2026-27 Kent Property Market Report

The annual guide to investment & development in Kent



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Grade II listed Len House, Maidstone. Built in the 1930s, the building was formerly home to Rootes. After a £40m transformation the building will now house retail and dining space and 80 apartments.

PLANNING/ARCHITECTS: HOLLAWAY
MAIN CONTRACTORS: BAUVILL AND BRICKHILL CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT MANAGEMENT: MEDA INTERNATIONAL

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SIBLEY PARES



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Welcome

Welcome to the 35th Edition of the Kent Property Market Report. The Kent Property Market Report is produced by Kent County Council and Caxtons Property Consultants and provides an annual overview of the performance of Kent and Medway's property market, alongside the investment, development and regeneration activity taking place across the county. Caxtons' Property Market Analysis reviews property deals, trends and activity across the principal sectors of the market, covering:

- Property Market Outlook
- Science and Business Parks
- Offices
- Industrial and Distribution
- Retail
- Rural (courtesy of Savills)
- Residential

This year's report again shows the resilience of Kent's property market against a challenging economic backdrop. It highlights continued investment across the county, from major commercial and residential developments to regeneration, infrastructure and investment in Kent's science, innovation and business locations.

The Infrastructure and Regeneration section brings together developments from across Kent and Medway, highlighting the important role that both the public and private sectors play in creating new places, supporting investment and unlocking opportunities for economic growth.

The strategic sites map features a comprehensive list of Kent and Medway locations by use class, together with how to find out more.

Kent County Council continues to work with partners across the public and private sectors to support sustainable economic growth, attract investment and help bring forward the infrastructure and development needed to support businesses and communities across Kent.

Caxtons Property Consultants provide the research and expert analysis of the county's property market sectors covered by the report. It draws on its extensive experience advising individuals and companies and managing property across the commercial and residential sectors in Kent and the wider South East.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to this year's report, and particularly our sponsors:

- Clear Insurance Management
- DHA Planning
- Handelsbanken
- Hollaway
- Kent Construction Consultants
- MHA
- Thomson Snell & Passmore

Their continued support and expertise help make the Kent Property Market Report an important source of insight into the county's property market and the development opportunities ahead.

The full report can also be found at
www.kentpropertymarket.com

We hope you find the report useful and informative.



David Wimble
Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects, Kent County Council



Daniel Thackray
Chairman & Director, Head of Valuation & Lease Advisory, Caxtons Property Consultants

Proposal for The Loop, Ashford.
THE BIG PICTURE

Caxtons' Property Market Outlook

Last year's report said that predictions for the Kent property market were even harder than usual, with the budget taking place after publication. But the Middle-East conflict a few months later was unexpected, and this has had a major impact on the global and UK economy, negatively affecting the property market, not only due to cost-of-living pressures but because of a continued loss of business and consumer confidence.

UK gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.7% over the three months to the end of August 2026, with monthly GDP up 0.1% in July 2026, following 0.4% in June and no growth in May (ONS). Annual GDP grew by 2.1%, making this the strongest growth since 2022.

Although inflation has decreased compared with last year, to 3.5% in September compared to 3.8% last year (ONS), it is still on an upward slope. It had been reasonably stable, but it is widely predicted that the Energy Price Cap will increase by 16% in January, which could add over 0.5% to January's inflation.

For the sixth month running, the Bank of England (BoE) left the interest rate at 3.75% in September, but the markets are increasingly convinced that several rate rises could be in the pipeline, quite likely from November.

Despite this background and alongside a lack of business and consumer confidence due to a range of factors such as the rise in NI, the cost-of-living and concerns about property related measures in the budget on 28 October, several sectors of the Kent property market have been relatively resilient in 2026 so far.

Science and innovation hubs continue to attract new companies and enjoy expansions, and at both Discovery Park and Kent Science Park, co-working labs have proved popular. Discovery Park, home to 180 science, office and industrial occupiers, has power-enabled sites that are in high demand thanks to the rise of AI. The park is also exploring new capabilities for data centres and cutting-edge communications infrastructure. **At Kent Science Park, work is progressing on the Westside Development which will deliver up to 175,345ft² (16,290m²) of new build-to-suit space** to accommodate labs and a range of other uses, with the first phase available late in 2026.

Business parks continue to attract investment in refurbishment and maintain stable yields at around 8-10.5%. Rents are slowly coming in line with other locations on or near the M25 such as Reigate and Redhill and Brentwood. At Kings Hill, Praxis is investing £8.75m in the refurbishment of five office buildings.

Hybrid working continues to shape office demand, with UK adults on average working 3.2 days at the office, slightly up on last year. In Kent, demand is concentrated on Grade A, sustainable space, reflected in a record rent of £42psf at 44 London Road, Sevenoaks. Nonetheless, take-up is sporadic, with many firms consolidating or shifting to serviced offices or space within their industrial buildings.

Despite this record rent, the office market has seen limited rental growth other than in Tunbridge Wells and Thanet, and some secondary stock is still being repurposed for residential or mixed uses. South East investment yields have held steady between 7.25% and 8.25% for prime town assets, with weaker secondary towns at about 11.25%.

In 2026, the UK industrial and warehouse market saw accelerated recovery. Tight supply in many regions and ESG regulations have increased rents for premium space in some areas but legacy assets have not fared so well.

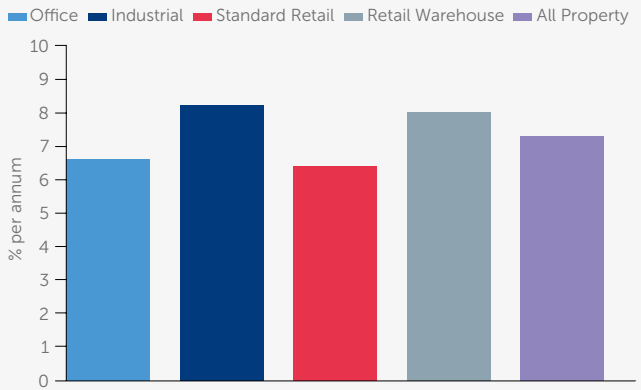
Kent hosts some of the South East's largest 'big box' units, and major schemes continue including TN2 Gateway, Tunbridge Wells, and Swanley Distribution Link. Panattoni has submitted a planning application to create Panattoni Park, Maidstone on a brownfield site on the A20 in Lenham. **Prime South East investment yields have moved out from 4.75% to 5% (Knight Frank Yield Survey).** Clearbell Capital sold four units at Loc8 for 4.84%.

Retail continues to adapt, with food stores and retail parks leading performance. Consumer spending has become

0.7%

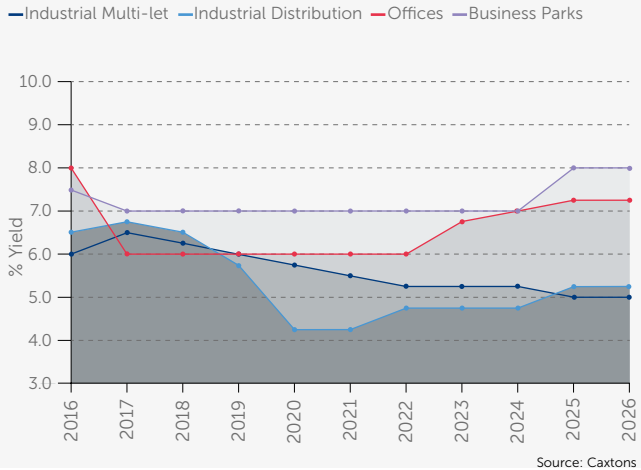
Growth in estimated gross domestic product (GDP) over the three months to August 2026.
ONS

UK Total Return IPF Consensus Forecasts, average over 2026/30 period



Source: Investment Property Forum Survey of Independent Forecasts for UK Commercial Property, May 2026.
Forecasts derived from 23 leading fund/investment management houses and consultancies

Kent prime yields



Source: Caxtons

TURNER JACKSON + DAY ASSOCIATES



Proposal for six new industrial units at St Augustine's Business Park, Whitstable, completion March 2027.

a bright spot in the economy, with **retail sales in August increasing by 0.5%, outperforming the 0.2% contraction predicted. Kent high streets have experienced some closures and continue to pivot to mixed-uses**—leisure, services and residential. **Several Kent towns saw an increase in average high street rents,** though in Folkestone rents were down 7%.

Aldi and Lidl particularly continue to build new stores, **but the biggest retail story this year saw a vacant 15.3 acre (6.2 ha) site south of Junction 5 M20 earmarked for Costco's first Kent store,** of approximately 139,931ft² (13,000m²). **The out-of-town retail market continues to thrive** though not without closures and openings at both Ashford Designer Outlet and Bluewater. **Retail parks also continue to see changes and new openings. Bargain stores have seen mixed fortunes, but new openings continue.**

UK yields for high street retail, shopping centres, and food stores have remained unchanged with **prime town retail yields at 6.25% and food stores between 4.5 to 4.75% (Knight Frank Prime Yield Guide February 2026).**

It has been another challenging year for housebuilders, buyers and sellers. The housing market downturn has proved more prolonged than expected with affordability pressures, geopolitical tensions, lacklustre domestic economic prospects and increased costs including construction materials and borrowing. The war in Iran drove up mortgage rates and knocked already fragile consumer confidence, and the recent slowdown in housebuilding is unlikely to end soon. Planning delays and nutrient neutrality challenges have not improved in the last year and have added to the sector's woes.

According to the Land Registry, **average house prices in Kent fell by 2% between Q2 2025 and Q2 2026,** the same as the fall in England and Wales, but less than the 3% fall in the South East, and less than last year's Kent figure. Prices increased by 4 and 7% in three East Kent districts and fell—by up to 6%—in the rest of Kent.

The Investment Property Forum (IPF) consensus of independent forecasts shows a negative picture across all sectors except office where there is no change, for the period 2026 to 2030 compared to 2025 to 2029. Forecasts for retail warehouses have reduced by only 0.4%, but 'all property' returns show a predicted 7.3% increase compared with 7.9% last year, industrial a 7.2% increase compared to 8.2% last year, and standard retail 6.4% compared to 7.5%.

In 2026, shopping centres are expected to generate the strongest total return at 7.2%, despite the weak capital value growth projection, closely followed by retail warehouses at 7.1%. Across the five-year horizon, retail warehouses are anticipated to be the top performing sector, with annualised returns of 8.0% pa. Outside the City of London, the office sector is expected to deliver 7.1% pa.

Although the predicted fortunes for industrial seem to have reduced, Caxtons Property Consultants predicts that, with demand remaining high and Kent's locational advantages, the sector will continue to be an attractive and rewarding investment, and the number of new developments underway supports that prediction.

In 2026, although some sectors have fared better than others, Kent's property market has shown its usual resilience, and there continues to be plenty of profitable activity in all sectors, though residential is facing viability difficulties.

Predictions for 2027 are challenging with the budget planned for 28 October. The Chancellor will need to raise money to meet Labour commitments, but it is not clear how this will be done or how any changes might impact the property market. Nonetheless, the industry remains cautiously positive and Kent's resilience will hopefully shine through yet again.



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Science and Business Parks Performance

With AI increasingly becoming a part of all our lives at home and at work, many AI firms looking to grow took co-working space at science and business parks. But despite rapid growth, some of these companies face difficulties in securing later-stage funding, as well as a critical shortage of AI skills.

Co-working labs, on the other hand, are emerging as a hybrid solution that combines the adaptability of shared workspace with the specialised infrastructure required for experimentation. These labs are now a crucial incubator for start-ups and spin-outs not yet ready for traditional leases.

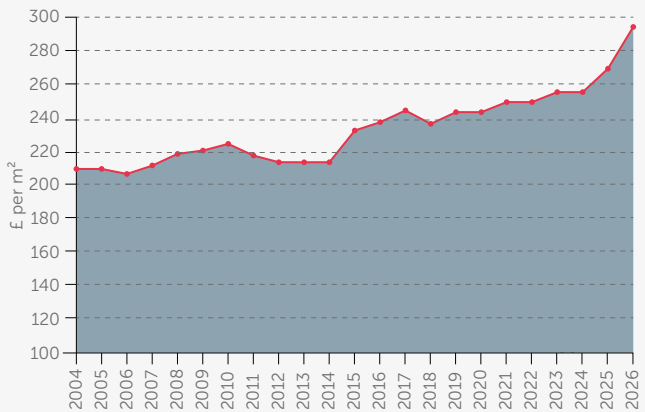
Discovery Park has seen rising demand for this kind of space and has doubled its scientific community over the past few years. Its response includes CoLab, a co-working lab run in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University, which provides flexible lab and equipment access. The park recently saw a breakthrough in tackling both waste plastic and aviation emissions when Clean Planet Technologies opened the world's first waste plastics to Sustainable Aviation Fuel pilot facility at Discovery Park. The company viewed 145 different locations before selecting Sandwich, citing connectivity, ecosystem and available space as key decision factors.

The park has also seen growing interest from China-based companies, as Kent provides the ideal European HQ destination with easy access to London and Europe. Since establishing its first European manufacturing base at the park, global contract development and manufacturing organisation **Asymchem has gone from strength to strength, with 100 team members onsite and expansion plans underway. In April, they were joined by Shanghai-founded international contract research organisation ChemPartner, who recently opened their first European site with a focus on preclinical and translational research.**

180

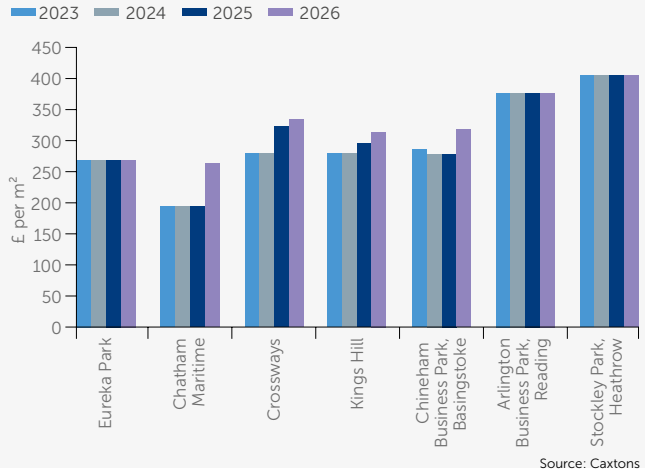
Companies at Discovery Park.
Discovery Park

Kent average prime business park rent



Source: Caxtons

Business park rents



Source: Caxtons

175,345ft²

New space at Kent Science Park's Westside development
Kent Science Park

The park continues to run Discovery Spark, a business growth accelerator programme for life sciences SMEs. So far, seven cohorts and 74 companies have completed the growth initiative, with founders travelling from all over the UK for expert-led sessions.

Discovery Park is home to 180 companies operating across the science, office and industrial sectors. With power-enabled sites in high demand thanks to the rise of AI, the park is exploring new capabilities for data centres and cutting-edge communications infrastructure—a key area of potential future growth.

Kent Science Park, near Sittingbourne, UKSPA's Best Life Science Research Facility for South East England, is made up of 42 buildings, with labs, offices, greenhouses and small-scale manufacturing space. Nobel laureate Sir John Cornforth is among the scientists linked to its history.

At the end of 2025, the park celebrated its 80th anniversary, marking the site's transition from a working farm to one of the South East's largest centres for agri-tech, biotech and biopharma businesses.



THE PIONEER GROUP

Proposal for Westside Development at Kent Science Park.

LETTINGS							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent/s**
May '26	Part, 10 Kings Hill Ave, Kings Hill	Praxis	Virtuoso	4,630	£125,010	10 yrs	SHW/Hanover Green
Feb '26	East Suite, Cotton Lake, Anchor Boulevard, Crossways, Dartford	Craigard (Dartford) Limited	Bupa Occupational Health Limited	4,359	£135,129	10yrs, tenant review with break at 5yrs	Watson Day/ Hanover Green
Jul '26	Mill Barn, Turkey Mill, Maidstone	Turkey Mill Investments	Salvation Army	1,428	£35,700	6 yrs	TM Estate Office

The Ventures Building recently went through a £2.5m refurbishment and now offers CL2 labs and offices ranging from 250 to 2,500ft² (23 to 232m²), rated EPC A, with chemical and gas storage and hazardous waste disposal on site, and shared lab equipment available.

Work is progressing on the Westside Development which will deliver up to 175,345ft² (16,290m²) of new build-to-suit space to accommodate labs, GMP facilities, offices, warehousing, data centres and biopharma manufacturing, with the first phase available late in 2026. Planning permission is also in place for more than 120,000ft² (11,148m²) of development.

The park works closely with Discovery Park, the Universities of Kent and Greenwich, Maidstone Innovation Centre, NIAB and UKSPA.

Business park rents in Kent are slowly coming into line with those in other locations on or near the M25, such as Reigate and Redhill at £28-£31.50 per ft² and Brentwood at £31 per ft². **Crossways in Dartford is priced at £31 per ft² and Sevenoaks at £36 per ft² although the latter is not strictly a business park location.**

Last year's report included Praxis's multi-million-pound acquisition of 14 buildings, totalling 500,000ft² (46,452m²) at Kings Hill. **The lack of demand for traditional large floorplate offices is illustrated by an application to redevelop the sites of five office buildings for up to 260 new homes.** The housing proposals coincide with a **£6.75m programme of refurbishment and renovation to upgrade three of Praxis's office buildings.** A further £2m has been earmarked for the refurbishment and upgrading of office space at 2 Kings Hill Avenue and 17 Kings Hill Avenue later in 2026.

The proposals are part of the owner's masterplan to sustain employment at Kings Hill and meet the demand for new homes.

Regus IWG, the global serviced office provider continues to enjoy good take-up within their business park locations around Kent. The company is working on its joint venture initiative, where IWG set up and manage a suite for the landlord and share in the upside of the lettings.

The most active business park this year in terms of take up and rental growth has undoubtedly been Crossways at Dartford with Radius comprising 4,363ft² (397m²) let to United Living Infrastructure at £24.50 per ft² although the headline rents at Crossways have now reached £31 per ft². There are a number of large office suites available including Riverbridge House comprising up to 19,408ft² (1,803m²), and Lakeview comprising up to 19,105ft² (1,774m²).

Gillingham Business Park continues to have little availability. The mixture of industrial and offices has provided the owners Zurich Threadneedle, who have purchased their long leasehold this year, with a hedge against volatility by being able to counter cyclical markets in the two distinct sectors. The park is offering 7 Amberley Green comprising ground and first floor offices of 8,131ft² (755m²), and at the Courtyard, self-contained office suites are available.

At Turkey Mill in Maidstone, rents at Tolherst Court which offers 14,000ft² (1,301m²) across nine suites are now in excess of £30 per ft². There have been three lettings and one lease renewal since autumn 2025. Offices in the suites within the converted former paper mill buildings are typically achieving £25 per ft². Turkey Mill is set in 20 acres of award winning grounds with a café on-site. The car parking ratio of 1 space per 175 ft² of office space is appealing for businesses here which include Kent-based SMEs and regional offices for larger businesses and charities.

The Maidstone Innovation Centre has up to 18,719ft² (1,739m²) available for the MedTech, Life Sciences and healthcare sectors, particularly start-ups.



TURKEY MILL

Tolherst Court, Turkey Mill, Maidstone.

There are a number of large office suites on the market at Chatham Maritime including 30 Pembroke Court comprising up to 33, 795ft² (3,139m²), Two Walter Burke Way offering up to 25,349ft² (2,355m²) and Montague Place, Quayside comprising 6,554ft² (609m²).

Ashford's Eureka Business Park has a number of available buildings including Inca House comprising 15,096ft² (1,402m²), and the freehold is for sale at 140 Upper Pemberton.

There are also a number of office suites of up to 6,789ft² (630m²) available at the Eurogate Business Park.

Yields on South East Business Parks haven't moved since last year and still range from 8 to 10.5% NIY depending upon lease length. There have been no sales of business parks in Kent this year although CCLA are selling Lakeview at Crossways comprising 28,069ft² (2,608m²) over 3 storeys with two floors of 9,189ft² available and one floor of 9,226ft² (857m²) let. The quoting price is £2.7m.

Office Performance

Employees continue to return to the office in greater numbers. Research by JLL shows average attendance has risen from 2.7 days in 2025 to 3.2 in 2026. **Land Securities has indicated that occupier levels are at a 20-year high.** Companies and employees continue to become more discerning. Accessibility to work as well as parking provision continue to be major factors in the choice of office location.

The number of changes of use from office to residential has reduced because there are fewer opportunities available. Invicta House, Maidstone comprising 65,196ft² (6,063m²) on 1.4 acres and surplus to Kent County Council's requirements, has potential for alternative uses including residential. The cost of demolition far outweighs the cost of construction, often precluding new development, and greenfield and brownfield sites are not viable for office development, and as a result, refurbishment of existing buildings, which is more cost effective, continues to be popular.

At Kings Hill, a planning application to replace five office buildings with residential development, while others are being refurbished, shows the lack of demand for larger office spaces.

SAVILLS



44 London Road, Sevenoaks.

3.2

Average weekly attendance at offices in 2026 so far, up from 2.7 in 2025.
JLL

The recent business rate reclassification of co-working space by the Valuation Office Agency could affect the popularity of this sort of space among developers as well as among small and medium-sized enterprises.

The greatest take-up this year to date in the South East is from AI companies (Colliers Quarterly snapshot). Kent has yet to see this new sector breaking through, although the county will be well set up for start-ups with the number of serviced offices available in most towns. In larger office locations, mainly cities, young fast-growing companies inevitably move from co-working spaces to managed offices to a full lease, providing movement in the sector, illustrating the importance of an area providing start-up space.

Similar to the South East, where demand is focused on Grade A space as opposed to secondary and tertiary stock, Kent is seeing greater demand for new or refurbished accommodation. There is less tertiary stock in the county as the majority of this has already been converted to residential use. Grade A plus rather than Grade A and B is now the new standard, with more tenants looking for a fully fitted workspace immediately, of similar quality to co-working and serviced office space.

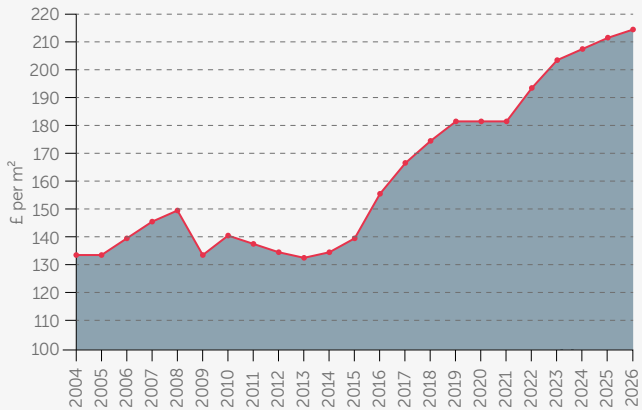
The 'All Office' rental growth as measured by the MSCI across the UK stood at 3% in April, up from 2.1% a year ago. Kent has been slightly behind this figure at 1% although quoting terms in Ramsgate have increased by 25%, albeit from a low base, and Tunbridge Wells by 4%.

A new record rent was again reached in Sevenoaks this year when the lease at 44 London Road was surrendered and a new lease agreed at a headline rent of £42 per ft² NIA, although a rent-free period was also granted. This compares with a record rent in the mid-£30s per ft² agreed at One Suffolk Way, also in Sevenoaks, last year.

£42psf

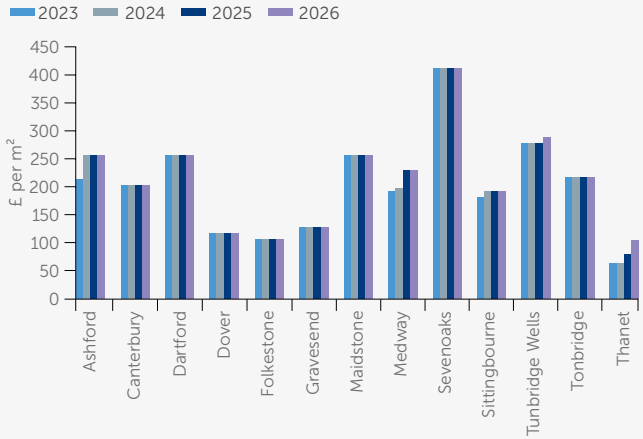
New record rent in Sevenoaks.
Caxtons Property Consultants

Kent average prime office rent



Source: Caxtons

Office rents



Source: Caxtons

LETTINGS							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent/s**
Jun '26	Ground & First Floors Building 5 Century Place, Lamberts Road Tunbridge Wells	PRAXIS Real Estate	Genesis Cancer Care	5,133	Average rent over 5yrs, £124,176	FRI 20 years, annual uplifts/breaks at yr10	Broadlands/ Doherty Baines
Jul '26	2nd floors—Dowding & Frant Houses, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells	Lower Pantiles LLP	Batcheller Monkhouse	2,847	£47,400	5 years	Durlings
Mar '26	Suite A, Pluto House, Ashford	Spectrum Properties UK Ltd	Ashford Borough Council	1,755	£21,000 (£12 psf)	6 yrs, 3 yr review	Stafford Perkins
Mar '26	Ground Floor, Woodcote House, Highpoint Business Village, Ashford	Private	Private	1,568	£18,816	5 year lease with a 3rd year break	Smith Woolley

SALES						
Date	**Location**	**Vendor**	**Purchaser**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Capital value**	**Agent/s**
Dec '25	Millbrook House, 114 Mill St, East Malling	Lotus Group	Woodcote Estates Ltd	5,910	£1,255,000	Sibley Pares
Dec '25	John Spare House, Monson Rd, T. Wells	IMAGO Ltd	The Pickering Cancer Drop In Centre	3,000	£880,000	Broadlands

New office developments are few and far between, but there are two examples in Sevenoaks. At Salters Heath in Cold Arbor Road, all but one office has been let, with one unit of 2,242ft² (209m²) remaining. The speculative development at 9 Pembroke Road, comprising 9,549ft² (891m²) over six floors, will reach practical completion in 2027 and is available for pre-letting at £40 per ft². Both developments are Grade A.

A recently revealed trend showed that **UK-wide, the value of data centres being granted planning permission overtook office blocks for the first time,** as demand for AI and cloud computing fuels a boom in construction of these centres. However, this is not yet the case for actual construction. The value of data centres receiving planning permission in 2025 hit £8.97bn, up 58% year on year while the value of offices fell 40% to £6.38bn.

At a site between Northfleet and Southfleet, early plans to create a £3bn AI data centre have been announced. Infrastructure developer Clearstone wants to build the campus on 145 acres of agricultural land. If built, it would be called Ebbsfleet Data Centre Campus.

There have been some notable offices to rent in the county including The Crown, London Road, Westerham offering up to 15,904ft² (1,479m²), Weald House in Sundridge comprising up to 5,647ft² (524m²), Wellington Gate, Church Road, Tunbridge Wells comprising up to 13,305ft² (1,236m²) and Weald Court, Hildenborough comprising up to 7,350ft² (682m²).

In East Kent, at Sparrow Way, Lakesview International Business Park, Hersden an office comprising up to 13,774ft² (1,279m²) is available. In Larkfield, Eden House in New Hythe Lane, comprising up to 12,355ft² (1,147m²), is available and at Kent House, Station Road, Ashford, space comprising up to 13,022ft² (1,209m²) is to let. Also in Ashford, part of Connect 38 comprising up to 5,628ft² (522m²) is available. The supply of offices in Maidstone has reduced over the last few years due to conversion to residential and now only a few larger offices are to let including Riverside House comprising up to 6,330ft² (588m²).

Lettings in Kent include FDS Contracting taking 7,710ft² (716m²) at Hawley Mill, Dartford and the letting of Apple Barn, Smeeth in Ashford comprising 7,730ft² (718m²).

Few office buildings have come to the market on a freehold basis, but those which do often have scope for full refurbishment. The largest freehold buildings on the market include Bouverie House, Middelburg Square in Folkestone comprising 72,119ft² (6,699m²) situated over 6 floors.

Mount Pleasant House in Tunbridge Wells comprising 16,777ft² (1,558.6m²) is currently on the market which is income generating and under an Article 4 directive, residential development under permitted development rights is prevented. 7 Vale Avenue, Tunbridge Wells, comprising 5,208ft² (483m²), fully let is quoting £1.1m and Unit 6 Station Court, Station Approach, Borough Green is for sale by auction. **Unit B, Compass North at Chatham Maritime was sold to Goldenbrook Assets for £600,000, in February.**

There have been few investment deals this year. **Yields for secondary South East towns remain at 11.25% compared to prime yields at 7.25% to 8.25%,** not having moved over a 12-month period. (Knight Frank Prime Yield Guide—February 2026).



SIBLEY PARES

Units 5-10, Sparrow Way, Lakesview Business Park.

Industrial and Distribution Performance

In 2026, the UK industrial and warehouse market saw accelerated recovery with steady leasing demand. Tight supply in many regions and ESG regulations have increased rents for premium space in some areas. There is a difference in fortunes between Grade A space and legacy assets.

Almost half of sub-100k ft² (9,290m²) industrial and logistics space may be unlettable by 2027 under the government's proposed Minimum Energy Efficient Standards (MEES), it's claimed. The regulations require buildings to have an EPC rating of at least C by 2027, and B by 2030.

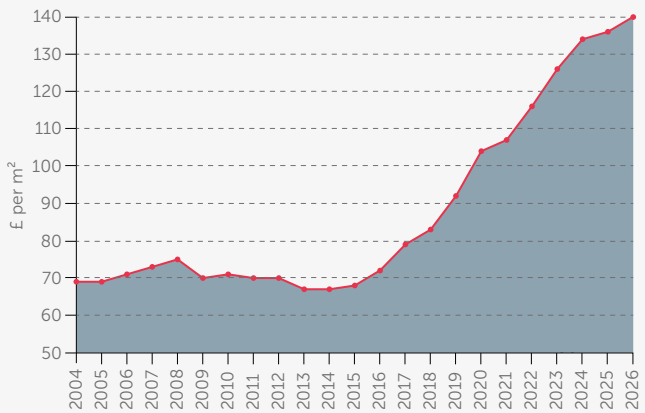
There are plenty of 'big box' opportunities in Kent including Powerhouse, Dartford comprising 302,790ft² (29,728m²) now owned by Tritax, and Goodman's Crossway's Business Park where Unit 241 of 240,884ft² (22,379m²) is available and Unit 5 of 68,558ft² (6,369m²). Orbital East, Sandpit Lane Dartford offers 121,079ft² (11,244m²). Scannell Properties and Royal London's TN2 Gateway scheme in Tunbridge Wells offers buildings from 23,503ft² (2,183m²) to 175,000ft² (16,258m²). Also in Tunbridge Wells, the former M&S warehouse, now refurbished and known as Ton 200, can offer 197,276ft² (18,328m²). Axel Logistics have refurbished the former Berkeley Homes building, Northfleet168, which is 168,249ft² (15,630m²) and Unit 1, Invicta Riverside in Aylesford is being refurbished, comprising 91,986ft² (8,545m²).

Panattoni was rewarded for its confidence in Kent by securing the largest single property deal in the South East, when ID Logistics agreed its third UK warehouse with the lease of S440 at Panattoni Park Sittingbourne. It provides 440,167ft² (40,893m²) of space and was built to BREEAM Excellent with an EPC A rating. When ID Logistics occupies the building it is expected to create 1,069 new jobs. Unit S205, of 205,000ft² (19,118m²) is still available.

2%

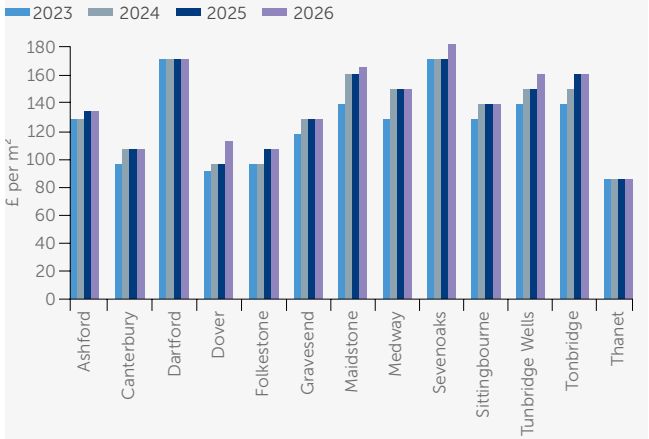
Increase in average prime industrial and distribution rent, 2025 to 2026.
Caxtons Property Consultants

Kent average prime industrial and distribution rent



Source: Caxtons

Industrial and distribution rents



Source: Caxtons

440,167ft²

Let by Panattoni Sittingbourne to ID Logistics—the largest property deal in the South East.
Caxtons Property Consultants



GOODMAN

Proposal by ENVA for new recycling plant at Crossways.

Panattoni has now submitted a hybrid planning application to create Panattoni Park, Maidstone on a brownfield site on the A20 in Lenham, until recently the home of Aliaxis, and formerly the Marley Works. The application includes detailed proposals for phase one—two units of 100,000ft² (9,290m²) and 150,000ft², (13,936m²), and outline permission for the second phase of 790,000ft² (73,394m²) of built-to-suit facilities. Panattoni believes the development would sustain 600 construction jobs, and 1,040 to 2,695 jobs once completed.

Aegis Energy plans to submit a planning application later in 2026 to develop the former Littlebrook Power Station next to the Dartford Crossing into a clean energy hub for electric heavy goods vehicles. The charging hub seeks to drive a substantial reduction in carbon emissions from the tens of thousands of commercial vehicles passing through one of the UK's most important freight gateways.

In addition, recycling and resource recovery specialist Enva has pre-let a 124,000ft² (11,520m²) facility at Goodman's Crossways Commercial Park in Dartford. When fully operational, the state-of-the-art fridge recycling facility will

LETTINGS							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent/s**
Aug '26	Unit 1A, Church Rd, Eurolink, Sittingbourne	Restore plc	Picture Playground Ltd	22,910	£176,197	Lease assignment	Caxtons
Feb '26	5 Vanguard Ind Est, Ashford	Zurich Assurance Ltd	Hovat Ltd	21,197	£212,000	10 yrs, 5 yr review	Stafford Perkins
Jun '26	Unit 8, Connections B'ness Park, Sevenoaks	L&G	Nova Automotive	12,993	£207,888	10 years	SHW
May '26	8, Applegarth Drive, Questor, Dartford	Chancerygate	Metcor Limited	5,591/11,570 yard	£154,829	10 yr lease, 5 yr break	Watson Day/SHW

SALES						
Date	**Location**	**Vendor**	**Purchaser**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Capital value**	**Agent/s**
Feb '26	Winchelsea Works, Winchelsea Road, Dover	Private	Private	18,452 on 2.4 acre site	£700,000	Smith Woolley
Mar '26	Unit E Technology Centre, White Oak Sq, Swanley	Allen Group (2005) SSAS	Albus Environmental Ltd	10,558	£1.95m	Caxtons

be capable of processing 35,000 tonnes of e-waste per year. Set to complete in late 2026, it will be the largest and most innovative facility of its type in the UK.

Goya and Hillwood's Swanley Distribution Link comprising 163,621ft² (15,201m²) offers EPC A+ units ranging from 26,850 to 55,536 sq.ft (2,495 to 5,160 sqm) and Position + in Paddock Wood, a new industrial and logistics park is offering Grade A spaces ranging from 9,677ft² (899m²) to 81,946ft² (7,613m²). Over in Dartford, Chancerygate's Questor 96 will offer new units from 5,640ft² (524m²) to 31,301ft² (2,908m²). Tavis House Tunbridge Wells has units from 10,548ft² (980m²) to 62,420ft² (5,800m²).

Clearbell's Loc8 at Maidstone has one unit remaining on phase 2 of 31,413ft² (2,918m²) of their 380,000ft² (35,316m²) scheme. The final phase—a terrace of units totalling 30,845ft² (2,866m²) and a single building of 53,000ft² (4,923m²), is still to be constructed. Also in Maidstone, at Gallagher's Eclipse Business Park, 4 units have been completed with only one still available, and planning permission has been granted for a new five-storey self storage facility for Cinch—a joint venture between Wrenbridge and Gallagher. Terance Butler Holdings are constructing four units totalling 25,177ft² (2,399m²) at Powerhub 2, Maidstone, and Patrizia Asset Management can offer Raptor, a 40,480ft² (3,760m²) building at Mills Road, Aylesford, or let the site for open storage.

Over in Dover, the government vacated their temperature controlled warehouse at White Cliff's Business Park, known as Bastion, comprising 84,376ft² (7,839m²). There will be a full strip out of the building. And at New Romney, Mountfield Industrial Estate has expanded again. The latest phase which saw Finberry Construction deliver 17 commercial units aimed at both new and established businesses, was completed in spring 2026.

George Wilson Estates has a number of schemes underway or due to commence, including a range of industrial/commercial units at Hawthorn Corner, Herne Bay, and a 30,000 sq.ft (2,787sqm) extension to Global House at Sparrow Way, Lakesview International Business Park, Canterbury.

The former 264,686ft² (24,589m²) Tesco warehouse at Snodland let to Morrisons after Tesco took a new facility at Panattoni Aylesford.

There are few build-to-suit offerings including Goodman's London Medway Park, Rochester accommodating from 60,562ft² (5,626m²) to 436,100ft² (40,514m²) Further afield, Yalding Enterprise Park can offer up to 8 acres (3.2ha) with a range of speculative units already constructed.

Open storage sites available include Marchmont IM's UK fund's Surface Ashford comprising 4.7 acres (1.9ha), Ridham Dock, Sittingbourne—4.14 acres (1.67ha) and Interchange, Northfleet Interchange totalling 15.44 acres (6.25ha). Clipper Boulevard in Dartford offers 8 acres (3.24ha), and Concrete Dover 4.3 acres (1.74 ha) In addition, Longmead purchased the Northfleet Interchange site for open storage to accommodate up to 15.44 acres (6.25ha). Recent site sales include the former KCC site in Forstal Road, Aylesford of 5.2 acres (2.1ha) for £7.6m (£1.46m per acre) sold to Gallagher Group Ltd.

There were few investment sales this year in Kent. **Prime South East Investment Yields have moved out from 4.75% to 5% (Knight Frank Yield Survey).** Although multi-let yields had dipped slightly since the Middle East conflict, Clearbell Capital sold 4 units at Loc8, Maidstone totalling 190,839ft². (17,728m²) for 4.84% to Aberdeen Asset Management. Added value is still one of an investor's pre-requisites, but due to a slightly slower market, income remains important.



GBEUROPE INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL

Bastion Point, White Cliffs Business Park.

Retail Performance

It has been another challenging year for retail, but particularly for the high street, with some Kent high streets struggling. Increased costs including national insurance, rents, and business rates; rateable values increasing by 9.3% on average, higher parking charges, inflation, and weak consumer confidence have put pressure on retailers. This is illustrated by **falling stock prices,** with JD Sports down 15.5% and Frasers 10%. **Retail sales (volume) in August increased by 0.5%, outperforming the 0.2% contraction predicted, and 0.9% in the three months to August** compared with the previous quarter. Consumer spending has become a bright spot in the economy, as households reported the highest confidence levels in five years. **Total UK retail footfall decreased by 2.6% in May (YoY),** up from -10.7% in April. (Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

Despite this, several Kent towns saw an increase in average high street rents, with Thanet up 35%, Canterbury 22%, and Medway 14%, though in Folkestone rents were down 7%.

The latest data from the ONS shows that nearly 3,000 retail units were lost across England and Wales between 2024 and 2025. Medway lost 40 shops in the past year, ranking it among the weakest areas nationally for retail health.

COSTCO



Proposal for a new Costco store at junction 5, M20, Maidstone.

139,931ft²

Size of Costco store planned for junction 5 M20.
Caxtons Property Consultants

While Kent high streets have experienced some closures, town centres continue to pivot to mixed-uses—leisure, services and residential. The coffee shop 'phenomenon' continues with Starbucks planning to open 500 sites across the UK over the next five years, and chains such as Black Sheep Coffee continuing to roll out new high street stores.

National retailers continue to muscle in on the high street where local footfall makes it viable. In less well-performing towns, artisan, local shops continue to establish. Holland and Barrett closed its Sheerness branch and the last two remaining The Original Factory Shop stores in Kent, in Tenterden and Headcorn, closed in March. Lloyds and HSBC banks are planning to close several more Kent branches in the near future, and TG Jones, which took over the 480 WHSmith stores, is restructuring, putting some 80 units at risk. On a more positive note, Superdrug is set to open 30 new stores nationwide.

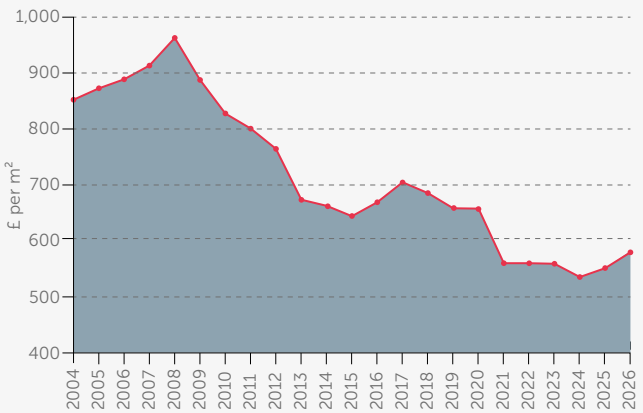
The biggest retail story in Kent this year saw a vacant 15.3 acre (6.2 ha) plot of land south of Junction 5 M20 earmarked for Costco's first Kent store, a single-storey warehouse building of approximately 139,931ft² (13,000m²), with 755 parking spaces and a petrol filling station. If built, Costco is expected to create at least 180 jobs, expanding to 250 within three years of opening. It's believed Tonbridge and Malling Council will make a decision by the end of 2026, with the aim of getting construction underway soon afterwards and the store opening in 2028.

Competition between major food retailers continues, with Aldi and Lidl planning stores across the county. Aldi are planning new stores at Herne Bay's Altira Park and close to junction 7, M20, next to M&S and Next. The Aldi store at Strood is being upgraded as part of a UK refurbishment

35%

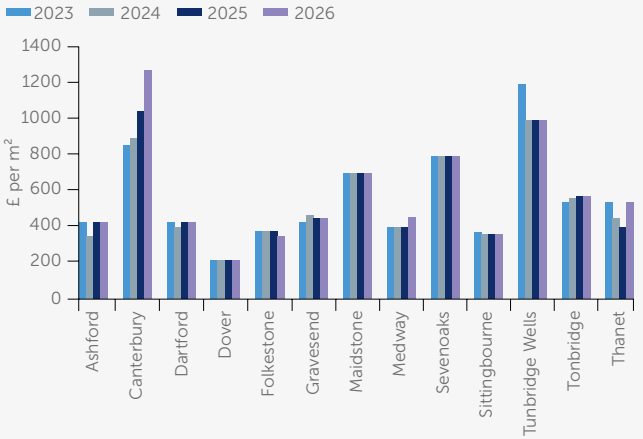
Increase in retail rents in Thanet.
Cradick Retail

Kent average prime retail rent



Source: Cradick Retail

High Street Zone A retail rents



Source: Cradick Retail

LETTINGS							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent/s**
Nov '25	Units 4 & 5, Shakespeare Centre, Folkestone	Private	Private	4,058 (gym use)	£39,500	5 years	Smith Woolley
Jul '26	7 The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells	Targetfollow	Socktopus	1,288	£40,000	10 years	Durlings
Nov '25	1-4 Bank Buildings, Elham, Kent	Private Landlord	Londis Franchisee	1,010	£18,500 (£18.57psf)	15 yrs, 5 yr reviews	Stafford Perkins

SALES						
Date	**Location**	**Vendor**	**Purchaser**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Capital value**	**Agent/s**
Jan '26	40 High Street, West Malling	RS Gleaves Property Ltd	Mardell Properties Ltd	1,930	£620,000	Sibley Pares
May '26	9 Castle Street, Tunbridge Wells	BW SIPP Trustees Ltd	Dudley Road Investments	931	£275,000	Durlings

programme. Lidl is building a new store near Medway Park, Strood and a new store in Swanley will be completed in 2027.

Sainsbury's store in Tonbridge has expanded into the adjacent Beales premises that had been vacant for six years, and re-opened in spring 2026. The £20m expansion and refit is said to be Sainsbury's biggest store investment in a decade. The supermarket is now approximately 25,000ft² (2,323m²) larger than before, allowing it to add around 17,000 new products and a large clothing section.

There is a mixed picture for shopping centres with less successful ones being repurposed, often with district council involvement, but the more successful ones going from strength to strength. New Look in The Orchards Shopping Centre, Dartford closed down only weeks after Primark closed. Ashford's Park Mall, owned by Ashford Borough Council, closed in January 2026 and will be demolished and eventually redeveloped with a mixed-use scheme including housing.



MCCARTHUR GLEN

The Gift Company, Ashford Designer Outlet.

More positively, **Rituals, Holland & Barrett and The Works all opened new stores in Fremlin Walk in Maidstone this year. River Island at Whitefriars, Canterbury, has closed and been replaced by Victoria's Secret. And Ashford is to have its first Primark store next year,** with the brand taking over the vacant Debenhams store and part of Select which is adjacent, at the town's County Square, creating 69,000ft² (6,410m²) of space. Ramsden's pawnbrokers opened its fourth Kent store, also at the shopping centre.

The out-of-town retail market continues to thrive although not without closures. **Ashford Designer Outlet continues to see strong leasing activity,** achieving full occupancy during 2025 and moving toward that position again thanks to a robust pipeline of new and returning brands. In May, Label Yard opened in the unit previously occupied by Jack Wolfskin, while June saw The Gift Company launch in the former Belstaff space, and Diesel is set to make a comeback after a five-year absence. Alongside successful leasing activity, the guest experience has been enhanced with a new six-hole mini golf course which opened in the summer, and the popular Christmas market will return in 2026.

Bluewater has seen women's fashion brand Stradivarius, the Wellness clinic and Crew Clothing opening. And Next recently launched its largest UK store, spanning 132,000ft² (12,263m²), tripling the size of its presence at Bluewater.

Retail parks continue to see changes and new openings. In June, Asda rebranded their branch at St Peter's Wharf Retail Park, Maidstone as the latest George Concept store—the first in the South East, and The Food Warehouse is to open at Strood Retail Park. M&S Foodstore is hoping to move into part of the former Homebase store which shut at Park Farm Retail Park in Folkestone last year, which would also house a Home Bargains.

Bargain stores have seen mixed fortunes. The family-owned Home Bargains saw another year of rising profits and sales with pre-tax profits increasing from £454m to £523m and 18 new stores, including at Hempstead Valley, Medway, and Fougeres' Way, Ashford which opened in February 2026. Others did not fare so well. B&M, Poundland and The Range struggled through 2025 due to competition from supermarkets and online retailers, rising operational costs and strategic mishaps. Hobbycraft are closing many stores across the UK.

Bligh's Meadow shopping centre in Sevenoaks has been sold by Abrdn, after hitting the market for £26.7m, to investment group Compagnie Du Parc, in partnership with property investor Revcap. The centre has 34 retail units including Holland & Barrett, Nando's and Crew Clothing, 14 office suites and residential accommodation on upper floors. Medway Council sold the Rainham Shopping Centre for £1.5m.

UK yields for high street retail, shopping centres, and food stores have remained unchanged over the last 12 months. **Prime town retail yields are at 6.25%, with good secondary at 10%, neighbourhood shopping centres at around 10%, good secondary open A1 parks at 6.5 to 6.75% and food stores between 4.5% and 4.75% depending upon lease structure (Knight Frank Prime Yield Guide February 2026).**

Rural Performance

savills

Uncontrollable factors influencing GB farmland market performance so far this year
The continuing effects of policy uncertainty are one of many factors impacting the farmland market across Great Britain (GB). At the half-year point of 2026, a 1.4% decrease in average farmland values was recorded in a Savills farmland value survey, and on the supply side the volume of publicly marketed farmland in GB was down 12% from the same period in 2025 at 88,100 acres (35,653ha).

In the South East, 8,924 acres (3,612 ha) were marketed in the first six months of 2026, this was a decrease of 14% from the same period in 2025 which had the second largest amount marketed during the first half of the year compared to the previous eight years.

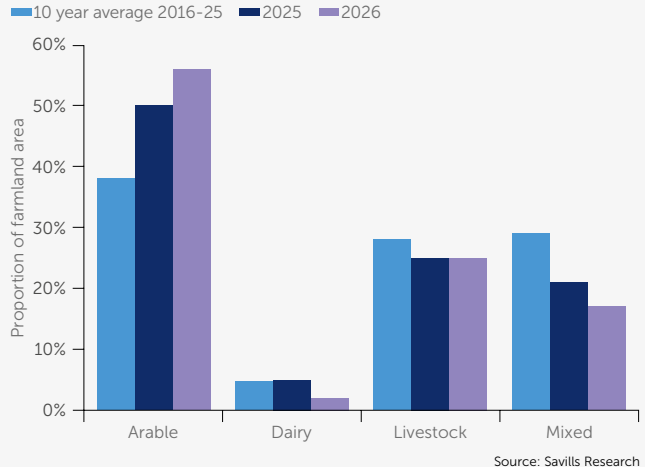
Since March this year, as well as grappling with the impacts of more frequent climate-related challenges, the farming sector has been faced with major increased costs due to the Middle East conflict. More recently however, a degree of policy stability has been delivered by The Land Use Framework (England) and Land Use Strategy (Scotland), which acknowledge the critical importance of land not only for food production but also for alternative uses, such as development, infrastructure, and energy, providing the sector with opportunities to realise value over the medium to long-term.

Chris Spofforth, Savills head of rural agency in the South East, says: "The range of buyers in the market is as varied as I can recall during the past 30 years. What hasn't changed is the fact that most of them tend to have a medium to long-term investment horizon, reflecting a fundamental characteristic of land ownership: its ability to preserve and appreciate wealth over time."

14%

Decrease in volume of South East farmland marketed in first six months of 2026 compared with same period in 2025.
Savills

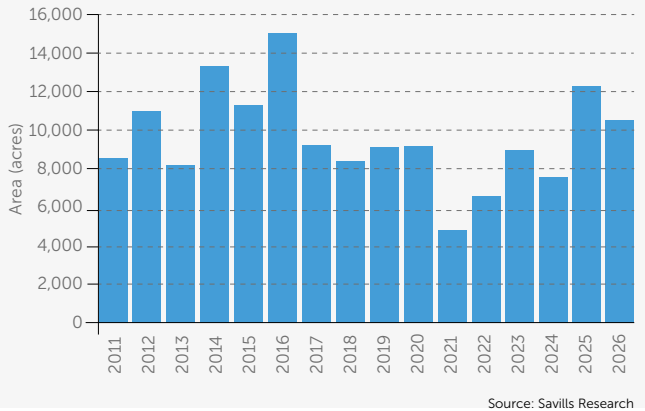
Farmland type marketed across Great Britain



Source: Savills Research

Publicly marketed farmland supply (to end H1, all years)

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, West Sussex



Source: Savills Research

Land type divide emerging
Overall, 56% of publicly marketed farmland was arable, compared with the 10-year average (2016—2025) of 38%, whereas mixed farms accounted for 17% of the farmland publicly advertised, compared with the 10-year average of 29%.

Despite the challenges facing the sector, many purchasers continue to recognise opportunities when they arise, particularly for best-in-class properties, where on occasion, competitive bidding has generated sale prices way above average land values. This is particularly the case when established farming businesses are competing hard for neighbouring or strategically important acres at levels that are difficult for buyers from outside the area to justify.

It's not only climate change finding the new norm; as farm support continues to be withdrawn, farming businesses continue to seek income streams via crop production, supply chain contracts and alternative enterprises.

Kelly Hewson-Fisher, Head of Savills Rural Research comments, "The Farming Roadmap sets a clear long-term vision for a profitable, productive, resilient and sustainable farming sector with the primary purpose of food production—we're seeing those keen to expand their farming operations and be part of the industry's future active in the market. In addition, the alternative land use opportunities underpin the long-term future of this asset class."



Chris Spofforth
Savills head of rural agency in the South East



Adisham Court near Canterbury
SAVILLS

Residential Performance

It has been another challenging year for housebuilders, buyers and sellers. The housing market downturn has proved to be more prolonged than expected with affordability pressures, geopolitical tensions, lacklustre domestic economic prospects and increased costs including construction materials and borrowing. After a decent start to the year, the housing market has gone into reverse since the war in Iran drove up mortgage rates and knocked already fragile consumer confidence, and the recent slowdown in housebuilding is unlikely to end soon, suffering another slowdown in August.

As a result for example, **Taylor Wimpey built 274 fewer homes between January and June 2026 than the same time last year,** and the weekly rate of sales at its sites was down 5%. Bellway, on the other hand, had a more positive year. Rightmove estimated that there were 6% fewer new-build properties available than a year ago, as weak demand, higher construction costs, a raft of new legislation from central and local government, as well as the Community Infrastructure Levy alongside lower house prices created viability challenges for housebuilders.

Planning is an additional hurdle, with research by The House Builders Federation showing that councils take on average nearly nine months from submission to issue planning approval, compared with the target for major applications of 60% of applications to be determined in 91 days. The August 2026 RICS survey of estate agents confirms a negative situation for most indicators but that the negativity has reduced in the last few months. The government has pledged that 1.5m new homes will be built over the next five years to summer 2029, but has admitted that this target is extremely unlikely to be reached.

It appears that people are moving less, maybe up to 10% less. Nonetheless, serious buyers are still buying, and starting to look further in advance, especially in West Kent. Houses are selling but flats are not as desirable, and some housebuilders have stopped building them.

2%

Decrease in average house price in Kent, Q2 2025 to Q2 2026, a smaller decrease than last year's 5%.
Land Registry

According to the Land Registry, average house prices in Kent fell by 2% between Q2 2025 and Q2 2026, the same as the fall in England and Wales, but less than the 3% fall in the South East, and less than the 5% fall in Kent last year. Looking at prices by district, prices increased by 4 and 7% in three East Kent districts, and fell—by up to 6%—in the rest of Kent. Residential new build prices per square foot have decreased in many districts, and are static in others, with Tunbridge Wells, which has the highest build cost, reducing the most.

Nutrient neutrality continues to challenge housebuilders and hold back construction of homes in East Kent. A government scheme for a Nature Restoration Levy is progressing through Parliament but is not yet approved. In the meantime, biodiversity credits are available locally but many developers have found them too expensive, making schemes unviable.

A few positive 'greybelt' planning decisions have been made in Kent but not enough to make much difference to housing completions. Medway and Tonbridge and Malling local plans are promoting a number of big grey belt/green belt sites, but these plans are yet to be approved.

Despite a challenging market, schemes are still being approved, started and completed. **At Ebbsfleet Garden City, 302 homes have been completed in the last year**—roughly half the number completed last year—bringing the total to more than 5,401. Otterpool Park will be a new garden town on and around the former Folkestone Racecourse between Hythe and Ashford—set to eventually accommodate 10,000 homes. Planning has been approved for a wastewater treatment plant, primary substation and wetlands, and the first 300 homes have been earmarked for land close to Westenhanger station. Work on infrastructure could start in 2028 with home building starting in 2029. But at Chilmington Green, lead developer Hodson entered administration creating challenges for the future of the 5,750-home Chilmington Green "garden town" in Ashford—approved in 2014—and the A28 Chart Road dualling project. Around 400 homes have been built so far, along with primary and secondary schools.

House price change in Kent, South East and England and Wales to end Q2, 2026

Location	Change Q2 2025 to Q2 2026	Average price Q2 2025	Average price Q2 2026
Ashford	-6%	£402,063	£377,065
Canterbury	4%	£372,371	£386,554
Dartford	-3%	£393,917	£383,509
Dover	1%	£324,455	£327,183
Folkestone and Hythe	7%	£317,203	£338,635
Gravesham	3%	£366,479	£378,400
Maidstone	-3%	£383,515	£371,357
Medway	-5%	£335,909	£320,714
Sevenoaks	-5%	£571,361	£542,515
Swale	-3%	£332,714	£323,647
Thanet	4%	£311,462	£323,551
Tonbridge and Malling	-5%	£468,313	£443,139
Tunbridge Wells	-2%	£507,801	£499,746
Kent	-2%	£391,345	£384,946
South East	-3%	£446,937	£431,737
England and Wales	-2%	£353,172	£347,284

Source: Land Registry

Fort Halstead, the ex-Ministry of Defence site near Sevenoaks which dates back to the 19th century, and was most recently a Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, **is set to be redeveloped for housing.** Demolition began in February, paving the way for a 635-home development by Barratt Redrow Kent. The project is expected to take more than six years. The company has also received planning permission for two residential phases at Wises Lane, Borden, Sittingbourne, delivering 160 new homes, including affordable housing, alongside new areas of public open space and play facilities.

QUINN HOMES



Proposal for the second phase of the award-winning Grove Park development in Sellindge.

Taylor Wimpey have secured approval for what will be the first phase of a major residential development at East Hill in the Capstone Valley, Chatham. Phase 1—Capstone Oaks, will deliver 91 houses, including 25% affordable homes, as well as open space and play areas. When complete the development could provide 800 new homes alongside retail floorspace, a site for a new primary school and new open spaces. At Newtown Works, Ashford, Ashford International Development Company has submitted a planning application for 815 new homes as part of the creation of a new vibrant quarter for the town.

Quinn Estates has many residential and community schemes underway in East Kent. The company have completed the restoration of the former redundant waterworks site in Charing, combining the preservation of a historic local asset with the delivery of new homes. And at Brook Court, Ashford, Quinn Estates has delivered a 10 apartment build-to-rent scheme. In Sellindge, the company has commenced the second phase of the award-winning Grove Park development and obtained planning consent for 105 new homes with a medical centre and local centre.

Despite Berkeleys stopping buying new land, other large housebuilders are still doing so, but only if well located and correctly priced. Smaller developers are still finding suitable small sites.

Demand for later living accommodation continues. One of many schemes, planning permission has been granted for a 75-bed care home in Whitstable, and specialist care home developer Aspire have acquired the site for £1.7m from Quinn Estates.

There is not much good news for landlords recently, with the Renters Right Act putting more obligations on landlords, in addition to earlier legislation. According to Savills, 254,000 buy to let properties were put up for sale in March, a 9% rise on last year and 28% rise on the year before, although some were sold to other landlords. There are still profits to be made according to UK Finance, but this is harder in the South East. The national Residential Landlords Association said it is becoming undeniably more complex to let residential property, and investments are much riskier.

At least partially as a result of this, the average cost of renting a home in Kent has increased by 5% on the same period last year, according to figures from Miles and Barr. The same data reveals the average age of renters in the county has risen once again—to 35, some way ahead of the UK average of 31.5 years. Demand for rental properties remains strong and the report also highlights that a "small but persistent flow of commuters are relocating to the county from London", fuelled by the high-speed rail link and "steady interest" in Kent's new housing developments.

After a challenging period for the UK housing market, there are signs that the longer-term outlook is more encouraging than some current headlines suggest. According to S&P Global Ratings, the UK is expected to be among Europe's stronger housing markets over the coming years. Although planning reforms are welcome, S&P notes that it will take time before these changes translate into a meaningful increase in supply. The new Your First Home scheme announced by the government on 29 September will help tackle the deposit barrier for first-time buyers and will provide another fillip to the housing market.

Estimated residential new build sales values range
by local authority area

Location	New build average price achieved (£/ft²) Houses & apartments Sept 2025	Sep 2026
Ashford	£332—£450	£315—£415
Canterbury	£380—£620	£365—£570
Dartford	£400—£580	£400—£535
Dover	£305—£415	£290—£385
Folkestone and Hythe	£355—£750	£345—£690
Gravesham	£400—£560	£400—£525
Maidstone	£330—£575	£320—£530
Medway	£335—£490	£335—£450
Sevenoaks	£565—£830	£550—£795
Swale	£315—£460	£315—£435
Thanet	£330—£555	£325—£515
Tonbridge and Malling	£420—£655	£415—£630
Tunbridge Wells	£480—£800	£465—£750

Source: RPC Land & New Homes



TAYLOR WIMPEY/VISTRY

Proposal for East Hill, Capstone Valley, Chatham.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

North Kent

DARTFORD

A town centre in transformation
Dartford is a dynamic borough that is attracting significant business investment and many new residents and workers. It is in the heart of the Thames Estuary growth area, at a pivotal point between Greater London, Kent and Essex. Flourishing and vibrant, the Census confirmed that Dartford's population was the second fastest growing in England with a 20% increase 2011-2021, and that uniquely in the region it's getting younger (average age 37.2 years).

Dartford Town Centre is cementing its place as one of Kent's most ambitious growth locations, with new housing, leisure, and public realm projects combining to reshape the town and attract fresh investment.

The story began with Weston Homes' Mill Pond scheme, which marked the first major step in bringing high-quality residential development into the heart of Dartford. This was followed by Bellway's landmark regeneration of Lowfield Street, where a once-vacant stretch of the High Street is being transformed into a thriving new neighbourhood, with planning permission for over 700 units, 425 of these have been occupied and work has recently commenced on the final phase. The development not only delivered hundreds of homes but also re-establishes direct links into Central Park, knitting the site back into the fabric of the town. Together, the Weston and Bellway schemes have drawn new residents into Dartford and created the critical mass needed to support local shops, cafés, and services.

Now the focus turns to the Westgate site, the next chapter in Dartford's regeneration story and one of the Council's most significant projects to date. Importantly, this is a Council-led scheme, with design work by Peter Barber Architects, ensuring that local priorities shape the outcome. Planning permission has been granted for family-sized housing in a street-based layout, combined with flexible commercial, leisure, and cultural uses. This approach deliberately contrasts with past developer proposals that prioritised height and density over liveability.



PETER BARBER ARCHITECTS

Proposal for the Council-led Westgate scheme.

Dartford is also investing heavily in the spaces that connect people and places. Public realm improvements along the High Street and throughout the core town centre streets are enhancing the environment for businesses and visitors, while continued upgrades to Central Park are reinforcing its role as Dartford's much-loved green heart—a place where town-centre living and open space meet.

The Orchard Theatre has undergone extensive repair and update work and is due to reopen for pantomime season in December 2026. This investment by the Council to create a state of the art cultural facility in the heart of the town centre will support the continued growth of arts and the nighttime economy, both important economic drivers in the town. Just east of the town centre, the growth of Stone continues with nearly 800 new homes occupied and under construction at Knights Reach. Community Infrastructure Levy funding from the development has contributed to the major upgrade to the adjoining recreation ground, which has been transformed through adding 167 trees, meadows, and range of new outdoor sports and leisure facilities.

Dartford's appeal is not limited to housing and new greenspaces. The town is also attracting major economic development investment, with Amazon establishing a state-of-the-art distribution centre on the former Littlebrook Power Station site. At the same time, ambitious proposals are advancing next to Ebbsfleet International Station, where a large mixed-use scheme is set to deliver more than 2,000 new homes alongside up to 1,076,391ft^2 (100,000m^2) of business floorspace. Together, these projects are expected to create a high-quality urban hub, supported by significant new infrastructure and long-term investment in the area.

For further information:
www.dartford.gov.uk

EBBSFLEET GARDEN CITY

The number of homes delivered in Ebbsfleet Garden City has now surpassed 5,401, with 1,593 of them affordable, and 302 completed since September 2025. In addition, 1,316 homes have detailed planning permission and are either under construction or not yet built.

At the heart of every great place is a strong community, and in Weldon, one of Ebbsfleet's newest neighbourhoods, two unique community buildings have taken shape, spaces designed not just to serve residents, but to bring people together. Backed by over £13m of investment from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC), these facilities are a bold statement of intent—showing that while property drives regeneration, it's people who truly bring places to life.

Working closely with housebuilder Barratt Redrow, and through various studies and public consultations, EDC identified opportunities to enhance the facilities required under the developer's section 106 Agreement, to provide exemplary amenities at the heart of the neighbourhood. EDC also provided additional funding to support these enhancements to the two community buildings in Weldon—a clear demonstration of its ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality facilities and placemaking across Ebbsfleet. Their strategic location means residents from surrounding neighbourhoods can easily access and enjoy everything on offer.

The buildings are constructed using Cross Laminated Timber and designed to achieve BREEAM Outstanding, the highest level of sustainable building performance.

Weldon Heart is a 2,626ft² (244m²) single storey building set within a generous area of public landscape, and adjacent to a new play space. This building provides residents with flexible amenities to come together and meet, with the space designed to respond to different activities and needs of users. Meeting facilities, along with IT equipment and a village tool store, have been provided to enhance the experience and offering of the space.

Weldon Wellbeing Pavilion is a 10,904ft² (1,013m²) two storey building with a multi-use sports hall, changing and welfare amenities, a gym, managed reception and café. Alongside it sits a new FA standard 3G sports pitch, tennis courts, play space and parking, all available for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Now complete, ownership of both buildings has been transferred to Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust, a resident and stakeholder led independent charity established by EDC to provide a long-term stewardship arrangement within Ebbsfleet. The Trust will manage and maintain the buildings in the long term and has appointed Freedom Leisure to run day-to-day management and operation of the Pavilion.



EBBSFLEET DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Weldon Wellbeing Pavilion.

By investing into local facilities, EDC has ensured that vital infrastructure is delivered alongside the community, not years after. With 5,401 homes now complete across the Ebbsfleet Garden City scheme, this investment is a proactive approach that puts people at the centre of regeneration, and a reminder that true development is about more than just delivering homes—it's about creating spaces where people genuinely want to live, thrive and belong.

Beyond the Weldon neighbourhood, EDC is also progressing Ebbsfleet Central, a new town centre serving the area around Ebbsfleet International Station. Outline Planning Permission was secured in March 2026, with three separate S106 agreements signed, guided by an illustrative masterplan seeking around 2,100 new homes—including at least 35% affordable housing—and approximately 936,460ft² (87,000m²) of commercial floorspace, alongside retail, leisure, health and community uses and new public open space.

An Area Masterplan and Design Code for the first phase (EC2) is due for submission in August 2026, comprising around 1,100 homes and 40,000 sqm of commercial floorspace. EDC is currently procuring a contractor to deliver roads and utilities infrastructure for the first phase, including new station forecourt facilities, with works due to start in 2028, alongside early-stage market engagement to find a development partner, targeting first occupations in 2032.



EBBSFLEET DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Weldon Heart provides residents with flexible amenities to come together and meet.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

GRAVESHAM

Gravesham is situated in the heart of the Thames Estuary with a young population of 107,000 people—a gateway to London, the Estuary and Kent.

The borough is well-placed to benefit from major infrastructure and regeneration projects, under development and in the pipeline. Gravesham 2040 provides a strategic vision and the council's Local Plan is at an advanced 'Regulation 19' stage. The borough has 11km of Thames riverfront and enjoys excellent transport links to London, with the prospect of restored international rail connections to the continent via Ebbsfleet International Station, which sits at the heart of one of Europe's largest regeneration projects.

High Speed 1 rail services connect Gravesend to Central London in 23 mins and Stratford International in 17 mins. Trials continue for rapid river transport via Uber Boats by Thames Clippers and as of September 2026, there is a commitment from government to ensure the return of a river ferry service between Gravesend and Tilbury. Enabling works for the Lower Thames Crossing commenced in 2026.

New Business Space
A new Youth Hub and flexible workspace is set to open on Gravesend High Street within two years. 8,500ft² of flexible workspace, meeting and networking space will provide a focus for youth participation, remote working and the town's growing creative and digital sectors.

New Leisure Centre
A pre-contract agreement was signed with Wilmott Dixon in September 2025, for the delivery of a £42.9m new Cascades Leisure Centre in Gravesend. Enabling works including demolition works, commenced in the spring of 2026. Plans include a 25m swimming pool, a 17m learner pool, aqua play and water flume facilities, plus a dedicated spectator viewing area. The ground floor will also feature a six-court sports hall, soft play zone, party and community rooms, and a café.


TOUCHSTONE

Gravesham Riverside, including The Charter riverside apartments, now largely complete.

Place Making on Gravesham Riverside
The Charter, which comprises 242 new build-to-rent homes on Gravesend riverside, is now largely complete and is the product of a partnership with Rosherville, the Council's wholly owned company.

With the recent addition of trial Uber Boat by Thames Clippers services from Gravesend Pier, St Andrew's Gardens is poised to become a key gateway to the town. The revitalised gardens will provide a welcoming first impression for visitors arriving by river. Gravesham Borough Council is investing in a multi-phase landscape project to create an inviting space for recreation and relaxation by maximising views of the river and creating a seamless connection with the waterfront.

Developing Gravesham's visitor economy is a key focus, by shifting the gravity of the town back to the river, encouraging an independent retail offer on the historic High Street of small businesses, artisan makers, tap-rooms and restaurants. The first scheme to be built by Gravesham Community Investment Partnership will be a scheme of 76 dwellings at Milton Road in Gravesend town centre, on a vacant site within the local conservation area. 80% will be designated affordable housing, including supported living and wheelchair-accessible homes.

SoloHaus at St Albans Close, Gravesend, will provide eight self-contained homes for single individuals, delivered in partnership with The Hill Group through their charitable Foundation200 initiative.

For further information please contact:
Economic.development@gravesham.gov.uk


GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

SoloHaus at St Albans Close, Gravesend.

MAIDSTONE

Maidstone: a strategic hub for property development and investment
The adopted Local Plan Review (2024) sets out the delivery of 13,200 new jobs and 20,000 homes by 2038, including two new Garden Communities. Lidsing seeks to deliver 2,000 new homes and 14ha of new employment space; Heathlands seeks to deliver 5,000 new homes and minimum of 14ha (35-acre) new employment land, aiming to provide 5,000 new jobs. Outline planning applications are expected to be submitted by the end of 2026.

Yalding Enterprise Park
Located on the former Syngenta agro-chemical works, and just seven miles from Junction 2 of the M20/M26, phase one will deliver over 90,000ft² (8361m²) of space, with a bespoke Padel Studio; 25,000ft² (2,322m²) recently opening to complement the existing leisure offering. A number of small units have been let but units up to 60,000ft² (5,574m²) remain available.

Eclipse Park
Following Regus investment in Eclipse Park a new centre at Horizon House opened in 2026. The space provides flexible co-working and meeting space and a wellness centre to hire. Four new units; totalling 20,000ft² (1,858m²) were brought to market in late 2025, with the space now 75% let with planning granted for Class E usage.

BRACKETTS



Yalding Enterprise Park: located on the former Syngenta agro-chemical works.

PANATTONI



Proposal for Panattoni Park, Maidstone.

Panattoni Park Maidstone
Panattoni, the world's largest privately owned industrial real estate developer, has submitted a hybrid planning application for Panattoni Park Maidstone, a major industrial and logistics development on the 28ha (70-acre) former Marley Works brownfield site in Lenham.

Strategically located on the A20 with excellent access to the M20, the site offers strong links to London, the M25 and key UK and European ports. The proposals include detailed plans for an initial phase comprising two industrial units of 100,000ft² (9,290m²) and 150,000ft², (13, 936m²) alongside outline consent for a further 790,000ft² (73,394m²) of employment space. Subject to approval, construction is expected to commence in Q4 2026.

Len House
Obee Holdings has completed a £40m transformation of the Grade II listed Len House, a landmark building in Maidstone town centre. Built in the 1930s, the building was formerly home to Rootes as a major car showroom and manufacturing workshop and is instantly recognisable for its distinctive Art Deco architecture. The scheme will see a mix of commercial space for retail and dining, with 80 new apartments becoming available from autumn 2026.

Accelerated development
Supported by over £80m of investment, Maidstone Borough Council is advancing a programme of residential regeneration to increase the supply of affordable housing. By the end of 2026, five developments will be completed, delivering 90 affordable homes across the borough. Located across key sites within the town, these developments demonstrate how underutilised brownfield land can be transformed into much-needed homes for local people.

The redevelopment of the former Royal Mail Sorting Office is due to commence this year and will provide 180 homes in the town centre and a 20,000ft² (1,858m²) community health facility. Further schemes include over 100 homes at Springfield Library with Hill Partnership Homes the lead contractor.

For further information:
Chris Inwood, Economic Development Manager
T: 01622 602465 or *chrisinwood@maidstone.gov.uk*
www.businessinmaidstone.co.uk

PILLORY BARN



The £40m transformation of the Grade II listed Len House.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

MEDWAY

Medway's new Local Plan
Medway's Local Plan 2041 is now with Government for Examination. Two Planning Inspectors were appointed earlier this year to carry out an independent examination on the Plan and consider any changes that should be made. The council has now received the Inspectors' matters, issues and questions for the examination. These will be considered at public hearing sessions this autumn, with completion expected in November 2026.

The Local Plan outlines how Medway will grow over the next 15 years, including housing, businesses, and transport, along with the necessary supporting infrastructure, and policies to secure quality development.

The James Williams Healthy Living Centre
The James Williams Healthy Living Centre opened in Chatham on 3 June 2026, marking a significant investment in Medway's healthcare infrastructure.

Named in honour of Medway Council's late Director of Public Health, James Williams, the £15m facility was jointly funded by NHS Kent and Medway (£13.4m) and Medway Council (£1.6m). Developed by Bauvill and managed by Medway Community Healthcare (MCH), the centre brings together two GP practices, clinic space, community health services, and modern patient facilities under one roof. The development will help support the long-term health and wellbeing of local residents, while enhancing the area's community infrastructure and public service provision.

The Brook Theatre
Since Sinden Ltd were appointed in May 2025, the team has spent the last 18 months working with appointed architects, Bailey Partnership, to prepare the building for



STUTHOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY

The James Williams Healthy Living Centre.

the planned changes. The £21m project is funded thanks to the Government's Levelling Up and Future High Streets fund, along with funding provided by Medway Council and the University of Kent.

Due to the significance of structural damp and drying out works, repair works are now due to be completed before the end of 2026, preparing the building before the major refurbishment improvements and lighting installation can take place, all due to be completed at the end of 2027.

The theatre is expected to fully reopen with performances commencing in spring 2028. Improvements will include new disabled access at the entrance, new staging, lighting, sound and digital equipment, upgraded office, meeting and dressing rooms, studio spaces, new toilets, and refurbishing the main theatre including foyer.

Chatham is benefiting from significant investment through the *Chatham Creative Quarters* programme, a cultural placemaking initiative designed to position the town as a centre for creativity, innovation, arts, heritage and enterprise. The programme connects major regeneration projects across the town centre and waterfront, creating an environment that supports creative sector business growth, skills development and cultural production.

Docking Station
Another project coming forward through Chatham Creative Quarters is the Docking Station. A topping out ceremony took place on 24 June 2026 to mark the completion of the building's structural frame at its highest point. Built inside the Grade II listed Police Section House, the Docking Station project is going to feature co-working spaces and creative studios, while supporting local artists in their crafts. Led by University of Kent and Historic Dockyard Chatham Trust, the project is aiming to open its doors in early 2027.

Pride in Place: Gillingham High Street
Last year, Medway Council was awarded £1.5m from the UK Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund (PIPIF).Through the public realm improvement scheme funding, £500,000 is being used to transform the Civic Square in Gillingham High Street. The regeneration project will see new street murals, new light columns with projections, planted areas including a rain garden, new seating, infrastructure for market and event spaces, new CCTV and creative art installations. The funding will also deliver public toilet refurbishment and lighting upgrades. HTA and Medway Development Company will deliver the improvements. The works are due to be completed in early 2027.

Medway Council has also been awarded £60m from the UK Government's Pride in Place programme for investment in three areas over the next 10 years: Strood West, Luton and Twydall. Neighbourhood Boards in each area will submit investment plans to the Government in February 2027.

Mountbatten House
This iconic building has dominated the Chatham skyline for nearly 50 years. The building has been transformed by Medway Development Company into a high-quality residential development called 'The New Tide', which includes 108 residential apartments plus 56 apartments in an extension that's been built next to the building. The sales suite and the show home are now open. Construction is due to be completed in early 2027.

Further plans for new homes in Chatham town centre
Meanwhile, both The Brook multi-storey and Solomons Road car parks have closed to make way for further homes in Chatham town centre. The scheme is being funded through the Government's Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) to demolish the car parks, alongside using £400k of capital funding to deliver this major transformation project.


BPTW

Proposal for Strood Civic, near Rochester Bridge.

Strood Civic

Strood Civic continues to move forward as a landmark regeneration project for Medway, with works underway to prepare the sales and marketing suite ahead of construction commencing on new homes at the site, situated near Rochester Bridge. Delivered by Medway Development Company, the scheme will see plans for 195 homes to be built alongside improved public spaces, active travel infrastructure, and new leisure and hospitality provision.

Improvements to Medway sports facilities

A brand-new youth gym and hyrox facility has now opened at Medway Park Sports Centre. In addition, a larger gym has been created at Hoo Sports Centre, along with refurbishment of the existing wet side changing rooms. Refurbishments are also planned for the wet side at Strood Sports Centre before the end of this autumn. Meanwhile, three new PlayZones have been delivered thanks to an investment of £694,488 from the Football Foundation.

Rochester Riverside

Over 600 new homes have now been delivered at the flagship regeneration scheme for Rochester. The scheme, which is delivered in partnership with Vistry, Hyde Housing and Homes England, has been shortlisted for two awards in 2026; 'Best Regeneration Initiative' at the Housebuilder Awards, and 'Excellence in Place Regeneration' at the Landscape Institute Awards. Once completed, Rochester Riverside will see 1,400 homes delivered by 2032.

Limehouse Landing was constructed in 2025 and continues to enable river tour operators to bring visitors to the area and make Rochester a port of call for the historic paddle steamer Waverley, which visited in October 2026.

Council-run care facility

Plans are progressing for a major new health and care development on Maidstone Road that will form a key part of Medway's future adult social care provision. Submitted in summer 2026, the £44m project will include an 80-bed care home and other facilities. The development will comprise a three-storey building, incorporating a 40-bed dementia nursing facility and a 40-bed respite and discharge-to-assess unit, helping to meet growing demand for specialist care services within Medway.


LUKE GRANGER PHOTOGRAPHY & FILM

Rochester Riverside: latest construction for phase 7.

As one of Medway's flagship care projects, the scheme will enhance local healthcare capacity, support independent living, and provide modern, high-quality facilities designed to improve outcomes for residents, while reducing pressure on the wider health and social care system.

Rainham town centre

The Rainham Reimagined Delivery Plan was launched on Friday, 14 August 2026. The plan defines the local community's aspirations for future improvements. Three projects will be delivered to improve the town centre. Some of these improvements will include decluttering of the central square to create a more flexible space for events, enhancements to the shopping centre through public art, new wayfinding, targeted crossing improvements, and establishing three walking trails. Some improvements will be delivered by March 2027, part-funded through S106.

Gun Wharf

Apex Contractors Ltd have been appointed to deliver the £21m refurbishment of Medway Council's Gun Wharf Headquarters. The improvements will include new council chambers that doubles as flexible working space, interior improvements and new windows, new meeting spaces and conference rooms, self-service café and wellbeing spaces, and resurfacing the car park, while also making the building more energy efficient to support the local environment. The offices have been closed to the general public since 18 May 2026. The works are due to be completed by autumn 2027.

Medway Design and Regeneration Awards

The 3rd awards ceremony will take place in September 2027 at The Rochester Corn Exchange. Nominations across eight categories will open in January, which include *Residential, Public Buildings, Civils and infrastructure and Commercial Retail and Industrial*.

The awards recognise a highly impressive catalogue of innovative building projects across Medway.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

SWALE

The property market in Swale can be characterised in the last year by the achievement of several major milestones, and progress on sites which will provide ongoing opportunities for local growth.

Peel Ports Group, who operate the London Medway Port in Sheerness, announced in September that they will be investing £100m into the steels and metals sector. The investment is split between Sheerness and the Port of Liverpool, and there are plans to create a new fully automated rail terminal in the former. The investment presents an opportunity to increase the capacity and speed of the handling of steel and metals at the port.



SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Workshop Spaces at Masters House, Sheerness.

Managed by Swale Borough Council and funded through £20m from the UK government, the Sheerness Revival Project is also nearing completion. In January 2026 at nearby Masters House, the funding has been used to create three workshops which are being let to artists, makers and craftspeople aged 18 to 30 to launch and grow their businesses. In May East Kent College unveiled its new 9,688ft² (900m²) campus extension at Sheppey College, which provides greater capacity, facilities and opportunities for learners aged 14-19. Importantly, the new learning offer has been closely aligned with the needs of local industries. The final phase of the project, the refurbishment and re-build of the Healthy Living Centre is planned to conclude in the autumn of 2026, and will include a modernised GP space, café and a custom-made area for local charity Sheppey Matters.

In Faversham, a resolution to grant planning permission has been secured for the Duchy of Cornwall's plans for up to 2,500 homes, which will include affordable housing. The proposals include employment space, which will be split across 29 separate commercial units including cafes, restaurants and flexible office space.

The Anderson Group also continue to make progress on their plan to develop the former gunpowder and aggregates site at Oare Gravel Works. In addition to a wider residential development, progress is being made on creating 9,397ft² (873m²) of office, workshop-studios and storage, and 7,68ft² (714m²) of community space, all set within historic buildings in a unique country park setting.

At Panattoni Park Sittingbourne, the 440,167ft² (40,893m²) building has been let to ID Logistics, and a further 205,788ft² (19,118m²) unit is still available. As well as benefiting from good transport connections, with proximity to the A249, the park is designed to provide leading sustainability outcomes, including BREEAM 'Excellent' and EPC A performance, supported by solar PV and electric vehicle charging provision.

Cook Trading Ltd were also granted planning permission last year for a new frozen and refrigerated logistics facility and office block. Work has started on the 8,772ft² (815m²) building which is within the Eurolink Business Park in Sittingbourne.



SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Campus Extension at EKC Sheppey College, part of the East Kent College Group (EKC Group).

Swale Borough Council has started building 51 high-quality affordable flats on the site of a former car park called Cockleshell Walk in Sittingbourne. The project has been funded through £6.4m from Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme Fund and will provide much-needed social housing accommodation near to the High Street.

Kent County Council has also reached the final stages of their project to improve the A249 Key Street and Grovehurst Roundabouts. The improvements are funded through a £38.1m award from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and complement the recent improvements to the M2 Junction 5. The slip lane at Key Street roundabout has been relocated to the south to improve capacity at the junction, while the improvements at Grovehurst junction are to upgrade the existing 'dumbbell' into a two-bridge flyover.

For further information:
www.swale.gov.uk

West Kent

Significant investment and development continue across West Kent, creating new opportunities to live, work and invest. Major town centre regeneration schemes are progressing alongside new commercial and employment space, strategic housing growth and investment in leisure and community infrastructure. New homes, including affordable housing, are being delivered alongside improved local amenities, while investment in sporting facilities, flood resilience, nature recovery and biodiversity is supporting sustainable growth. Together, these developments demonstrate continued confidence in West Kent's property market and long-term growth prospects, strengthening its position as an attractive, sustainable and well-connected location for residents, businesses and investors.

Town centre regeneration

Royal Tunbridge Wells
The transformation at **Royal Victoria Place** continues with Primark opening in December 2025 and Fenwick committing long term to the centre and to Tunbridge Wells in February 2026. The completion in August of the major £10.6m refurbishment of the car park with 958 extra wide spaces and solar PV, has transformed it into a modern, future-ready facility for shoppers, workers and visitors to Tunbridge Wells. The new solar canopy contains 973 solar panels delivering approximately 40% of the centre's electrical requirements. With footfall up at RVP by over 20% bucking the national trend, plans for a multi-screen boutique cinema, leisure and dining offer and enhanced retail scheme are progressing. Planning permission to deliver the Palm Court scheme was approved in June 2026 and designs for the scheme are progressing with procurement planned to commence in Autumn 2026. A decision on Ely Court is programmed for April 2027 with the aim to be on site by Autumn 2027 and complete in Winter 2029.

Paramount Place, the new Retirement Villages Group development on the site of the former ABC Cinema, is nearing completion and includes 167 apartments, restaurant, gym and 10 retail units. On the nearby site of the former AXA offices, January 2026 saw planning approval granted for the delivery of 44 new homes, comprising a mix of three-and four-bedroom family houses alongside six apartments.


TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Artist's impression of Palm Court Refurbishment at Royal Victoria Place.

Sevenoaks
Sevenoaks District Council is progressing the regeneration of land east of Sevenoaks High Street, linking the town centre with Knole Park. The mixed-use scheme will deliver a new energy-efficient leisure centre, high-quality homes, including affordable housing subject to viability, enhanced public realm and biodiversity, and the refurbishment of 96 High Street as a creative and cultural hub.

In July 2026, the Council approved the appointment of Wates as Development Partner and is now progressing the Development Agreement, detailed design and further stakeholder engagement. Subject to viability and planning consent, enabling works are expected to commence by Q3 2028, with completion anticipated by Q1 2033. The regeneration will attract investment, support local businesses and strengthen the vitality of Sevenoaks town centre.

Swanley
Meeting Point
Meeting Point continues to provide a vibrant business and community hub at the heart of Swanley High Street, supporting local businesses and encouraging enterprise within the town centre. The flexible facilities offer co-working and shared office space, dedicated offices, meeting and event rooms, and on-site business support, providing an accessible environment for businesses to connect, work and grow. Meeting Point continues to strengthen Swanley's business offer and contribute to the wider vitality of the town centre.

Bevan Place
The Council continues to explore future development opportunities for the Bevan Place site in Swanley town centre. The site remains an important strategic regeneration opportunity that has the potential to support investment, economic growth and enhanced town centre activity. Future proposals will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and the local community.

Tonbridge
Angel Centre and Tonbridge Regeneration
Tonbridge town centre regeneration received a significant boost with planning permission granted for a new £20m Angel Centre. The replacement leisure facility will feature an expanded gym, studios, café, soft play facilities and flexible community space within a modern, energy-efficient building. Construction is expected to commence in autumn 2026, with the new centre opening in 2028 as a key component of the wider Sovereign Way regeneration programme.



SAUNDERS BOSTON ARCHITECTS

Proposal for The Angel Centre, Tonbridge.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Commercial developments

North Farm Industrial Estate, Tunbridge Wells
The first phase of the Royal London Asset Management Property **TN2 Gateway** development at Kingstanding Way next to the existing Kingstanding Business Park has reached completion with phase 2 construction now under way. When complete, the scheme will see 500,000ft² (46,452m²) of warehouse accommodation and ancillary office space delivered next to the A21 dual carriageway, offering excellent access to the M25. Within the landscaped site, TN2 Gateway offers a range of units with flexible space from 23,503 to 175,223ft² (2,184 to 16,279m²). The development is leading the way in shaping a new environmentally conscious future and is targeting both EPC A+ and BREEAM Outstanding certifications; it has also been shortlisted for the international 2026 BREEAM Lifecycle Impact Commitment award.

Aylesford
In Aylesford, a planning application was submitted at the end of July 2026 for Kent's first Costco warehouse and petrol station on land close to Junction 5 of the M20. The development would deliver a significant new retail destination, creating an initial 180 jobs with employment expected to rise to more than 250 within three years. Subject to planning approval, Costco aims to open the store by 2028, further strengthening the area's role as an important commercial and employment hub.

Residential developments

Paddock Wood
The adopted Tunbridge Wells Local Plan (December 2025) allocates significant growth around Paddock Wood and East Capel, comprising approximately 2,450 homes spread over four sites (with 40% affordable housing).


SCANNELL PROPERTIES

TN2 Gateway, Tunbridge Wells, Phase 1 now complete.

In 2026 significant progress has been made towards developing residential schemes and the Council is now considering planning applications for all four strategic development sites submitted by national house builders. This demonstrates the confidence brought by the adopted Local Plan, as well as the strategic vision set out within the Paddock Wood Masterplan to deliver high-quality housing developments with ample green space, associated infrastructure for Highways, Education, Health and Sports and utilising garden settlement principles.

Going forward, the Council will continue to progress the development proposals in a collaborative way, to deliver high-quality developments alongside the necessary infrastructure for the local area. It is envisaged that the residential schemes will progress towards securing planning consents in 2027.

Alongside this residential development, the Council is considering Reserved Matters details for a significant employment development to the north of the town centre, delivering 195,365ft² (18,150m²) of employment floorspace for B2/B8 uses. This scheme provides high-quality business premises and provides a significant uplift to employment floorspace within the Borough.

Edenbridge
Farmstead Drive
Construction is progressing at Farmstead Drive, bringing forward a significant renewal of part of the 1960s Spitals Cross Housing Estate in Edenbridge. The development will provide 23 new affordable homes, offering a mix of houses and flats, together with a new convenience store and replacement community hall. Wider improvements include upgraded landscaping and parking provision, as well as



LSI ARCHITECTS (DESIGN) LTD

Proposal for Farmstead Drive, Edenbridge.

the relocation of the existing playground. The scheme is expected to be completed in Autumn 2026, delivering new homes alongside improved community facilities and an enhanced local environment.

Four Elms Road

Four Elms Road represents a significant growth opportunity for Edenbridge, combining new housing with education, community infrastructure, transport improvements and public open space. Outline permission provides for 340 homes, including affordable housing, alongside land for a new secondary school, Scout facilities, additional parking for Edenbridge Town Station and allotments. The wider area remains part of Edenbridge's emerging planning strategy, with potential to support future housing delivery and investment while strengthening local infrastructure, connectivity and community facilities.

Swanley

White Oak

Work is underway at White Oak in Swanley, delivering 60 new homes next to Swanley Leisure Centre, including 15 three-bedroom townhouses and 45 one—and two-bedroom apartments around a shared community garden. Sustainability measures include solar panels, air-source heat pumps and a green roof, supported by £840,000 from the Brownfield Land Release Fund. The scheme will also contribute towards the £22m White Oak Leisure Centre. Construction is progressing, with completion expected in 2028, supporting Swanley's continued regeneration and vitality.

Broom Hill

Broom Hill is a strategically located mixed-use development site on London Road, close to the M20 and M25 at Swanley. The approved proposals will deliver 47 homes, a new retail food store, public open space and landscaping, alongside a new access roundabout and supporting infrastructure. The development will unlock a site with long-term potential for economic growth, creating new residential and commercial opportunities while improving connectivity and contributing to the continued development and investment appeal of the wider Swanley area.

Kings Hill

Subject to planning approval, a major redevelopment proposal has emerged at Kings Hill, where Praxis has unveiled plans to transform five vacant office buildings, delivering up to 260 new homes. The proposals are intended to respond to changing workplace requirements while sustaining Kings Hill's role as a key business location. Alongside the residential development, Praxis is investing more than £8m in refurbishing and upgrading retained office accommodation, helping to provide the modern, flexible workspace increasingly demanded by businesses. A community consultation was undertaken in June 2026 ahead of submission.

World class sporting venues

Cobdown Park, Ditton

Cobdown Park is set to become home to one of the country's leading women's football training facilities following planning approval for London City Lionesses' redevelopment of the site. The proposals include a state-of-the-art performance campus, academy facilities, a community 3G pitch and improvements to existing sports infrastructure. The development is expected to create more than 50 jobs and generate approximately £1m annually for the local economy, reinforcing the borough's growing sporting and leisure offer.

Nature and biodiversity net gain

Darent Valley

The Darent Valley Nature Partnership brings together 18 landowners, including Sevenoaks District Council, to support long-term nature recovery through habitat creation, restoration and improved connectivity. Led by Kent Wildlife Trust, the partnership is developing a collaborative approach to land management, maximising opportunities for DEFRA funding and longer-term investment through environmental markets, including Biodiversity Net Gain units and potential carbon sequestration credits. The initiative aims to establish sustainable land stewardship over a 30-to-50-year period, generating income while delivering lasting benefits including habitat restoration, species protection, enhanced biodiversity, carbon capture, food security and sustainable rural development across the wider river basin.

Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough

Strategic infrastructure investment is continuing through the Leigh Flood Storage Area Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme. The £36m project will increase flood storage capacity by around 25% and reduce flood risk to more than 1,800 homes and 575 businesses across Tonbridge and Hildenborough. The scheme will provide long-term flood resilience and support future investment and development within the area. The site was officially opened by The Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MBE VR MP in September 2026.


ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Leigh Flood Storage Area as part of the Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

East Kent

ASHFORD

Ashford—the hub for investment, regeneration and growth

The Ashford International Station Investment Area (AISIA) is emerging as one of Kent's most significant regeneration and investment opportunities. Covering 33 hectares of brownfield sites around Ashford International Station, it brings together housing, commercial development, skills, transport and low-carbon infrastructure within a single investment proposition. Around £16m of investment is planned or progressing across the area, supporting Ashford's ambitions for growth and strengthening the case for the future return of international rail services.

Several major projects are advancing within AISIA. Planning applications have been submitted for the Tanyard and former Civic Centre regeneration schemes, which together could deliver around 200 homes, improved public spaces and the restoration of heritage assets. Alongside this, the Stour Centre Solar Array project proposes more than 1,500 solar panels across 26 canopies covering 234 parking bays, generating around 1MW of renewable electricity annually and supporting Ashford's ambitions for low-carbon growth.

Investment in skills is also progressing with Ashford College Phase 3 unlocking more than £9m of investment in new teaching facilities and student amenities, reflecting growing demand for further education in the town.

Housing delivery remains a key feature of Ashford's growth programme. Nearby, Swanton House will deliver 34 apartments on a vacant historic site, while Newtown Works, one of the South East's largest brownfield regeneration

HAWORTH TOMPKINS



Proposal for the former Odeon cinema, Ashford town centre.

opportunities, has the potential to deliver approximately 815 homes alongside commercial, community and public realm improvements. Beyond the town centre, the South of Ashford Garden Community continues to represent a major long-term development opportunity, with plans for approximately 7,250 homes and supporting infrastructure.

Town centre regeneration is accelerating. Elwick Place has opened as a major leisure attraction, strengthening Ashford's entertainment and hospitality offer. Elwick Place Phase 2 also retains planning permission for approximately 200 homes, bringing further residential development into the town centre.

At Park Mall, demolition of the former shopping centre has enabled the creation of a temporary 200-space town centre car park while plans progress for a longer-term mixed-use redevelopment. Nearby, the former Odeon cinema is being brought forward as a cultural, creative and community destination, repurposing one of Ashford's landmark buildings to provide a 200-capacity flexible performance, event and creative space that supports footfall, evening economy activity and wider regeneration.

Confidence in Ashford's retail future has also been demonstrated by Primark's decision to open a new 29,000ft^2 (2,694m^2) store at County Square in late 2027. This investment by one of the UK's largest retail brands is expected to create jobs, increase visitor numbers and reinforce Ashford's role as a key retail and service town centre.

Across the wider borough, in Tenterden, investment in the leisure centre and the successful reuse of the historic Embassy Building demonstrate confidence in the market town economy. The Ashford Borough is also gaining recognition as the epicentre of England's and Kent's growing wine industry, with the launch of the Kentish Wine Way and increasing collaboration between local vineyards helping to strengthen the visitor economy and enhance the borough's reputation as part of one of the UK's leading wine-producing regions.

Finally, the emerging Local Plan 2043 will provide the framework for future housing, employment and infrastructure growth, with adoption targeted for March 2028.

THE BIG PICTURE



Proposal for The Loop.

CANTERBURY

Canterbury district adopts new strategies for city and towns to power inward investment
It's been a busy and exciting year for both planning and delivering economic regeneration and securing new investment in Canterbury district.

With the city council adopting new city and town centre strategies for Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay, these places now have different visions for how they will grow and flourish up to 2040. As well as seeking to build on their successful tourism and visitor economies (which are worth more than £400m per year) by boosting business and regeneration, these strategies also welcome new investors.

"The purpose of these strategies is to give investors confidence that we have a plan for each place", says Cllr Chris Cornell, Canterbury City Council's cabinet member for economic development and coastal towns. *"They create a framework that aims to facilitate private sector investment and connect the right people with the right spaces wherever we can."*

This approach is paying off in Canterbury where Whitefriars shopping centre reached 100% occupancy in June this year. The Riverside also attracted new tenants in 2026 supported by increased footfall and dwell times. This success is impressive especially given ongoing challenges to UK high streets.

New flexible office space for 2026 included Regus' arrival at 6-8 Longmarket, Canterbury offering serviced offices, co-working space and meeting rooms in the heart of the city.

2026 will also see Levelling Up Fund works finish in Canterbury. The £22m programme of investment in the city's regeneration—including walking and cycling infrastructure, event spaces, heritage sites and parks/green spaces will be completed, with the much-anticipated reopening of Canterbury Castle to the public.

The Marlowe Theatre's £8.5m plans to turn Canterbury's former Poor Priests' Hospital site into a creative learning centre for young people took a massive step forward this year. Its Hive project was awarded a £4.4m grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This initiative will transform the 12th-century building—adding another exciting chapter to this site's remarkable history.

In the Wincheap area of Canterbury, the city council gave the go ahead to increase capacity at the Park & Ride site. The site's expansion will sit alongside development of a new A2 off-slip road. Both form part of longer-term plans to masterplan the industrial estate site, which amongst other things, will identify new opportunities to invest in Canterbury.

In Whitstable a well-known national operator has been selected to bring forward the redevelopment of the iconic Net Store site on Whitstable Harbour's south quay, following a competitive marketing process. The new operator is set to bring their unique style and food and drink offering to the town. This represents a significant investment in the harbour and demonstrates its continued appeal as a regionally and nationally attractive destination to invest in.

Building on a successful year for the district, *Choose Canterbury* will focus its efforts on showcasing new investment opportunities in Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay along with connecting investors to the district's business parks and new strategic development sites.

Confidence creates confidence and that has been the story again over the last year with a strong pipeline of investment continuing to bring jobs, facilities, business space and economic activity to Canterbury district.



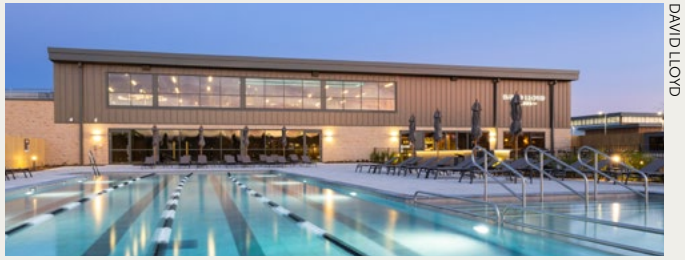
CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

Poor Priests' Hospital set to become the home of The Hive, a creative centre.

Strategic investments

Canterbury continues to attract significant private sector investment demonstrating ongoing confidence in the district.

David Lloyd Health and Leisure Centre
A new David Lloyd Club offering premium health and wellness facilities opened in December 2025 at Altira Business Park, Herne Bay. This 48,000ft² (4,460m²) development represents one of the district's most significant private leisure investments delivering 130 jobs.



DAVID LLOYD

David Lloyd, Altira Park, Herne Bay.

George Wilson Holdings
Plans for a new 180,000ft² (17,000m²) commercial and industrial business park at Herne Bay were approved by Canterbury City Council in January 2026.

Ideally located on the A299 Thanet Way, this new George Wilson Holdings development will provide a mix of small industrial units, starter units, leisure space and EV charging infrastructure. Up to 250 jobs are expected to be created. 100% of planned commercial space in phase one is under offer.

Investment interest in Herne Bay continues
Supermarket chain Aldi has submitted plans for a new £7m, 20,742ft² (1,927m²) store at Altira Park in Herne Bay, earlier this year, which if approved will create up to 40 jobs, and be the retailer's second investment in Herne Bay, alongside its existing town centre store.

For further information:
To explore investment opportunities, live projects, and the latest business insights from across Canterbury and its coastal towns, visit www.choosecanterbury.co.uk

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

DOVER

Regeneration, placemaking and opportunity driving confidence across the district
Dover continues to demonstrate strong momentum, with significant investment in regeneration, education, housing, heritage and innovation helping to strengthen the district's appeal as a location for business investment, development and growth.

The Bench opens its doors
One of the district's most significant regeneration projects reaches a major milestone in 2026 with the completion of The Bench, the landmark mixed-use building at the heart of the Dover Beacon Project. Following handover to Dover District Council, tenants are preparing to move in ahead of the official launch for the new academic year in September 2026.


DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Bench, Dover, officially launched in September 2026.

The development will provide a new creative and educational campus for EKC Dover College, flexible workspace for start-ups and small businesses through Benchworks, creative sector facilities, and new hospitality provision. Expected to deliver more than £90m in economic benefit, the wider Dover Beacon Project is creating opportunities for skills development, entrepreneurship and inward investment while helping to revitalise Dover town centre.

A historic landmark reawakens
The restoration of Dover's magnificent Maison Dieu (Dover Town Hall) is already proving a major success story. Reopened to the public in May 2025 following a £10.5m restoration programme, the Grade I listed building has become a vibrant heritage, community and events venue.

Now open daily, the 800-year-old landmark hosts a growing programme of cultural events, tours, performances and private functions. More than 10,000 visitors attended during its first year following reopening, helping to strengthen Dover's visitor economy and showcase one of Kent's most significant historic buildings.

Delivering much-needed housing
Providing high-quality affordable housing remains a key priority for Dover District Council. Construction is progressing on the Military Road development in Dover, which will provide eight new social rent homes, including accessible accommodation, on a previously underutilised brownfield site. The development is being supported through Homes England funding and incorporates sustainable measures including air-source heat pumps and solar panels.

The council continues to progress a wider programme of affordable housing delivery across the district, helping to meet local housing needs while supporting the creation of sustainable communities.

Gateway to international trade
The Port of Dover remains one of the UK's most strategically important infrastructure assets and a key driver of the local economy. As the nation's busiest international ferry port, Dover continues to play a vital role in supporting trade, tourism and connectivity between the UK and Europe. The port's ongoing investment programme and focus on sustainability, technology and operational resilience reinforce its position as a critical gateway for both passengers and freight.


ANDY AITCHISON

The magnificent Maison Dieu welcomed 10,000 visitors during its first year following reopening in May 2025.

Innovation and life sciences growth
The district's reputation as a centre for innovation continues to grow through Discovery Park, the internationally recognised life sciences campus. The park has expanded its community of high-growth businesses, supporting both home-grown innovators and international companies across sectors including biotechnology, digital health and advanced manufacturing.

Recent activity includes support for cardiovascular and cardiometabolic health start-ups through the Discovery Spark programme, together with continued investment in laboratory and collaborative workspace facilities that help ambitious businesses scale and commercialise new technologies.

Looking ahead
With transformational regeneration projects coming to fruition, continued housing delivery, a thriving innovation ecosystem and world-class transport connectivity, Dover is building on its unique strengths. The completion of The Bench, the success of the Maison Dieu restoration and ongoing investment across the district highlight growing confidence in Dover's future as a place to live, work, visit, learn and invest.

For further information:
www.investindover.co.uk

FOLKESTONE & HYTHE

Folkestone
The *Folkestone—A Brighter Future* project (FABF) a highways and public realm scheme to support the ongoing regeneration of the town centre, using £19.8m in central government funding. The scheme looks to improve the experience of users of the town centre and adds additional greening with the planting of more than 70 trees. The former bus station in Bouverie Square is being replaced with a green park to include a play area delivered in partnership with Creative Folkestone.

Part of the funding from Folkestone—A Brighter Future is being used to create a watertight shell in the Art Deco part of the former department store building, now called Folca 2. This phase of the project will be completed in September 2026. The council is also working towards a mixed-use scheme for the building, combining medical and commercial uses. The development is benefiting from Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant designed to implement carbon reduction measures. for the building.

Otterpool Park is a new garden town being created on and around the former Folkestone Racecourse between Hythe and Ashford and is set to eventually grow to 10,000 homes. It will be a place to lead a healthy active, sustainable lifestyle in a creative, inclusive and vibrant community. Planning has been approved for new infrastructure including a wastewater treatment plant, primary substation and wetlands. The first 300 homes have been earmarked for land close to Westenhanger rail station. Work on infrastructure could start in 2028 with house building starting in 2029. An updated planning submission is due to be made before the end of 2026 with amendments made to secure greater flexibility around delivery and to align with changes to national policy and guidance.

Changing Tides Coastal Centre in Greatstone opened in 2026 and is a beachside destination delivering a café, 93 beach huts, public toilets, and a remodelled car park. The concession is operated by Reynolds Ice cream and there are further plans by F&HDC for a seasonal water sports facility with access to showers, changing facilities and an education/training room. There are solar panels,



FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Changing Tides Coastal Centre has delivered a café, 93 beach huts, public toilets, and a remodelled car park.



FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Risborough Barracks.

a green roof system and information boards highlighting the importance of the area as a designated Site of Specific Scientific Interest is also planned. The scheme is funded by F&HDC with the support of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority through Nuclear Restoration Services.

The council acquired the **Ship Street site** in 2021 and received £2.5m from the Brownfield Land Release Fund to help remediate the 3.8 acre (1.54ha) former gas works site. Work is underway with a regional affordable housing provider to bring forward the scheme for 90 homes subject to planning and reserved matters application.

The last block of a 44-home affordable housing scheme at **Risborough Barracks in Folkestone** was completed in August. These are high-quality, energy efficient homes for local families all at EPC rating B. In addition, July saw the completion of six affordable homes for social rent (three bedroomed houses) in Lyminge and 26 social rented homes in Hythe were due to be handed over by the developer in the autumn.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

THANET

Accelerating delivery in the eastern corner of Kent
Thanet is a dynamic district characterised by its vibrant coastal towns, picturesque rural villages and excellent transport links to London. The three main towns of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate each have a distinctive character, and are a magnet for creatives and associated industries.

Tourism continues to boost local employment, supporting more than 8,200 jobs across Thanet, representing 19% of the total local employment. These figures underscore the industry's importance to local employment and economic recovery. There is a strategic focus on significant developments across regeneration, housing and local infrastructure.

Thanet District Council is forging ahead with ambitious projects, having been awarded over £70m in regeneration capital funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government programmes since 2019 and substantial investment in housing programmes.

Margate
The Margate Creative Land Trust, established through £6.7m of government funding, has purchased a site in Harold Road of over 29,063ft^2 (2,700m^2) and a building on Grosvenor Place. These spaces will support creative businesses. To further support the sector, a new digital campus has opened in Margate High Street as part of the East Kent Colleges Group and is now welcoming students.

Ramsgate
In Ramsgate, the Green Campus at the Port of Ramsgate will offer approximately 19,698ft^2 (1,830m^2) of training facilities, commercial space and workplaces for small and established businesses, supporting decarbonisation of the marine industry and growth of the green and blue energy industries.

Additionally, 5A Broad Street will provide 2,960ft^2 (275m^2) of rentable workspace in Ramsgate town centre for creative and third sector businesses. Ramsgate was also selected in 2025 to receive up to £20m in funding over the next decade, as part of the government's national Pride in Place Programme.

HMY ARCHITECTS



Proposal for Green Campus, Ramsgate.



THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Development at former brownfield site, Tomlin Drive.

Thanet experiences a high degree of housing stress and meeting local housing need is a key priority. In particular:
- House prices are, on average, 8.4 times local incomes, meaning many people can't access the home they need.
- Privately rented accommodation makes up 30% of all homes, with 4,020 homes containing a serious hazard.
- Affordability is a significant cause of homelessness and poor housing circumstances.

Housing delivery remains a key priority with annual completions of all homes doubling since 2020. The council's proactive approach includes a commitment to buy or build at least 400 new social or affordable homes for local people by March 2027. To date, 296 homes have been either built by the council, or secured in partnership with local developers.

Thanet offers fast rail connection to London via High Speed 1 into St Pancras International, enhanced by the Thanet Parkway station joint venture with Network Rail, Kent County Council and Thanet District Council, bringing the capital to within an hour's commute.

In July 2025, the government confirmed funding for the North Thanet Link road which will enhance connectivity and relieve local traffic in parts of the district.

Thanet's forward-looking strategy combines targeted regeneration initiatives and proactive housing solutions, supported by significant infrastructure developments for the future.

Kent and Medway economy

Invest Kent
Invest Kent is strengthening the way Kent and Medway presents itself to investors, developers and businesses looking to locate, expand or invest in the county. The service brings together inward investment, commercial development and business growth activity, promoting Kent's key assets and opportunities while providing businesses with a clear route into local partners, intelligence and support.

A particular focus is on developing a stronger relationship between the public and private sectors. Invest Kent's new partnership programme gives property businesses, developers, landowners, professional services firms and other strategic partners opportunities to collaborate in promoting the county, share market intelligence and connect with businesses considering investment or expansion. The offer includes opportunities to promote development sites, access commercial property insight and participate in discussions around strategically important sites and investment opportunities across Kent and Medway.

This is supported by a renewed marketing approach, including a dedicated Invest Kent digital presence, sector propositions and business case studies. Together, this is about building a stronger and more consistent investment proposition for Kent, ensuring its connectivity, commercial property offer, workforce, sector strengths and major development opportunities are presented effectively to national and international audiences.

For further information:
www.investkent.co.uk

Visit Kent
The visitor economy remains an important part of Kent and Medway's wider economic proposition. The latest available economic impact data indicates that the sector supported more than 82,000 jobs in 2024, equivalent to 11% of employment in the county. It also recorded around 61.4 million day visits and 4.5 million overnight visits, generating approximately £2.19bn and £1.01bn in visitor expenditure respectively.

Visit Kent is building on this economic contribution with a renewed focus on destination marketing, partnership and strategic development of the visitor economy. Consumer activity has resumed across Visit Kent's channels, promoting Kent for short breaks and days out, while the refreshed destination identity reinforces Kent's position as the Garden of England and highlights the combination of coast, countryside, heritage, food and drink, culture and experiences that make the county distinctive.



Proposal for the Loop, Ashford. The former cinema site will become an all-day entertainment and lifestyle destination.

The visitor economy also has an important relationship with Kent's wider growth agenda. It supports places, town centres and hospitality businesses, while complementing growth opportunities in areas such as food and drink and viticulture. Rather than sitting separately from economic development, the ambition is increasingly to recognise tourism as an economic multiplier, helping Kent derive greater value from investment in its businesses, places and infrastructure.

For further information:
www.visitkent.co.uk

Kent and Medway Local Growth Plan
Kent and Medway is developing a Local Growth Plan to provide a clear, investment-focused articulation of the area's economic ambitions. Although Kent and Medway does not currently have a Mayoral Strategic Authority and is therefore not required by government to produce such a plan, partners have chosen to take a proactive approach. The plan is intended to strengthen the area's case to government and investors while ensuring Kent and Medway is well positioned as the national landscape for devolution, growth funding and investment evolves.

The emerging vision is for Kent and Medway to be recognised by 2035 as the UK's 'gateway growth economy', capturing more economic and social value from the assets and opportunities that already exist across the area. The plan focuses on high-growth opportunities, employment and investment, while seeking to translate Kent and Medway's strategic infrastructure, connectivity and sector strengths into higher productivity, stronger supply chains and better jobs.

Of particular relevance to the property and development sector will be the plan's emphasis on investible propositions and the infrastructure, sites and commercial space needed to unlock growth. Work on the emerging investment pipeline has considered opportunities ranging from innovation and research facilities to port, freight, manufacturing and decarbonisation projects, alongside the role of strategic assets including high-speed rail and the Lower Thames Crossing. The Local Growth Plan will sit alongside, rather than replace, the Kent and Medway Economic Framework, providing a sharper focus on high-growth sectors.

For further information:
www.kmep.org.uk

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Kent County Council property

Capital works and examples

Programme for schools works
Case Study: Rosherville Primary School
Kent Country Council (KCC) successfully delivered the new Rosherville Church of England Academy with Morgan Sindall through our KCC Partnership Framework, the Department for Education (DfE) and Aletheia Academies Trust, achieving practical completion on 20th July 2026, with the school opening for operational use in September 2026.

The project provides a modern, inclusive learning environment comprising 420 primary school places, a 26-place nursery, and specialist provision for 15 Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) pupils, which meets the DFE Net Zero Operational Requirements. The new school will support the growing Northfleet and Ebbsfleet communities.

In addition, KCC has completed new expansions, refurbishments and modernisation using its frameworks such as Maidstone Grammar School for Girls (MGGS). A new science block and the old block demolished under KCC's Basic Need Programme by Baxall who are on KCC's Kent Construction Partnership.

KCC delivered the Helen Keen Building for Maidstone Grammar School for Girls (MGGS), a three-storey facility combining general teaching spaces, specialist science laboratories, music classrooms and a visitor centre for the Wolrd War II tunnels beneath the building. The project provides enhanced learning environments and celebrates MGGS's wartime heritage. MGGS Headteacher Deborah Stanley described the opening as "a day of immense pride, bridging the past with the future".

The KCC Minor Works team have delivered more than 1000 projects from £10k up to £900k across KCC schools and buildings delivering KCC services. This included a range of roofing, boiler and pipework projects as well as building extensions.

Kent Communities Programme

Future assets
Communities Programme:
During 2025/26, four co-locations were delivered and opened to the public as part of the implementation of the Kent Communities Programme — reinventing library spaces to bring Family Hubs and Adult Learning Disability services into existing community venues;

- **Temple Hill, Dartford**—Libraries and Family Hubs including Health visiting
- **Cranbrook, Tunbridge Wells**—Libraries and Family Hubs including Health visiting
- **Sittingbourne**—Libraries, Registration, and Family Hubs including Health visiting
- **Stanhope, Ashford** —Libraries and Family Hubs including Health visiting.

Further co-locations were commenced in 2025/26 but opened, or will open in 2026/27.

As a result of these projects, KCC is able to exit 13 other sites within the relevant districts, with a combined revenue saving potential of c£500k once fully exited and capital receipt potential of c£1.25m.

User and service feedback from newly opened co-locations has been very positive, both in terms of the newly refurbished fit-for-purpose modern spaces but also highlighting the benefits of bringing place-based community services together into strategically located buildings improving customer experience and cross-referrals.

Folkestone Library and Community Learning Centre:
Co-location of Folkestone Library service and Community Learning and Skills provision in Folkestone through the exit of the CUBE, The Pottery sites, and 2 Grace Hill which had a condition backlog liability of c£2.9m.

The opening of the new flagship co-location at 14 Sandgate Road ended the 3 year period in which Folkestone has not had a full and comprehensive library service.

The building has received consistent positive feedback for its new location, its modern and flexible design, and its ability to bring key services together. During its opening, the number of visitors to the building were double the number visiting the former library site.

The building was also future proofed through the creation of a 19-desk hybrid office space with 2 meeting rooms. The building embraces KCC's new approach to co-location of services, and the model established here will inform future co-location opportunities being explored under the Co-location First and Flex programmes launched in 2026/27.

Kent Estates Partnership

The Kent Estates Partnership (KEP) brings together:

- Kent local authorities,
- NHS, Kent Police, Ambulance and Fire & Rescue
- Higher Education/Further Education,
- Kent Association of Local Councils
- Central government

The KEP identifies and promotes collaborative projects and opportunities around their land, buildings and property. The national One Public Estate Programme (OPE) provides support and funding to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration to take a strategic approach to asset management.

OPE funding is designed to help project initiation/ development work for projects with a higher risk profile. KEP has entered bids in four funding rounds and has been allocated £1.3m in OPE funding and £0.87m from two rounds of Land Release Funding (LRF) plus £16.5m in Brownfield Land Release Funding (BLRF). In 2026 this was added to with a further £1.18m of BLRF for projects in Canterbury and Thanet.

All the projects are targeted to ensure the efficient use of the public sector estate and support the release of surplus land particularly for housing. In addition, projects deliver significant benefits to local communities, such as new Community Centres, improvements to town centres and

the public realm, improved access to health services and diagnostics centres. Examples of projects funded include:

- **Maidstone East Civic Quarter**—masterplanning work
- **Paddock Wood Community Hub**—outline design work
- **Ebbsfleet Grove Rd**—masterplanning work
- **Phase 4 Dane Valley Arms, Margate**—17 new build affordable and sustainable homes
- **Farmstead Drive, Sevenoaks**—complex groundworks to release site for housing and community facilities
- **Milton Place, Gravesend**—demolitions and 83 new builds for those most in need.

A third round of Brownfield Land Release Funding is under discussion by government to be available nationally from autumn 2026 and which KEP partners will be able to bid for.

Kent County Council disposals

£27.09m of land and property assets were released from the KCC estate in the 2025-26 financial year, principally for new housing and employment uses. These receipts will be reinvested in the council's capital development programme which funds vital infrastructure projects.

The receipts from such sale of assets will be reinvested into the capital development programme. Private investment, along with promoting the local area's character, will boost development and contribute to housing and employment land required within the county.

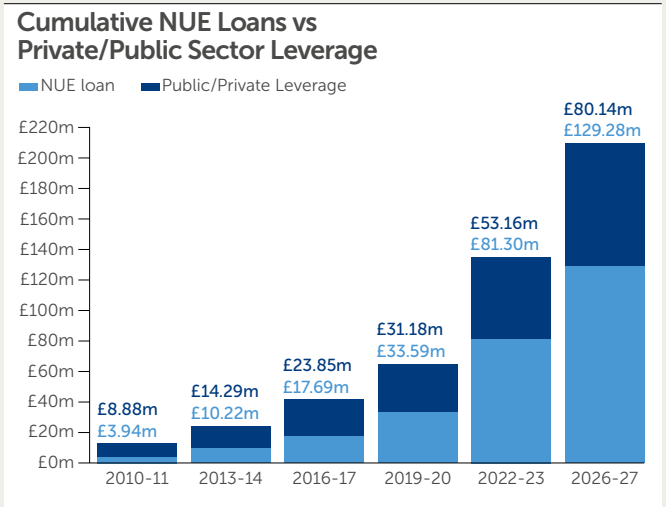
No Use Empty

Total investment £209.4m

Now in its 21st year, No Use Empty (NUE) remains a cornerstone of Kent's approach to bringing vacant properties back into productive use and supporting economic growth. As the longest-running empty property initiative in the UK, the programme helps address the challenge of residential properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than six months, while providing finance to support the refurbishment and reoccupation of both residential and commercial buildings.

Despite ongoing pressures within the construction sector, demand for NUE's short-term secured loan products remains strong. Since its launch in 2005, the programme has approved more than 650 loan applications, facilitating total investment of £209.4m across Kent.

This represents an increase of £18.1m compared with the previous year and comprises £129.6m in direct lending through the scheme, together with £90.1m in additional investment leveraged from public and private sector partners. Over the same period, direct lending increased by £11.7m and leveraged funding by £6.4m.



NUE Residential

Supporting regeneration and housing delivery

Economic decline, recession and historically low property values have led to underinvestment in several South East coastal communities, particularly Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet. While regeneration activity is increasing, many vacant properties still require significant refurbishment and remain difficult to finance through traditional lending, preventing their redevelopment into much-needed homes.

The NUE programme addresses this by combining flexible finance with specialist support. Delivered by Kent County Council in partnership with all 12 district councils, it provides a proven model for bringing long-term empty properties back into use. Its success has led to adoption by Southend-on-Sea City Council, and the programme is now fully self-financing through loan interest and application fees.

Delivering long-term impact

NUE remains committed to reducing the number of long-term empty properties across Kent. Since 2005, district Empty Homes Officers have helped bring more than 9,215 properties back into use through a combination of targeted interventions, including:

- Adapting delivery models to reflect changing market conditions.
- Providing short-term secured loans to property owners, with repayments recycled to support future lending.
- Maintaining consistent and sustained intervention over the long term.

Bringing empty properties back into use is a powerful catalyst for regeneration. In addition to increasing housing supply, these projects create employment opportunities, improve the appearance and vitality of local neighbourhoods, and strengthen community pride and cohesion.

By restoring neglected buildings, NUE continues to support both economic growth and sustainable community development across Kent.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

National leadership and best practice
KCC's commitment to tackling empty properties extends beyond Kent through its representation on the Executive Board of the national Empty Homes Network (EHN). The network brings together local authorities, housing professionals, registered providers, charities and other organisations dedicated to returning vacant properties to productive use.

Through collaboration, professional development, policy exchange and the sharing of best practice, the EHN helps shape effective responses to empty homes challenges nationwide. KCC's participation at Executive Board level enables the authority to both contribute to and benefit from emerging best practice, strengthening local housing and regeneration outcomes while supporting wider national efforts to increase housing supply.

NUE residential statistics
According to data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, the number of long-term empty dwellings in England rose by 14.5% to 303,185—an increase of 38,301 properties. This marks the fourth consecutive year of growth in long-term vacancy. These figures refer to dwellings that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than six months representing 1.2% of the dwelling stock in England.

Kent currently has 10,124 long-term empty dwellings, with 8,729 located within the Kent County Council area and 1,395 within the Medway Council area. This represents 3.3% of the national total—an increase of 0.1%. These figures include properties across all tenures, including those owned by local authorities, housing associations, and the private sector, although the majority are privately owned.

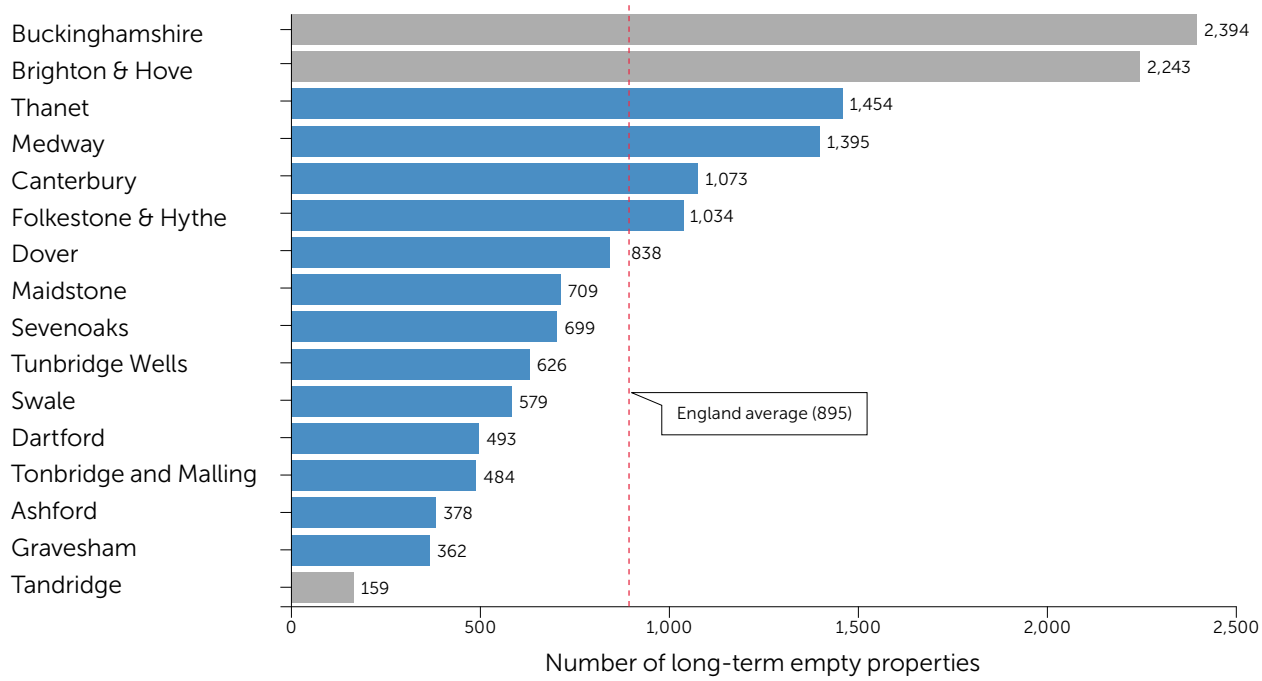
In the last year:
Across Kent's districts, the largest increases were recorded in Thanet (+340), Sevenoaks (+336) and Dartford (+240), while Medway also saw a substantial rise of 260 properties, from 1,135 to 1,395. Thanet (1,454) and Medway (1,395) now have the highest numbers of long-term empty homes, followed by Canterbury (1,073) and Folkestone & Hythe (1,034). Ashford was the only district to see a reduction, with numbers falling by 319 properties. The overall trend indicates growing pressure across Kent and Medway, particularly in coastal districts and areas experiencing the fastest rates of increase.

NUE compared to the rest of the South East of England
There are 68 local authorities in the South East, and compared with 2024, four Kent districts and Medway improved their regional ranking. In 2025, Buckinghamshire recorded the highest number of long-term empty properties (2,394), followed by Brighton & Hove (2,243), while Tandridge (Surrey) had the lowest number (159). This highlights the significant variation in long-term empty homes across the region.

The NUE scheme provides short-term secured loans to help property owners and developers cover the cost of repairs and renovations needed to bring empty homes back into use. New applicants can access interest-free loans of up to £175,000, while repeat applicants are offered loans on interest-bearing terms.

The loan scheme operates on a recyclable basis—once repaid, funds are reinvested into new projects. So far, NUE has issued £69m in secured loans, leveraging an additional £52.4m from both public and private sector partners. This combined investment has supported the creation of 1,630 housing units across Kent. Notably, 18% of all long-term empty properties brought back into use in the county are directly attributed to NUE loan interventions.

Variation in long-term empty properties across the South East of England



In addition to its core funding, the NUE scheme also manages top-up loans on behalf of Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, and Tunbridge Wells councils. These loans help developers bridge the financial gap between a property's value before and after refurbishment, covering renovation costs that are often excluded by traditional lenders. This collaborative approach has been key to bringing many otherwise unviable properties back into use.

The average cost of renovating and bringing a property back into use is £74,576, with Kent County Council contributing an average loan of £42,434 per property. To date, more than £50.9m has been repaid and recycled into new projects, representing 75% of all loans issued.

NUE Commercial

The performance of NUE Commercial demonstrates the value of applying the No Use Empty model to the commercial property sector. Through a relatively modest £3m Growing Places Fund (GPF) allocation, the programme has leveraged a total investment of £13.5m, helping to unlock redevelopment opportunities that may otherwise have remained stalled. The scheme has successfully brought 22 commercial properties it was contracted to restore back into productive use, making a significant contribution to local economic activity, particularly in Kent's coastal communities.

NO USE EMPTY



Lansdown Cottage, Canterbury.

NO USE EMPTY



Development of 17 Biggin Street, Dover, which has been vacant since September 2022.

The programme has also exceeded its housing objectives. While the original target was to create 64 new homes through the conversion and redevelopment of vacant commercial buildings, the scheme has delivered 80 new homes, demonstrating how mixed-use development can make effective use of underutilised space above shops and commercial premises. This achievement highlights the important role that empty commercial properties can play in supporting both housing delivery and town centre regeneration, while creating opportunities for employment and business growth.

Although the GPF funding has been fully committed, support for vacant commercial properties remains available through the core No Use Empty loan scheme where projects include residential accommodation above.

CASE STUDY

NUE Commercial: 17 Biggin Street, Dover

The redevelopment of the former Halifax Bank at 17 Biggin Street marks a significant step in the regeneration of Dover town centre. Since the branch closed in September 2022, the prominent building has remained vacant on one of the town's principal retail streets. With support from a £250,000 secured loan from No Use Empty, the property is being transformed into a mixed-use development comprising eight self-contained apartments above retained ground-floor commercial space.

The project demonstrates the value of repurposing underused commercial buildings to meet changing market demands while strengthening town centre vitality. By introducing new homes within a central location, the scheme will increase residential occupancy, support local businesses through greater footfall and spending power, and maintain opportunities for commercial activity and employment.

As Dover continues to adapt to evolving retail trends, developments such as 17 Biggin Street help reduce vacancy, attract investment and bring prominent buildings back into productive use, supporting the town's long-term regeneration and economic resilience.

NUE new build homes

In 2020 KCC made available £12m for NUE to provide funding for new builds on derelict or vacant land with required permissions in place. All loans are secured as a first charge and interest is collected on a quarterly basis with the capital loan being repaid on an agreed future date or if sold. Demand was such that by KCC increased the funding available in 2024 to £28m.

To date, the NUE New Build loan scheme has approved £57.9m in loans to support the development of 370 new homes across eleven of Kent's twelve districts. Of these, 274 homes have been completed (70 in the last financial year), sold, and the associated £34.3m in loans repaid and recycled into new projects. The average loan per new-build unit stands at £156,530. KCC have provisionally allocated up to £40m for NUE loans allowing greater flexibility for projects on our waiting list to start and not rely on earlier loans being recycled.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

CASE STUDY
New build homes—The Sidings, Nash Road, Margate
NUE supported the delivery of The Sidings through an interest-bearing development finance loan to Thanet Property Enterprise II Ltd, a local SME developer specialising in residential-led schemes across the Thanet district. The funding enabled the successful delivery of a high-quality housing development that contributes to the area's supply of family homes.

The Sidings is an exclusive, gated development comprising nine contemporary homes, including detached and semi-detached properties. Designed with modern family living in mind, the homes offer spacious, light-filled interiors, private off-road parking, landscaped gardens, and a secure setting. The development combines strong design credentials with a high-quality specification. Features include German-designed kitchens with stone worktops, underfloor heating, premium bathroom fittings, and high-performance aluminium windows and doors. The homes have been carefully planned to maximise comfort, functionality, and long-term value for residents.


THANET PROPERTY ENTERPRISE II LTD

Proposal for The Sidings, Nash Road, Margate.

Sustainability was a key consideration throughout the project. Each property incorporates energy-efficient technologies such as solar photovoltaic panels, inverter systems, electric vehicle charging points, and enhanced thermal performance through modern construction methods. These features help reduce energy consumption and support lower household running costs.

Distinguished by its red cedar cladding and contemporary architectural style, The Sidings demonstrates how targeted development finance can help local SME developers bring forward attractive, future-ready homes. By supporting the scheme, NUE has enabled the delivery of a sustainable residential development that enhances local housing provision while contributing to the growth and resilience of the Thanet economy.

NUE Business units

In the previous *Kent Property Market Report*, No Use Empty (NUE) outlined its ambition to expand support for commercial development by working in partnership with the Kent and Medway Business Fund (KMBF) to establish a dedicated lending programme for business units across Kent. This ambition became a reality following a Key Decision in October 2025, when Kent County Council approved a £6m allocation to NUE to provide short-term development finance for commercial schemes. The funding is secured by a first charge and repayable within a maximum term of three years.

Following the approval of the fund, the KMBF Investment Advisory Board supported three commercial developments that will collectively deliver 79 new business units across Kent. Contracts have now been completed for all three schemes.

The projects are progressing through different stages of delivery. Completion is anticipated in December 2026 for Plot 2D at Manston Business Park and April 2027 for Plot C at Coronet Park, New Romney. The larger Palmerston Road development in Dover, which secured planning permission in August 2026, is expected to deliver the first phase of 20 business units by mid-2027, with the full 48-unit scheme scheduled for completion by July 2028.

Collectively, these developments will increase the supply of modern employment space across Kent, supporting business growth, entrepreneurship, inward investment and job creation. Once occupied, the new units are expected to strengthen local supply chains, attract further private sector investment and generate wider economic benefits for surrounding communities. Importantly, interest repayments generated through the lending programme will be recycled through the Kent and Medway Business Fund, creating a sustainable source of funding for future economic development initiatives.

As the developments approach completion, there will be opportunities to market the available business space through **Invest Kent**, helping to showcase the schemes to prospective occupiers and investors and maximise take-up of the new commercial accommodation.

The programme also provides a valuable platform to promote the wider support available through the **Kent and Medway Business Fund**. Businesses locating within these developments, or elsewhere across Kent and Medway, may be eligible to access KMBF finance to support start-up activity, expansion plans and job creation. Through both the **Standard Loan** and S**mall Business Boost** programmes, KMBF continues to play an important role in enabling businesses to invest, grow and contribute to the area's long-term economic prosperity.

For further information:
www.investkent.co.uk
www.kmbf.co.uk


NO USE EMPTY

Plot C, Coronet Park, Howey Road, New Romney.

KMBF—NUE projects	Developer	Funds	Units
Plot 2D, Manston Business Park, Manston, Ramsgate	Guildcrest Commercial Ltd	£1.8m	13
Plot C, Coronet Park, Howey Road, New Romney	Finberry Construction Limited	£2.0m	18
Land at Palmerston Road, Whitfield, Dover	St Barts Development Limited	£2.2m	48
		£6.0m	**79**

GUILDCREST COMMERCIAL



Exterior of Plot 2D, Manston Business Park.

CASE STUDY
Plot 2D, Manston Business Park
Plot 2D marks the latest phase in the continuing evolution of Manston Business Park and builds on a successful working relationship between Kent County Council, Guildcrest Commercial and East Kent Opportunities LLP (EKO LLP). Through developments such as Maple Leaf and Merlin Business Park, Guildcrest has demonstrated its ability to deliver high-quality commercial accommodation that responds to local business demand, while EKO LLP's strategic land disposals have helped unlock significant private sector investment across the wider business park.

The Plot 2D scheme differs from previous projects in that KCC's support is being provided directly through the No Use Empty (NUE) Business Units programme, rather than through land transactions. A loan of £1.8m is supporting the delivery of 13 new business units, comprising five light industrial units and eight office units, helping to accelerate development and bring additional employment space to the market.

The investment demonstrates how the established NUE model can be adapted beyond empty property regeneration to unlock commercial development where there is a clear economic benefit. By supporting a proven developer with a strong track record at Manston, the programme is helping to leverage private sector investment, strengthen market confidence and support the continued growth of one of East Kent's premier business locations.

Once complete, the development will provide flexible, high-quality space for a range of occupiers, creating opportunities for business expansion, inward investment and job creation. The scheme also highlights the value of long-term partnership working between KCC and the private sector in delivering sustainable economic growth across Kent.

NUE going forward

The No Use Empty (NUE) initiative continues to deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits across Kent by bringing vacant residential and commercial properties back into use. To date, the programme has helped create or safeguard more than 2,171 jobs, provided homes for over 3,586 residents, increased Council Tax and Business Rates revenues, and attracted additional New Homes Bonus funding.

NUE's success has been recognised nationally through three regeneration and partnership awards, shortlisting for the UK Housing Awards Council of the Year in 2020 and 2022, contributions to the Local Government Association's guidance on empty homes, and features at the National Empty Homes Conference and across national media including the BBC's The One Show (October 2024).

Looking ahead, Local Government Reorganisation presents an opportunity to retain and strengthen NUE as a strategic county-wide function. Empty homes are a housing market issue that extends beyond administrative boundaries, requiring a coordinated approach rather than fragmented local responses. A county-wide model retains specialist expertise, reduces duplication, promotes consistent delivery, strengthens access to funding, and enables investment to be targeted where it can achieve the greatest impact. Maintaining NUE as a strategic partnership function would support the new authorities in increasing housing supply from existing stock while contributing to wider regeneration, economic growth and place-making objectives.

NUE also continues to influence policy and best practice beyond Kent. Over the past year, the programme has presented to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the One Public Estate Programme, advocating for a regional or national recyclable loan fund modelled on the proven No Use Empty approach. Interest in the model continues to grow, with authorities such as Brighton & Hove and Bromley engaging with NUE to explore how similar initiatives could be adopted in their areas.

Alongside addressing housing need, bringing empty buildings back into use delivers important environmental benefits. Reusing and retrofitting existing buildings conserves materials, reduces land consumption, avoids the carbon impacts of new development, and improves energy efficiency, helping to support wider climate and sustainability objectives.

NUE lessons learned

A key lesson from the NUE programme is that partnership working achieves greater impact than isolated action. By combining local flexibility with shared expertise, resources and funding, districts have been able to tackle local priorities within a coordinated county-wide framework. The programme shows that bringing empty homes back into use not only increases housing supply but also supports investment, economic growth, community regeneration and better use of existing assets. As Kent moves towards a new local government structure, these lessons provide a strong basis for keeping empty homes high on the strategic agenda.

For further information:
www.no-use-empty.org.uk

Contributor

clear
insurance management

What could stop your next development?

From acquiring land to handing over the keys, the risks capable of disrupting a development change constantly. Identifying them early can make the difference between a project that progresses and one that stalls.

A development does not have to suffer a fire, flood or structural failure to be brought to a halt. Sometimes all it takes is a line written into a title nearly a century ago. That was the position facing one developer planning 60 new apartments. A restrictive covenant dating back almost 100 years created the possibility that neighbouring owners could challenge the proposed scheme. There were strong legal arguments against such a claim succeeding, but that did not remove the potential cost, delay and uncertainty of a challenge.

Specialist legal indemnity insurance provided another option. Rather than trying to eliminate an uncertain risk, the developer could transfer much of its potential financial exposure to an insurer and proceed with greater certainty. It illustrates something easily overlooked when assessing development risk: insurance is not simply there to pay for physical damage. Used intelligently, it can help solve commercial problems and keep viable projects moving.

Risk begins before construction
Across Kent, developments will encounter very different challenges, but one principle applies whether a project is residential, commercial, industrial or mixed use: the earlier an issue is understood, the greater the opportunity to manage it.

Before construction begins, title defects, restrictive covenants, access rights and other third-party interests can affect whether land is developable, fundable or ultimately saleable. Not every problem can, or should, be insured. Some require legal resolution, changes to design or commercial negotiation. The important questions are what happens if the risk materialises, who carries the cost and whether that exposure can be transferred.

The same thinking extends beyond title. Environmental conditions, contractual obligations and professional responsibilities can all influence a project's viability. Latent defects insurance, arranged before construction begins, can also provide protection against specified structural defects that only become apparent after completion, providing greater certainty for developers and future owners when properties are sold or ownership changes.

Lenders and investors will also want confidence that foreseeable threats to their capital and the development programme have been considered. Insurance arrangements should therefore reflect the contracts, funding structure and intended works rather than becoming an administrative exercise immediately before construction.

When the unexpected happens
Even careful due diligence cannot uncover everything. On another residential development, insurance had been arranged against existing and potentially unknown third-party rights. After the policy was in place, additional drainage serving a neighbouring property was discovered across land needed for the development and had to be rerouted.

Approaching the neighbouring owner without agreement from the insurer could potentially have prejudiced the existing indemnity protection. Clear worked with the developer, its advisers and the insurer to agree how negotiations could proceed while maintaining cover. A revised approach was agreed without additional premium, allowing the developer to address the problem and continue progressing the scheme. It demonstrates why risk advice should not end when an insurance policy is issued.

The risk changes as the building rises
Once construction starts, exposures become more visible but no less complex. Fire, water damage, theft, severe weather and accidental damage can disrupt programmes, increase financing costs, delay sales or lease commencements and put contractual relationships under pressure.

Insurance provides financial protection, but preventing a loss remains preferable to recovering from one. Risk management should therefore evolve with the site. Fire controls may need to change as combustible materials and hot works are introduced, security requirements develop as valuable equipment and finishes arrive, and escape of water becomes increasingly significant during testing and commissioning. **The question throughout should be: what could materially disrupt this project now?**

Completion is a transition, not an endpoint
On larger developments, completion may happen in phases. Some properties can be occupied while others remain under construction, creating different insurance responsibilities across the same development. Responsibility may also pass between developer, contractor, investor, freeholder, managing agent and occupier as individual phases are handed over.

Construction arrangements therefore need to transition carefully to those required for the completed property, potentially while tenants undertake fit-out works or construction continues elsewhere on site. A poorly planned transition can create uncertainty precisely when years of investment are being converted into finished assets.

At Clear Insurance Management, we work with developers, contractors, investors and property professionals across that lifecycle. Sometimes that means arranging insurance. At other times it means identifying an exposure, challenging an assumption or bringing together the right insurer and professional advisers to find a practical way forward.

Successful developments may take many forms and use very different methods of construction, but they all depend on considerable expertise. Long before the finished building becomes visible, another form of construction has been taking place: **a chain of informed decisions that gives everyone involved enough confidence to keep moving forward.**

Keep development moving

Some risks can be **removed.** Some can be **reduced.** Others can be **transferred.**
Knowing the difference matters.



From legal issues that can threaten a land acquisition to the risks that emerge during construction and occupation, Clear helps developers, contractors, investors and property professionals identify, manage and transfer risk throughout the development lifecycle.

What could get in the way of your next development? Talk to us before it does.

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Contributor

How does Kent grow through planning?

Could the planning planets be about to align and create the right conditions for growth and development? Alex Hicken, Managing Director of DHA, the South East's largest independent planning and highways consultancy, considers what's driving the opportunities.

Changes to national planning policy, ambitious infrastructure investment and increasing pressure to deliver new homes are creating what can best be described as a two to three-year policy window of opportunity. For landowners, developers and investors, the decisions made during this period are likely to shape the county's development landscape for decades to come.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has reinforced the Government's commitment to increasing housing delivery and supporting sustainable growth. One of the most significant changes is a stronger emphasis on directing residential development towards locations with good public transport accessibility, including sites close to railway stations. This approach aligns well with Kent's extensive rail network and its strong commuter connections to London, creating opportunities for well-planned housing schemes in sustainable and highly accessible locations.

At the same time, local authorities face a pressing timetable. Councils across Kent are expected to progress and submit their Local Plans for examination by the end of 2026. This creates a limited but important opportunity for promoters, developers and landowners to engage with the plan-making process and bring forward strategic sites. Once plans are adopted, influencing growth patterns becomes considerably more constrained, making the next two to three years especially significant.

The introduction of Grey Belt policy continues to present a major opportunity, particularly across West and North Kent where Green Belt constraints have historically held back development options. The Government's evolving approach recognises that some lower-performing Green Belt land can be released where it supports sustainable development objectives. For Kent, this has the potential to unlock sites in highly accessible locations, helping to address housing needs while maintaining protection for genuinely valuable Green Belt assets. Areas benefiting from strong transport links and proximity to employment centres are likely to be among the greatest beneficiaries of this policy shift.

However, planning policy alone does not guarantee delivery. Land values and development viability remain key challenges across many parts of the county. Rising construction costs, infrastructure requirements, nutrient neutrality obligations and affordable housing expectations continue to place pressure on schemes. The latest emerging challenge that's constraining housing delivery is South East Water's inability to deliver water infrastructure for development—and this will be an issue to watch closely.

The ability to bring forward deliverable sites will depend not only on securing planning allocations but also on ensuring developments remain commercially viable. This makes early strategic planning and realistic assessments of development economics more important than ever.

Infrastructure investment continues to strengthen Kent's long-term growth prospects. The proposed Lower Thames Crossing represents one of the most significant transport projects in the South East and is expected to improve connectivity between Kent, Essex and the wider strategic road network. By reducing congestion at the Dartford Crossing and improving freight movement, the project has the potential to enhance the attractiveness of locations across North Kent for both residential and employment development.

Further opportunities are being created through investment along the M20 corridor. Improvements at Junctions 5 and 7 are increasing capacity and accessibility, opening up new development potential in and around Maidstone and the surrounding growth areas. Enhanced highway infrastructure often acts as a catalyst for both housing and commercial investment, helping to support sustainable economic growth.

Taken together, policy reform, infrastructure investment and the Local Plan programme create a rare alignment of circumstances for Kent. While viability challenges remain, the next few years offer a significant opportunity to shape where and how the county grows. Those who engage early with the planning system, local communities and stakeholders will be better placed to benefit from this evolving landscape.

dha

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Contributor

Handelsbanken

Relationship banking—the Handelsbanken way

In a world where all aspects of banking can feel increasingly automated and devoid of that personal connection, we believe that true relationship banking can offer a different approach; one built around knowing you and your goals and aspirations, whether for your personal banking or corporate banking—for our customers, often it's both together.

At Handelsbanken, relationship banking isn't a marketing phrase or gimmick, it's the only way we do business. Every customer, personal or corporate, has direct access to their own local relationship manager backed by an expert team. Lending decisions are made by someone who knows you, and you won't have to deal with chatbots or endless call queues before you can speak to them.

Making property plans possible
When it comes to our corporate customers a relationship-led approach can be particularly valuable; providing tailored lending, expert support and a truly personal service end-to-end.

Our expertise spans a wide range of property and business needs from commercial investment property and housing associations to landed and agricultural estates. For customers looking to build that dream home, or update an existing one, we offer flexible solutions, we'll even partner with local professionals that are familiar to you.

We assess each case on an individual basis and we never base our underwriting on an automated credit score, instead we take a long-term view and consider the bigger picture. Unique in how we're set up, our decentralised model leaves decision-making to our colleagues based in branches across the country. Here in Kent we have branches in East Kent, West Kent, Dartford and Maidstone. Having a bank that understands your commercial context and the local market in Kent can make a real difference, and because we know what your financial ambitions look like, we're responsive and agile when you need us to be.

A flexible approach to funding
There's no maximum loan amount whether you're looking to finance an individual property, refinance an existing facility or support broader property investment plans—we'll consider the funding needs on their own merits. We look beyond loan-to-value to consider the overall viability of any proposal; this is where our relationship-led approach really comes into its own.

We'll structure lending to suit individual needs with options including fully or partially amortising loans, facilities with a bullet repayment, interest-only arrangements and fixed and variable rates. We can organise loan terms to suit the underlying business need, with repayments that fit the circumstances of the borrower.

Strong on sustainability
Sustainability runs through every part of our bank. We have a long history of integrating sustainability and climate risks across our proven, long-term business model. This commitment extends to supporting our customers; we can help you navigate the challenges that a changing climate will bring to the property sector. Our Sustainable Home Reward and climate adaptation loans offer financial rewards for a move towards sustainability, and whatever your plans our dedicated sustainability advisory service is on hand to provide support.

Recognised for our approach
Our colleagues work to exceed our customers' expectations rather than for bonuses and incentives. We believe that delivering the best possible service works for everyone; putting customers' interests ahead of profit means we have some of the most satisfied customers in British banking.

We've been rated top for 18 years in an independent survey of British bank customers' satisfaction, that's across personal and corporate banking*. We've also been named as the most recommended provider for relationship / account management for SMEs by the Competition and Markets Authority's Independent Service Quality Survey (August 2026).

A trusted partnership on your terms
Whatever your funding requirements, as a Handelsbanken customer you can expect a banking partnership that fits around you; we're only a phone call, email or visit away—it really is up to you.

* EPSI Rating Group (2009-2026)

Handelsbanken

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Contributor

Hollaway

Architects / Master Planners / Interior Designers

It's on the way back

The past few years of writing in the KPMR have been framed around "what if?" What if planning was easier? What if Stodmarsh wasn't there? What if we weren't so exposed to global market shocks?

The pendulum had swung so far beyond its equilibrium that it felt as though we were witnessing its widest possible arc. I'm pleased to say that, finally, it feels like it is beginning to swing back.

Over the past year, the collective response to last year's article has felt like a simple challenge: "Go on then. Show me what you can do."

The arrival of the NPPF, together with the renewed rumours of Help to Buy, might have suggested that policy and legislation alone would be enough to get the sector moving again. It was perhaps naive to think that the system would simply concede and make way for development.

What has actually happened is more interesting—and, ultimately, more important.

There has been a recognition that the goodwill created by the new NPPF needs to be matched by action from the development community. We have been given an opportunity to re-engage, to rebuild confidence and to commit to the process again.

Because there is a problem we cannot ignore. Over the past few years, we have lost some important bridges between the various parts of the development process. We are now at risk of allowing apathy to take hold in areas that should be fundamental to good development.

Pre-applications for anything other than major applications are increasingly viewed as an unnecessary expense. Ecology reports are commissioned to satisfy the requirements of planning validation rather than to inform and improve the design. And BSR gateways are increasingly steering the viability of proposals in ways that can be completely counterproductive.

These are not simply administrative frustrations. They are symptoms of a system that has, in places, lost sight of what it is trying to achieve.

That said, this has genuinely been a year of progress.

We have accepted the challenges in front of us, and things are happening. The development community has, in many respects, embraced the "go on then" challenge and risen to it. We are navigating an increasingly complex environment, finding ways through it and, importantly, continuing to deliver.

The conversation has therefore moved on.

This is no longer simply a question of "What could we change to make things easier or quicker?" It is a challenge to our entire community to embrace the complexity, rebuild the connections that have been lost and move forward with confidence.

The pendulum is not back at equilibrium yet.

But it is moving.

And for the first time in a while, it feels like it is moving in the right direction.



MILES AND BARR

Grade II listed Len House, Maidstone. Built in the 1930s, the building was formerly home to Rootes. After a £40m transformation for which Hollaway were the architects, the building will now house retail and dining space and 80 apartments.

Opposite: Coastguard Cottages, a development of 12 units in St Margaret's Bay.
CHARLES HOSEA



Contributor

KENT
CONSTRUCTION
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Delivering public sector regeneration with private sector experience

Kent Construction Consultants combines regional knowledge with private sector commercial expertise to help public bodies and local authorities deliver viable developments and meaningful regeneration.

Turning public sector ambition into deliverable projects requires careful alignment of design, funding and community priorities. New homes and regenerated neighbourhoods must provide lasting value, with every investment decision balancing affordability, quality and environmental performance.

As regionally based Chartered Quantity Surveyors, Kent Construction Consultants brings local understanding and commercial expertise to this challenge. Drawing on experience across private residential development and public sector projects, the practice works alongside clients, architects, engineers and stakeholders to identify opportunities, resolve constraints and establish a financially credible route to delivery. That regional presence matters. Understanding the places in which projects sit, the communities they serve and the construction market available to deliver them helps turn cost advice into practical, locally informed decisions.

The greatest opportunities often emerge early, while designs can still be shaped. By working closely with design teams from the outset, Kent Construction Consultants helps clients understand how building form, structural solutions, specifications and construction and procurement methods affect project viability. Coordinating structural grids, simplifying complex details and introducing repeatable layouts can improve build efficiency while preserving architectural character and the quality of homes.

This approach brings a private sector attitude to protecting public investment. Challenge assumptions, test alternatives and make every pound work harder. Cost planning becomes an active part of design development and wider teams feel supported, giving the team timely evidence to make informed choices. Clear reporting also helps public bodies explain decisions and demonstrate how expenditure supports their wider objectives.

Strategic thinking extends to how a project will be built. Enabling works, infrastructure requirements, construction sequencing and procurement all influence affordability. Testing these matters early helps establish realistic programmes, align expenditure with available funding and manage risks before they become expensive changes. Where appropriate, phased delivery can create a workable route forward, provided its additional costs and implications for residents and the surrounding area are understood.

Sustainability belongs within these same conversations. Kent Construction Consultants approach is to help clients select measures suited to the building, its users and its long-term operation. Comparing capital expenditure with energy use, maintenance and replacement costs allows decisions to reflect value throughout a building's life.

Working with designers and sustainability specialists, this can include assessing fabric improvements, efficient building services, renewable energy and materials with lower embodied carbon. Retaining suitable existing structures and reducing material quantities can also offer opportunities to cut carbon. Assessing cost and carbon together helps the team understand trade-offs and direct investment towards measures with a clear, project-specific benefit.

The Tanyard in Ashford illustrates the range of priorities that regeneration must bring together. Designed by ON Architecture for Ashford Borough Council, the proposed development combines 160 new homes with the restoration of the Grade II* listed Whist House. New streets, public spaces and pedestrian connections would open up a previously inaccessible site and strengthen links across the town.

Kent Construction Consultants Quantity Surveying role places commercial advice alongside the design ambition. A scheme of this nature requires coordinated consideration of new housing, heritage restoration, infrastructure and public space. Its value lies in the relationship between these elements: homes that meet local needs, a historic building returned to use and a neighbourhood that connects with its surroundings.

Community engagement is central to getting that relationship right. Collaboration through design alongside designing regeneration which is ultimately affordable before engaging with consultation is fundamental and often mislead. Designs were developed through extensive consultation with residents, stakeholders and statutory bodies, including Historic England and the Environment Agency. This reflects the importance of both the site's heritage and its riverside setting.

For Kent Construction Consultants, listening to local priorities helps establish what a project's budget needs to protect. Safe and accessible routes, welcoming public spaces, durable landscaping and connections to existing amenities all contribute to how a place functions. Bringing those priorities into cost discussions early helps the team make informed choices as the design develops and understanding client's brief is paramount.

Through close collaboration, practical sustainability advice and disciplined cost management, Kent Construction Consultants helps public sector clients build confidence in their projects' viability. Understanding opportunities and mitigating risk. Its focus is on making regeneration achievable and ensuring that investment creates places people can use, value and feel part of for generations, reestablishing Kent's underutilised opportunities.


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Insights from the Kent Property Market Report 2026-27

As contributor sponsors of the Kent Property Market Report 2026-27, MHA is delighted to support this important platform for sharing knowledge and foresight across the region's property sector. Each year, the report provides valuable insight into the trends, challenges and opportunities shaping Kent's market.

The past year has been challenging for construction and real estate. Economic uncertainty, borrowing costs and subdued confidence have influenced investment and development decisions. However, Kent retains strong fundamentals: its proximity to London, strategic transport links, position as a gateway to international markets and demand for new homes and infrastructure.

Sector performance
The Construction Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) has remained below the 50 threshold indicating growth since January 2025. While recent PMI data suggest the pace of contraction has eased from the sharp downturn earlier in 2026, optimism remains subdued. Affordability pressures, delayed investment decisions and uncertainty over when major projects will move from planning to procurement and onto site continue to weigh on the sector.

Housing remains a key pressure point, with borrowing costs and affordability affecting buyer confidence, while planning delays, regulatory requirements and construction costs put pressure on development viability. Increasing housing delivery will depend on addressing the constraints preventing viable schemes coming forward.

Infrastructure offers a stronger longer-term pipeline, but here too the challenge is delivery. Greater certainty around funding, procurement and start dates will be important in converting planned investment into activity.

Kent: turning ambition into delivery
This national picture has particular relevance for Kent, where planned infrastructure and development provide long-term opportunity.

Ebbsfleet Garden City is one of the clearest examples of Kent's regeneration story, with plans for 15,000 homes, alongside infrastructure and a new commercial centre around the international railway station.

The Lower Thames Crossing is another major investment with significant implications for North Kent. The new route will connect Kent and Essex beneath the Thames, with early works beginning in 2026 following development consent in March 2025.

But the key issue is delivery. There is a strong pipeline of infrastructure investment, but businesses need projects to move from announcement to procurement and onto site, supported by clearer procurement timetables, funding certainty and realistic start dates.

Real estate sector trends
Several themes are likely to continue shaping Kent's market:

- **Housing supply remains a fundamental challenge.** Affordability, borrowing costs, planning capacity and buyer confidence continue to influence the pace of private development.
- **Infrastructure provides a potential catalyst.** Strategic investment can improve connectivity and unlock wider development, with the Lower Thames Crossing demonstrating the scale of infrastructure activity in the county.
- **Quality is increasingly important in commercial property.** Investors are becoming more selective, prioritising asset quality, sustainable income and long-term relevance rather than simply pursuing headline yield.
- **Logistics and industrial remain strategically important.** Kent's connectivity and gateway location means it's well placed to benefit from longer-term demand for distribution and supply-chain infrastructure.
- **Sustainability and retrofit continue to influence investment.** Energy efficiency increasingly affects operating costs, financing and asset values, supporting demand for high-quality development and improvements to existing stock.

Outlook
The outlook for Kent's property market is one of cautious optimism, with delivery remaining the key test.

Economic conditions and confidence will continue to influence investment decisions, and it would be premature to assume a sustained recovery is underway. However, the longer-term requirement for housing, infrastructure and high-quality commercial and industrial space remains.

Our wider real estate analysis points to an increasingly selective market, with investors focusing on location, asset quality, sustainable income and long-term resilience.

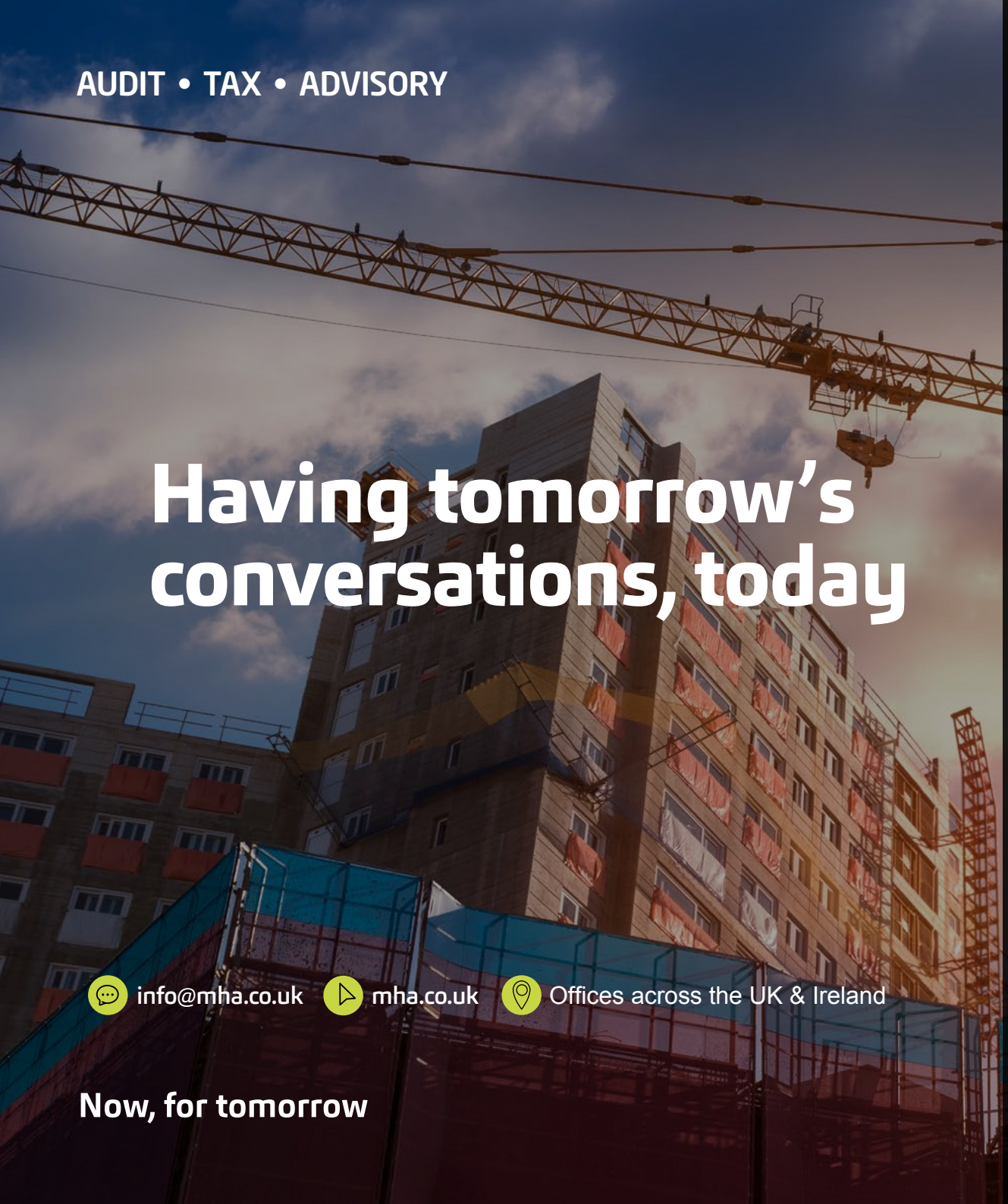
Kent has significant advantages in this environment. Its location, connectivity and development pipeline provide strong fundamentals. The challenge is converting that potential into activity on the ground.

Ultimately, the county does not lack ambition or demand. The priority for the year ahead is delivery: giving developers, investors and contractors the confidence and certainty to turn planned investment into new homes, infrastructure and economic growth.

At MHA, we are proud to work alongside investors, developers, contractors and occupiers to help them navigate change, unlock opportunity and shape the future of Kent's property market.

If you would like to discuss the trends shaping Kent's property and construction market and what they could mean for your business or investment strategy, please get in touch:

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Now, for tomorrow

At MHA we seize opportunities today and build lasting relationships so that together we can build a better tomorrow.

We are passionate about construction and real estate. With accounting and financial management at our core, we guide businesses from start-up all the way through to exit planning, advising on growth strategies and on how to survive a changing economy and an uncertain future.

Let's face the future, together.

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Contributor

Thomson Snell & Passmore

Key legal changes shaping the property market

2026 has seen unprecedented regulatory change across both the commercial and residential property sectors. The impact of these changes is already being felt across the industry, and arguably making an already slow market even harder to navigate. Here, we highlight some of the key changes which are either now underway or planned for the future.

The Renters' Rights Act

The first phase came into force as of 1 May 2026, reshaping security of tenure by abolishing "no fault" evictions and permanently ending traditional fixed term Assured Shorthold Tenancies. All residential tenancies have automatically converted into rolling Assured Periodic Tenancies. This shift alters how landlords market properties, conduct rent reviews and regain possession.

The Government plans to introduce a mandatory Private Rented Sector Database from late 2026. Landlords will need to register before they can legally market a property, and failing to maintain an active entry will carry severe penalties. Public access will follow once national coverage is complete, mandatory membership of the new Ombudsman scheme has been pushed back and is not expected until 2028.

Upwards only rent review ban

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act will reshape commercial property by banning upward only rent reviews (UORR). This historically meant that rent could only increase or stay the same, but now the review mechanism must operate in both directions. While regulations are not expected until 2027/2028, the ban applies to commercial leases with variable rent that permit business occupation. Landlords can, however, still use collars and reciprocal caps to soften downward market impacts.

Crucially, the legislation applies retrospectively to renewal arrangements made on or after 17 March 2026. Any future underletting clauses designed to force UORR terms onto a subtenant will become entirely unenforceable.

Landlord and Tenant Act 1954

The Law Commission's latest consultation paper, building on its 2021 review, proposes a series of reforms to modernise the business tenancy renewal regime in England and Wales. While the existing contracting-out model will remain, the focus is on simplifying processes and removing anomalies in the system.

Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill

The draft Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill aims to phase out new leasehold flats, cap ground rents, abolish forfeiture of residential leases, and regulate estate rent charges. It signals a fundamental shift away from the leasehold model for flats.

The Housing Committee calls for a government response within 2 months, with Royal Assent taking place by late 2027.

The Building Safety Act and Levy

The Building Safety Act (BSA) introduces a strengthened safety regime applying to all buildings, with enhanced duties for higher-risk buildings (18 metres+/seven storeys with two or more residential units, hospitals, or care homes). Those involved with such buildings must understand their responsibilities, as non-compliance is a criminal offence. For buildings in England, the BSA is now a core part of due diligence.

The Building Safety Levy, introduced by the Building Safety Levy (England) Regulations 2025, is a new tax taking effect on 1 October 2026. It applies to any developer seeking building control approval on or after that date.

Fire safety: Approved Document B

From 30 September 2026, all new residential buildings in England exceeding 18 metres in height must feature a second independent staircase. This landmark shift, codified via updates to Approved Document B (Fire Safety), redraws the landscape for high-rise developments.

Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025

The Planning and Infrastructure Act seeks to accelerate housing and infrastructure delivery by streamlining the planning system, establishing a Nature Restoration Fund, and limiting meritless legal challenges to one attempt, and easing land acquisition processes for new housing, GP surgeries, and schools.

Other legislation

The property sector must prepare for more change as future reform is also planned for MEES, EPCs and the introduction of the Remediation Bill (which relates to unsafe cladding).

Thomson Snell & Passmore's 45 strong Real Estate team is comprised of legal experts in real estate finance, development (including airspace), investment / portfolio management, planning and construction. Our lawyers are solution-orientated team players who understand our clients' wider business needs and relationships. We work collaboratively with other property professionals and have the expertise to advise on navigating the legal changes the sector is experiencing.

Written by:
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