

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)¹

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. Paragraphs relevant to this socio-economic assessment are:

- **Paragraph 8** - considers the important social and economic role that planning plays to secure sustainable development;
- **Paragraph 9** - plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas;
- **Paragraph 61** - outlines the importance of sufficient land supply to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes;
- **Paragraph 85** - refers to the Government's commitment to secure economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development; and
- **Paragraph 96** - planning policies and decisions should promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for multiple connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontage. Additionally, planning policies and decisions should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- **Paragraph 98** - planning policies and decisions should ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services;
- **Paragraph 109** – considers the importance of promoting sustainable travel by ensuring that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.
- **Paragraph 124** - planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Regional Planning Policy

Kent and Medway Economic Framework (2024)²

The Economic Framework demonstrated that overall, Kent and Medway has a diverse economy, which has been successful in recent years in increasing employment, growing its business stock and attracting investment. It also suggests that recent and forecast population growth is significantly higher than the UK average. The Framework aims to ensure that Kent continues to be a place where people want to live, and it enjoys a substantial stock of 'quality of life' assets which are important to enhance and protect.

The Framework outlines five ambitions:

- Enabling innovative, productive and creative businesses – including leverage of Kent's quality of life, connectivity and other assets in ensuring that it is a welcoming place for visitors and investors.
- Widening opportunities and unlocking talent – including retaining and developing talent.
- Securing resilient infrastructure for planned, sustainable growth.
- Placing economic opportunity at the centre of community wellbeing and prosperity - Ensuring that everyone who wants a job can access work, the development of a new strategic partnership for health and the economy, and ensuring that economic opportunity is at the centre of local regeneration.
- Creating diverse, distinctive and vibrant places – including enhancing Kent's rural economy.

Local Planning Policy

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)³

The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2014 and outlines the strategic vision and policies for development in Gravesham from 2011 to 2028. The following policies are of relevance to Socio-Economics:

- **Policy CS01: Sustainable Development** - In order to meet both current and future economic, social and environmental needs to achieve sustainable development in Gravesham, further development is required within the Borough. Such development will meet the changing housing needs of the population, support and improve the local economy and develop services and facilities to support and benefit the existing local communities.
- **Policy CS14: Housing Type and Size** - The Council will expect new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes taking into account the existing character of the area and evidence of local need to create sustainable and balanced communities.

- **Policy CS16: Affordable Housing** - The provision of affordable housing will be required on all new housing developments of: 15 dwellings or more or on sites of 0.5 hectares or more in the urban area; and 3 units or more or on sites of 0.1 hectares or more in the rural area. The amount of affordable housing to be provided by private housing development sites above the threshold will be 30% in the urban area and 35% in the rural area.
- **Policy CS10: Physical and Social Infrastructure** - Support will be given to proposals that protect, retain or enhance existing physical and social infrastructure, or lead to the provision of additional infrastructure that improves community well-being.

Gravesham 2040 (2025)⁴

Gravesham 2040 aims to make the case for investment in the borough, highlighting the opportunities and the vision and objectives that will unlock the borough's potential. It indicates that Gravesham's economy has experienced strong growth over the past decade and average resident and workplace earnings are above regional and national averages, with strong business and employment growth. However, housing affordability is a challenge in terms of both purchase and rental. This has worsened in recent years relative to both resident and workplace earnings.

The vision outlined in the plan is that Gravesham in 2040 will be a fairer place that puts the needs of communities, businesses and people at the heart of plans to enhance the Borough and makes the built environment and infrastructure fit for purpose for a diverse economy to maximise the opportunities available and provide the circumstances that meets the modern challenges in housing, employment, and transport.

The vision also aims to support health and well-being advancements indicating that the borough is currently the most in-active in Kent. The council has outlined a commitment to advance healthy living: by advancing local health outcomes through modern, affordable, and accessible leisure provision.

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024) National Planning Policy Framework

² Kent County Council (2024) Kent and Medway Economic Framework

³ Gravesham Borough Council (2014) Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy

⁴ Gravesham Borough Council (2025) Gravesham 2040