

Green Cluster Studies

Faversham Creek Technical Report



March 2008

Executive Summary

The Green Cluster studies set out an ambitious vision for planning the Green Grid public realm and provide an Action Plan to support its delivery across north Kent. Seven Green Cluster Studies have been undertaken to date, and a further Cluster Study is planned for the Isle of Sheppey. Each one focuses on areas of intensive regeneration and change where there are superb opportunities to create strategically sited new greenspaces which will raise expectations, add value to existing investment and create high quality green infrastructure for future development.

The Cluster Studies have adopted a partnership approach to co-ordinate discussions amongst key stakeholders in each cluster. Many are engaged in developing ideas and drawing up plans for individual sites and the Cluster Studies' workshops have provided a valuable opportunity to focus attention on the relationships between projects and the wider landscape setting.

Faversham Creek is a tidal creek which links the Faversham town centre to The Swale - it is the reason for the development of the historic port of Faversham, but has long been in decline and the Creek basin is now a silent, partially silted pool, surrounded by large (mostly) industrial buildings and car parks. It is currently an under-used waterfront, with poor quality public access, which presents a superb opportunity for redevelopment right in the centre of Faversham.

Faversham has a dramatic landscape setting on the edge of the windswept north Kent marshes. Faversham Creek and its tributary, Oare Creek, are the focus for routes and views out to the flat, exposed coastal landscapes which are currently part grazing marsh - part arable land. But the cumulative effect of ongoing land purchase and land management enhancements at Cleve Marshes (related to the London Array offshore windfarm), Seasalter and the Oare Marshes Nature Reserve will generate a planned transformation from arable farmland to ecologically valuable grazing marsh and inter-tidal habitat. The area is already a mecca for ornithologists but, once these large scale land management projects are complete, the combined area of grazing marsh and wetlands surrounding Faversham and on the Isle of Sheppey will rival the Camargue!

The Green Cluster Studies' vision for Faversham Creek draws together and expresses a common vision for the Faversham Creek Cluster. It is an ambitious vision, with new waterfront public realm, interpretation and an expanded and enhanced network of public rights of way leading from Faversham town centre out onto the marshes to the north. Key stakeholders responsible for leading and influencing the ongoing projects and activities in the Faversham Creek Cluster include Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council, the Environment Agency, Kent Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Faversham Enterprise Partnership, Faversham Creek Consortium, Sustrans, Groundwork Kent & Medway, local landowners, London Array Limited and the RSPB.

The Green Cluster vision makes the case for strategic, targeted investment in Green Grid places and connections and aims to strengthen links between Faversham and its hinterland. The vision complements existing activities within the town and in particular fulfils the stated objectives of the Tourism Strategy which seeks to rebalance Faversham's tourism offer so that it promotes Faversham's unique environmental assets as well as its heritage buildings. The Green Cluster Vision for the Faversham Creek Cluster is accompanied by an Action Plan for its delivery. The Action Plan demonstrates how delivery of the various components of the vision can be facilitated - by Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway and by a range of other partners. It also sets out broad capital costs for the investment required to achieve the vision and an overall timetable for its implementation which demonstrates the inter-relationships between proposed and ongoing projects throughout the cluster

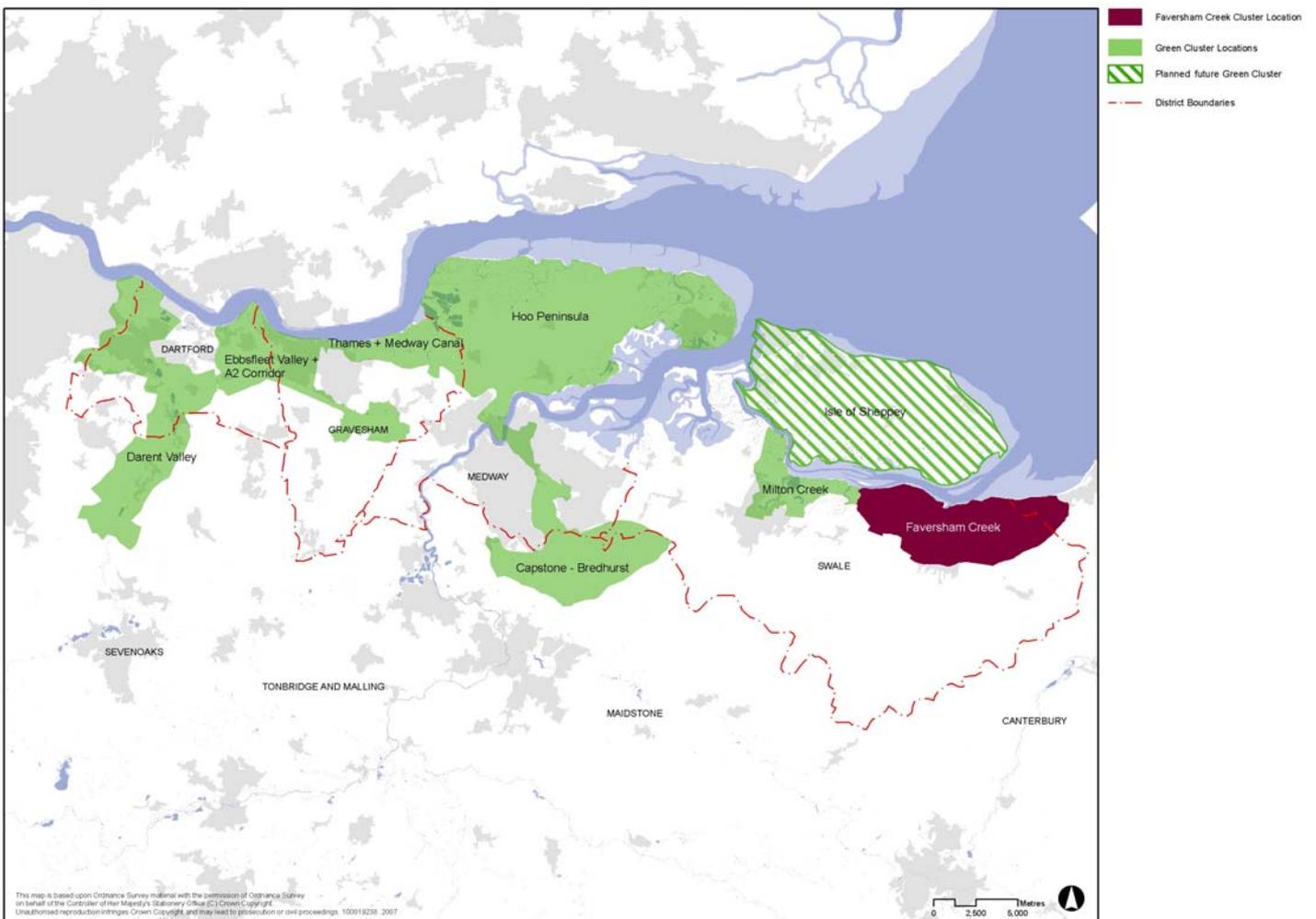


1 What are the Green Cluster Studies?

The Green Cluster studies set out an ambitious vision for the Green Grid public realm and provide an Action Plan to support its delivery across north Kent. Seven Green Cluster Studies have been undertaken to date, and a further Cluster Study is planned for the Isle of Sheppey. Each one focuses on areas of intensive regeneration and change where there are superb opportunities to create strategically sited new greenspaces which will raise expectations, add value to existing investment and create high quality green infrastructure for future development.

'Clusters' or groupings of planned and aspirational green space projects were identified during the Green Grid stakeholder workshops held in Kent Thameside, Medway and Swale in 2007 and the areas selected for the Green Cluster Studies take account of this earlier work. The Green Cluster Studies have:

- identified a coherent sense of place for each cluster area
- captured what is already happening
- identified stakeholder aspirations and updated existing studies
- identified inter-dependencies, gaps and opportunities
- articulated a common vision for each cluster area
- developed an outline action plan which set out actions, governance and phasing for delivering the vision
- made the business case for investment



Green Clusters



The Cluster Studies have adopted a partnership approach to co-ordinate discussions amongst key stakeholders in each cluster. Many are engaged in developing ideas and drawing up plans for individual sites and the Cluster Studies' workshops have provided a valuable opportunity to focus attention on the relationships between projects and the wider landscape setting. Two workshops were held for each cluster: the focus of the first workshop was to collate information, define objectives and understand stakeholder aspirations; the second workshop was a creative session in which the stakeholders worked together to develop a common vision for the cluster.

The overarching Green Clusters vision for Faversham Creek captures stakeholder aspirations and visions and inspires an ambitious and creative approach. It is not a proposal or a bid, but is intended to be a helpful tool to prompt creative discussion and joined up thinking in future discussions between stakeholders as the various projects in the cluster are taken forward. Ultimately the Green Cluster Studies will increase confidence, make the case for investment and provide a lever to bid for further funding.



2 Faversham Creek Green Cluster

Sense of place



hops and pubs - market bustle - pools - creeks - kingfishers - sequence



boats - strewn ropes - skyline - landmarks - ditches - geometry - gunpowder - heritage



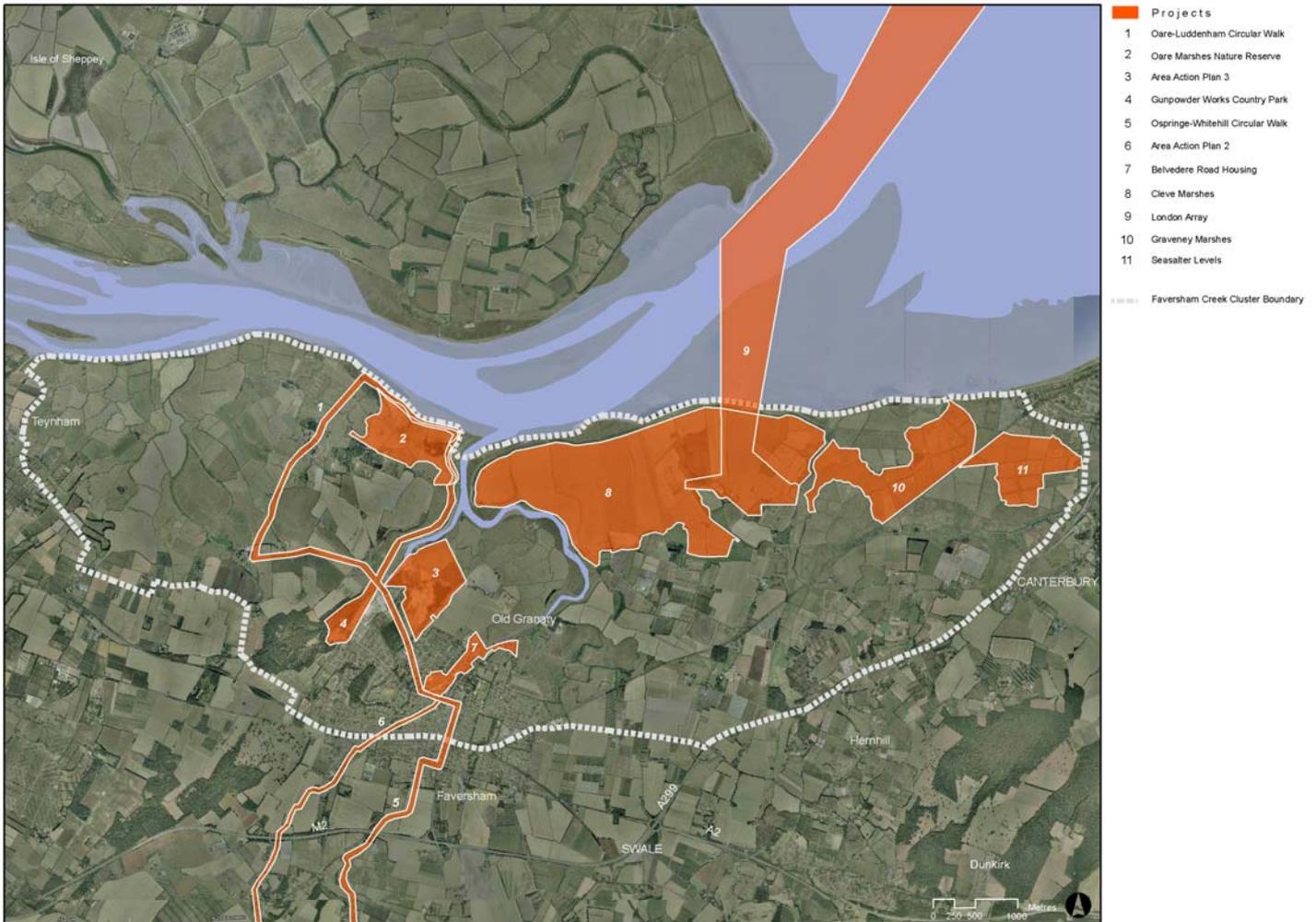
The historic port of Faversham exists because of Faversham Creek, a tidal watercourse which links the town centre to The Swale and the North Sea beyond. By the 13th century Faversham was a thriving port of regional significance with Thames barges carrying bricks, gunpowder (from the nearby Chart Gunpowder Works) and agricultural produce. The town retains a wealth of historic buildings which date from this period, including the medieval Granary (now converted to a wine bar) and virtually the whole of Abbey Street. Most of Faversham Creek remains navigable and Standard Quay (leading to Iron Wharf) remains a lively working quay, strewn with ropes and lined with boats and barges. But at the heart of the town, the historic creek basin is a silent, partially silted pool, surrounded by large (mostly) industrial buildings and car parks. It is currently an under-used waterfront, with limited public access, which presents a superb opportunity for redevelopment right in the centre of Faversham.

At a stone's throw from the creek basin, Faversham's town centre public realm focuses on the Front Brents and Crab Island Town Greens, the market place, the surrounding shopping streets, the railway station and car parks. The town has an attractive, vibrant mix of historic buildings, with residential, commercial and industrial buildings juxtaposed throughout the central core. Upstream from the Creek Basin, Faversham Creek becomes a meandering tree-lined stream which feeds a sequence of small ponds before threading between residential neighbourhoods. Footpaths alongside provide attractive and popular routes to the town centre.

Faversham has a dramatic landscape setting on the edge of the windswept north Kent marshes. Faversham Creek and its tributary, Oare Creek, are the focus for routes and views onto the marshes immediately to the north of the town. To the west, the Oare Marshes stretch along the shore of the Swale to Conyer and beyond while to the east, the Nagden, Cleve and Graveney Marshes continue as far as Whitstable. These flat, exposed coastal landscapes are part grazing marsh - part arable land but the cumulative effect of ongoing land purchase and potential future land management enhancements at Cleve Marshes (related to the London Array offshore windfarm), Seasalter and the Oare Marshes Nature Reserve will generate a planned transformation from arable farmland to ecologically valuable grazing marsh. The area is already a mecca for ornithologists but, once these large scale land management projects are complete, the combined area of grazing marsh and wetlands surrounding Faversham and on the Isle of Sheppey will rival the Camargue!



Forces for change - existing proposals, projects & activities



Existing proposals, projects & activities

Two areas within the Faversham 'cluster' are allocated as Area Action Plans (AAP) in the Swale Borough Council Local Plan¹. These areas are likely to experience significant change and the Council will be undertaking detailed masterplanning work to outline its general approach to their future. The AAPs are:

- Faversham Creekside (AAP2) - a forthcoming masterplanning process will set out a strategy for the future use and potential redevelopment of the urban creekside sites. Overall the aim will be the retention and promotion of employment activities, encouragement of a greater diversity of uses and, for those sites with a frontage to the creek, the re-establishment and enhancement of their links and usage of the water channel itself. The strategy will promote opportunities for new waterfront public open space and a creekside walk, along with wider environmental enhancements.
- Land at Oare (AAP3) - this area, alongside Oare Creek and on the fringes of the village of Oare, has a strategic location at the interface between the town and its marshland setting to the north. The area is currently subject to gravel working, but there are plans for mixed use development comprising business, recreation and tourism uses, together with enhancement and long-term management of the site's ecological resources. The process will begin with Swale Borough Council approving a development brief for the site, which will be put forward by the landowner.

¹ Swale Borough Local Plan, Adopted February 2008



The major development in the cluster is due to the proposed London Array offshore windfarm, which will have on-shore substation at Cleve Hill Farm to the north east of Faversham. This development is likely to provide the impetus for a large scale land management project on the surrounding marshes. This project, which is expected to be led by Kent Wildlife Trust, would transform the character, quality and biodiversity value of the marshes to the north east of the town. Adjacent to the Cleve Marshes site, a partnership between the RSPB, Swale Borough Council, Canterbury City Council and Natural England is leading another ambitious land management project which will transform the future management of the Graveney and Seasalter Marshes so that these areas too become grazing marshes and the perfect habitat for waders. To the west, there is a long term aspiration for the expansion of Kent Wildlife Trust's Oare Marshes Nature Reserve by means of enhanced habitat management and land purchase or management agreements between the existing reserve and Conyer Creek.

There are a number of smaller developments within the town centre and one particularly relevant opportunity for the redevelopment of a waterfront site adjacent to the swing bridge at the entrance to the creek basin is being promoted by the Faversham Enterprise Partnership.

The Saxon Shore Way, the Swale Heritage Trail and the Sustrans national cycle route 1 all pass through the town and provide links to the surrounding countryside. In addition to these nationally promoted routes, the Faversham Enterprise Partnership promotes a number of circular walks within the cluster - at Oare and Ospringe - and Teynham Parish Council promotes a 5 mile circular walk at Archbishop's Creek.

The location of these projects and ongoing activities are shown on the aerial view.

The location of these major proposals, together with a range of other ongoing activities and forces for change, are shown on the aerial view.

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders within the Faversham Creek Cluster are:

Swale Borough Council - planning and delivery of forthcoming AAP masterplans for Faversham Creekside and the Oare gravel works site and delivery of the Swale Green Grid and Swale Open Space Strategies. The Cluster Study provides a preliminary vision which will inform the forthcoming masterplanning process which Swale Borough Council is undertaking for the whole of the Faversham Creek Area. Within Swale Borough Council, the Swale Rural Forum has a key role in delivering the Green Grid public realm. Swale Borough Council also manages the Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park, an important historic site in a woodland setting immediately to the west of Faversham.

Kent County Council - the accountable body for the roadway across the swing bridge and the footpaths.

Faversham Town Council and local Parish Councils - which serve as the main link between the people of Faversham and Swale Borough Council

Environment Agency - shoreline & flood management, recreation & waterfront access, protection of controlled water quality, fisheries and contamination. The majority of the land adjacent to Faversham Creek is within the 100 year flood plain so opportunities for built development are restricted. The Environment Agency has also provided information on the status of the landfill sites within the cluster, with timescales and criteria for remediation. Opportunities for the restoration of ecologically valuable inter-tidal salt marsh habitat are limited but this form of wetland creation and management is planned for part of Nagden Marsh, as part of the Cleve Hill Vision.

Medway Ports - the statutory harbour, pilotage and conservancy authority and the accountable body for creek navigation



Kent Wildlife Trust - The principal interests of Kent Wildlife Trust are at the Trust's Oare Marshes and South Swale Nature Reserves and the planned future nature reserve at Cleve Marshes (which is currently the subject of ongoing negotiation). The Oare Marshes Reserve is the Kent Wildlife Trust's most popular reserve with more than 50,000 visitors per year, demonstrating the popular appeal of accessible estuarine landscapes - this is one of the few locations along the Swale where there is easy vehicular access and a car park close to the water's edge. The Trust is continuing to develop and improve habitats and visitor access at the reserve in line with its management plan but also has plans to extend the reserve further to the west. The Cleve Marshes site has the potential to become a nature reserve and amenity area of regional significance. There are good road and footpath links to the site and scope for the development of a wider network of paths with associated interpretation - there are obvious links to messages about sustainable energy, environmental enhancement and quality of life

RSPB - The new 200ha RSPB reserve at Seasalter Levels is an outstanding opportunity for large scale habitat creation and enhancement. It extends the existing Seasalter nature reserve to include extensive parts of the Graveney Marshes which have been afflicted by illegal uses, tree planting and general mismanagement. The area has superb potential biodiversity value and will support species of international importance. There will be improved public access and education/interpretation opportunities.

Natural England - an overarching interest in promoting public access to the natural environment and in the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity throughout the cluster. Sustrans - National Cycle Route One cuts across the marshes at Teynham and Oare before continuing through Faversham and out into the countryside to the east. The surrounding large scale landscape is more suited to cycling than walking and there are obvious opportunities to access the route via Faversham railway station.

Groundwork Kent & Medway - Groundwork has led some valuable community consultation and education work relating to the Oare gravel works site and involving two local schools. Children were taken on fieldtrips to the quarry and drafted their own plans for its future restoration. Ideas included a scuba diving centre, an animal rescue sanctuary, a sports centre and a school for children with learning disabilities which focuses on sensory stimulation

Faversham Enterprise Partnership Ltd - This active local partnership is responsible for developing a promotional website for Faversham and has commissioned the Faversham Tourism Development Strategy, the Faversham Area Regeneration Strategy, Faversham Streetscape Strategy and Faversham Employment Development Strategy. All provide data and plans to support the future economic development and environmental enhancement of the town. - Faversham Creek Consortium a vibrant, community based partnership established in 2006 following a series of public meetings and working parties. It brings together a range of organisations and individuals that seek to redevelop Faversham Creek and its footprint in a way that maintains its long maritime heritage, and enables commercial, tourist and public interest to coincide. Those organisations include Swale Borough Council, Faversham Town Council, Faversham Municipal Charities, the Faversham Society, the Friends of Faversham Creek, Faversham Enterprise Partnership Ltd and Shepherd Neame Ltd, together with residents, other creekside businesses and landowners. It meets on a monthly basis and has been instrumental in encouraging the inclusion of Faversham Creek in the Local Development Framework, following policy agreement with Swale Borough Council and Faversham Town Council, and active engagement with Medway Ports

The Cambria Trust - a 20 year old trust that has recently brought the historic barge Cambria to be restored at Iron Wharf. This is a £1.75m project. A considerable spin-off is the engagement of apprentice tradesmen/women and the encouragement of traditional boatbuilding skills with a range of small craft related businesses.

London Array Limited - the proposed off-shore windfarm in the outer Thames Estuary has planning permission and the onshore elements of the project - cabling and a substation are to be located at Cleve Hill. London Array Limited is providing significant funding to Kent Wildlife Trust towards the creation of new or additional nature reserve and has also announced a package worth £850K for community and environmental enhancement projects in the local parish of Graveney with Goodnestone.

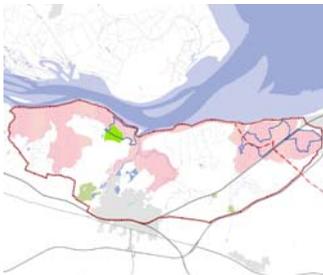
Hollowshore Cruising Club - boat owners and users based at the marina on Oare Creek, who have an interest in the recreational use of the Creek and access to it from Ham Marshes



3 Policy Context

The context maps have been prepared using GIS data. They illustrate our current knowledge of the cluster area and highlight key potential influences which should be taken into account in planning future activities.

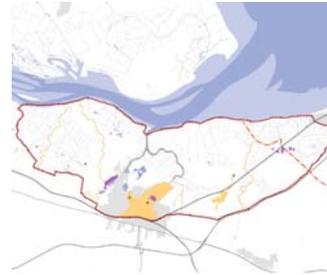
The mini-maps below provide an indication of the range of context maps available; the full set of maps (at a larger scale) is available separately.



Statutory Designations



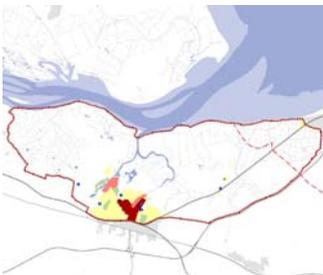
Accessible Greenspaces



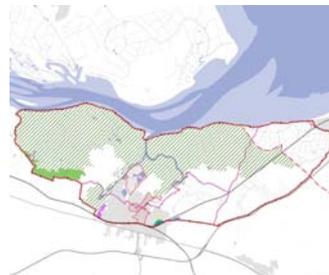
Cultural Heritage



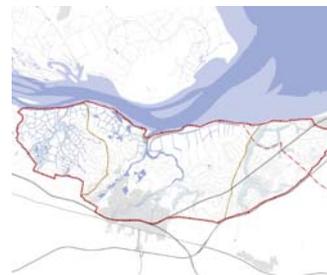
Ecological Network



Land Use



Planning & Policies



Topography



Destinations & Connections

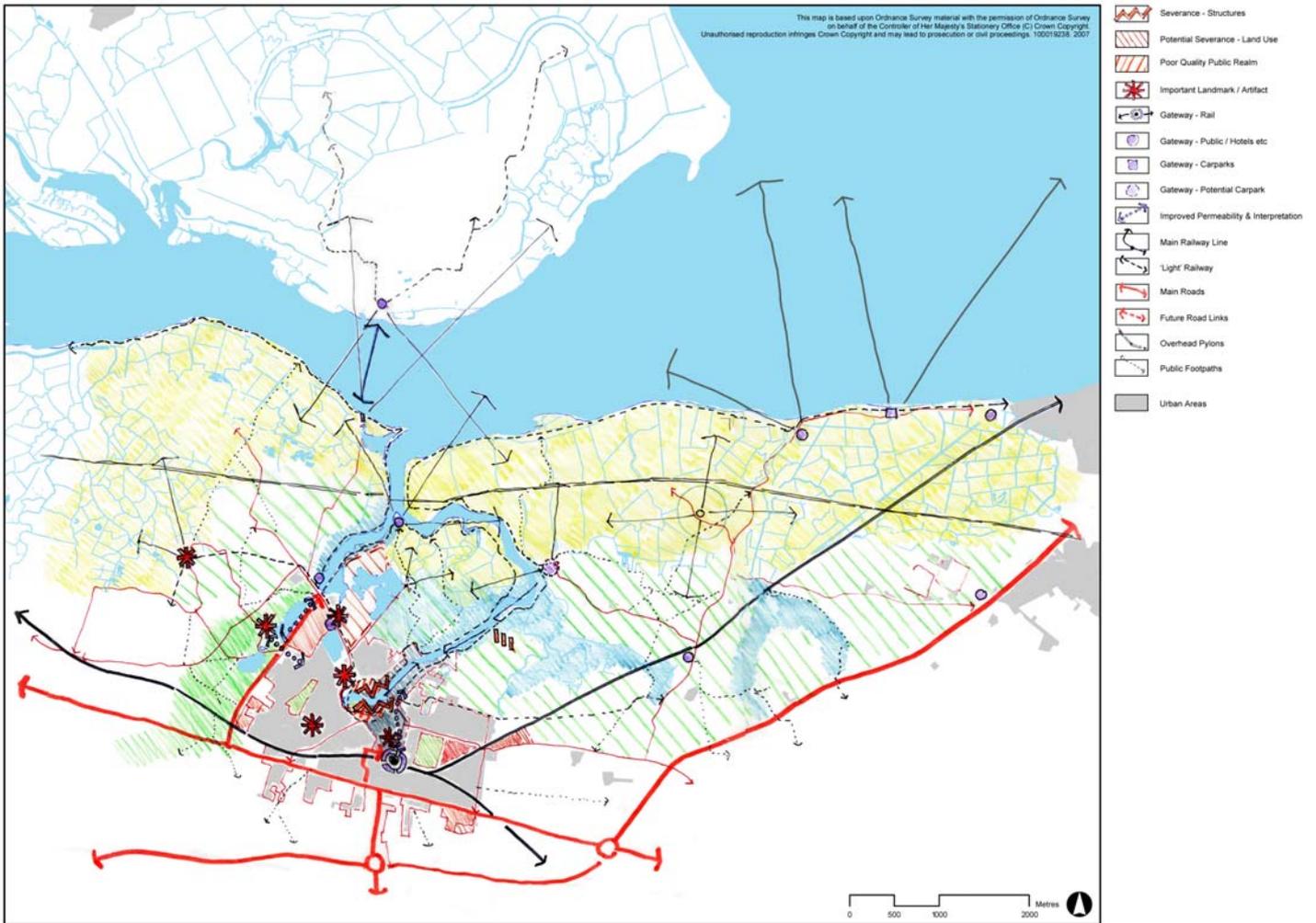
Key issues to note from the context drawings are:

- **Planning and policy** - the North Kent Marshes to the north of Faversham are a Special Landscape Area in the Swale Borough Council Local Plan
- **Statutory designations** - the north Kent marshes to the north of Faversham are of exceptional ecological value - Ramsar, SPA, SSSI and National Nature Reserve designations (South Swale Nature Reserve)
- **Ecological network model** - the parts of the marshes which are not currently designated, are shown as 'potential wetland/grazing marsh habitat' on the ecological network model - indicating the potential for linkage along the coastal marshes
- **Cultural heritage** - The whole of Faversham town centre is a Conservation Area, which includes a traces of a medieval abbey, one of the longest preserved medieval streets in the country (Abbey Street) and the 18th century Chart Gunpowder Mills. The remains of the Gunpowder Works at Oare and Stone Chapel (of Roman and Saxon origin) to the west of the town,
- **Access**
 - Three major promoted long distance routes, the Saxon Shore Way, Swale Heritage Trail and Sustrans National Cycle Route 1 pass through Faversham
 - This is a relatively large scale landscape - the distance from the town centre to the Swale is more suited to cyclists than pedestrians



4 Analysis

The Analysis drawing begins to focus on the way the area is perceived, by pedestrians, cyclists, residents, visitors and those who work in the neighbourhood. It analyses the public realm, highlighting connections, gaps, barriers and the inter-relationships between existing projects and activities throughout the cluster.



Faversham Creek: Analysis



Faversham Creek Cluster - SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Superb unspoilt environmental assets - marshes, open views, wild, natural character
- Internationally valuable nature conservation habitats
- Faversham's townscape - heritage and rich mix of industrial, cultural, historic, commercial and residential buildings, closely juxtaposed
- Strong, continued community support

WEAKNESSES

- Long distances for walkers
- Exposed, unrelenting marshland environment - general public requires carefully targeted introduction and interpretation to maximise awareness and appreciation
- Pressure points eg road to Oare Marshes and car park at shore
- Faversham Creek is visually isolated from the rest of town centre

OPPORTUNITIES

- Significant investment will restore the character and quality of the marshes to the north of Faversham.
- Green tourism
- Cycling network
- Make use of rural pubs as information/access 'hubs'
- Future regeneration of the Creek Basin and waterfront (AAP2). Future restoration and reuse of the Ham Farm gravel pits area (AAP 3)

THREATS

- Siltation of Faversham Creek is an ongoing issue

The Faversham Creek analysis plan highlights the contrasts in landscape character between the exposed open marshes and large scale arable farmland on the coastal plain and the more enclosed farmland just inland. To the south west of Faversham the Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park is set within dense woodland, while to the east the farmland is more open, with shelterbelts, market gardening (and greenhouses) and pasture as well as smaller arable fields.

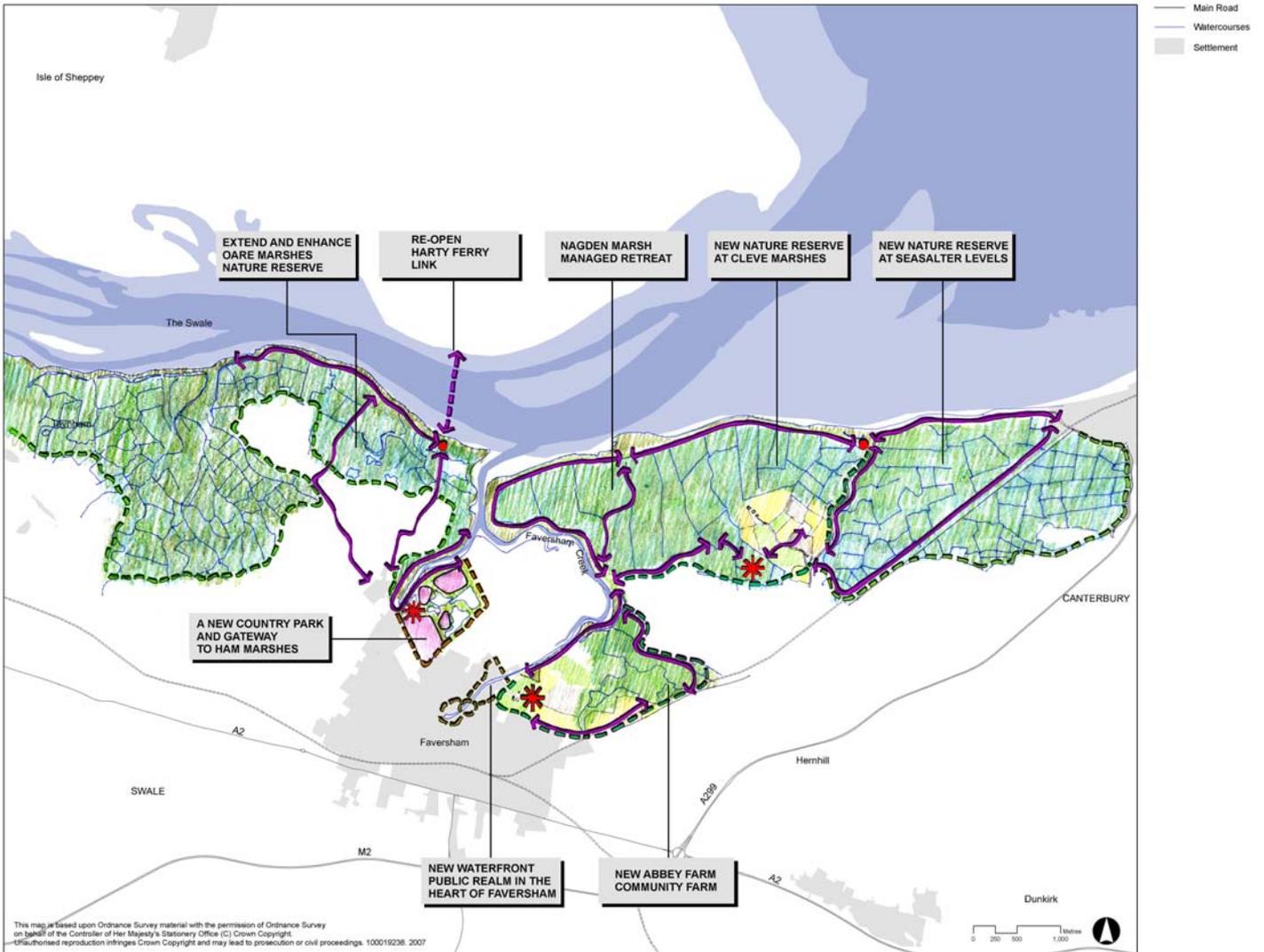
This is a large scale landscape and the footpath/cycleway network is well spaced, particularly on the marshlands to the north of Faversham. There are long open views across the marshes to the Swale, the Isle of Sheppey and beyond. Rural pubs (and their car parks) are important destinations within the 'green grid public realm'. Some parts of the landscape on the fringes of Faversham are in transition. There are areas of gravel extraction on the Ham Marshes and an extensive area to the east of Faversham (the Abbey farm site) is not currently in agricultural use. It is gradually regenerating to scrub and woodland and regularly suffers from degradation as a result of motor bikes, fly tipping and other 'urban fringe' uses.

Within the town centre, Faversham Creek Basin is rather isolated from its surroundings and does not fulfil its potential as a core part of the historic public realm.



5 Faversham Creek - Vision framework

Faversham Creek will once again lead boats right into the heart of Faversham, where the Creek Basin will be the focus for a working quay and lively waterfront. Faversham will be renowned for the richness of its wildlife and its dramatic marshland setting and people will be encouraged to visit, understand and enjoy the marshes at their own pace via a varied network of cycleways and footpaths. New country parks on the Ham Marshes and at Abbey Farm will act as gateways to the wider marshes, offering information and accessible open spaces for recreation and relaxation and helping to reduce pressure on the sensitive marshland habitats. Visitors will also benefit from high standards of interpretation and Faversham's tranquil 'Dutch' landscape of reeds, sheep pastures, water and birds will be a haven for naturalists and cyclists. The town will thrive on a unique brand of green tourism.



Faversham Creek: Vision Framework



Key opportunities and components of the vision are:

- **Create and enhance the creekside waterfront in the heart of Faversham** - Future redevelopment and restructuring of Faversham's creekside waterfront area associated with the restoration of the Creek and Basin as a working facility for boats and sailing barges. The Faversham Creek Navigation Study analyses a series of options to achieve this objective: all involve dredging the creek and basin, restoring full movement of the basin gates and restoring or renewing the Brent Bridge to its original swing and lift design and renewing the sluice mechanism so that it can allow the passage of vessels. A future creekside waterfront development could incorporate a lively waterfront public realm with full public access to original walkways along the banks surrounding the entire basin. There may be opportunities to retain and convert existing industrial buildings to public use, perhaps with a maritime theme and with extension of the public realm to enhance permeable access to the town centre. This form of development will enhance Faversham's tourism offer, reposition the creek basin at the heart of the town centre as a complement and extension to the existing retail areas and provide additional employment uses in line with the stated aims of the Faversham Creek Area Action Plan (AAP2)².
- **A new country park and gateway to the Ham Marshes** - developed as part of the restoration works following the cessation of gravel works to the south of Ham Farm. Strategically located at the interface between Faversham, Oare and the Ham Marshes immediately to the north, this site has enormous potential as a 'user-friendly eco wetland' with car parks, play areas, facilities for active recreation, interpretation and wildlife areas. This site would provide superb access to Oare Creek, Faversham Creek and the Ham Marshes, with a network of circular walks designed to allow access for wheelchairs and buggies. This new country park would also function as a 'buffer zone' between Faversham and the surrounding countryside, reducing potential visitor pressures on the sensitive marshland habitats to the north. New mixed use development on part of the site can be designed to form a positive urban edge and in accordance with ecoscape principles.
- **Transformation of a vast area of the north Kent Marshes from farmland to grazing marsh and high quality inter-tidal habitat** - and its ongoing management as nature reserves managed by Kent Wildlife Trust (Cleve Marshes) and the RSPB (Seasalter Levels), where the restoration of existing grazing marsh is already underway. The combined area of Cleve Marshes and the Seasalter Levels is significant in biodiversity and landscape terms and there may be future opportunities to extend and enhance the Oare Marshes Nature Reserve and possibly to reopen the Harty Ferry link to the Isle of Sheppey. There may also be scope for a significant and potentially valuable salt marsh restoration project at Nagden Marsh, one of the very few places in the area where it is possible to create intertidal habitat without negatively affecting internationally important freshwater grazing marsh,. Together these projects offer huge potential for enhanced public accessibility, interpretation and education. Faversham will benefit from a unique specialist 'green tourism' attraction and there may be potential to develop town centre based interpretation which expands on these themes.
- **Abbey Farm Community Farm** - to the east of Faversham the Abbey Farm area has potential for development as a country park centred on a community farm. The Farm could grow, promote and sell local produce and offer training (perhaps in connection with Hadlow Agricultural College). This area has been the subject of a major development proposal in the past and, as a direct result of this 'hope value' has not been in agricultural use for many years. It is currently regenerating and the land is a mix of scrub, grass land and pioneer woodland. The area would benefit from a positive long term use and already has a developing mosaic of valuable ecological habitats which could be managed sustainably to provide high quality public open spaces. There might be opportunities to use the country park and its associated car park as a base for footpath and cycleway links and the community farm could be managed to provide sufficient economic return to ensure that the enterprise is self financing.
- **An accessible network of cycleways and footpaths** - this is a large scale, exposed landscape: only dedicated walkers are likely to cover the long distances involved so the network of rights of way requires more short circular routes, small car parks, destinations and information points. There may be scope to work in partnership with local pubs to improve the quality of pub car parks and the facilities they offer. For instance they might provide maps and information at the start of walks and cycle rides. This strategy promotes local businesses while avoiding the need for new car parks. All routes and facilities need to be carefully designed so that they function effectively within the network and are integrated within the wider landscape. The marshes are perfect for cycling - a well promoted cycle network (with cycle hire) could be central to Faversham's green tourism

² HR Wallingford, April 2006, Faversham Creek Navigation Study



- **Focus on key gateways, to reduce pressure on sensitive routes and destinations** - the single track road out to the Oare Marshes Nature Reserve is a popular route which becomes extremely congested at weekends. There is scope to use the proposed new Country Park at Ham Farm (and also the existing Gunpowder Works Country Park) as gateway car parks, where people can hire or swap onto bikes before continuing onto the marshes via a carefully sites network of cycleways.

6 The Bigger Picture

The **Thames Gateway Parklands Programme** is a strategic planning and development initiative, overseen by the Department for Communities & Local Government. It builds on the *Greening the Gateway Strategy* first set out in 2004³ and aims to transform the identity of the Thames Gateway, increasing economic social and environmental value so that the area becomes a flagship for sustainable living.

In north Kent, the regeneration process is well underway, but there is much to be done to make the most of the current opportunities, raise expectations and articulate an ambitious vision to secure high quality environments for sustainable living. *The Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway initiative* (GGKM) is one of three partnerships engaged in promoting and delivering this vision in the Thames Gateway (the others are in East London and South Essex).

High level regeneration outcomes for the Thames Gateway: - The **Thames Gateway Parklands Programme**, providing the context for a network of accessible, high quality and sustainable landscapes and waterways, which capitalize on existing natural, built, historic and cultural assets, to support their conservation, enhancement and ongoing use, and boost the Gateway's rich biodiversity assets, strengthen character and identity, transforming perceptions and making it a great place to live, work and invest. *Thames Gateway Delivery Plan, December 2007.*

The Thames Gateway Parklands Programme offers new opportunities for investment which will be delivered via **five transformational themes**:

- *Thames Waterfront* - a new estuary path, which will eventually run along both banks of the River Thames, waterfront projects featuring public access and an improved river environment
- *Thames Gateway World Class Heritage* - finance for the bid for Chatham Historic Dockyard and improvements on other heritage sites
- *Thames Gateway Landscapes* - large scale public green spaces of regional importance
- *Thames Gateway Corridors* - environmental improvements to some strategic transport corridors, including key rail routes and A-roads to provide carbon offsetting schemes, easier travel and an enhanced first impression
- *Thames Gateway Squares* - two or three large urban squares with a focus on cultural, economic and environmental activities.

³ DEFRA and ODPM, *Creating sustainable communities: Greening the Gateway, 2004*



7 Delivery

The Green Cluster Studies provide a framework for delivering Thames Gateway Parklands 'on the ground'. The vision expressed in this *Technical Report*, captures many of the individual visions and ideas being promoted by stakeholders, combining them all into an overarching vision for the Faversham Creek Cluster which all stakeholders recognise and can buy into. So far, we have a vision framework to help inform funding decisions, but it is only the starting point and will be followed by a rolling programme of consultation, planning, funding bids and, for some projects, design development and implementation.

Action Planning

This *Technical Report* is accompanied by a separate *Action Plan* which sets the broad agenda for the transformation of the Faversham Creek Cluster, emphasising the scope for delivery of green infrastructure. The *Action Plan* sets out the issues to be addressed and the type of funding required to achieve the Green Clusters vision. Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway will establish a Cluster Steering Group for each of the Green Clusters. The *Action Plan* will be a working document, which will identify (for each project):

- who will be the lead partner (champion) and how stakeholder involvement should be broadened
- how it will be taken forward, in terms of funding, consultation, resourcing and procurement
- a clear timetable for planning and implementation which takes account of all other relevant projects plans and revenue funding for ongoing monitoring and management.

8 References

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