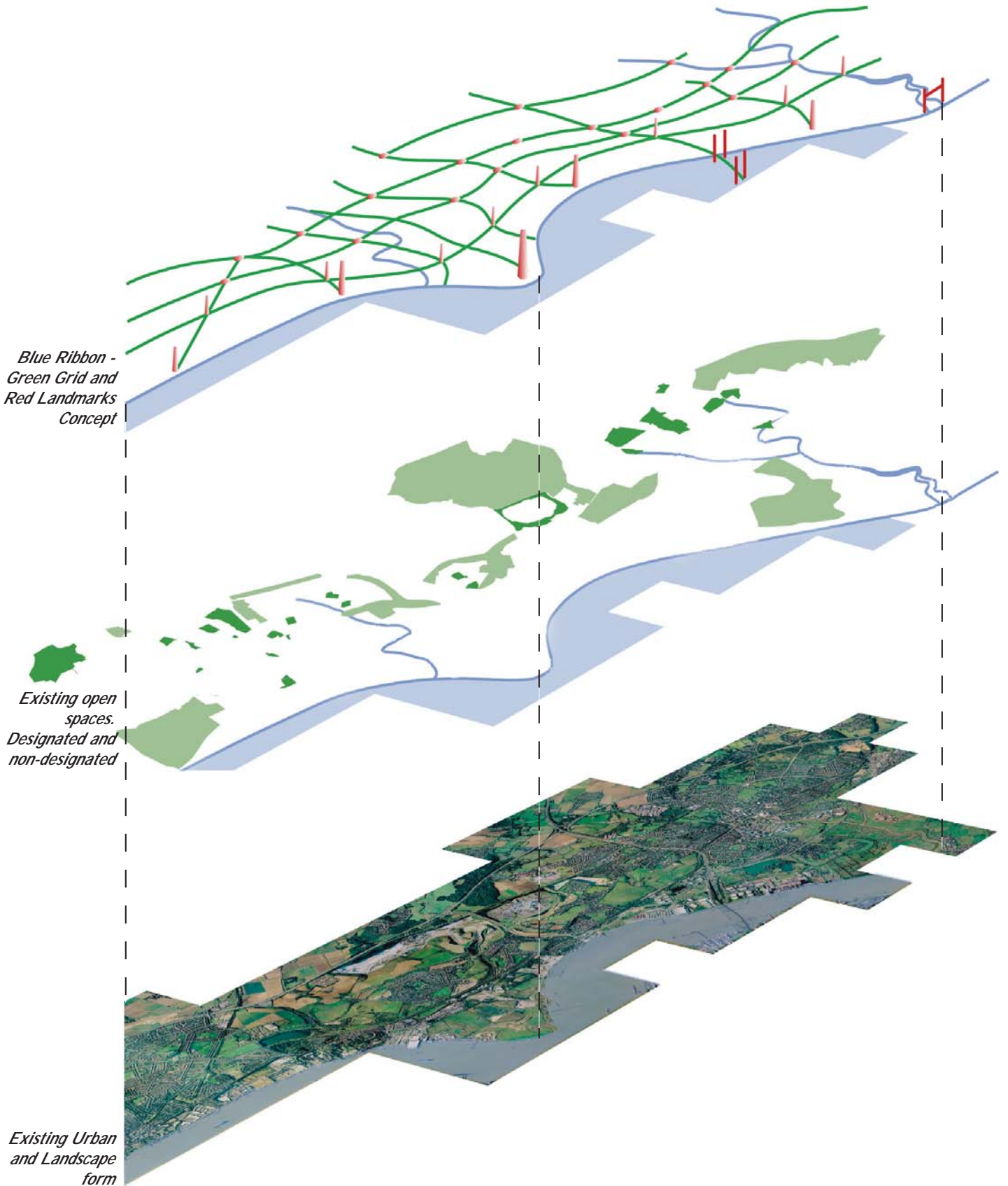


Figure 5: The Concept

3.0 Strategic Design Guidance

3.1 Introduction

Figure 8: Landscape Character Areas, catalogues the wide variation of landscapes in the area. As a result of past and present industrial activities combined with natural landform and development, it exhibits several different characteristics. It is a fragmented landscape that needs protection in some instances, and in others, enhancement and the creation of new landscapes for parks and green spaces and connections between them. Any new proposed parks, green spaces and links must respond to these different landscape characters.

The varying areas with their associated descriptions and character types are well documented in the 'Green Grid Framework Planning - Turning the Vision into Reality'. The following Strategic Design Guidance is based on the twenty one landscape character areas identified in that document, and on additional site reconnaissance carried out for this Strategy.

Design guidance for each area provides a short summary description of its character, strategic links through the area proposed in the Design Strategy Framework Plan (Figure 6), a short summary of the key issues to be addressed within the area, and Design Guidance addressing, inter alia, opportunities, hard and soft landscape design, and signage types which are referenced on the Signage and Landmarks plan (Figure 7).

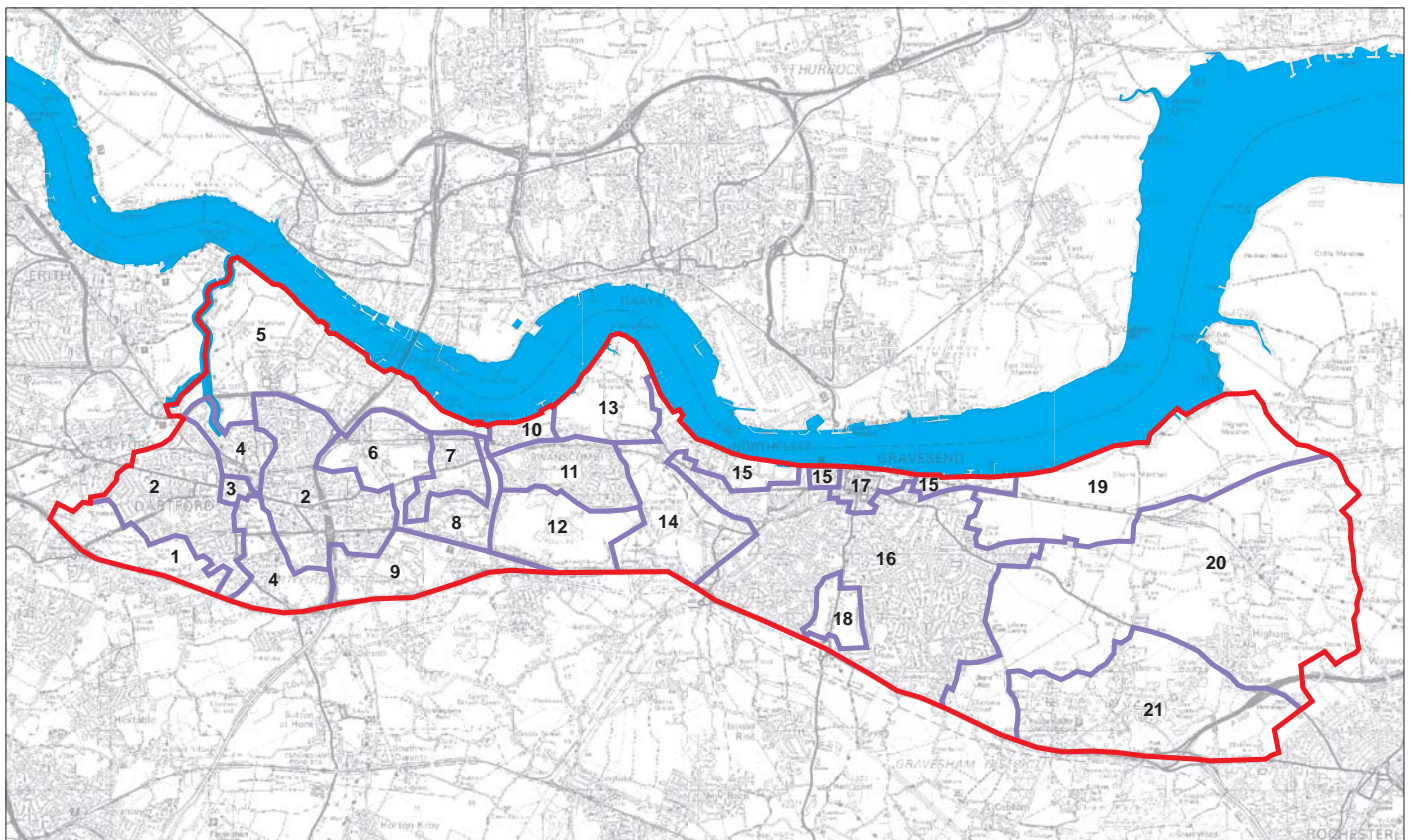


Figure 8: Landscape Character Areas

Character Area 1 - Dartford Heath

Strategic Links

Dartford Heath Link

Summary Description

Lowland heath, sandy soil - supports typical heathland vegetation grass, gorse, heather, birch, oak.

Issues

- Heathland divided by the A2 and bounded by Dartford Suburbs
- Problems with flytipping
- Problems with scrub encroachment
- Problems with occasional travellers encampments

Design Guidance

Soft landscape

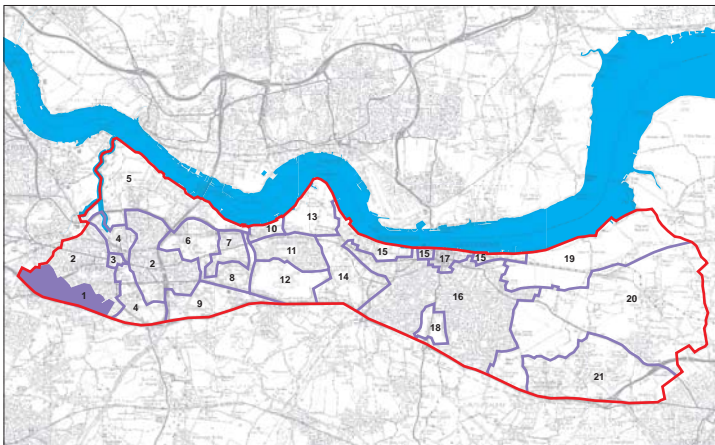
- Maintain and carry out heathland planting and restoration management to create a Local Nature Reserve

Hard landscape

- Paths/surfacing: Hoggin/compacted gravel
- Fencing/barriers: Post and rail, tanalised timber, unstained. Timber bollards.

Signage

- Interpretation signage: Type 2
- Directional signage: Type 9



Character Area 2 - Dartford Suburbs

Strategic Links

Darent Valley Link
Dartford Marsh Link
Dartford Stone Link
Dartford Heath Link

Summary Description

East and west of the town centre, land rising either side of Darent Valley and town centre.
Mixture of C20th estates surrounding Victorian terraces.

Issues

- Busy roads cause poor links into town centre from adjoining suburban areas
- Low density estates such as Temple Hill have green space between buildings which serve little purpose and have low ecological value
- Lack of marked, safe routes for cyclists except the 'Sustrans National Cycle Route'

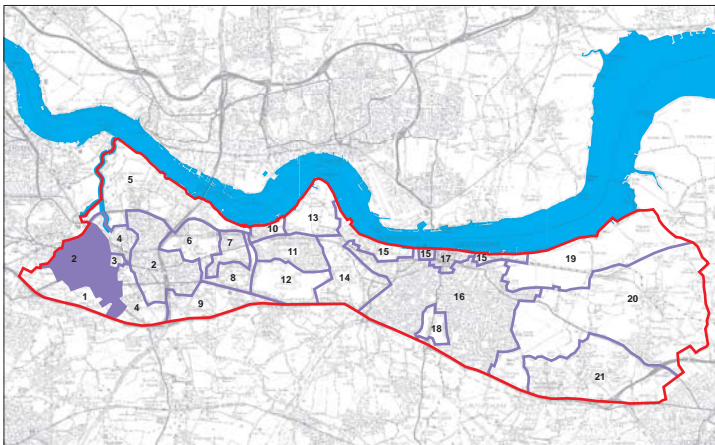
Design Guidance

Soft landscape

- Grass verges: mowing regime to leave areas of long grass, mown margins, two cuts/year
- Formal single species tree planting to strengthen Green Grid routes through urban centres.
- Species to link with surrounding character areas where appropriate e.g. Alnus at urban fringe adjacent to marsh areas. Where possible utilise species from heathland habitat to link Dartford Heath with its surrounding streets.

Hard landscape

- To match existing urban infrastructure and paving
- Signage - Type 3, 5, 6 dependent on specific location
- Discreet pavement markers, Type 7.
- 'Homezone'/Green Grid signage to be used as a part of 20 mph speed restriction on Green Grid routes.



Temple Hill Suburbs



Character Area 3 - Dartford Town Centre

Strategic Links

Dartford Creek Link

Summary Description

Town centre with varying quality - pedestrianised areas in centre with dominant ring roads cutting off the centre from surrounding suburbs for non-motorised traffic. Large areas of car parking near the Clock Tower and Orchard Centre contribute to an overall poor townscape quality.

Issues

- The town centre has been largely disconnected from its surroundings by traffic engineering and poor pedestrian and cycle links
- The pedestrianised town centre is underused in the evenings
- Poor urban design leads to poor environment for pedestrian visitors and limits the potential use of public spaces.
- Lack of residential dwellings in the town centre restricts its potential use as a vibrant centre and limits the use of the existing facilities, and the potential for creating new ones.

Design Guidance

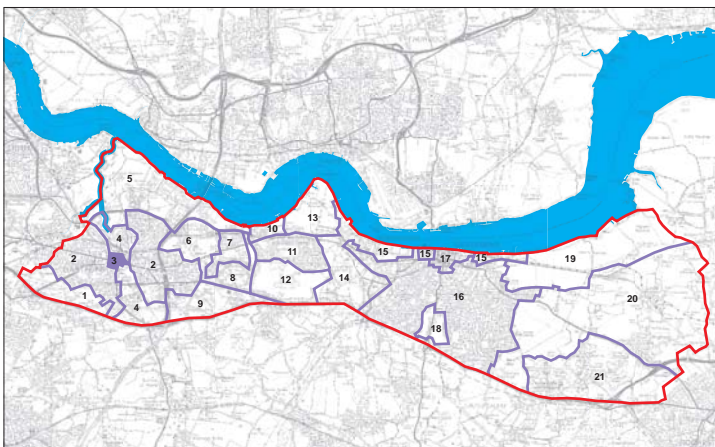
- Reconnect town centre with surrounding areas and railway station by providing pedestrian/cycle routes using high quality robust materials.
- Reconnect the town centre with the marshes/Thames via a new accessible river walk
- Redefine Dartford's character by eliminating poor quality townscape areas and pedestrian 'dead zones'.

Materials

- Town Centre
Take references from historic materials found in the town centre and its traditional buildings, to emphasise Dartford's historic character.
- River Walk - asphalt paths, soft verges
Town fringes: Breendon gravel, timber edging to marshes section of the river walk.

Signage

- Incorporate Green Grid signage into New Fastrack transport nodes at Railway Station (Type 1)
- Town centre areas and existing roads: Type 5 and 7
- River Darent - Marshes: Type 2 and 8.



View north back into town from Dartford Creek



Character Area 4 - Darent Valley

Strategic Links

Darent Valley Link

Summary Description

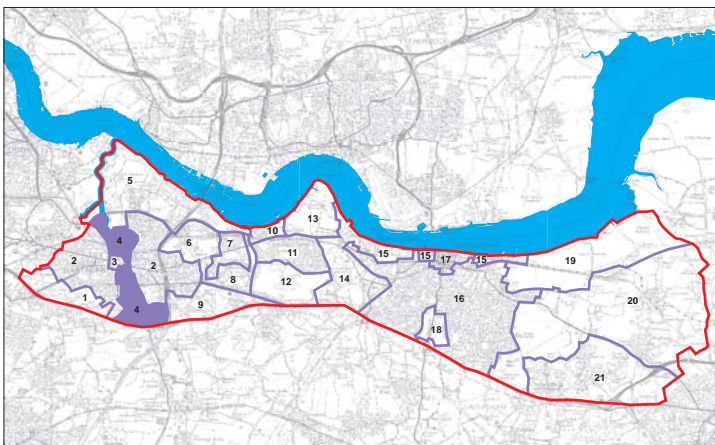
North and south of town centre and including Central Park
Largely surrounded by light industrial areas and suburban housing. Central park has several sports and other facilities.

Issues

- An important green grid link with good access from the adjoining suburbs to the countryside south of the A2.
- The river Darent is contained within an engineered canal on its approach into the town centre and is a major potential visual and recreational resource.
- Motorway noise
- Views out towards suburban, industrial areas and roads have a negative impact.

Design Guidance

- Re-connect the Gun Powder Mills site with the town centre
- Materials and signage as for Dartford town centre Character area 3
- Enhance the pedestrian and cycle links from the town centre through Central Park, to the countryside south of the A2.
- More naturalistic style of planting could be introduced into Central Park to 'bring the Countryside into the town centre'
- Rural character can be reinforced by replanting hedgerows, strategic planting of riverside trees, and masking unsympathetic infrastructure
- Restore the river's natural floodplain for water management, aesthetic and environmental reasons
- Signage
 - Type 3, 5 and 6 where on public roads
 - Type 7 through Park, and incorporate into Park Notice Boards



Character Area 5 - North Dartford and Crossways

Strategic Links

Dartford Marsh Riverside and Dartford Marsh - Stone Link

Summary Description

Marshes landscape dominated by the power station and associated industrial works south of the Dartford Bridge crossing
Range of naturalised landscapes around the Littlebrook Lakes (no public access)
Structural landscape surrounding crossways Business Park has a 'manicured' character, maintained to a high standard but not in keeping with the surrounding marshland character

Issues

Dartford Marshes

- Flytipping
- Poor pedestrian access to and around the Marshes
- Inaccessible public rights of way
- Industrial neighbours create a poor impression
- Ecologically sensitive

Design Guidance

Hard Landscape

- Paths - east-west riverside/flood defences local hoggin/bound gravel material
- Marshes: re-use the existing sett/cobble roads and tramlines, within any new development
- Links adjacent to main roads: tarmac, pedestrian and cycle routes segregated from the main carriage way.

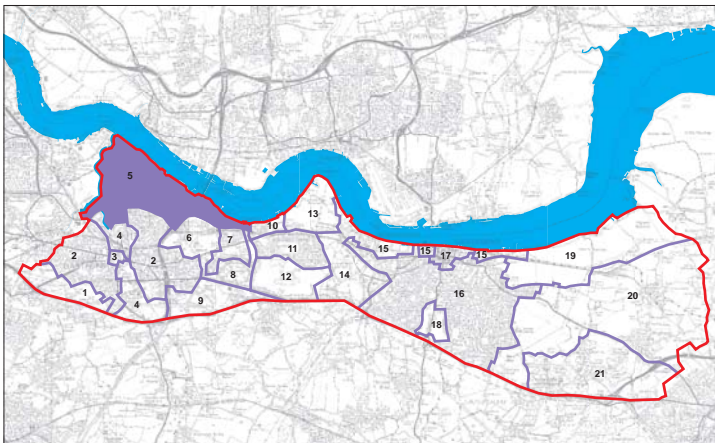
Soft Landscape

- Along drainage ditches/new development/University Way
Trees: Alder, pollarded willow
- Design new flood defences to contribute to the network of Green Grid infrastructure and pedestrian links
- Ramps over flood defences: to create north/south links back to university way

Signage

- Marshland: Types 8 and 2
Littlebrook Lakes: Types 8 and 2
Business Park: Type 4 - Integrate within Business Park signage, and Type 8

View across Dartford Marshes



Character Area 6 - Stone Lodge and surrounding land

Strategic Links

Dartford - Stone Link
Stone Castle Link

Summary Description

- Hospital site promoted for housing redevelopment
- Severely degraded development, landscape, old landfill/quarry site
- Sparsely vegetated, predominantly grassland and litter
- Good views overlooking Dartford Bridge and the river
- Lacks character due to second generation landscape created by - landfill operations with no design for its afteruse, therefore, needs a new purpose

Issues

- Degraded landfill site with issues such as car dumping, no specific land use
- Lack of nearby residential density to use the site
- Poor ecological value
- Limitations as to future land use due to previous landfill operations
- Weak character/sense of place within the surrounding context
- Artificial landform, obliterating former landscape character
- Existing toilet facilities usually shut, this could be used as a ranger station.

Design Guidance

General Principles

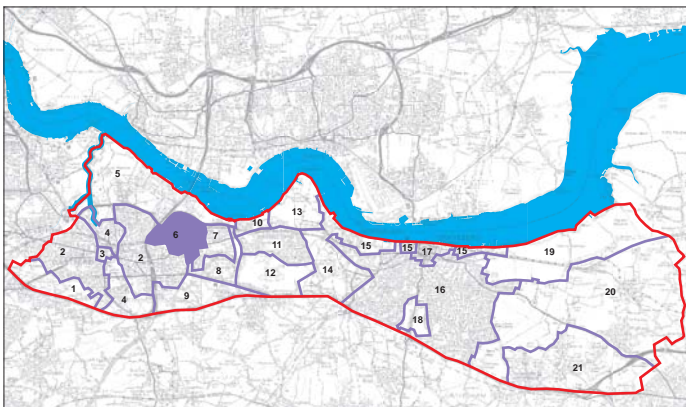
- Create an alternative/additional landuse for the existing degraded land; a new park with sports and recreation, with additional land combined as an ecology park with allotments and biomass fuel production. The new park should aim to create its own new, post industrial aesthetic
- Create network of paths leading from the surrounding areas to specific events and destinations across the site.
- Increase ecological diversity through site design and planting, creating areas of shelter, openness, views, landmarks, sculptures, education
- Ensure that any new development on the Stone Lodge Hospital Site embraces the Green Grid principles and includes pedestrian access/links to the adjacent open space
- Ensure that new development retains all items of existing hospital 'heritage' as part of the Green Grid infrastructure. Ensure the strategic Green Grid link is central to the development.

Materials

- Hard Landscape: The new hard landscape materials can take reference from the surrounding areas and post industrial activities to reinforce a new sense of place and contribute to the new character
- Soft Landscape: Produce native plant stock and seed banks from local, adjoining areas to increase the biodiversity on the site.

Signage

- Mixture of modern designed, post industrial landscape signage for the new park and sympathetic, simple timber bollards to aid waymarking; Type 8 and 12.



Character Area 7 - Stone

Strategic Links

Stone Castle Link

Summary Description

- Villages of Stone and Horns Cross, featuring flint faced traditional construction.

Issues

- Villages are surrounded by inaccessible landfill sites, industry, Business Parks.

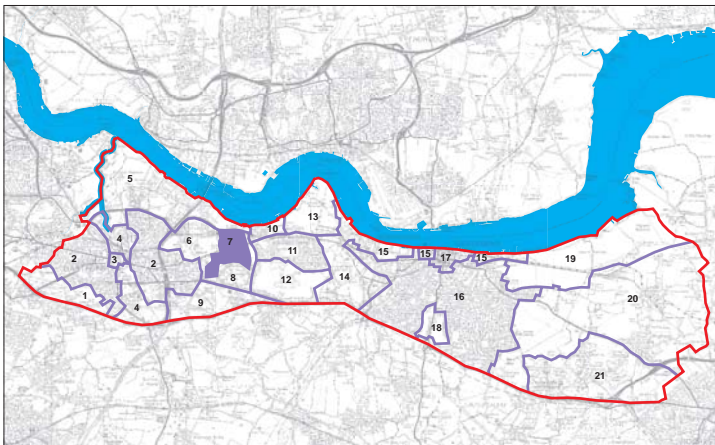
Design Guidance

Materials

- To match existing paving types in historic villages
- Hard Landscape: Robust, cost effective paving materials to enhance the new fastrack route along London Road. Transport nodes; Type 1, integrated signage
- Soft Landscape: Appropriate tree planting for chalk/sand and gravel areas, such as beech, rowans, hawthorns, dependent on location and situation
- Calcareous grass and wildflower mixes for lawns and open spaces in new developments.

Signage

- Incorporate into existing signage and structures to avoid excess 'clutter'
- Use of ground mounted direction Type 7 markers, so as not to compete with the historic fabric.
- Ensure Green Grid signage is incorporated into the new residential developments at Stone Castle
- Distinct Green Grid routes within the new phases of Stone Castle developments should have appropriate street tree planting, and 20mph routes clearly marked.



Character Area 8 - Bluewater and St Clements/Eastern Quarry Development

Strategic Links

Bluewater Link

Summary Description

Eastern Quarry: Existing partly working quarry, soon due for closure and development for housing
Bluewater: Large retail park set within an old quarry

Issues

- Level changes and associated problems with accessibility
- Ensuring a new development is permeable to its surroundings
- Creation of links with, and routes to existing communities
- Creation of a new landscape for the new communities, to be in respectful of the surrounding features and landscape characteristics while having its own, positive and distinct identity

Design Guidance

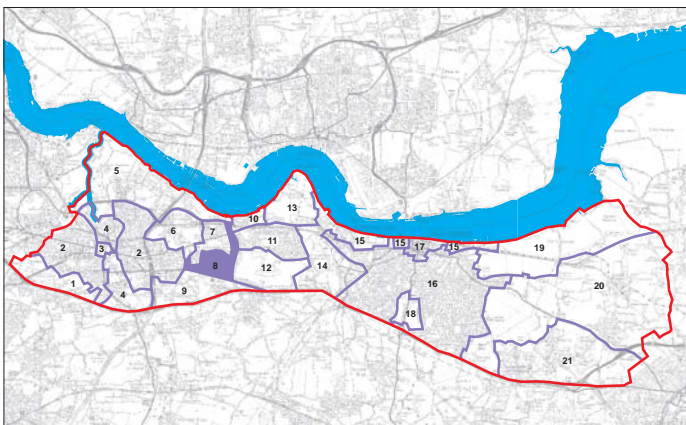
- Improve signage between Railway Station/Fastrack to Bluewater and the Thames
- Utilise Bluewater 'Quarry environment, ex-chalk workings aesthetic' in the creation of the strategic Green Grid link
- Ensure high quality Green Grid E/W links are created into Eastern Quarry, and which are separated from the main road carriageway.
- Ensure pedestrian and cycle links are integrated into the eastern quarry site - utilise prominent 'Gateway' signage to give these links a high profile and presence.

Materials

- Hard landscape: Monolithic materials, tarmac with chippings paths physically separated from the carriageway by a minimum 1 metre planted strip.
- Soft landscape: Typical chalkland flora, calcareous grass/wildflower mixes created from existing grassland habitats in surrounding areas.
- Native plants/shrubs to constitute the main 'structure planting' within the new development and ensure continuous native green links for wildlife. To be propagated from local native plant stock, cultivated in on-site nurseries, to be set up to supply the development during the construction phase.
- Street tree planting: Major routes - Fagus, Quercus
Minor routes: Acer, Sorbus, Gleditsia, Alnus

Signage

- Green Grid signage to be incorporated into road/infrastructure signage to ensure continuity for Green Grid routes with surrounding routes. Type 5.
- Gateway signage to promote new Green Grid routes within the site. Type 11.



Character Area 9 - Area incorporating Darenth Country Park with ancient woodland (SSSI)

Strategic Links

Summary Description

Largely open and rural
Area of extensive gravel and clay extraction.
Beacon Wood and Country Park exhibits many relics of the site's industrial history, such as rails from the clay transportation routes, gunpowder building foundations and gravel heaps.
Darenth Country Park - newly created on the site of old hospital grounds

Issues

- Fast rural roads leading to entrances to country park discourage non-car traffic
- Dominance of major roads including the A2

Design Guidance

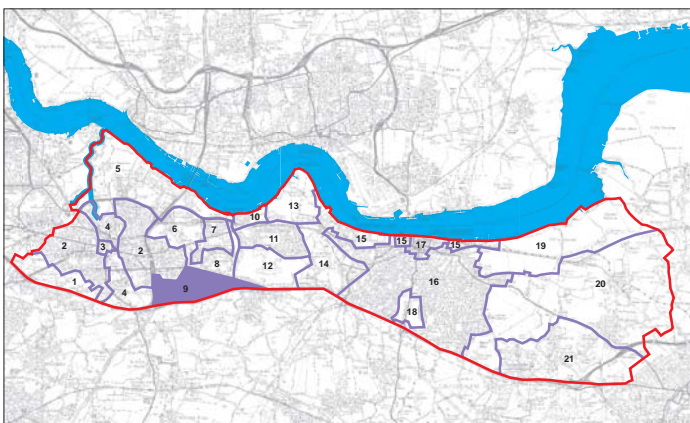
- Extend both Beacon Wood and Darenth Country Park to create a 'joined' Darenth and Beacon Country Park
- Enhance woodland character and open rural grazing pasture, interspersed with orchards and hedgerows
- Create additional woodland along the major road corridors.

Materials

- Continue materials used in Darenth Country Park throughout Darenth/Beacon Wood linked park
- Stone, timber, simple and robust furniture and enclosure.
- Soft Landscape: Pioneer species - birch, rowan on former quarry sites, Fruit trees to enhance the fruit tree belt further south.

Signage

- Utilise remnants of industrial heritage for interpretation and waymarkers, for the proposed Darenth:Beacon Wood Link.
- Possible use of locally sourced stone, for carving with inscriptions for waymarkers and place names.
- Types 8, 9, 10, 12.



Beacon Wood Country Park with industrial remnants



Character Area 10 - Greenhithe/Ingress Park Riverside

Strategic Links

Fiddler's Reach (Swanscombe waterfront)

Summary Description

Former chalk extraction and industrial area. Currently in the process of change to new residential

Issues

- Access and links through riverside developments from public footpaths to the river should be plentiful and culminate in public spaces which have facilities and create 'destinations'
- Design of new riverside communities should integrate flood defence into the public amenity of the site and not prevent visual or physical access to the river
- New landscapes adjoining and running through the sites must be multi-functional for human use and wildlife transport, ecological diversity, etc.
- Former heritage activity should be incorporated within new site designs and character.

Design Guidance

- All new future Riverside developments should be linked to the new Riverside Walk in terms of both physical access and materials
- Riverside path requires a consistent treatment along its length to tie in the various developments and create a unified character
- Retain former industrial elements e.g. old machinery remnants/structures to retain evidence of the previous land uses and layers of history
- Avoid use of 'datable' materials such as concrete block paving in public areas, which will give a disjointed appearance to the link as a whole.

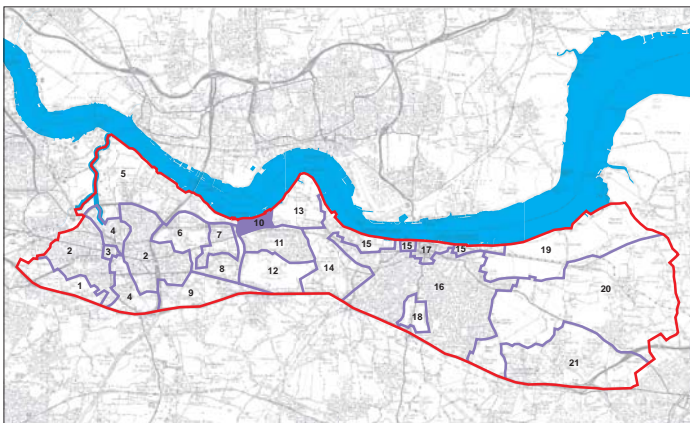
Materials

- Hard landscape: High quality urban river front
Tarmac paths, gravel chippings, rolled in
Robust street furniture
- Soft landscape: Calcareous grassland/herbaceous mix
- Tree planting: Oak, birch, rowan; suitable for calcareous and thin soils
- Shrub: Hippophae, potentilla, piceus spinosa, Euonymus europaeus, salix.

Signage

- Robust, new signage to reflect the historic character of the site and complement the new housing development
- Types 5, 9.

New development with integral open space



Character Area 11 - Swanscombe and Knockhall

Strategic Links

Swanscombe Town Link
Swanscombe Link
Green Manor Link

Summary Description

A cohesive industrial village, surrounded by open land comprising former quarrying sites, of varying character, quality and accessibility

Issues

- Existing residential community with established parks and open spaces
- Incorporates the Sustrans National Cycle route through the centre of Swanscombe
- Isolated from surrounding areas by private, often ex-quarry land
- Existing parks and open spaces such as Swanscombe Heritage Park suffering from lack of cohesive design, and adequate capital and management funding.

Design Guidance

- Capitalise on the important themes of past concrete industry and internationally important Palaeolithic archaeology to define a design theme for the Swanscombe Town - Peninsula Link and corridor
- Ensure a strong, strategic link is created from the Eastern Quarry Development to the river via the Swanscombe Corridor

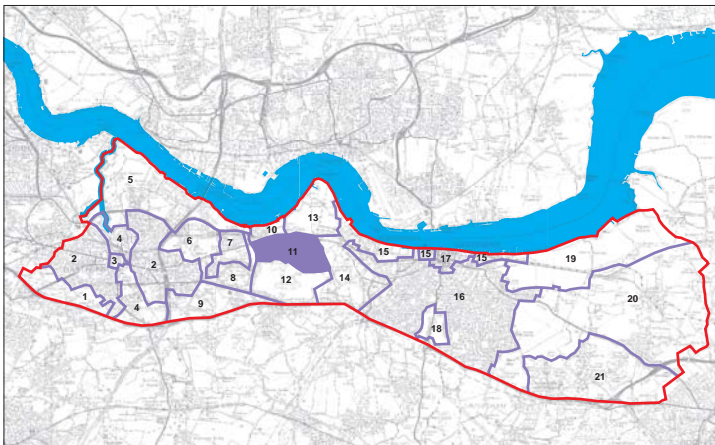
Materials

- Hard landscape: Existing street infrastructure
Tarmac, new segregated paths for new developments
Hoggin/bound gravel - rural fringe paths
- Soft landscape: Calcareous grassland/herbaceous mix
Scrub mix on ex quarry sites; local native
Stock e.g. Euonymus, salix, prunus spinosa
- Trees: Street trees: Acer 'Columnare'
Pyrus, Robinia species, Sorbus.

Signage

- Urban, street signage: Type 4, 6
- Post industrial and quarry landscapes: Types 10, 12
- Rural, timber waymarkers and signage as subsidiary signage for rural character areas: Type 8
- Informal planting, Oak, birch, rowan.

Quarry land east of Swanscombe



Character Area 12 - Eastern Quarry

Strategic Links

Eastern Quarry North
Eastern Quarry Central
Eastern Quarry South

Summary Description

Eastern Quarry: Existing partly working quarry, soon due for closure and development for housing

Issues

- Level changes and associated problems with accessibility, especially on southern sides.
- Ensuring a new development is permeable to its surroundings
- Creation of links with, and routes to existing communities
- Creation of a new landscape for the new communities, to be in respectful of the surrounding features and landscape characteristics while having its own, positive and distinct identity, which contributes to the biodiversity and ecology of the area.

Design Guidance

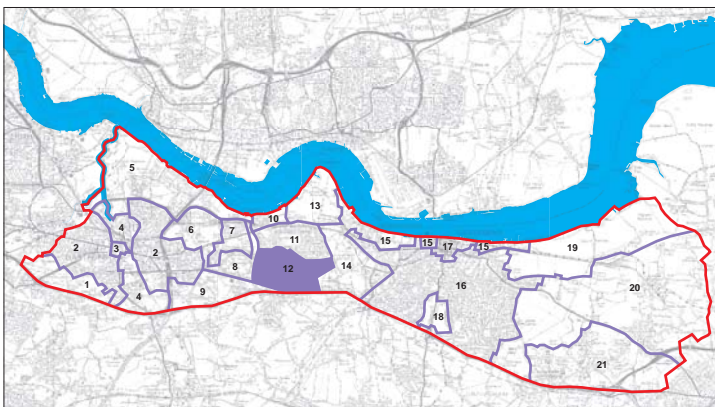
- Key opportunity to reconnect the surrounding residential areas with each other, the new Transport hub at Ebbsfleet, Bluewater and the river
- Key opportunity to create a network of new and varied landscapes which connect back to the wider landscape/townscape.

Materials

- Hard landscape: Tarmac with chippings rolled in, physically separated from the carriageway by a minimum 1 metre planted strip.
- Soft landscape: Typical chalkland flora, calcareous grass/wildflower mixes created from existing grassland habitats in surrounding areas.
- Native plants/shrubs to constitute the main 'structure planting' within the new development and ensure continuous native green links for wildlife. To be propagated from local native plant stock, cultivated in on-site nurseries, to be set up to supply the development during the construction phase.
- Street tree planting: Major routes - Fagus, Quercus
Minor routes: Acer, Sorbus, Gleditsia, Alnus

Signage

- Green Grid signage to be incorporated into road/infrastructure signage to ensure continuity for Green Grid routes with surrounding routes. Type 5.
- Gateway signage to promote new Green Grid routes within the site. Type 11.



Character Area 13 - Swanscombe Peninsula

Strategic Links

Green Manor Link
Swanscombe Peninsula South
Swanscombe Peninsula

Summary Description

Area of former extraction, currently a flat marshland habitat with concrete and steel fabrication plants, due for development as identified in Figure 2: Development and Transport Infrastructure

Issues

- Flood relief and its design within the new masterplan will be crucial to ensure its multi-functionality within the new landscape
- Ensure a new green grid access link to the tip of the peninsula and the 'Beacon' Development proposed for that location
- Opportunity to create a well connected new community and set of facilities for the benefit of the new development and existing communities of Swanscombe and Knockhall.

Design Guidance

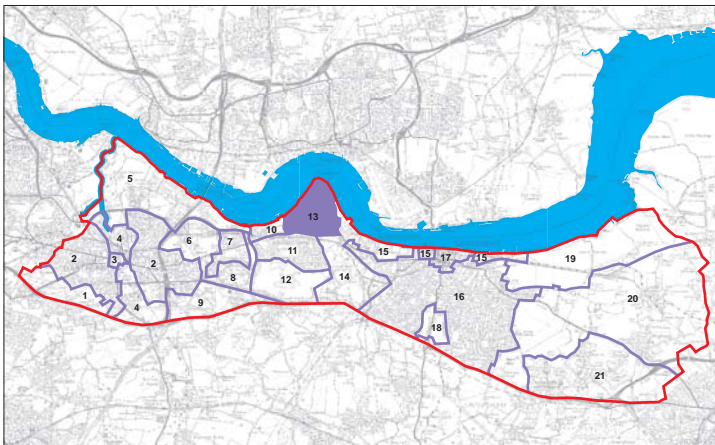
- Ensure marshland character is reflected within the new development on the Swanscombe Peninsula, and that the Green Grid corridor is designed as a part of this
- Creation of a landmark building within the Swanscombe Peninsula development to become a beacon for the area, to reinforce its legibility within the East Thames landscape and create an identity for the peninsula.
- Creation of viewing point at the Swanscombe peninsula.
- High quality, segregated cycle and pedestrian route to be created as a strategic route north-south from Swanscombe to the river and Thames Path City to Sea
- Creation of a linear park incorporating the strategic link, and marshland character through the peninsula
- New urban waterfront with generous public access

Materials

- Hard landscape: Tarmac with chippings rolled in High quality, simple and robust furniture
- Soft landscape: To reflect marshland character, planted SUDS drainage, reeds, damp meadow herbaceous species
- Trees: Restrict tree planting on the peninsula to reflect the existing marshland character.

Signage

- Main segregated routes and new linear parks: Type 11 and 12
Types 5, 6 for strategic routes through roads.



Existing industry and landmarks on the peninsula

Character Area 14 - Ebbsfleet

Strategic Links

Ebbsfleet Valley Link
Springhead Country Park

Summary Description

Area of former chalk/quarrying with large water bodies. An area of redevelopment with major new transport hub, for CTRL

Issues

- Integration of the Ebbsfleet river valley into the new 'Valley Park' Green Grid North-South Link, a flagship green grid project
- Major new transport hub must have good connectivity with the Green Grid, to make them complementary
- Integration of existing water body (Blue Lake) into the new development, to create a new Nature Reserve
- Potential to integrate educational and Green Grid Ranger facility within the new Nature Reserve
- Important to ensure Green Grid infrastructure is implemented prior to new development being constructed

Design Guidance

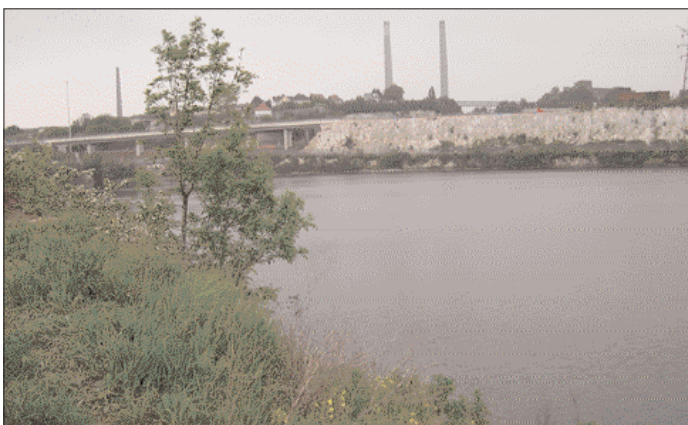
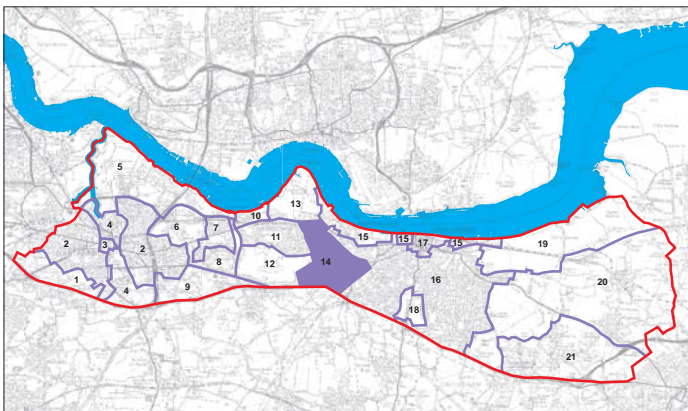
- New roads and infrastructure to be put in as part of the new transport hub and regeneration provide the opportunity to develop segregated cycle/pedestrian paths, away from major new roads
- New, robust 'Ebbsfleet' signage can be developed to reflect the new green infrastructure and industrial past
- Major paeleolithic archaeology sites - the interpretation and recognition of which should be incorporated into the new character for the new developments.

Materials

- Hard landscape: Tarmac with chippings for new pedestrian cycle routes adjacent but separated from new roads.
- Soft landscape: Typical chalkland flora, calcareous grass/wildflower mixes created from existing grassland habitats in surrounding areas.
- Native plants/shrubs to constitute the main 'structure planting' within the new development and ensure continuous native green links for wildlife. To be propagated from local native plant stock, cultivated in on-site nurseries, to be set up to supply the development during the construction phase.
- Street tree planting: Major routes - Fagus, Quercus
Minor routes: Acer, Sorbus, Gleditsia, Alnus

Signage

- Green Grid signage to be incorporated into road/infrastructure signage to ensure continuity for Green Grid routes with surrounding routes. Type 5.
- Gateway signage to promote new Green Grid routes within the site. Type 11.



New CTRL infrastructure across the top of the 'Blue Lakes'

Character Area 15 - Gravesend Industrial Riverside

Strategic Links

Botany Marsh

Summary Description

Currently occupied by retail and industrial sheds. Little public access to the river. Another area of former extraction, sharp level change from the London Road to the industrial zone due to previous quarrying activity.

Issues

- Severance of hinterland from River Thames
- Lack of access along riverside
- Severance of access from Thames Path by Gravesend 'out of town' retail sheds

Design Guidance

- Opportunity for new riverside walk as part of Thames Path City to Sea as the industrial uses change
- Associate with river-related leisure activities
- Exploit views across the river towards Tilbury.

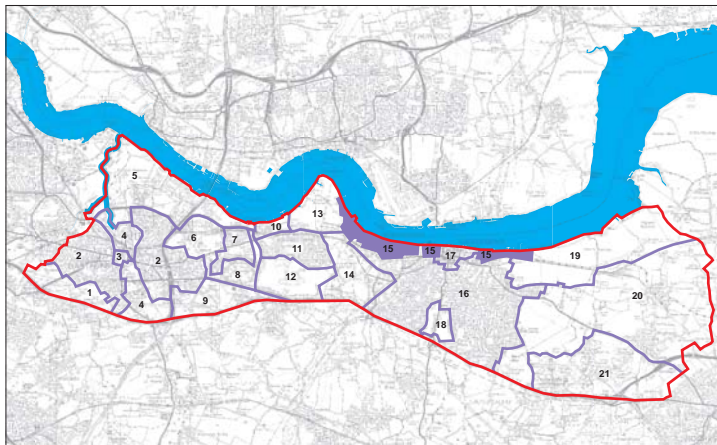
Materials

- Hard landscape: Tarmac with chippings rolled in along high quality robust furniture
New urban riverfront
- Soft landscape: Restrict tree planting, incorporated into SUDS drainage schemes to create new urban marshland character
Calcareous wetland species and shrub species.

Signage

- Riverfront: Type 11, 12, new post industrial signage.

View across existing industrial sheds showing change of level



Character Area 16 Gravesend Suburbs

Strategic Links

Wealdway
Gravesend to Shorne Wood

Summary Description

Typical, terraced, semi-detached and bungalow type housing often set within verged roads

Issues

- Fast road speeds
- Costly labour intensive mowing regimes
- Lack of local distinctiveness

Design Guidance

Signage

- Enhance existing parks
- Enhance and create good, safe and attractive links to the wider surrounding landscape such as Cobham Park and other areas to the south of the A2, via specific 'Quiet Lanes'
- Use speed restrictions/homezone signage - (Type 5, 6 and 7)
- Type 5 and 6, 4 or 11 at destinations and 'gateways'
- Type 1 at transport nodes.

Materials

- Soft landscape
Utilize species typical of North Kent landscape; e.g. Holm oak to give structure to main routes
Change mowing regimes on main routes with wide grass verges, to allow some long grass with close cut grass margins
- Hard landscape: Existing urban infrastructure with enhanced signage and traffic speed restrictions.

