Acknowledgements

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Thanks are also due to the client team (specifically Ruth Childs at Kent County Council), and to the many organisations and individuals who have contributed to the consultation.

All photographs (except p. 9) by Fiona Fyfe.
View west across the Medway valley towards Nettlestead
Commissioning and Brief

This project was commissioned in December 2014 by Kent County Council. It has been prepared by Fiona Fyfe Associates between January and March 2015. The project brief contains the following 'Vision' for the Strategic Landscape Enhancement Plan (SLEP): The SLEP will use landscape as the common thread to tie together cross-disciplinary aspirations and aims. It will act to cement, by knitting together disparate plans (e.g. Green Infrastructure Strategies, Local Plans etc.) which exist for an area, by generating clear and practical measures which can be realised...

Format of the Medway Valley SLEP

This SLEP is in the three parts. The first part (Introduction) describes the study area’s location, and provides a summary of its landscape history, key features and designated sites. The second part (Evidence Base) summarises the key documents which are relevant to the landscape management of the area, and also sets out the findings of the public consultation exercise undertaken at the start of the project. The third part (Opportunities for Enhancement) presents concerns and opportunities for landscape enhancement in a series of themes. The Appendices provide a list of consultees, references and sources of further information.

The Study Area

The Study Area is shown in the map below. It is focussed on the river Medway between the M20 bridge crossing near Allington (the northernmost point), and Beltring Station (the southernmost point). The Study Area is within Maidstone District, and in places the study area boundary follows the District boundary.

Some recommendations (for example those relating to land management) are relevant to land which lies outside the formal study area, but which nevertheless has a strong visual connection with the study area, and influences its landscape character and sense of place.

Methodology and Stakeholder Engagement

The project comprised four key stages of work: 1) Desk studies (reviewing mapped information and relevant documents); 2) field work (spending several days in the study area, recording observations and taking photographs); 3) writing-up (creating and compiling text, maps, illustrations and photographs) to form this report, and 4) stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholder engagement has been a key part of this project, and has taken place early in the project in order to influence the direction and content of the SLEP. Public consultation took the form of questionnaires which enabled people to describe what makes the Medway valley special to them, their concerns about its landscape, and their favourite views. These questionnaires were completed by members of the public at a drop-in session at Wateringbury Village Hall arranged through Parish Councils, and throughout the fieldwork. Consultation also took place with Local Authority staff, and representatives of a variety of organisations engaged with the Medway Valley, including planning officers, historic environment officers, the Environment Agency, Wildlife Trusts, canoeists, flooding and drainage officers and access and rights of way officers.
Short History of the Medway Valley Landscape

Geology and Topography

The river Medway and its tributaries rise as a series of springs in the mudstone (clay) geology of the High and Low Weald. This geology extends into the southern part of the study area around Yalding, with its wide valley floor and clay soils. For the majority of the study area, the Medway flows through Lower Greensand rocks. Greensand is a distinctive form of limestone with a grey-green colour which makes excellent building material, known locally as ‘ragstone’. Over millennia, the river Medway has cut through the Greensand to create a relatively steep-sided valley with a narrow valley floor.

The river Medway is made navigable through the study area by a series of locks. Allington Lock (at the northernmost point of the study area) is the last lock when travelling downstream; beyond this point the river is tidal down to its mouth at Chatham.

Prehistory and the Roman Period

Evidence suggests use of local river valleys as trading routes in the Bronze Age, with associated settlement and activity. Further evidence suggests that the river Medway was made navigable (at least as far as Teston) in Roman times, in order to export ragstone from local quarries by ship. A Roman shipwreck with a cargo of Kentish ragstone was found near Blackfriars Bridge in London, and another possible Roman shipwreck site was recently found in the river Medway near East Farleigh.

There are known Roman ragstone quarry sites within or close to the study area, at Allington, Dean Street, Teston and Boughton Monchelsea. Roman villa sites have been found close by, suggesting that the villas accommodated the owners/managers of these quarries. Several local churches contain re-used Roman stones in their construction. There are also Roman roads and cemetery sites within the study area.

The Medieval Period

The study area is rich in surviving medieval structures, many of which remain in use. The most well-known examples are the ragstone bridges across the Medway at East Farleigh, Teston and Yalding. There are numerous medieval churches, some within villages, and others (e.g. Barming, Nettlestead and West Farleigh) in isolated locations. Maidstone has historically been an ecclesiastical centre (the location of the Archbishop’s palace) and monastic sites along the Medway are suggested in place names (e.g. Priory House).
The town of Maidstone was founded in the medieval period, and the majority of villages and lanes within the study area would also have been established by c.1300.

A particularly fine example of a medieval manor house (with gatehouse) has survived at Nettlestead Place, overlooking the Medway Valley south of Wateringbury.

The following illustrations show the ruined castle in the 19th Century, and the restored castle as seen from the river today.

Historic maps show many mills along the Medway and its tributaries, and many of these would have had Medieval origins.

Allington Castle, at the northern end of the study area was originally a manor house, which was fortified in the 13th Century. It was subsequently enlarged into a country house, and was the home of the Wyatt family, including poet Thomas Wyatt. Henry VIII was a visitor to Allington, along with Ann Boleyn. The castle was damaged by fire in the 16th Century, and left as a ruin until 1905, when it was restored as a country house. It is surrounded by gardens and ancient woodland, but is not publicly accessible.
The Post-Medieval period
The post-medieval period saw many changes in the rural landscape which can still be seen in views today. Large estates comprising country houses surrounded by parkland were laid out in this attractive countryside located an easy carriage drive from London along newly-constructed turnpike roads. Hops were introduced into Britain in the early 16th Century and hop gardens (and their accompanying oast houses) quickly became a feature of the Kent landscape. Orchards also became an established part of the local agricultural economy.

In 1823, William Cobbett travelled from Maidstone to Mereworth (along the route now known as the A26) and described it as follows:

> From Maidstone to...[Mereworth] is about seven miles, and these are the finest seven miles that I have ever seen in England or anywhere else. The Medway is to your left, with its meadows about a mile wide. You cross the Medway, in coming out of Maidstone, and it goes and finds its way down to Rochester, through a break in the chalk ridge. From Maidstone to Merryworth, I should think that there were hop-gardens on one half of the way on both sides of the road. Then looking across the Medway, you see hop-gardens and orchards two miles deep, on the side of a gently rising ground: and this continues with you all the way from Maidstone to Merryworth. The orchards form a great feature of the country; and the plantations of ashes and of chestnuts that I mentioned before, add greatly to the beauty.
The 19th Century
In the 18th and 19th Century, the Medway Navigation Company installed a system of locks and weirs which made the river Medway navigable upstream as far as Tonbridge, opening up the river to barges and other river traffic. This supported industry along the river, and changed the character of the area. It also required the replacement of the old bridge at Maidstone. These changes were documented by local artists, as illustrated in the following paintings.

The railway along the Medway Valley between Maidstone and Paddock Wood was constructed in 1844, and extended to Strood in 1856. Many of the original station buildings survive, along with manual level crossing gates at Wateringbury. The railway further increased the accessibility of the area and its connections with London. Towns and villages expanded as the population of the area grew.

The 20th and 21st Centuries
The map on page 10 shows land use and key features in the study area today.

Development has continued throughout the 20th and 21st Centuries. Towns and villages have expanded, often through ribbon development.
along main roads. Several caravan parks have also been constructed in the valley. Some former watermeadow sites have been built on, for example Lock Meadow in Maidstone (shown on the front cover of this document) is now the site of a retail and leisure park, and law courts. Many of the riverside developments in Maidstone face away from the river, rather than towards it, which has changed the relationship between town and river. This disconnect between the town and the river is exacerbated by the 1960s road layout, which effectively turns the river banks and bridges into a large roundabout. Pedestrian access to the riverside path is still possible via subways, but it is not easy. Further impacts of road developments are apparent in the northern part of the study area, which is close to the M20.

Industry has continued to develop alongside the river in Maidstone, and at the former chemical works site near Yalding. Aggregate extraction has taken place on the valley floor in the southern part of the study area since the mid-20th Century. Some of the former mineral workings are now wetland wildlife sites.

The use of the river Medway has changed from industrial transport to recreation. It is now a popular resource for many different types of boats. There are marinas at Allington (containing several historic barges), Maidstone, Wateringbury and Yalding, and numerous moorings along the length of the study area. The river is also used by rowing and canoe clubs, and canoe (and fish) passes have recently been created adjacent to several of the locks. Other recreational uses of the river include angling, bird watching, boat trips and simply watching the world go by, as at Teapot Island.

Evidence survives in the landscape from both World Wars, including concrete anti-tank traps (e.g. opposite Whatman’s Park) and pill boxes. Further military structures may be unrecorded.

The Medway Valley Walk is a recognised long-distance walking route. The surfaced section between Allington and Maidstone is also used by joggers and cyclists. Publicly-accessible riverside sites include The Lees (Yalding), Whatman Park (Maidstone) and Teston Country Park.

Agricultural practices have changed in recent years, sometimes impacting on the traditional landscape character of the Medway Valley. Until the mid-20th Century, families would leave London for a few weeks’ hop-picking ‘holiday’. Many were accommodated in huts on the hop farms, some of which still survive today. Hops are still grown in the area, but are dried industrially, so most oast houses have been converted to residential use. The Medway Valley is still known for its fruit orchards, with spectacular blossom in spring. However, many orchards have been neglected or grubbed-up in recent years as they have ceased to be financially viable. Poly tunnels offer a practical method for growing fruit, and these are now visible on the valley sides. Some former orchards and agricultural land is now used for ‘horsiculture’ and subdivided into paddocks.

Flooding continues to be an issue in the Medway Valley. Winter 2013 saw particularly bad floods, with some riverside settlements severely affected, and much of Maidstone town centre under water.

West Farleigh church and Court Lodge Farm
Designated sites within the study area

The map on the following page shows the many designations which cover natural and cultural sites within the study area. Many of these designated sites are protected through the planning system. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 provides more information on these measures.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- River Beult through Yalding

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)
- Allington Woods
- Bydews Wood
- Waregrave’s Wood
- VariousUnnamed smaller woods

Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)
- Oaken Wood (outside study area)
- Woodland on Hunton Hill (outside study area)

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Teston Country Park
- Nettlestead Churchyard
- Hale Street Ponds and Pasture
- Stoneham and The Lees

Local Nature Reserve (LNR)/ Wildlife Area
- Fant wildlife area

Scheduled Monuments (SM)
- Archbishop’s Palace Gatehouse and Tithe Barn, Maidstone
- College of All Saints, Maidstone
- East Farleigh Bridge
- Teston Bridge
- Twyford Bridge (Yalding)

Historic Farmsteads
- Numerous, often located within villages or isolated on valley sides.

Local Historic Parks and Gardens (HPG)
- Cobtree Manor Park
- Allington Castle
- Court Lodge
- Nettlestead Court

Conservation Areas (CA)
- Maidstone Town Centre
- Maidstone All Saints
- East Farleigh
- Teston
- Wateringbury
- Yalding

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)
Too numerous to show on designations map. TPOs are designated to protect trees in the interest of amenity. They cover trees in a variety of locations, including parks, streets, gardens, greens and woodland.

Listed Buildings
Too numerous to show on designations map. Listed buildings may be situated in villages and towns, or be isolated in the countryside. They include houses, churches, shops, former waterworks, railway stations, lock-keepers cottages, bridges, oast houses, Allington Castle and various country estates.

Long Distance Routes
- Medway Valley Walk

Other non-designated sites of interest include:
- Locks, weirs and sluices
- Mill sites
- Railway buildings and structures
- Historic boats
- Industrial buildings
- Hopper huts
- Traditional orchards and hop farms

Other visitor attractions include:
- Museum of Kent Life and Malta Inn, Allington Lock
- Teapot Island
- Whatman Park, Maidstone
- Pleasure Boat Trips between the Archbishop’s Palace and Allington Lock
Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment

The premise of landscape character assessment is that ‘all landscapes matter’. Not only designated landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but also ‘everyday’ landscapes where people live, work and play. Landscape character assessment identifies landscape character areas (LCAs) which have a distinctive ‘sense of place’ resulting from their combinations and patterns of natural and cultural landscape features.

The Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment identifies and describes 11 LCAs within the study area, plus others which provide its landscape context, as shown on the map.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maidstone LCAs within the study area</th>
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The full Borough Landscape Character Assessment can be viewed at http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/landscape,-heritage-and-design/landscape
Maidstone Borough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Green and Blue Infrastructure is described as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. It includes many types of open spaces, including parks and gardens, country parks, nature reserves and allotments. It also includes movement corridors for people and wildlife.

The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy makes recommendations for enhancing Green Infrastructure across Maidstone Borough. Its draft proposals are shown opposite. Within the study area, the proposals include:

- Prepare Maidstone green and blue corridors action plan.
- Develop Strategic green links with the Medway Gap and the Kent Downs AONB.
- Enhance Priority Green Infrastructure improvement area south-west of Yalding.
- Support Medway and Low Weald Grassland and Wetland Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
- Encourage Catchment ecological improvement (rivers Medway and Beult).

Planning Documents

The Adopted Local Plan
Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan (adopted 2000) and its appendices are currently used to make planning decisions. It contains a number of policies which are relevant to the landscape of the Medway Valley. These include policies which relate specifically to landscape, and also policies relating to development, conservation, historic environment, equestrian development, recreation, areas of local landscape importance, boat moorings, agricultural buildings, etc. The Adopted Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan can be viewed at: http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/12068/Maidstone-Borough-Wide-Local-Plan-2000.pdf

In addition to the Adopted Local Plan, Maidstone also has adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and endorsed Supplementary Guidance Documents (SG). There are also a number of Policy Advice Notes. These can all be accessed from: http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/planning-guidance

The Emerging Local Development Framework
The Local Plan is currently being updated through the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). The first round of consultation has been completed, and the revised Local Plan should go out for consultation later this year.

The evidence base for the LDF comprises a series of technical reports relating to a variety of subjects. As well as the Landscape Character Assessment and Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy already described, they include (for example) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Ancient Woodland Inventory and Agricultural Land Classification Study. The full list can be viewed at: http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/evidence

At the time of writing this SLEP (March 2015), additional work on landscape character sensitivity for Maidstone Borough Council is ongoing. The resulting documents will also be relevant to the study area.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012
The NPPF states (para 109): The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...and minimising impacts on biodiversity...

Para 118 of the NPPF sets out principles to ensure that Planning Authorities conserve and enhance biodiversity when determining planning applications.

Guidance on Development
Guidance is available which aims to promote positive development, and to enhance landscape character through good design and siting. Examples of such guidance are described below. In addition, Maidstone Borough and Kent County Landscape Character Assessments make recommendations for the enhancement of landscape character through their landscape guidelines.

Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook
Contains guidance on a range of rural development and land management techniques covering the AONB and beyond.

Contains detailed recommendations for retaining the character of rural roads and villages whilst dealing with traffic management and development issues.

Kent Farmsteads Character Statement, Site Assessment Framework and Design Guidance
Contains detailed recommendations on the conservation and new-build of farm buildings.

Guidance for Masterplanning Sustainable drainage,
aiming to manage rain water runoff in a natural way by replicating natural processes. See Appendix B for website links to the above publications
Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation

Historic Landscape Characterisation involves the analysis of aerial photographs and maps to identify different types of historic field patterns which survive in the landscape.

The majority of the study area is within Historic Landscape Character Area 11: Greensand Horticultural Belt, which is defined by its relatively high density of horticultural land uses.

The southern part is within Historic Landscape Character Area 10: Medway Basin, which largely comprises valley floor landscapes, with patches of horticulture and fields.

Within these Historic Landscape Character Areas are a number of Historic Landscape Types (HLTts). Within the study area, the principal HLTs are as follows:

**Miscellaneous Valley Bottom Paddocks and Pastures:**
Generally found on the valley floor in rural parts of the study area, and occasionally extending up the valley side. These HLTs comprise generally small enclosures, ranging from regular to highly irregular in shape. Boundaries may be hedges or ditches, and their location often depends on the morphology of the valley bottom.

**Small/ Medium fields with Straight Boundaries:**
Generally found on the valley sides, particularly to the north/ west of the river Medway. These regular fields, bounded by hedgerows, date from the Parliamentary enclosure of open fields in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

**Orchards:**
Generally found on the valley side to the south of the river Medway, and also on the north side of the valley between Barming and Maidstone. Horticultural activity today only accounts for approx. 5% of Kent’s land use, and orchards comprise the majority of this. Orchards have a strong influence on the historic landscape character of the County, and are key elements in the Greensand Horticultural Belt Historic Landscape Character Area.

**Hamlet or Village, 1801 extent:**
This HLT comprises nucleated settlement identifiable on first edition Ordnance Survey maps. Examples within the study area include Allington, Maidstone town centre, Tovil, East and West Farleigh, Barming, Teston, Nettlestead and Yalding.

**Post-1810 Settlement:**
This HLT comprises settlement which has developed since 1801. It includes expansion of hamlets, villages and towns, as well as new settlements. The largest example of this HLT is Maidstone, but it can also be seen around the peripheries of most villages within the study area.

Less extensive HLTs in the study area include:

**Fields with irregular straight boundaries:**
Situated west of W.Farleigh and south-west of Tovil, this HLT comprises small-medium sized fields of interlocking shapes, thought to represent enclosure of land in the 17th/18th Centuries, prior to parliamentary enclosure.

**Ancient Woodlands (pre 1801):**
These include Bydews Wood and Waregrave’s Wood. Towards the south of the study area are Ancient Valley floor woodlands, often containing wet woodland species, e.g. alder and willow.

**19th Century and Later Parkland:**
This HLT is associated with the grounds of estates. Within the study area there are examples at Barham Court (east of Teston), and near Allington.

**Industrial Complexes and Factories:**
The former chemical works near Yalding station is within this HLT.

The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation can be viewed at: [http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_hlc_2014/downloads.cfm](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_hlc_2014/downloads.cfm)
**Water Framework Directive**

The EU Water Framework Directive (2000) requires the preparation of strategic plans for water management on a catchment scale. It focuses on the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment, and is intended to provide a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the water environment for the benefit of people and wildlife. The river Medway is within the Thames catchment. The Thames catchment is divided into 'operational catchments' for management purposes, with the study area within the ‘Middle Medway’.

The Catchment Improvement Group (CIG) is currently writing a Catchment Improvement Plan for the Middle Medway, which should be adopted later this year. This is overseen by the Strategic Medway Partnership, which includes Water Authorities, Kent County Council, etc. Details of relevant groups and publications are provided in Appendix B.

The section of the river Medway through the study area is a navigation, containing a series of locks. It is a heavily controlled river following a programme of straightening, widening and deepening in the 1930s. The river is initially spring fed, but quickly picks up clay which gives it its characteristic brown colour. Key drivers for change through management are as follows:

**Water quality**
Poor water quality (including high phosphate levels) stems from point source pollution (e.g. sewage works) and diffuse pollution (e.g. from agricultural/horticultural discharge).

**Water quantity**
Abstraction occurs for drinking water and agricultural use. However, approx. 70% of water abstraction is for horticultural trickle irrigation, which is unlicenced.

**Climate change**
Future years are likely to see changes in climate and weather patterns which will affect the river (see following section for more detail).

**Impoundments**
There are many obstructions and impoundments on the river, ranging from historic mills and locks to more recent structures. Impoundments reduce water flow and concentrate pollution, and also form a barrier to fish and eels.

**Invasive species**
These include plants (e.g. Giant hogweed) and animals (e.g. non-native crayfish).

**Engineered banks**
The banks of the Medway are heavily engineered in some sections, which reduces their ecological value. The engineering also adds an industrial aesthetic to a natural feature, and limits its ability to function naturally.

**Habitats and wildlife**

**Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**
BAPs have been established in response to the Government’s commitment to safeguarding biodiversity following the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Each BAP identifies habitats and species which are priorities for conservation, and produces Habitat/Species Action Plans. Kent is home to 24 UK BAP priority habitats, and 85 UK BAP priority species, although not all occur within the study area. The Kent BAP and the associated Habitat Action Plans can be viewed at [http://www.kentbap.org.uk](http://www.kentbap.org.uk)

The following Priority Habitats have been identified within the study area:
- Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows
- Lowland Fen (near Yalding)
- Lowland Meadows
- Standing Open Water
- Traditional Orchards
- Built-up Areas and Gardens
- Native Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland (including veteran trees)

Maidstone has produced its own Local Biodiversity Action Plan in association with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership. It can be viewed at [http://www.medwayvalley.org/maidstone-lbap/](http://www.medwayvalley.org/maidstone-lbap/)
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

BOAs indicate where the delivery of Kent BAP targets should be focussed in order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits. They offer the best opportunities for establishing large habitat areas and/or networks of wildlife habitat, and therefore show where the greatest gains can be made from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation.

There are two BOAs within the study area, and one close to the boundary, as shown on the following map. They are described below, together with a summary of relevant recommendations.

**Mid Kent Greensand and Gault**
- Pursue opportunities to restore or recreate wetland habitats along the river Medway... and tributaries, particularly where this may: Provide opportunities for flood risk management and for recreation; Contribute to the conservation of priority species; extend and buffer Local Wildlife Sites.
- Infrastructure and other development should avoid further fragmentation, particularly of wetland habitats and woodlands.

**Medway and Low Weald Wetlands and Grasslands**
- Pursue opportunities for creation of wider river floodplains with riparian corridors around natural drainage channels.
- Pursue opportunities for the establishment, by 2020, of a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed. In this context, a ‘landscape-scale’ complex should be considered as extending over at least 1000 hectares.
- Secure the appropriate conservation management of all existing Lowland Meadows.
- Pursue opportunities to create new species-rich neutral grassland.
- Enhance or reinstate woodland management, and extend and reconnect fragmented woodlands where this would not conflict with grassland conservation and enhancement.
- Continue to encourage the positive management, restoration and re-creation of hedgerows, particularly where this would reconnect other habitats or enhance the landscape, in particular where these have been removed due to agricultural intensification.
- Improve the management of invasive species in and alongside water courses.

**Greensand Heaths and Commons** (immediately to north of study area boundary)
- Pursue opportunities for creation of acid grassland and heathland where this would contribute to the county-wide target of creating, by 2015, up to 145ha in blocks of at least 1ha and no more than 500m from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.
- Enhance or reinstate woodland management – including wood pasture management where appropriate – and restore plantations on ancient woodland sites to native woodland; extend and reconnect fragmented woodlands where this would not conflict with grassland conservation and enhancement.
- Pursue opportunities for quarries to be restored to maximize their biodiversity potential. Where appropriate, seek restoration to heathland and/or acid grassland as a condition of permissions for aggregates extraction.
- Engage communities within target areas by raising awareness of biodiversity and encouraging them to get involved in biodiversity action.

- Maintain, restore, recreate and buffer ponds, particularly to establish networks of sites to support great crested newt.
Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

- Greensand Heaths & Commons
- Medway & Low Weald Grassland & Wetland
- Mid Kent Greensand & Gault

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Climate Change
A growing body of evidence is demonstrating the impacts which climatic changes are having on our weather and biodiversity. These climatic changes are caused by global warming, and associated changes in global weather patterns. Within the UK they include: sea level rise; drier and hotter summers; warmer and wetter winters, and more extreme weather events. The likely extents of the changes are shown in the UK climate change predictions. The potential impacts of these changes are wide ranging, and potential impacts on key elements of the Medway Valley landscape are outlined below. These impacts will have consequences on features which produce character and the biodiversity these features support. The natural environment also has important roles to play in the mitigation of climate change impacts. Links to more detailed information are provided in Appendix B.

Woodlands and trees
The species composition of woodlands is likely to alter as a result of climate change. Other trees within the landscape (e.g. parkland trees, hedgerow trees and shelterbelts) will also be affected. Drier summers will result in increased root stress, and increased vulnerability to pests and diseases. Trees will also be vulnerable to increased damage from high winds, fire and extremes of soil temperature and moisture. Warmer, wetter winters may prevent wood hardening and seed germination. They may also result in waterlogging and damage to tree roots.

Orchards
Orchard trees are also potentially vulnerable to physical damage or crop loss as a result of drought stress, waterlogged soils and high winds. They are also vulnerable to warmer winters, as apple trees need cold weather to achieve dormancy (part of their natural cycle). Pests and diseases are likely to increase with fewer winter frosts, and many (e.g. powdery mildew) thrive in warmer summer conditions. Traditional orchard trees provide a habitat for many bird and insect species, which may also be impacted if trees decline.

Rivers and streams
Rivers and streams are highly sensitive to climatic change. Changes in water temperature have knock-on impacts through ecosystems, potentially affecting plants, invertebrates and fish. Invasive non-native species may also thrive. Drier summers and reduced rainfall will result in lower river flows and poorer water quality, exacerbated by increased abstraction to feed demand for domestic water and irrigation. Wetter winters are likely to result in higher peak flows and more frequent flood events, impacting on the environment, people and landscape.

Agricultural land
Longer growing seasons and changing cropping patterns may result in new crops which are better suited to the climate (e.g. vines).

Wetlands
Wetlands are vulnerable to changes in climate, particularly drier summers. Drought would adversely affect wet woodlands, fen, reedbeds and wet meadows, and may result in a change to dry woodland or scrub habitats. Long-term waterlogging during wet winters could also reduce the species variety within wet woodland. Fens are particularly vulnerable, as they are susceptible not only to drought, but also to changes in the balance of nutrients, and are rare habitats which support a variety of species.

Lowland meadows
Lowland meadows are characteristic of low weald landscapes and often support a rich diversity of herb and insect species. Climate change will result in alterations to the composition of plant species, favouring those better adapted to the new conditions (for example, plants with deeper roots, which can better survive drought, or those which can tolerate longer periods of winter waterlogging). Potential changes in seasonal cycles of flowering and seeding may affect the appearance of the landscape.

Species change
Changes in the extents and movements of species may result in more continental species of flora, fauna, birds and insects within Kent.
Public Consultation Responses

The Special Qualities of the Medway Valley

The adjacent ‘word cloud’ shows the results of the public consultation question which asked ‘What makes the Medway Valley landscape special to you?’ Word clouds work on the principle that the more times the word is used, the larger it appears.

The most frequent responses to the question were: ‘views’; ‘Medieval bridges’; ‘winding river’; ‘peaceful’; ‘countryside’; ‘wildlife’; ‘orchards’ and ‘history’.

The responses include some general words and phrases (for example ‘countryside’, ‘wildlife’ and ‘peaceful’). They also include a rich variety of more specific items which in combination create a word picture of the unique special qualities of the Medway Valley landscape. Examples of these words include ‘orchards’, ‘Medieval bridges’, ‘hop gardens’, ‘oast houses’, ‘navigation’ and ‘riverside walks’.

The words and phrases in this word cloud describe what local people would like to see protected and enhanced in the future, and these have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this SLEP.
Issues of concern about the Medway Valley landscape

The adjacent word cloud shows the responses to the question ‘What are the issues which concern you about the Medway Valley landscape?’

The issues of greatest concern to local people are: ‘urbanisation’, ‘flooding’, ‘pollution’, loss of orchards, ‘poor quality development’ and ‘loss of biodiversity’.

Closer examination of the word cloud reveals a wide range of issues. These issues include:

Development and the expansion of settlements
(for example ‘flood plain development’ ‘high rise development’, ‘caravan sites’ ‘quarrying’ and ‘ridge line development’).

Changes in land management, and associated loss of biodiversity and landscape change
(for example ‘loss of orchards’, ‘poor land and woodland management’, ‘increased equestrian land use’, ‘fish passage’ and ‘polytunnels’).

Recreation and access
(for example ‘speeding boats’, ‘obstructed footpaths’, ‘increased moorings’, ‘lack of facilities for boaters’ and ‘underuse of railway’).

Vulnerability of the historic environment
(for example ‘damage to bridges’, ‘lack of protection’ and ‘coalescence of historic settlements’).

Environmental degradation
(for example ‘litter’, ‘poor water quality’, and ‘noise pollution’).

Part 3 addresses many of the above issues.
Favourite views of the Medway Valley

The public consultation revealed many favourite views in and around the Medway Valley. These generally fell into three categories, and are illustrated by the following photographs.

*Elevated views across the Medway Valley*

These views (similar to those described by William Cobbett in Part I) are long, panoramic views across (and sometimes along) the Medway Valley, seen from the valley sides. They encompass broad sweeps of countryside, and orchards and trees create strong seasonal changes. Historic buildings such as churches, oast houses and bridges create focal points within these views.

*Viewpoints within the Medway Valley*

These views are found in riverside locations, for example the Medway Valley Path, the railway line along the valley, and from crossing points such as bridges and locks. They are dominated by the river itself, and its proximity creates a sense of connection to the river and its associated habitats and wildlife. Boats and bridges are often key features of these views.

*Viewpoints in Maidstone town centre*

The group of Medieval buildings around the Archbishop’s Palace, in their riverside setting, form popular views within Maidstone.

Looking ahead

This section has reviewed many sources of information on the Medway Valley landscape. The following section integrates the recommendations found within these sources into a series of practical ideas to restore and reinforce landscape character, while at the same time enhancing the valley’s biodiversity; addressing issues related to climate change; protecting historic assets; improving recreation opportunities; addressing the challenges of future development and tackling the issues raised in the consultation process.

Many different individuals and organisations have responsibility for decisions which affect the landscape of the Medway Valley. These include private farmers, landowners and developers, as well as the Local Authorities (Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council) and other organisations such as the Environment Agency, Kent Wildlife Trust and community partnerships. The opportunities identified in Part 3 are intended to reflect this wide range of users.
Part 3: OPPORTUNITIES

The river Medway at East Farleigh
BIODIVERSITY AND WATER QUALITY

Introduction
As described in Parts 1 and 2, there is a rich diversity of habitats and species within the study area, including several priority habitats. Habitats include wet and dry woodland, hedgerows, meadows, orchards, river banks, historic parkland, wetlands, rivers and open water, private gardens and allotments. Within the study area there are four Local Wildlife Sites and a Local Nature Reserve. There are also three Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within or adjacent to the study area. Habitats are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, but also have important roles to play in its mitigation.

The river Medway provides a range of aquatic and riparian habitats, and there is a close relationship between water quality and surrounding land use.

NOTE- this section should be read in conjunction with the following section on farming and land management.

Issues
• Loss and/ or fragmentation of species-rich habitats, including ancient woodland, hedgerows, meadows and traditional orchards, and the poor management of some surviving habitats.
• Past engineering/ canalisation of river banks and culverting of tributaries reducing the natural functioning of the river, and its effectiveness as a habitat corridor.
• Impoundments on the river affecting fish passage.
• Reduction in river water quality as a result of abstraction and pollution (both point-source and diffuse from agricultural run-off).
• A range of pollution issues, including air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, litter and flytipping adversely affecting the natural environment.
• Climate change impacts affecting habitats and potentially causing loss of species vulnerable to hotter, drier summers or warmer, wetter winters. Increased drought and flood events affecting rivers.
• Increased vulnerability of native trees and plants to pests and diseases, including those airborne or imported.
• Loss of native species of plants and animals as a result of colonisation by invasive species.
Opportunities for Enhancement

Enhance wildlife connectivity between sites: Improve the hedgerow network to connect woodland sites within the study area and those just outside it (e.g. Oaken Wood and Nettlestead Wood). Work with Network Rail to manage the railway line as a linear grassland habitat corridor.

Improve the management of woodland, hedgerows and trees, and improve their resilience to climate change: Plant locally-distinctive species (e.g. oak and wild service tree) in appropriate proportions, but also aim to increase the age and species diversity of woodlands. Reinstate traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing. Replace lost hedgerow trees, and plant isolated specimen trees in historic parklands to ensure their continuity in the landscape. Manage veteran trees and increase public awareness of their biodiversity and cultural value.

Manage wetland sites, and expand them where practical to enhance biodiversity value and flood storage capacity: Work with landowners to improve water quality in wetlands through reduced agricultural runoff (see following section). Monitor and manage rare wetland sites e.g. fens and wet woodland, and look for opportunities to expand and buffer these sites.

Increase the biodiversity value of rivers and streams: Enhance hard river banks to improve their function as a wildlife corridor through the urban area, for example through the introduction of coir rolls and baskets. Where practical, remove culverts and unnecessary impoundments to create a more natural system. Leave woody debris in tributaries and streams as a wildlife habitat (although not where it will constitute a flood risk).

Work with developers and planners to achieve positive biodiversity gains through new development: Include locally-important habitats within development designs (for example orchards and woodlands), ensuring that they are then managed appropriately. Where appropriate, secure funding for habitat management as off-site mitigation. Encourage Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate to minimise the impacts of new development on water quality, and to enhance biodiversity.
FARMING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Introduction
The Medway Valley has a rich history of farming and land management, notably the orchards, meadows and hop gardens which have helped to give Kent its title of ‘the garden of England’, and which were described so vividly by William Cobbett. However, recent years have seen major changes in agricultural practices, driven by a combination of commercial, economic and regulatory factors. These changes are continuing, with resulting impacts on landscape character, biodiversity and the survival of historic features.

If farming and horticulture are to continue, changes and diversification must be accommodated. The challenge is to make these changes in a way which retains and enhances the character of the landscape and its biodiversity.

Contribution to perceptual qualities and views
The mosaic of orchards, meadows, fields and woodlands resulting from traditional land uses creates the quintessential views of the Medway Valley. It also forms the setting of the river Medway itself, and of the many historic villages and structures within the valley.

Issues
- Loss/abandonment of traditional orchards* and hop gardens, often left as rough grassland, which has implications on landscape character and seasonal variation within the landscape.
- Intensification of arable and pastoral agriculture, resulting in (for example) loss of hedgerows and locally-distinctive field boundaries, nutrient enrichment of soil (affecting the biodiversity of meadows) and run off of silt and chemicals into watercourses.
- Changes in fruit-growing practices, with very few surviving traditional orchards, declining numbers of commercial orchards, and an increase in crops grown under plastic in polytunnels.
- Increased water abstraction (including for non-licenced horticultural trickle irrigation systems) affecting water levels.
- Increased equestrian land use, particularly around villages.
- The introduction of non-native species for shelter belts, particularly leylandii conifers, which are very visible in the landscape.
- Future impacts of climate change on land use and landscape character, including the potential introduction of new crops suited to the climate (for example vines and soft fruit trees) and double cropping to utilise longer growing seasons. Orchard trees are particularly vulnerable to warmer winters as apple trees need cold weather to achieve dormancy.
- Loss of native tree species as a result of new pests and diseases.
- Changing needs for agricultural buildings (see following sections).

*Traditional orchards are not intensively managed to maximise fruit yield. Trees are set in grassland which is grazed or cut for hay.
Opportunities for Enhancement

Retain orchards and manage them to enhance their biodiversity value: Growing fruit trees in a sward of species-rich grassland promotes wildflowers and herb species, and provides habitats for insects, including those which are predatory to pests. Traditional orchard features could also be created in association with new development, or as an alternative to conventional screen planting. Consider planting apple varieties with lower dormancy requirements to ensure economic viability is retained in a changing climate.

Retain traditional field patterns: Resist further hedgerow loss, repair gappy hedgerows using native species, and retain historic irregular field patterns around Tovil and East Farleigh. As well as contributing to landscape character and biodiversity networks, hedgerows also help to reduce run-off of silt and pollutants into water courses.

Retain and promote locally-distinctive landscape features: Use traditional native species rather than conifers for shelter belts, and where appropriate use traditional fencing styles such as rough cut chestnut post-and-rail.

Manage meadows to increase their biodiversity value: Retain valley floors in pastoral use and resist conversion to arable. Where appropriate, aim to re-establish semi-natural grassland in areas which are currently nutrient rich, and create a network of linked meadow sites using native provenance seed (locally harvested if possible). Allow for flexibility of meadow management (e.g. timing of grazing or cutting) to respond to climate change. Continue the ‘Save our Magnificent Meadows’ landscape scale initiative, as demonstrated at Yalding Lees.

Put in place measures to improve water quality: Minimise water abstraction, particularly at times of low rainfall. Reduce run-off of silt and pollutants into rivers by allowing strips of herbaceous vegetation to establish along river banks. This may occasionally require stock-proof fencing to prevent poaching of river banks by animals. Such strips should be managed, and regularly checked for invasive water-borne weeds.

Promote good practice in land management: refer to Kent Downs AONB Farm Diversification Toolkit and Land Manager’s Handbook. Both are relevant to sites beyond the AONB.
THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Introduction
The rich historic environment of the Medway Valley has developed over millennia. It includes many historic buildings and structures, as well as buried archaeology, and the pattern of lanes, tracks, fields, woodlands and hedgerows which combine to give a landscape of great time-depth. As described in Parts 1 and 2, some of these sites are designated, but not all. Some are elaborate (e.g. the Archbishop’s Palace in Maidstone) whilst others are ‘everyday’ (e.g. the manual level crossing gates at Wateringbury). But both contribute to character.

There are agricultural, residential and industrial features, and also many sites relating to the river Medway and its tributaries, including bridges, barges, locks and mill sites. Many historic structures are still in everyday use, including houses, churches and Medieval stone bridges.

Contribution to perceptual qualities and views
Historic structures often form focal points in views, for example oast houses, bridges, churches and country houses. They also contribute to the area’s distinctiveness. Historic structures and landscape features contribute to the area’s sense of place, and ‘timelessness’ is a much-valued factor in views.

Issues
- Lack of protection for some sites and buildings, e.g. surviving hopper huts, and historic barges, which are of considerable cultural value.
- Lack of awareness of buried archaeology, with a consequential risk of unintentional damage through ploughing, drainage works etc.
- Insensitive changes to the settings of historic structures and buildings. This may take the form of development (e.g. caravan parks) or poorly designed railings, signage etc.
- Physical damage to historic lanes and banks by vehicles, and by road widening or upgrade schemes. Excessive or insensitive signage also affects the character of some rural lanes, especially around villages.
- Loss of historic landscape pattern through hedgerow loss (see Biodiversity and Land Management sections) and erosion of settlement pattern.
- Physical damage to historic structures such as bridges and houses by traffic-strikes and flooding.
- Gradual erosion of historic character of railway as buildings and structures are upgraded.
- Lack of appreciation of historic environment due to lack of awareness and/ or interpretation.
- Loss/ conversion of traditional agricultural buildings as they are no longer required for use (e.g. oast houses) or no longer meet animal welfare requirements (e.g. traditional barns and byres).
Opportunities for Enhancement

Retain and enhance settings of landmark buildings and structures: These may occur in open countryside, in villages or in an urban context. It is particularly important where the historic structure is a feature within a wider view.

Promote sensitive treatment of historic farmsteads: Refer to Kent Farmsteads Guidance with regard to the conversion, use or setting of historic farmsteads, and the introduction of new agricultural buildings/structures.

Extend protection of culturally significant but currently unprotected buildings and structures: These include locally-distinctive hopper huts (e.g. at East Farleigh), which provided accommodation for London families on ‘hop picking holidays’.

Improve awareness of historic buildings: Whilst some historic structures are well known by the public (e.g. stone bridges), others do not appear to be. Improved interpretation (possibly in association with schools or local history societies) could raise local awareness and value of the historic environment and its contribution to landscape character.

Protect the character of rural lanes: Refer to Rural Streets and Lanes; A Design Handbook to retain the local character of streets and lanes, and avoid unnecessary or insensitive signage. The Handbook also provides guidance on traffic calming measures suitable for sensitive historic environments.

Retain the traditional character and integrity of the railway line: Resist incremental changes to station buildings and railway structures (for example through new signage) where this does not compromise safety. Promote high-quality and sensitive design where access improvements are required.

Record known buried archaeology: Geophysical survey known and potential archaeological sites, and excavate those at risk of damage through ploughing, exposure, development etc.
RECREATION AND ACCESS

Introduction
The Medway Valley is a popular recreation resource, particularly for the residents of Maidstone and other nearby settlements. It is a key component of the wider Green Infrastructure network, and is important for both individual and public health.

The Medway Valley Walk runs through the study area, adjacent to the river for most of its length. Further footpaths on the valley sides provide access into the countryside. There are several popular waterside recreation sites, including Teston Country Park, Allington Lock (and the Museum of Kent Life) and Teapot Island. There are also urban riverside parks within Maidstone.

The river Medway hosts a variety of water-based recreation, including moorings, rowing, canoeing and fishing, making it a popular destination for locals and visitors.

Contribution to perceptual qualities and views
Paths and access points provide opportunities for people to enjoy the special qualities of the valley and its views, and to experience peace and tranquillity. Boats and other recreation sites are often focal points within views.

Issues
- Poor cycling facilities within the valley, particularly south of Maidstone, where the riverside path is not suitable for bicycles. Lanes are often narrow and twisty with fast traffic, and not easy or safe for cycling.
- Difficulty of accessing the riverside path from Maidstone town centre, largely due to the road scheme and poor signage. The path itself is often muddy and slippery, and does not always feel safe or welcoming.
- Obstruction of footpaths, particularly in rural areas.
- Damage to riverside paths following periods of flooding or fast water flow.
- Relative lack of use of urban riverside parks (e.g. Whatman Park), despite its proximity to a large population.
- Extensive moorings can result in a perception of ‘clutter’ associated with the river, and also a lack of facilities for boaters.
- Marinas can be visually-intrusive in views, particularly where they have associated development, and introduce urbanising elements into rural areas.
- Underuse of the railway line which runs through the valley.
- A concentration of litter around some recreation sites.
Opportunities for Enhancement

Upgrade the riverside path to be suitable for cycling south of Maidstone:
Connect villages such as Teston, Wateringbury and Yalding with Maidstone to enable sustainable travel by bicycle within the valley.

**Improve access to the river from Maidstone town centre**: Improve signage and physical connectivity of riverside paths and bridges, and enhance connections between town centre and Whatman Park via a green corridor.

**Improve access into the countryside**: Work with landowners to keep footpaths open and easy to use. This can be a particular issue where fields have been subdivided into horse paddocks. Consider improving public access to parts of wetland sites in the south of the study area, possibly as offsite mitigation for development. NOTE: this would be subject to consultation with Kent Wildlife Trust, and dependent on the findings of bird surveys.

Reduce the perception of visual ‘clutter’ associated with riverside recreation sites: Promote consistent use of local materials and styles in the detailing of boundary treatments and access points, and also around marinas and mooring facilities.

**Promote trails, interpretation and signage**: Further develop circular and linear walks within the valley, utilising the railway as a recreational resource. Work with community groups (e.g. schools and local history societies) to research and design themed interpretation materials. These could include traditional panels and leaflets, and also digital media such as apps. Encourage new user groups to enjoy recreation within the valley, and promote the health benefits.

Enhance the wider Green Infrastructure network: Put into practise the Green and Blue Corridors Action Plan for the Medway Valley, and promote strategic green links with the Kent Downs AONB and the Medway Gap. Ensure any new development has good sustainable access links.

Example view before and after measures to enhance access
RECENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction
The study area has seen considerable development in the 20th and 21st Centuries, not all of it designed or sited in a manner sensitive to its local context. This is a particular problem where new development occurs within the settings of historic features and villages, or on visually prominent sites. There are many different forms of recent development in the Medway Valley, including small-scale village extensions and infill, larger-scale urban extensions, static caravan parks, marina developments, agricultural buildings, roads and infrastructure. Development pressure in the area is ongoing, with large and small planning applications currently in the planning system, and a constant demand for new infrastructure and alterations to existing buildings. However, development can be positive if it is well designed and sited.

NOTE: this section should be read in conjunction with the section on the historic environment, particularly regarding settings, farms and rural lanes.

Issues
- Encroachment of existing (and future) urban development in views of and from the Medway Valley. This is a particular problem where the urban edge is very abrupt, and/or where houses/caravans are light in colour.
- Many recent developments (large and small) lack design quality, and do not respect local building styles, scale or materials.
- Poorly-sited development, particularly with regard to the setting of historic sites and villages.
- Gradual erosion of rural character through suburban frontages, gates, etc.
- Linear development along roads causing coalescence of historic villages.
- Ridge top development (including vertical structures such as telecommunications masts) visually prominent from within the valley.
- Much recent development in Maidstone town centre faces away from the river rather than towards it, creating a poor visual relationship between the river and its built surroundings.
- Light pollution associated with new developments, particularly floodlights and street lighting along roads.
- Existing transport developments (e.g. the M20 impacting visually and audibly on the north end of the study area) and potential future energy and infrastructure developments within the valley.
- Large agricultural and industrial buildings can appear out of scale.
- Extensive area of derelict land at former chemical works site at Yalding.

Existing urban edge at Barming

Contribution to perceptual qualities and views
Development generally has the greatest impact on views when it occurs in prominent locations, such as ridge tops and valley sides. It can have negative impacts on the perceptual qualities of an area, particularly where it impacts on the sense of remoteness or tranquillity (light pollution is also a problem) and if designed insensitively, it can also impact on the historic environment.

Static caravans, East Farleigh

Former chemical works site, Yalding
Opportunities for Enhancement

Encourage high quality design for new developments (large and small): Respect traditional scale, character and materials for buildings, referring to published design guidance. Ensure that frontages in villages and lanes are sensitive to their rural context and do not create an urbanising influence. Integrate sustainable drainage systems with biodiversity and landscape aspirations where appropriate.

Consider the settings of historic buildings and landscapes: Ensure that new development is not detrimental to the settings of historic buildings/structures, or to historic landscape features such as orchards and hedgerows. Respect the setting of the Kent Downs AONB.

Carefully site new development and minimise its visual impact: Avoid visually prominent locations, particularly in rural/undeveloped contexts, and respect traditional settlement patterns. Avoid linear sprawl along roads. Masterplans should include appropriate screen planting and open space (perhaps utilising fruit trees in community orchards) to help the development integrate into its surroundings and reduce its visual impact.

Enhance the landscape context of existing developments, particularly on village edges: Consider planting new orchard trees and native woodland to filter views of existing urban edges, and help expanded villages and caravan sites to blend into the landscape, reducing the impression of coalescence.

Use the river as a positive focus for development within the urban context of Maidstone: New riverside developments on brownfield sites should have a positive visual and functional relationship with the river. Use sensitive materials which respect the character of the river, and avoid visual clutter.

Conserve the undeveloped skyline and night skies: Restrict development which will appear on the skyline in views across or from the valley. Minimise impacts of light pollution from existing and new development.

Carefully design and site new agricultural and industrial buildings: Choose materials which are not visually intrusive, and screen with native planting (where it supports character) to help integration into surrounding landscape.
Mature traditional orchard near West Farleigh
Archbishop’s Palace and All Saints’ Church, Maidstone
Appendix A: Lists of Consultees

The following organisations were invited to the workshops at the start of the project and/or provided additional information which informed the SLEP:

Environment Agency
Explore Kent
English Heritage
Kent County Council (heritage team)
Kent County Council (flood risk & natural environment team)
Kent County Council (rights of way team)
Kent Wildlife Trust
Maidstone Borough Council (historic environment team)
Maidstone Borough Council (landscape and planning team)
Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
Natural England

The following organisations and Parish Councils (and individual residents) were invited to contribute to the public consultation survey:

Barham Court
Barming Parish Council
East Farleigh Cruising Club
East Farleigh History Society/East Farleigh Community Network
East Farleigh Parish Council
Maidstone Ramblers
Maidstone Victory Angling Society
Medway River Users Association
Nettlestead Parish Council
Park run volunteers
Teston Land Conservation Trust
Teston Parish Council
Tovil Parish Council
Wateringbury Local History Society
Wateringbury Parish Council
West Farleigh Parish Council
Yalding Parish Council
Appendix B: References and Sources of Further Information

Fant Local Nature Reserve friends group
www.fantwildlife.org.uk

Guidance for Masterplanning Sustainable drainage

Kent Biodiversity Partnership
http://www.kentbap.org.uk/about/about-us/

Kent County Council Landscape Character Assessment

Kent Downs AONB Farm Diversification Toolkit
http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/publications/farm-diversification-toolkit

Kent Downs AONB Land Manager’s Pack


http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/publications/rural-streets-and-lanes-a-design-handbook

Kent Farmsteads Character Statement, Site Assessment Framework and Design Guidance (2013)

Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation
http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/kent_hlc_2014/downloads.cfm
Loose Valley friends group
www.valleyconservation.org.uk

Maidstone Borough Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan
http://www.medwayvalley.org/maidstone-lbap/

Maidstone Borough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Draft (2013)

Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2012)
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/landscape,-heritage-and-design/landscape

Maidstone Borough Local Development Plan Evidence Base
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/evidence

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Additional Documents
http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/planning-guidance

Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan (adopted 2000)

Medway Catchment Flood Management Plan (Environment Agency)

Natural England National Landscape Character Areas
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/587130

Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
http://www.medwayvalley.org/

Middle Medway Catchment Improvement Group
http://www.medwayvalley.org/our-rivers-catchment-improvement-groups/
National Planning Policy Framework

Natural England Climate Change Adaption Manual
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5629923804839936

Save Our Magnificent Meadows
http://www.plantlife.org.uk/wild_plants/habitats/grassland/saving_our_magnificent_meadows/

Terrestrial and Water-related Biodiversity Climate Change Impacts

Water Framework Directive
http://www.wfduk.org/

Weald native origin wildflower and grass seed
http://highwealdlandscapetrust.org/?media_dl=381