Land use in Kent local authorities: April 2022

The Land Use Statistics were released by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in April 2022.

NOTE: Within this bulletin," Kent," refers to the Kent County Council (KCC) area which excludes Medway

Further Information

These summary statistics show the distribution of different land uses across the local authorities in Kent and Medway.

Summary of findings

- As of April 2022, an estimated 91.1% of land in England was undeveloped, 8.7% was developed land and 0.2% was vacant.

- Dartford district had the highest proportion of developed land (25.7%), and Ashford had the smallest proportion (6.4%).

- The largest developed land use across all local authorities was transport and utilities. The largest non-developed land use in all areas in Kent was agriculture.

- Dartford had the highest proportion of developed Green Belt land (11%) and the highest proportion of developed land within National Flood Zone 3 (36.6%).

- Folkestone and Hythe had the highest proportion of land within National Flood Zone 3 (38.1%).

Contents

Introduction

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) publish experimental statistics looking at the distribution of different land uses across local authorities in England.

Land uses are classified into two groups. Developed land use, also known as brownfield sites, and Non-developed land use, also known as greenfield sites. The two groups are sub divided into 28 land use categories. Statistics on land uses within the Green Belt and within areas of high flood risk are also presented. Data are based on a snapshot of land use in England in April 2022. The groups and categories of developed land use and non-developed land use are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Developed land use groups and categories.

Group	Category
Residential	Residential, Institutional and Communal accommodation
Transport & utilities	Highways and road transport, Transport other, and Utilities
Industry & Commerce	Industry, Offices, Retail, storage, and warehousing
Community services	Community buildings, and Leisure and recreational buildings
Minerals & landfill	Minerals, Landfill waste disposal
Defence	Defence
Unknown developed use	Unidentified building, Unidentified general manmade surface, Unidentified structure, Unknown developed use

Table 2: Non-developed land use groups and categories

Group	Category
Agriculture	Agricultural land and agricultural buildings, Rough grassland and Bracken, Natural and semi-natural land,
Forestry, open land & water	Forestry and woodland, and water
Outdoor recreation	Outdoor recreation
Residential gardens	Residential gardens
Undeveloped land	Undeveloped land in urban areas
Vacant	Vacant land

Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

These experimental statistics are estimates of land use. They are not focussed on a single date as they are derived from a range of products which each have their own publication dates spread out over a number of weeks. The DLUHC has chosen to centre these statistics around 1st April.

Vacant land is identified as unclassified land, bounded by hoardings, and not yet attributed to an address. It is not possible to define whether the vacant land is of a developed or non-developed land use type. Residential land is limited to the ground footprint area.

Only buildings can be classified as "defence" use. Large areas such as firing ranges and military airfields cannot currently be identified.

The Green Belt analysis is based on annually updated data sets of digitised boundaries provided to the DLUHC by local authorities. Land can only be removed from the Green Belt through the local planning process. Land uses have been mapped against Green Belt boundaries for 2017-18, published by the DULHC.

Land uses have been mapped against National Flood Zone 3 for 2018 published by the Environment Agency. Only areas identified as having a 1% or greater annual probability of flooding from rivers or a 0.5% or greater annual probability of tidal flooding from the sea are included in the data.

Data are published at local authority district/unitary authority level. The data are percentages and cannot be aggregated to provide a county figure. All percentages are rounded to 1 decimal point so may not sum to 100.

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Developed and non-developed land

As of April 2022, most of the land in England was non-developed land (91.1%). Ashford had the highest proportion of non-developed land at 93.3% and Dartford had the lowest proportion of non-developed land at 72.7%. Five areas within Kent had a lower percentage of developed land than the national average of 8.7%. See Tables 3 and 4 for details.

Table 3: Land type by proportion of total land

2022	Developed land	Non-developed land	Vacant land
England	8.7	91.1	0.2
Ashford	6.4	93.3	0.2
Canterbury	9.5	90.2	0.3
Dartford	25.7	72.7	1.6
Dover	8.1	91.6	0.3
Folkestone & Hythe	7.7	92.2	0.1
Gravesham	15.3	84.4	0.3
Maidstone	9.1	90.6	0.3
Sevenoaks	7.8	92.1	0.1
Swale	9.0	90.6	0.4
Thanet	22.0	77.5	0.5
Tonbridge & Malling	12.2	87.5	0.3
Tunbridge Wells	7.9	91.8	0.3
Medway Unitary Authority	20.4	79.2	0.4

Table 4: Total land area (hectares) by land type

2022	Developed land	Non-developed land	Vacant land	Total
England	1,137,361	11,883,733	25,076	13,046,170
Ashford	3,744	54,178	140	58,062
Canterbury	2,920	27,855	100	30,875
Dartford	1,866	5,290	116	7,273
Dover	2,554	28,891	89	31,534
Folkestone & Hythe	2,753	32,896	43	35,692
Gravesham	1,516	8,353	30	9,899
Maidstone	3,577	35,620	136	39,333
Sevenoaks	2,899	34,104	32	37,035
Swale	3,362	33,843	137	37,342
Thanet	2,280	8,028	52	10,361
Tonbridge & Malling	2,933	21,007	72	24,011
Tunbridge Wells	2,631	30,418	83	33,133
Medway Unitary Authority	3,951	15,336	85	19,371

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Developed land

Most developed land is developed for transport and utilities. On average it accounts for half of the total developed land. See Table 5 and Charts 1 and 2 for details.

**Table 5: Developed land use by type - % of total land.**

2022	Community Service	Defence	Industry & Commerce	Minerals & Landfill	Residential	Transport & utilities	Unknown developed use	Total
England	0.7	0.0	0.4	0.1	1.3	4.4	1.9	8.7
Ashford	0.4	-	0.2	0.1	0.7	3.6	1.4	6.4
Canterbury	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.6	4.6	1.7	9.5
Dartford	2.4	-	1.8	0.4	3.8	11.8	5.5	25.7
Dover	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.1	1.2	4.0	1.7	8.1
Folkestone & Hythe	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.2	1.0	4.6	1.2	7.7
Gravesham	2.0	-	0.7	0.0	2.8	6.9	3.0	15.3
Maidstone	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.4	4.6	2.1	9.1
Sevenoaks	0.8	0.0	0.2	0.1	1.2	4.0	1.6	7.8
Swale	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.2	4.5	2.3	9.0
Thanet	2.5	-	0.8	0.0	4.2	11.0	3.6	22.0
Tonbridge & Malling	1.3	0.0	0.5	0.2	1.7	5.7	2.7	12.2
Tunbridge Wells	1.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.1	3.8	1.5	7.9
Medway Unitary Authority	2.1	0.0	0.9	0.1	3.6	10.1	3.7	20.4

Chart 1: Developed land as proportion of total land

Developed land as proportion of total land: April 2022

Source: DLUHC; Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council
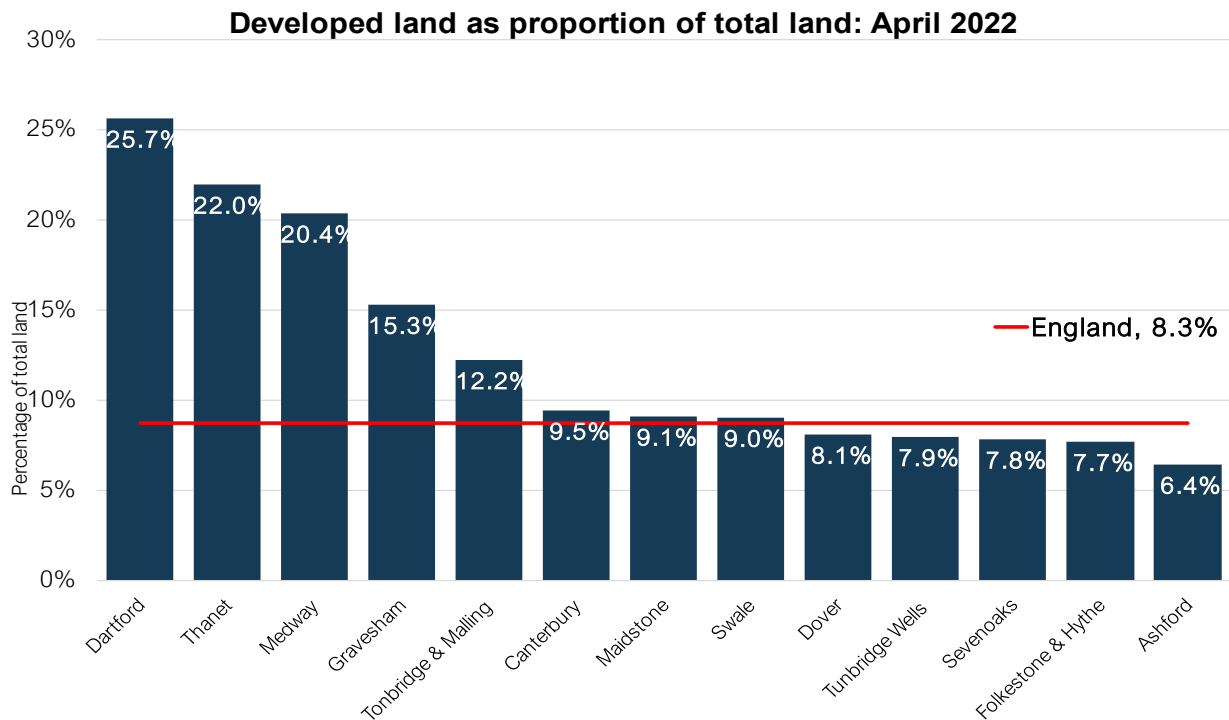
Chart 2: Developed land use by type in Kent and Medway: 2022

Developed land uses in Kent & Medway, 2022

Source: DLUHC; Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Kent Analytics, Kent County Council
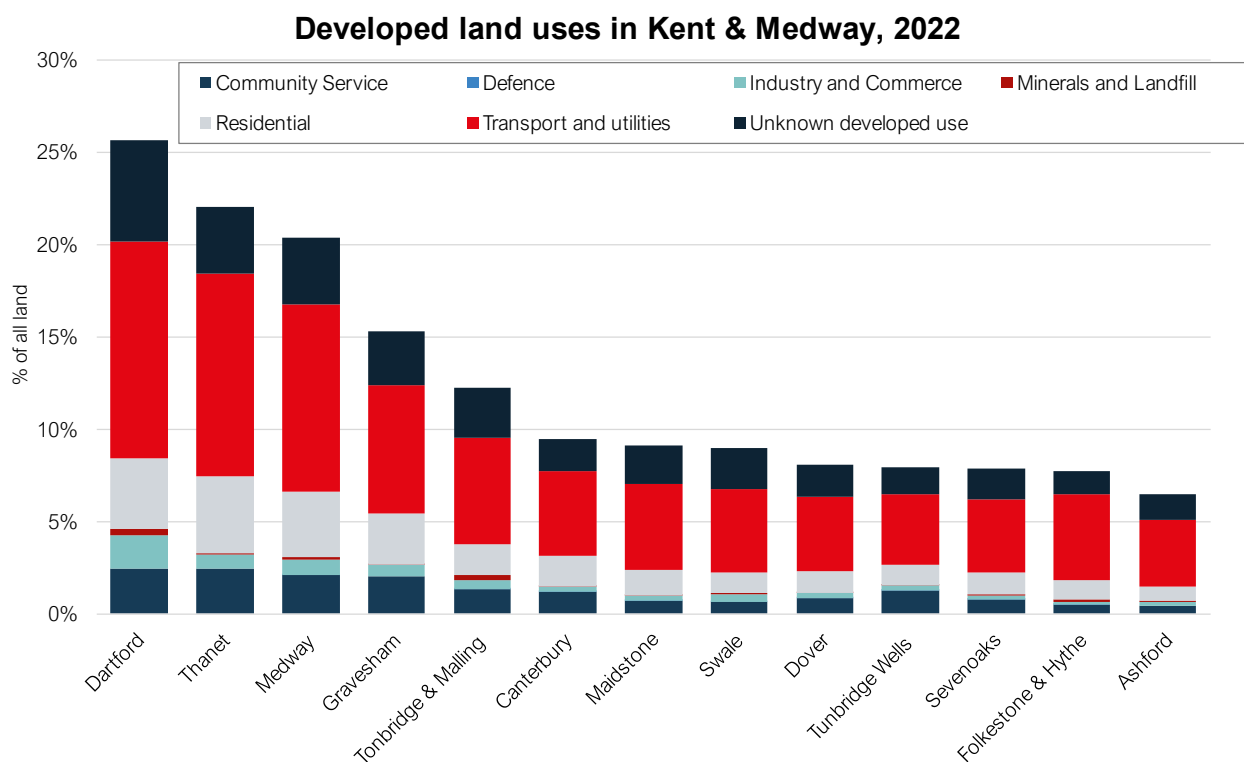
Non-developed land

The majority of land in Kent and Medway is used for non-developed purposes. Six Kent authorities have a greater proportion of non-developed land than the national average of 91.7%. See Chart 3 for details.

Chart 3: Proportion of land use for non-developed purposes: 2022
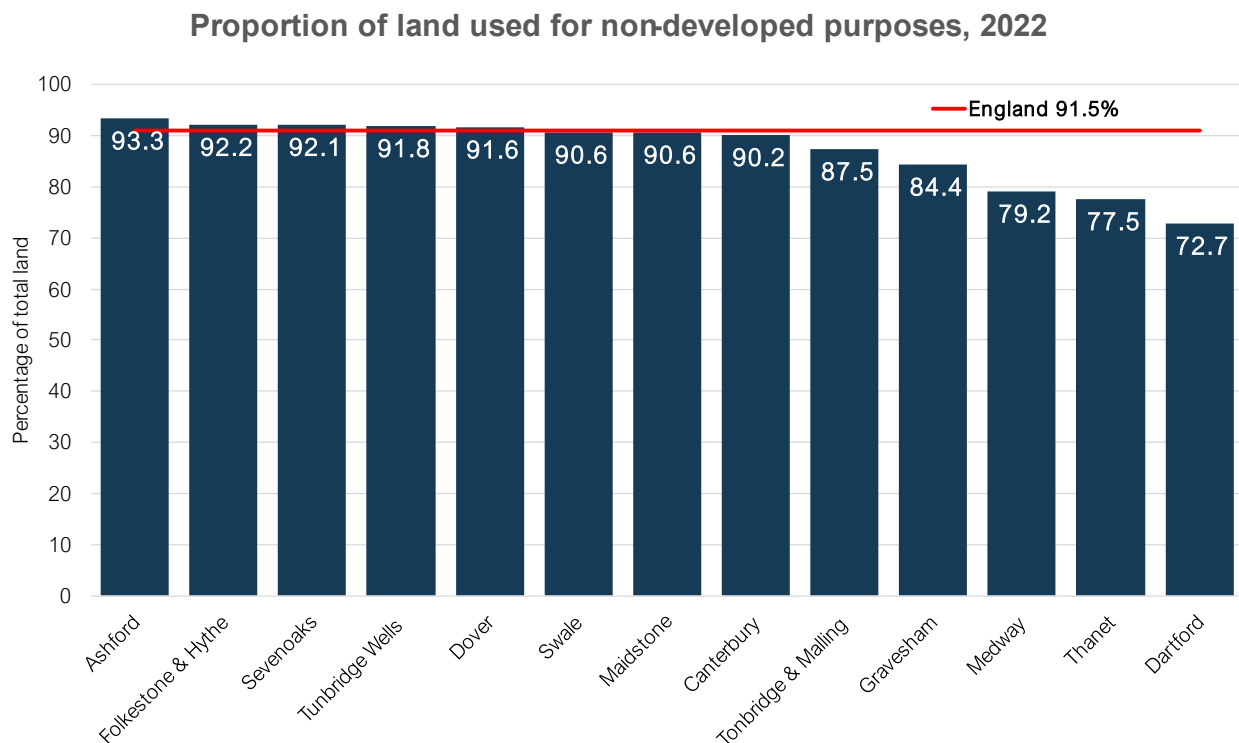
**Proportion of land used for non-developed purposes, 2022**

Source: DLUHC; Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

The majority of non-developed land is used for agriculture. Nationally 63.1% of all land is used for agriculture.

Five local authorities in Kent have a higher proportion of land used for agriculture than the national average. See Table 6 and Chart 4 for details.

Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 6: Non-developed land by use type - % of total land

2022	Agriculture	Forest, open land & water	Outdoor recreation	Residential garden	Undeveloped land	Total
England	63.1	20.1	2.1	4.9	0.9	91.1
Ashford	69.5	17.2	1.2	4.7	0.6	93.3
Canterbury	57.7	23.2	1.8	6.8	0.8	90.2
Dartford	33.8	16.9	6.8	12.2	3.0	72.7
Dover	71.1	11.6	2.6	5.3	0.9	91.6
Folkestone & Hythe	68.6	16.3	2.0	4.5	0.8	92.2
Gravesham	48.5	16.5	7.2	10.8	1.3	84.4
Maidstone	65.0	15.7	2.1	7.0	0.7	90.6
Sevenoaks	55.5	22.6	5.2	8.1	0.7	92.1
Swale	66.3	16.8	1.8	4.9	0.8	90.6
Thanet	53.9	4.5	4.4	12.2	2.5	77.5
Tonbridge & Malling	50.4	23.4	4.1	8.5	1.1	87.5
Tunbridge Wells	57.3	25.3	1.4	7.2	0.5	91.8
Medway Unitary Authority	45.0	16.5	4.6	11.1	2.0	79.2

Chart 4: Non-developed land use by type in Kent & Medway: 2022

Non-developed land uses in Kent & Medway, 2022

Source: DLUHC; Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council
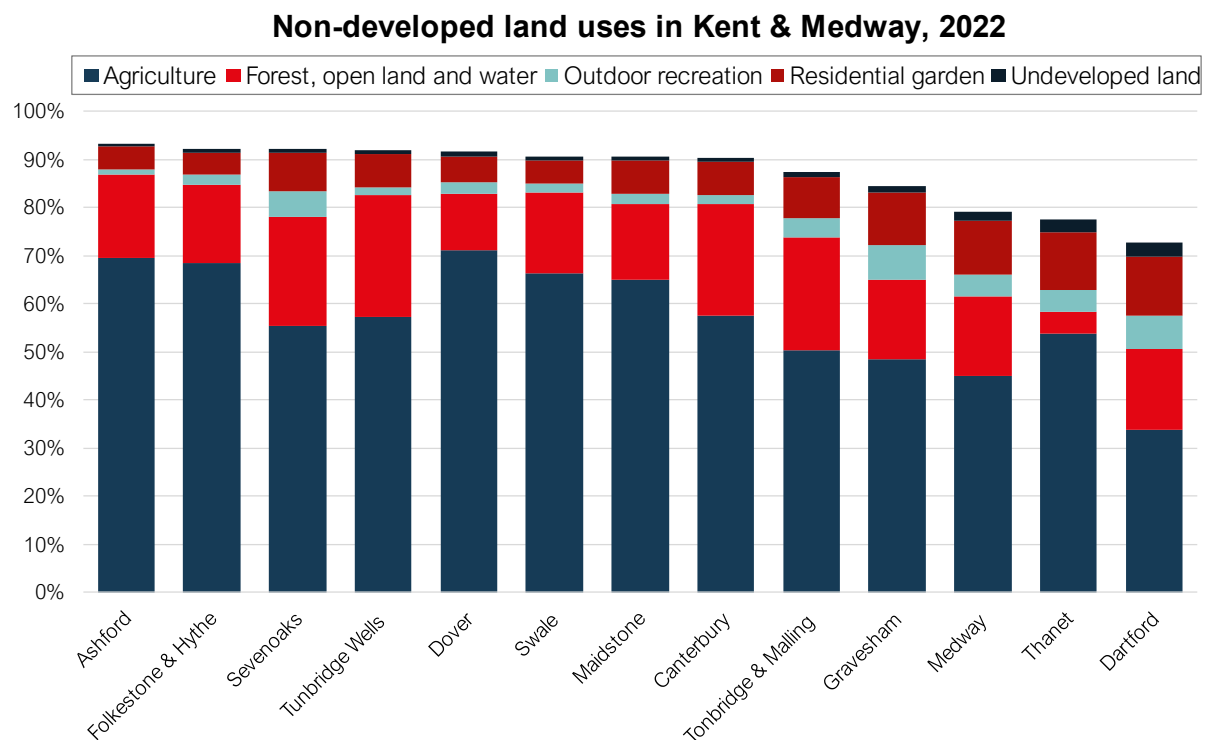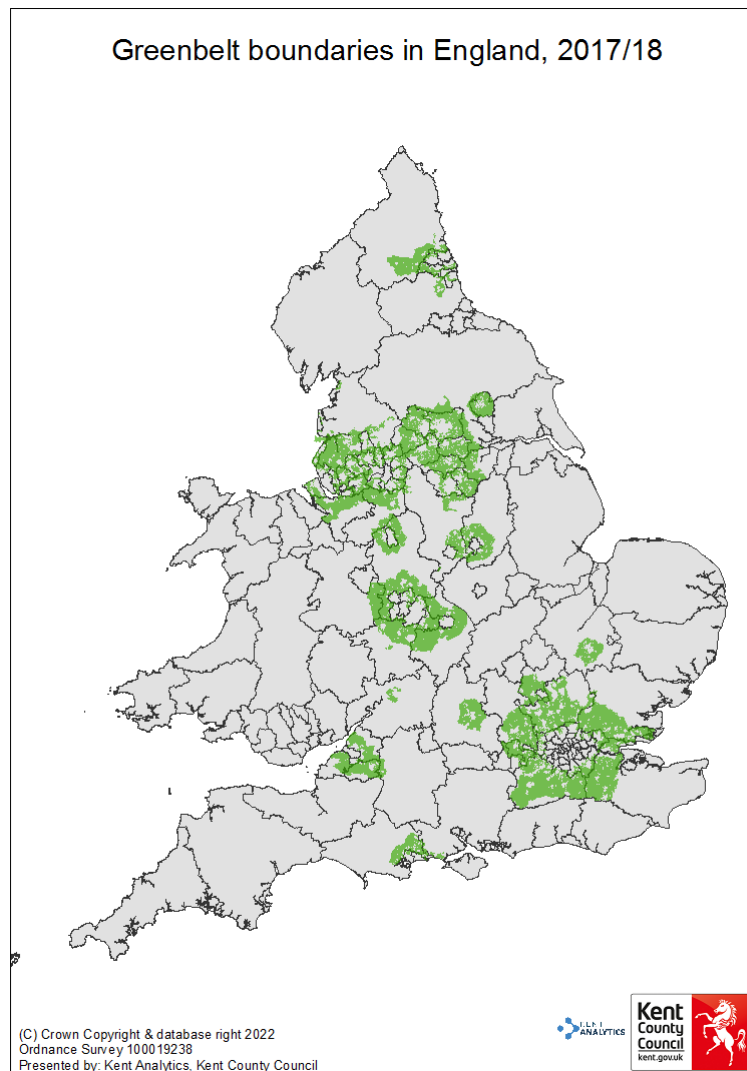
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Land use in Green Belt areas

The Green Belt is a policy for controlling urban growth. The main purpose of the Green Belt policy is to protect the land around larger urban centres from urban sprawl and maintain the designated area for forestry and agriculture as well as to provide habitat to wildlife.

There is a constant review of Green Belt land in England. However, land can only be removed from the Green Belt through local authorities adopting new local plans which must satisfy the strong tests for protecting Green Belt land set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. See Map 1 for Land designated as Green Belt in England at 2017/18.

Map 1: English Green Belt boundaries

Greenbelt boundaries in England, 2017/18

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Ordnance Survey 100019238
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

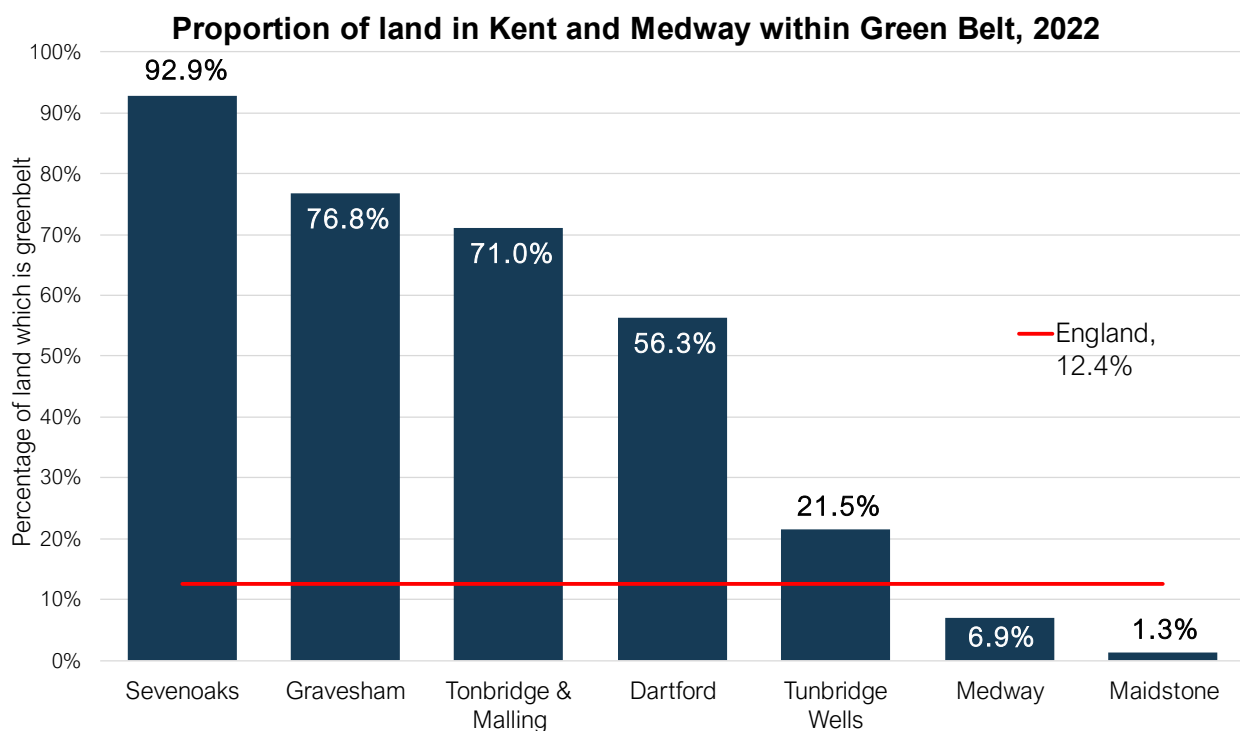## Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In April 2022, 12.5% of land in England was designated Green Belt land (1,637,099 hectares). In Kent and Medway approximately 72,129 hectares was designated as Green Belt across seven local authority areas. Sevenoaks has the highest proportion of land within the Green Belt boundary (92.9%). See Table 7 and Chart 5 for details.

Table 7: Green Belt land in England, Kent, and Medway

2022	Total Hectares of Green Belt Land	Green Belt land as % of Total land area
England	1,637,099.07	12.5%
Dartford	4,095.31	56.3%
Gravesham	7,598.06	76.8%
Maidstone	527.52	1.3%
Sevenoaks	34,390.59	92.9%
Tonbridge & Malling	17,053.40	71.0%
Tunbridge Wells	7,129.08	21.5%
Medway Unitary Authority	1,335.13	6.9%

Chart 5: Proportion of Green Belt land in Kent & Medway: 2022

Source: DLUHC; Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Nationally 6.8% of all land within Green Belt boundaries is developed, more than half of which was for transport and utilities purposes (3.8%). See Table 8 for details.
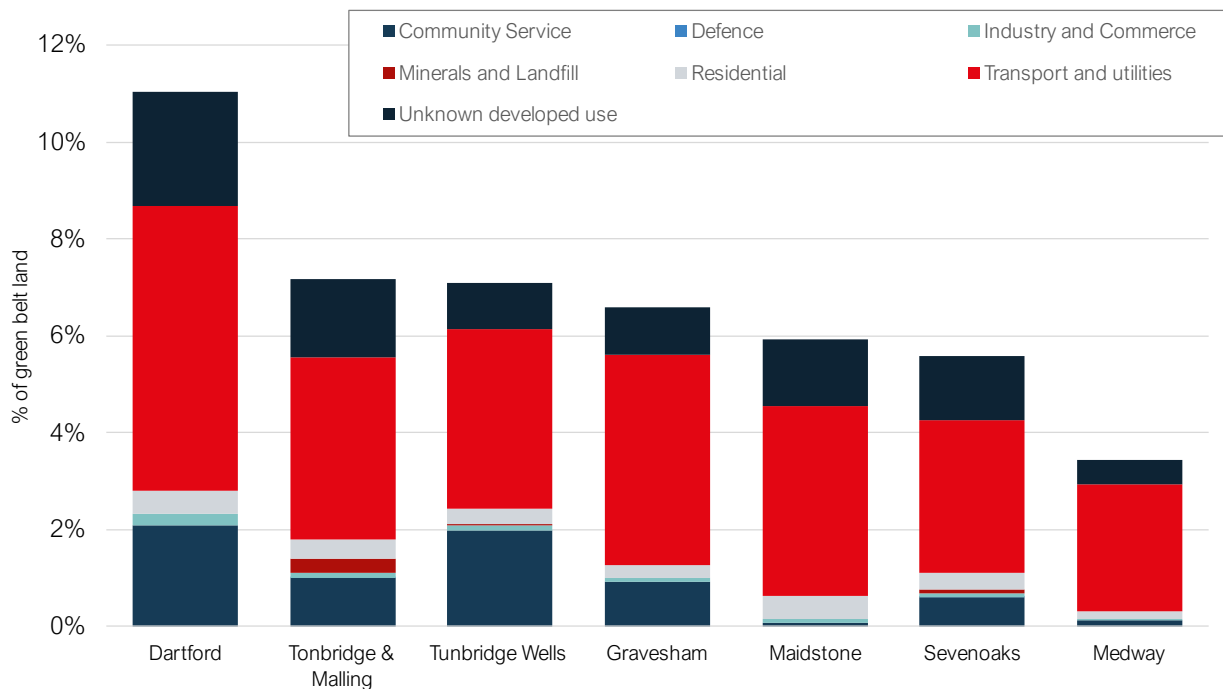
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Table 8: Developed land use by type within the Green Belt - % Green Belt land.

2022	Community Service	Defence	Industry & Commerce	Minerals & Landfill	Residential	Transport & utilities	Unknown developed use	Total
England	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	3.8	1.7	6.8
Dartford	2.1	-	0.2	-	0.5	5.9	2.3	11.0
Gravesham	0.9	-	0.1	-	0.3	4.3	1.0	6.6
Maidstone	0.1	-	0.1	-	0.5	3.9	1.4	5.9
Sevenoaks	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	3.1	1.3	5.6
Tonbridge & Malling	1.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.4	3.8	1.6	7.2
Tunbridge Wells	2.0	-	0.1	0.0	0.3	3.7	1.0	7.1
Medway Unitary Authority	0.1	-	0.0	-	0.2	2.6	0.5	3.4

Dartford district has the highest proportion of Green Belt land which has been developed (11%). Medway unitary authority has the lowest proportion of Green Belt land used for developed uses (3.4%). See Chart 6 for details.

Chart 6: Developed land use by type in Kent & Medway - % Green Belt land: 2022

Developed land uses in Kent & Medway - Green Belt, 2022

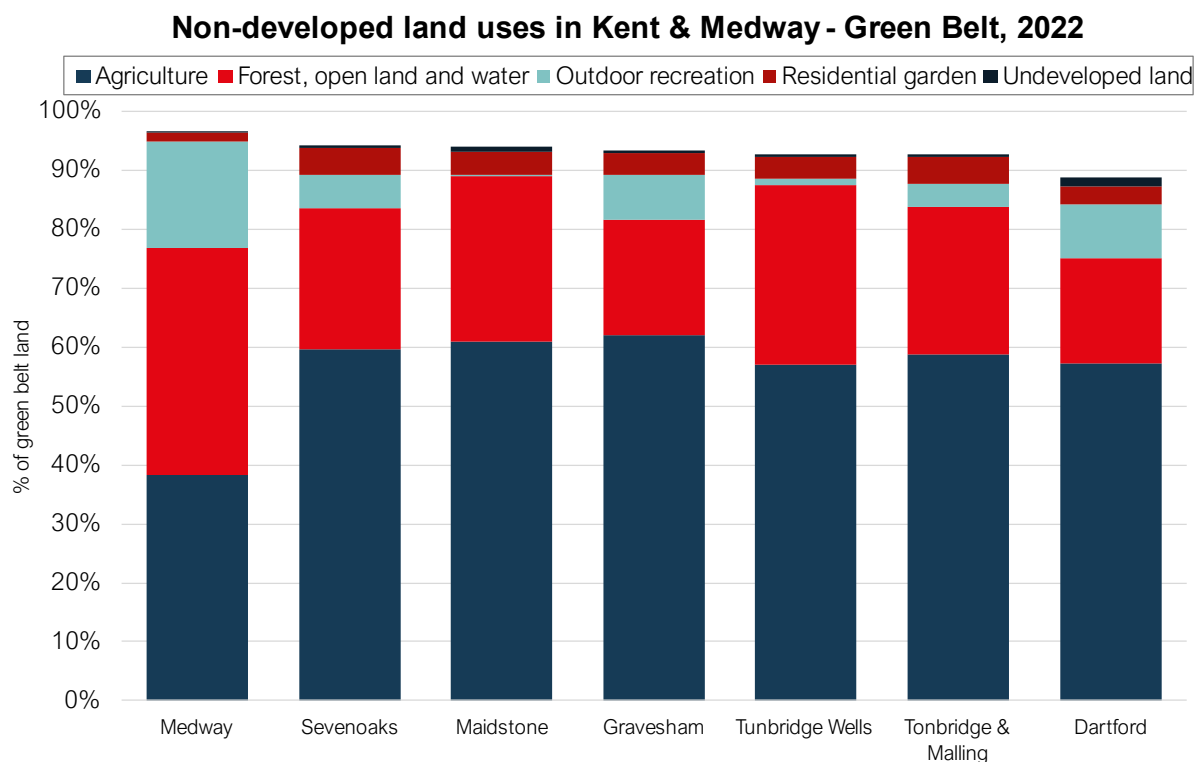Source: DLUHC Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

The majority of non-developed Green Belt land in England is used for agricultural uses. 65% of this land is used for agriculture with a further 18.9% being forest, open land, or water. Medway unitary authority has the highest proportion of undeveloped Green Belt

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land (96.6%). Dartford has the lowest proportion of undeveloped Green Belt land (88.9%). See Table 9 and Chart 7 for details.

Table 9: Non-developed land uses within the Green Belt boundary: 2022

2022	Agriculture	Forest, open land & water	Outdoor recreation	Residential garden	Undeveloped land	Total
England	65.0	18.9	5.5	2.9	0.8	93.1
Dartford	57.3	17.7	9.2	3.0	1.6	88.9
Gravesham	62.1	19.7	7.6	3.6	0.4	93.4
Maidstone	60.9	28.2	0.3	3.9	0.9	94.1
Sevenoaks	59.7	24.0	5.5	4.7	0.5	94.4
Tonbridge & Malling	58.8	25.0	4.0	4.5	0.5	92.8
Tunbridge Wells	57.0	30.5	1.1	3.8	0.4	92.8
Medway Unitary Authority	38.2	38.7	18.0	1.5	0.2	96.6

Chart 7: Non-developed land uses in Kent & Medway – Green Belt: 2022

Non-developed land uses in Kent & Medway - Green Belt, 2022

Source: DLUHC, Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

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Land use in National Flood Zone 3

The Environment Agency (EA) has devised a set of flood zones for guidance for developers, councils, and communities to explain the probability of river and sea flooding, ignoring the presence of flood defences. There are essentially three flood zones:

Zone 1: Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probabilities of river or sea flooding.

Zone 2: Land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding or land having between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding.

Zone 3: Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding or land having a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of sea flooding. Flood zone 3 also contains land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

Local authorities have to take flood zones into account when considering location and potential future flood risks to developments and land uses.

The DLUHC land use estimates only present information for those local authorities within National Flood Zone 3 which have a 1% or greater annual probability of river flooding or a 0.5% or greater annual probability of tidal flooding from the sea.

As at April 2022, 10.3% of land in England is defined as being within National Flood Zone 3. Nine local authorities within Kent have a higher proportion of land within National Flood Zone 3 than the national average.

Folkestone & Hythe has the highest proportion of land within National Flood Zone 3 (38.1%). Sevenoaks has the lowest proportion of land within the National Flood Zone 3 (4.5%). See Table 10 and Chart 8 for details.

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Table 10: Proportion of land within National Flood Zone 3: 2022

April 2022	% that is National Flood Zone 3
England	10.3
Ashford	12.9
Canterbury	10.8
Dartford	12.7
Dover	12.5
Folkestone & Hythe	38.1
Gravesham	10.5
Maidstone	11.9
Sevenoaks	4.5
Swale	26.6
Thanet	13.1
Tonbridge & Malling	9.9
Tunbridge Wells	6.6
Medway Unitary Authority	29.1

Chart 8: Proportion of land within the National Flood Zone 3

Source: DLUHC, Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council
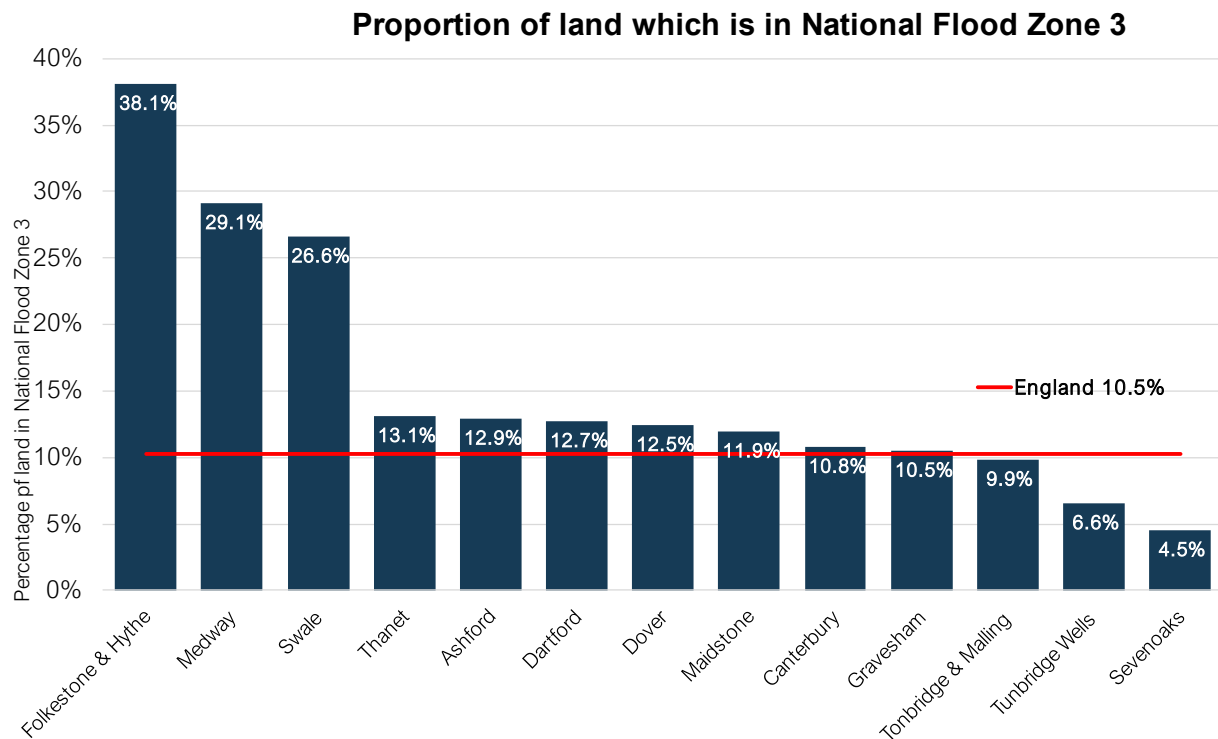
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Nationally 6.1% of land within Flood Zone 3 has a developed land use. This proportion varies across Kent. Ashford has the lowest proportion of land within the flood zone having a developed use (2.7%) while in Dartford 36.6% of flood zone land is developed.

Dartford, Gravesham, and Tonbridge & Malling have a significantly higher proportion of land within Flood Zone 3 that is developed. See Chart 9 and Table 11 for details.

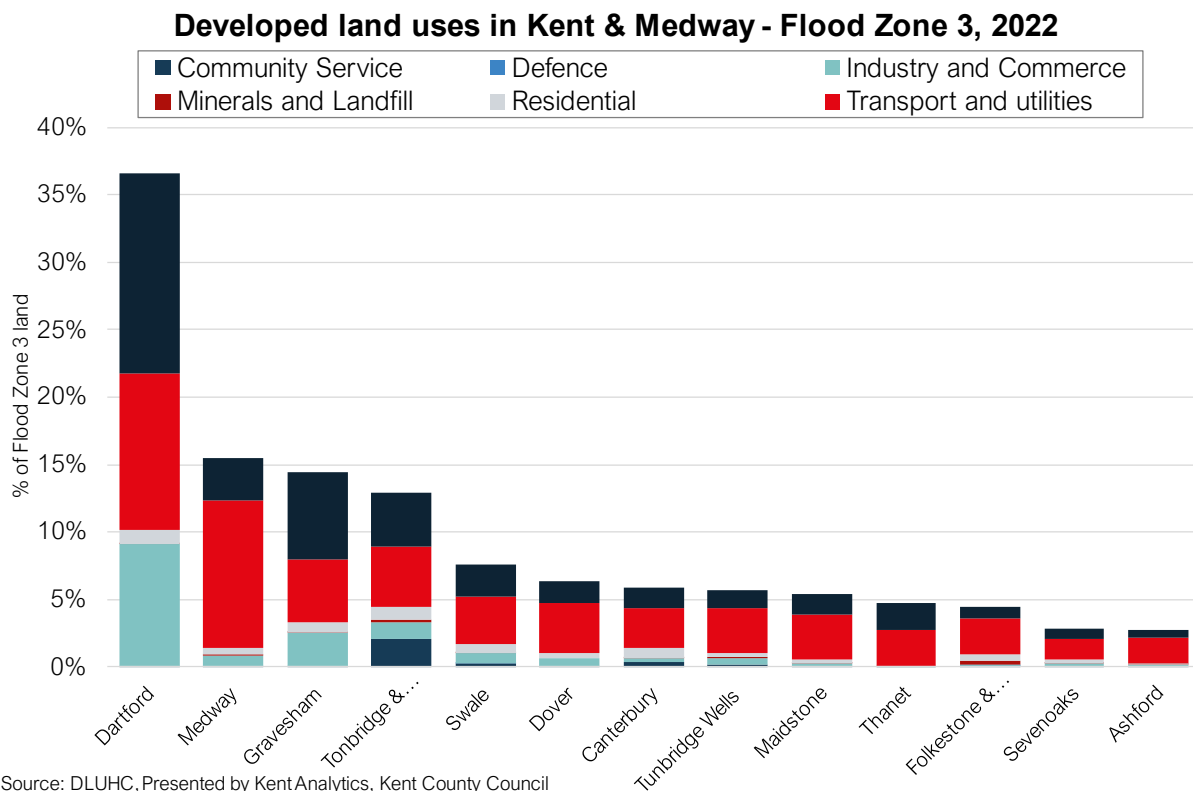**Chart 9: Type of developed land use in Kent & Medway – National Flood Zone 3**

Developed land uses in Kent & Medway - Flood Zone 3, 2022

Source: DLUHC, Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 11: Developed land within National Flood Zone 3 by use type: 2022.

April 2022	Community Service	Defence	Industry & Commerce	Minerals & Landfill	Residential	Transport & utilities	Unknown developed use	Total
England	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.6	3.2	1.7	6.1
Ashford	0.1	-	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.9	0.6	2.7
Canterbury	0.3	-	0.3	0.0	0.7	3.0	1.5	5.9
Dartford	0.1	-	9.0	0.0	1.0	11.6	14.9	36.6
Dover	0.0	-	0.6	-	0.4	3.7	1.6	6.3
Folkestone & Hythe	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.5	2.6	0.8	4.4
Gravesham	0.0	-	2.5	0.0	0.7	4.7	6.4	14.4
Maidstone	0.1	-	0.2	0.0	0.3	3.3	1.6	5.4
Sevenoaks	0.1	-	0.2	0.0	0.3	1.5	0.8	2.9
Swale	0.2	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.7	3.6	2.4	7.6
Thanet	0.0	-	0.0	-	0.1	2.7	2.0	4.7
Tonbridge & Malling	2.1	0.0	1.3	0.2	0.9	4.4	4.0	12.9
Tunbridge Wells	0.2	-	0.4	0.1	0.3	3.3	1.3	5.7
Medway Unitary Authority	0.1	-	0.8	0.1	0.4	11.0	3.1	15.5

Nationally 93.7% of land within Flood Zone 3 has a non-developed use. Agriculture makes up the highest proportion of non-developed flood zone land followed by forest, open land, and water. See Chart 10 and Table 12 for details.

Chart 10: Non-developed land within National Flood Zone 3 by use type: 2022

Non-developed land uses in Kent & Medway - Flood Zone 3, 2022
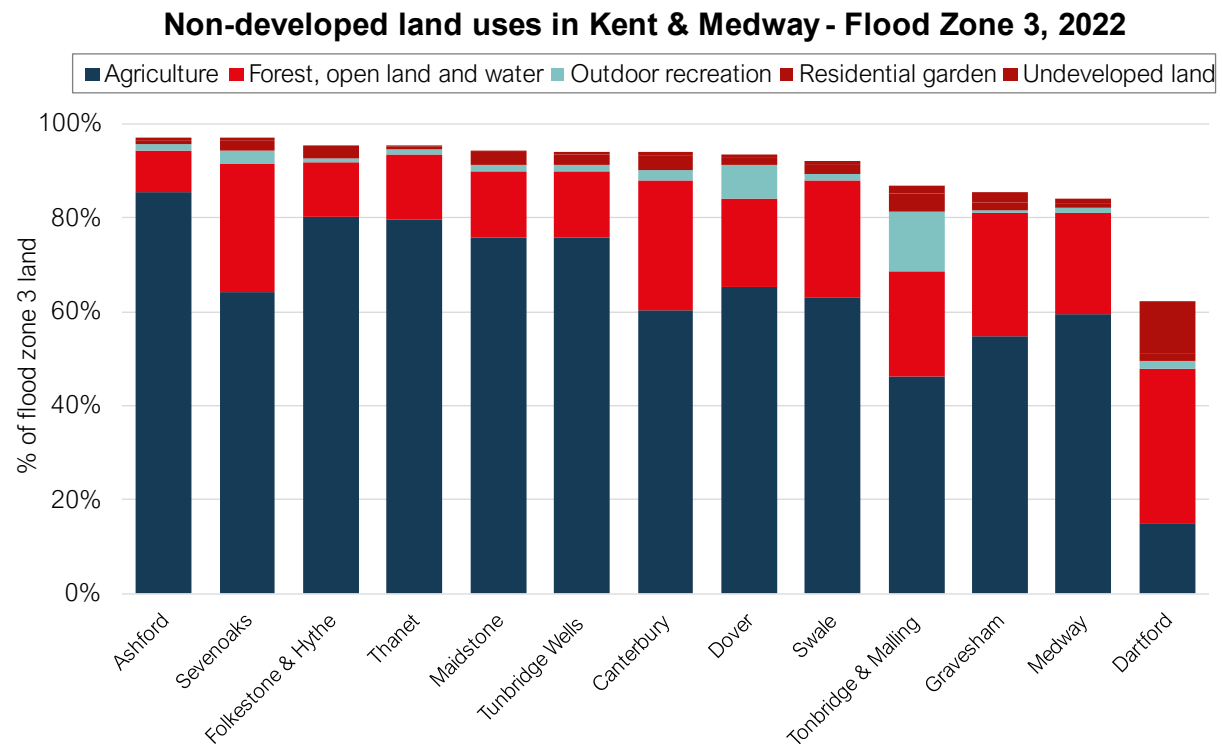
Source: DLUHC. Presented by Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 12: Non-developed land within National Flood Zone 3 by use type:2022

April 2022	Agriculture	Forest, open land & water	Outdoor recreation	Residential garden	Undeveloped land	Total
England	70.9	17.9	2.0	2.1	0.9	93.7
Ashford	85.5	8.8	1.5	0.8	0.5	97.1
Canterbury	60.3	27.8	2.2	3.1	0.7	94.0
Dartford	15.0	33.0	1.5	1.6	11.1	62.2
Dover	65.3	18.7	7.4	1.6	0.5	93.5
Folkestone & Hythe	80.3	11.5	0.9	2.2	0.6	95.5
Gravesham	54.9	26.2	0.5	1.6	2.3	85.6
Maidstone	75.9	13.9	1.4	2.9	0.4	94.4
Sevenoaks	64.1	27.5	2.7	2.2	0.5	97.0
Swale	63.0	24.9	1.5	1.8	0.9	92.2
Thanet	79.8	13.6	1.3	0.4	0.2	95.2
Tonbridge & Malling	46.1	22.6	12.7	4.0	1.5	86.7
Tunbridge Wells	75.7	14.1	1.3	2.4	0.5	94.1
Medway Unitary Authority	59.6	21.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	84.1

Related documents

Information about land use and housing can be found on the Kent Analytics Housing statistics web pages