

EAST KENT

East Kent is made up of five districts: Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet.

The East Kent Regeneration Board (EKRB) has prepared the East Kent Growth Framework (EKGF) (currently in draft), which sets out an overarching strategic approach for identifying priorities to achieve long-term economic growth across East Kent between 2017 and 2027. The EKGF has been produced through collective working to define the following key objectives for driving continued and sustainable growth across East Kent:

- Unlocking growth through infrastructure;
- Delivery of business space;
- Supporting skills and productivity within business;
- Place making and shaping.

EAST KENT - DISTRICTS AND BOROUGHES

Ashford is the largest Borough in Kent and has the fastest growing population, which has more than trebled in the last 40 years to around 118,000 residents. Ashford Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan to 2030 with the aim of ensuring that future development within Ashford is well planned and managed effectively, whilst having a positive impact on local communities, the economy and the environment. Whilst the urban area of Ashford is expanding, much of the borough is rural in character and includes protected areas such as the North Downs and the High Weald Area(s) of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). The Local Plan seeks to balance the need for growth with protection of these important natural assets.

The Local Plan seeks to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the high-speed rail and road links to Europe and London which define Ashford's economic and housing growth. This trend



**HOUSING GROWTH
(2011-2031):
68,600**



**TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENT
£2,184,157,000**



**POPULATION GROWTH
(2011-2031):
146,700**



**TOTAL FUNDING IDENTIFIED:
£1,591,734,000**



**INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING GAP:
£592,422,000**

has led to some 15,000 new homes planned to 2030, as well as facilitating the delivery of a number of strategic infrastructure and economic projects.

Canterbury includes the historic City of Canterbury, the coastal towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable, and attractive countryside and villages. The district has a rich built environment, recognised internationally by the designation of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO comprising the Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's Church. The Kent Downs AONB covers about a third of the district to the south, together with local landscape designations covering the Blean Woods, one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in England.

The district is an important sub-regional employment centre in East Kent. Canterbury has a strong service and education sector, with four higher and further education institutions. The strong education sector has implications for the population structure and the private rental market, with students competing for rented properties. The manufacturing sector is largely located at the coastal towns and has experienced some decline over the years, although there are several successful business parks at Whitstable and Hersden. Canterbury suffers from congestion at peak times and the A2 junction at Bridge

requires substantial upgrading. Canterbury City Council's recently adopted Local Plan, proposes new relief roads for Herne and Sturry, and a new A2 junction at Bridge to be provided as part of the development of the strategic sites.

Dover comprises the White Cliffs coastline, nationally valued landscapes and spectacular heritage (e.g. Dover Castle). The Port of Dover is a vital international gateway to Europe and there are strategic transport links to London. Housebuilding has increased and strategic infrastructure issues are being addressed, with a major regeneration of Dover town centre and a new leisure centre currently under construction. An Area Action Plan for Dover Waterfront will provide improved connectivity to the town centre and a continuous commercial area to the seafront. Viability issues, particularly in the Dover urban area, place great pressure on the district in meeting its growth requirements. More recently, the district successfully expanded the flagship Enterprise Zone in the Sandwich Discovery Park.

Dover is likely to benefit from the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and, along with the Port of Dover, is pressing for the comprehensive upgrade of the M2/A2 route, including improvements at Brenley Corner and the A2 from Lydden through to the Port of Dover.

Shepway's appeal is primarily based on its connectivity and wide variety of towns, villages and rural environments. The Kent Downs AONB and Romney Marsh has Grade 1 classified agricultural land and both have a rich and diverse influence on the landscape character. Significant areas of the district are low-lying and subject to a high risk of flooding.

The Council is progressing with a Core Strategy Review (CSR) to identify and define strategic site allocations up to 2037, with the following key sites identified to be redeveloped: at Folkestone Seafont, Shorncliffe Garrison, New Romney Broad Location and the Urban Sports Park, Folkestone. With Government backing for the development of a new locally led Garden Town at Otterpool Park, comprising up to 12,000 new dwellings, a planning application is being prepared by Arcadis on behalf of the site owners, SDC and Cozumel, programmed for submission in spring 2018. Consultation on plans to build a major new lorry area in Kent to the north of M20 J11, to tackle disruption caused by Operation Stack, commenced in August 2016. A decision by Government on the project has been delayed pending the outcome of a Judicial Review that is to sit in December 2017.

Thanet lies at the eastern end of Kent, with the three main coastal towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. There are 32 kilometres of coastline with chalk cliffs and beaches and bays, many of which have been awarded European Blue Flag status. Much of the coast is also recognised for its internationally important habitats, including coastal chalk and significant wildlife populations.

Thanet is the fourth most populated district in Kent, with the second highest population density. Thanet is also a popular area for retired people to live, with the highest number of 65-year-olds and over in the County. The built-up area is densely populated and forms an almost continuous urban belt around the North East

coast. There are areas of countryside between the towns providing open green space in contrast to the urban areas. About 30% of the district is urban, with 95% of the population living in the main urban area around the coast. Through its close proximity to Europe and easy access to London, Thanet plays an important role in East Kent. The Local Plan, which is currently in draft publication, is looking to build on this and has identified its growth potential as a location for business investment.

Thanet has seen substantial coastal regeneration, with investment in the Turner Contemporary, Dreamland and hotel development.

AUTHORITY	DOCUMENT	STAGE	EXPECTED ADOPTION (AS OF NOV 2017)
ASHFORD BC	CORE STRATEGY (2006-2021)	ADOPTED 2008	
	LOCAL PLAN 2030	SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION - DEC 2017	SUMMER 2018
CANTERBURY CC	LOCAL PLAN (2011-2031)	ADOPTED JULY 2017	
DOVER DC	CORE STRATEGY AND LAND ALLOCATIONS LOCAL PLAN	ADOPTED 2010/2015	
	LOCAL PLAN (2014-2037)	EVIDENCE GATHERING	SUMMER 2018
SHEPWAY DC	CORE STRATEGY (2031)	ADOPTED 2013	
	PLACE AND POLICIES LOCAL PLAN	REG 19 CONSULTATION - WINTER 2017	SPRING/SUMMER 2018
	CORE STRATEGY REVIEW	GATHERING EVIDENCE	2020
THANET DC	THANET LOCAL PLAN	ADOPTED 2006	2019
	LOCAL PLAN (2031)	REG 19 CONSULTATION - EARLY 2018	

EAST KENT - GROWTH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Sustainable residential and commercial growth will provide benefits for those who live and/or work within East Kent.

The East Kent Growth Framework identifies 12 spatial priorities, with 36 projects identified as being strategically significant for future economic growth, within these priorities. The 12 spatial priorities are:

1. Ashford Commercial Quarter;
2. Chilmington Green;
3. Romney Marsh Regeneration (commercial);
4. Folkestone Seafront and Town Centre;
5. Dover Port, Town Centre and Waterfront;
6. Whitfield, Dover;
7. Discovery Park, Sandwich;
8. Ramsgate Port, Marina and Waterfront (commercial);
9. Thanet Centre Island and Manston;
10. Margate and Cliftonville Regeneration;
11. Canterbury Knowledge City; and
12. Wincheap, Canterbury.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Signalling on the Ashford Spurs requires upgrading to operate the new Eurostar Class e320 trains	The Port of Dover is Europe's busiest passenger port and handles 17% of the total UK trade in goods. Western Docks Revival is developing Dover's cargo business with a new cargo terminal and distribution centre to boost productivity and employment
Implications and uncertainties regarding post-Brexit border control management	Otterpool Garden Town demonstrates an exceptional opportunity to enable accelerated growth in quality homes and jobs, helping to address the housing need in Kent
Strategic network improvements to the A2/M2 are required to support the new Lower Thames Crossing, the growth of Canterbury and the ports of Dover and Ramsgate	Good progress in the delivery of new homes, boosting the housing stock options for purchasers
The cost of rail travel, especially to London, is currently high	Growth of higher-value and knowledge-based sectors with skills and training development boosting workforce capabilities
The effects of Operation Stack and the risks associated with its implementation (estimated to cost Kent and Medway over £1.5mn per day)	High demand for managed commercial space for new businesses
Congestion exacerbated by freight traffic and overnight lorry parking	High demand for high-quality, adaptable commercial spaces
High house prices affecting affordability in urban centres	Enterprise Zone East Kent Spatial Development Company, a cross-authority investment vehicle that is developing high-quality business space, such as the Discovery Park
Ageing population challenging healthcare and local community services	Visitor economy boosted by the rural and coastal offer in East Kent
Challenges to the viability of commercial development and limited speculative development	Higher education facilities have ambitious future programmes and masterplans
Low high-grade stock of commercial space has the potential to hinder employment growth	
Housing affordability issues, especially in Ashford and Canterbury, are limiting options for many purchasers, who are forced to move outside these urban areas to live	
An ageing population and the education and healthcare facilities required to support it	
Variations in deprivation	
New schools and school expansions required to support growth aspirations	

EAST KENT - INFRASTRUCTURE PICTURE

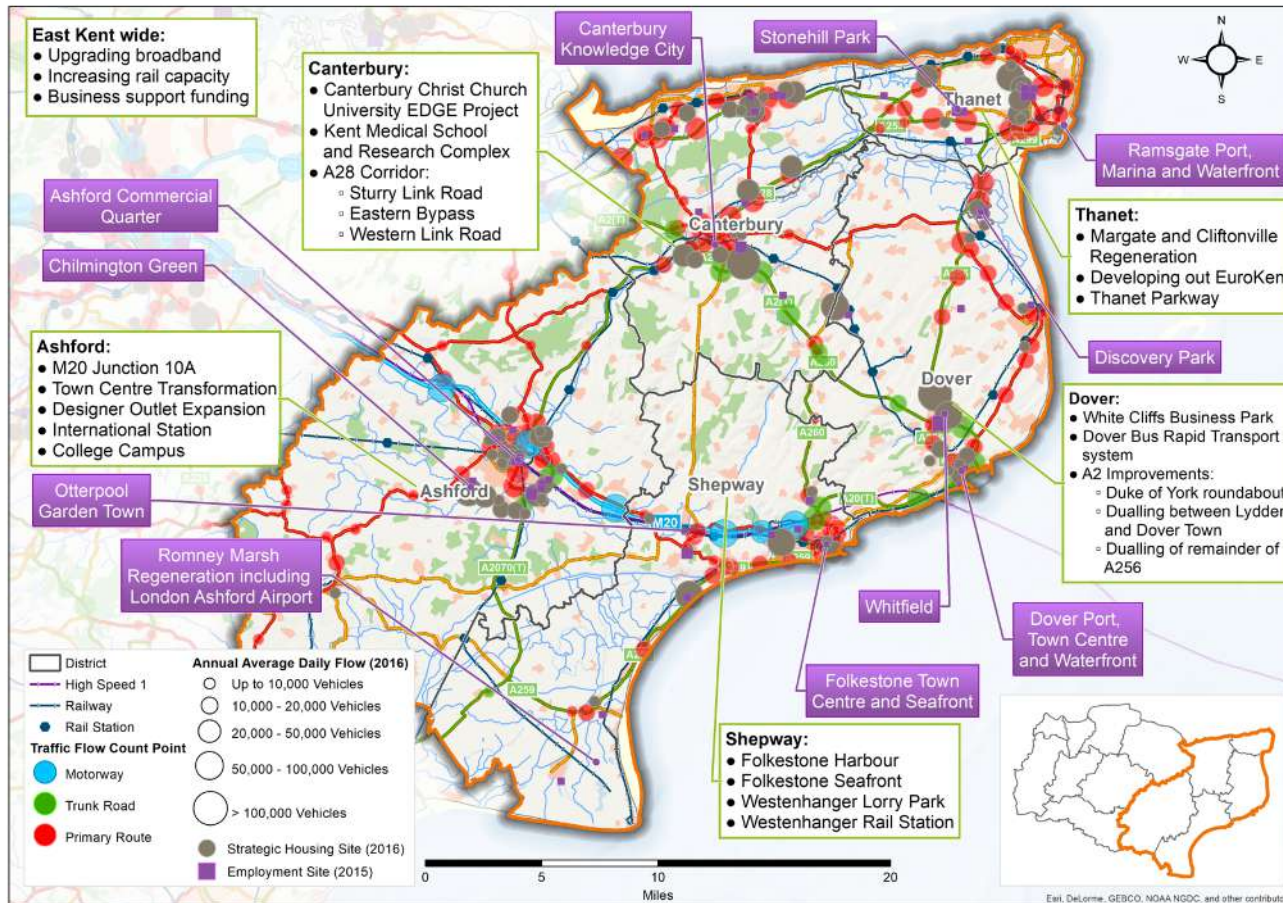


Figure 7.5: East Kent - example strategic projects for economic growth

The East Kent Growth Framework top priorities are:

- **Strategic network improvements to the A2/M2** required to support the new Lower Thames Crossing, the growth of Canterbury and the ports of Dover and Ramsgate;
- **M20/A20 improvements** including junction 10A, the proposed lorry holding area, HGV overnight parking and access to Dover;
- **Improvements to rail capacity**, speeds, frequency and associated infrastructure, including Ashford SPURS, Westenhanger Station enhancement and Thanet Parkway; and
- **A28 corridor artery** stretching across East Kent from Margate in Thanet to Ashford via the City of Canterbury requires improvements through eight separate but connected transport infrastructure projects to improve road links, address bottlenecks and problems of congestion.

Transport

- Investment in the road network at Westwood Cross to alleviate traffic problems and unlock development sites as well as the port at Ramsgate.
- Rail capacity, speed, frequency and associated infrastructure, including Ashford SPURS, Westenhanger Station enhancement and Thanet Parkway. Dover is also investigating options for additional capacity on the High Speed route and investigating a new Whitfield Station.
- Park and Ride systems are a success in the city and could be future schemes for the coastal towns. Introduction of accessible transport options at the Folkestone harbour redevelopment.
- Improvements to the A260, creating the most easterly link between the M20/A20 and M2/A2 routes.

Education

- Secondary school pressures in Ashford begin in Year 7 in 2018/19, with demand expected to exceed supply in 2019/20. This is to be managed in the short term through existing schools admitting additional pupils and a new school in the Chilmington Green development.
- Total primary school rolls will continue to rise until 2018/19 in Shepway. Subsequently, the pressure for Year 7 places means a new Secondary Free School will be needed in 2018/19.
- Reception year numbers are forecast to reduce from 1,678 in 2016/17 to 1,609 in 2020/21 in Thanet. However, continued inward migration and new housing may result in an increase over the forecast period. The impact of a decade of rising numbers in the primary phase will begin to impact on the secondary phase significantly from 2019/20 and provision will have to be put in place.

Health and Social Care

- Healthcare responding to growth in demand from residential development – e.g. primary healthcare required in the Westwood Cross area, Thanet, where major new development is planned.
- The need for four community service hubs has been identified in the South Kent Coast CCG area, in Deal, Dover, Folkestone and Romney Marsh. The CCG will look to utilise the existing estate where possible.
- The offer of a new hospital 'shell' in Canterbury from housing developers is being formally analysed and scrutinised to see if it is a viable option. The STP Programme Board acknowledged that if it is considered to be viable, this would have a considerable impact on the proposals for hospital services in East Kent. The work to develop proposals for East Kent continues, with a focus on finding potential long-term solutions to the current challenges as quickly as possible.

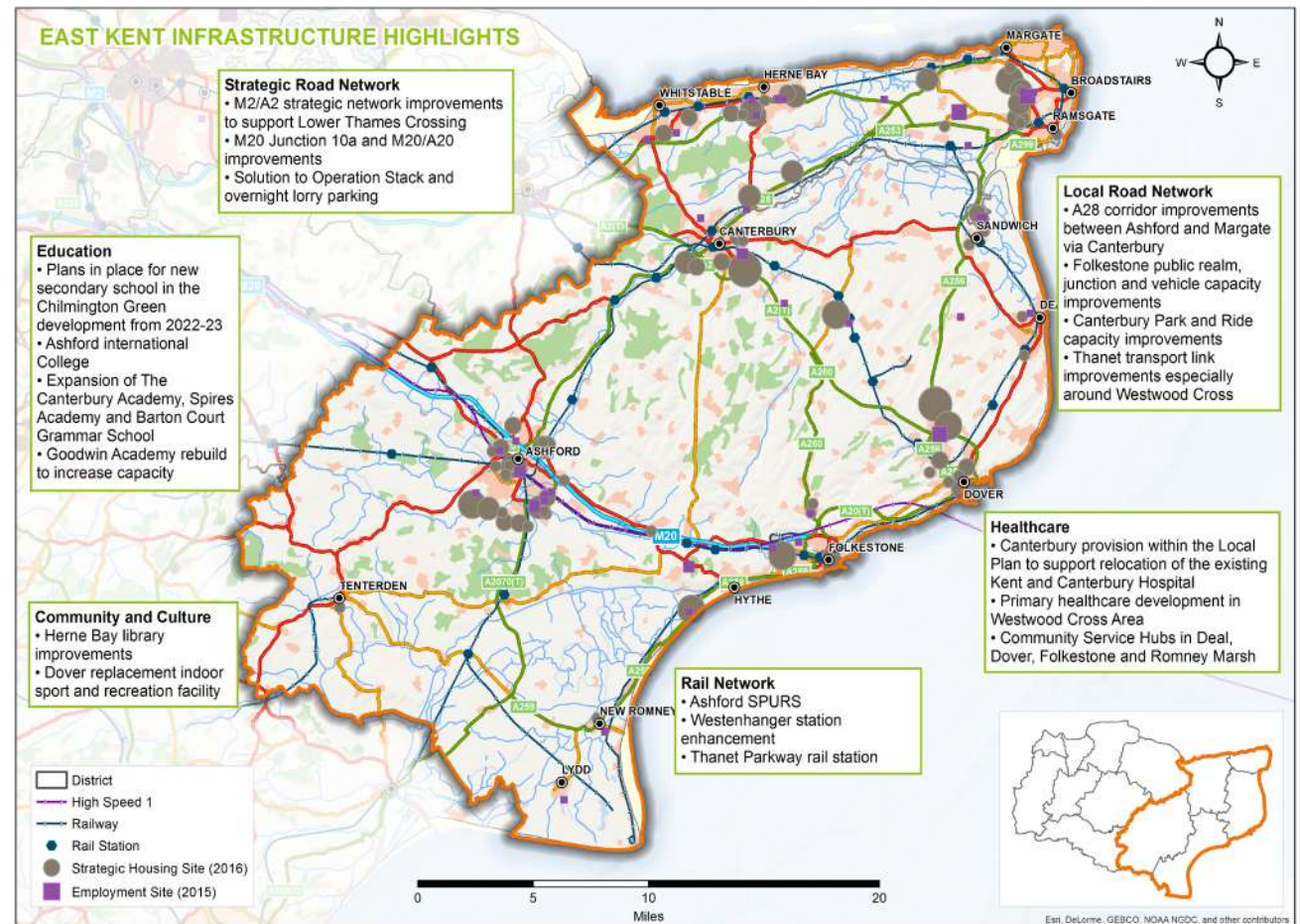


Figure 7.6: East Kent – key projects for each infrastructure sector

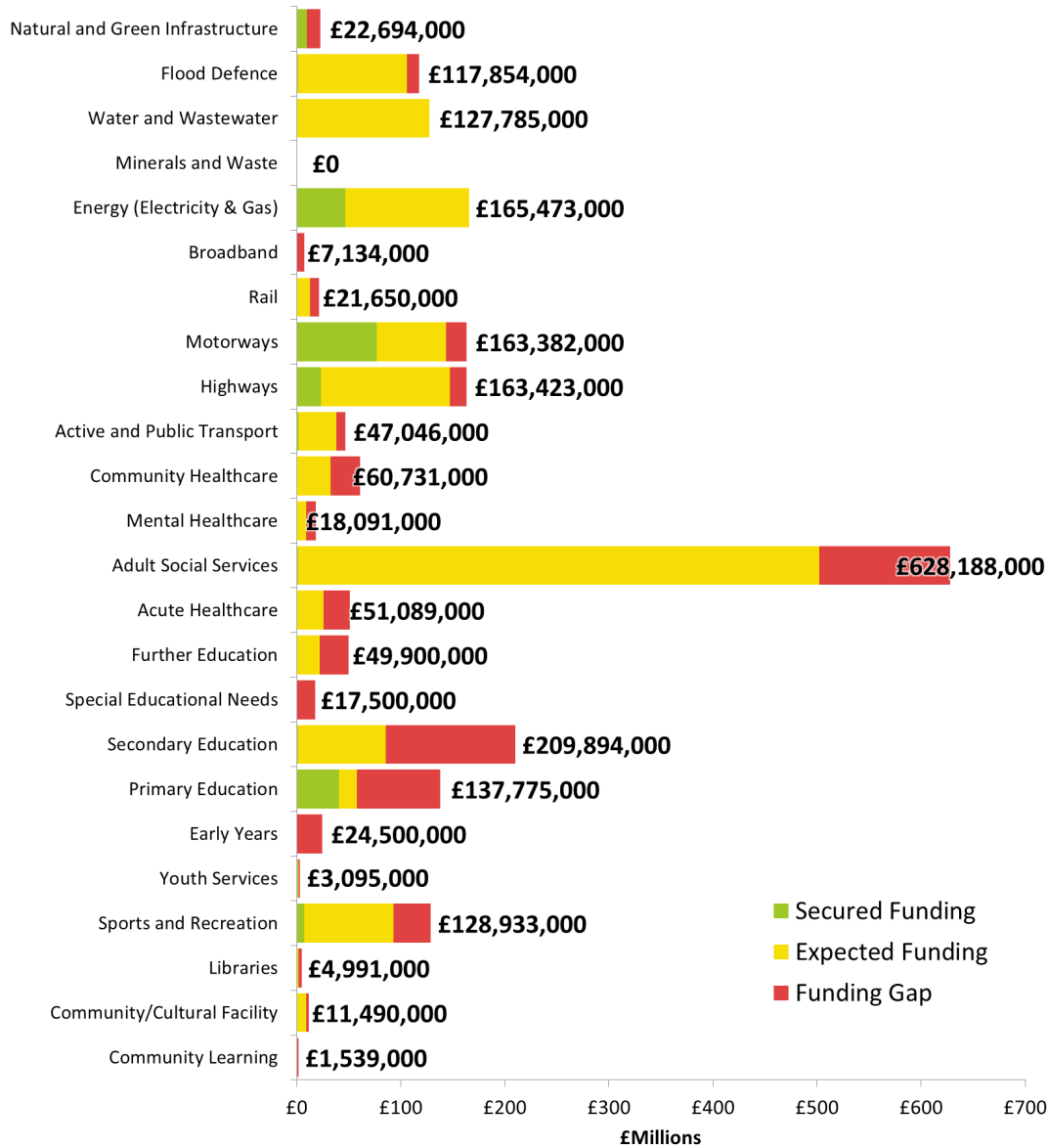


Figure 7.7: East Kent Infrastructure Funding Requirements

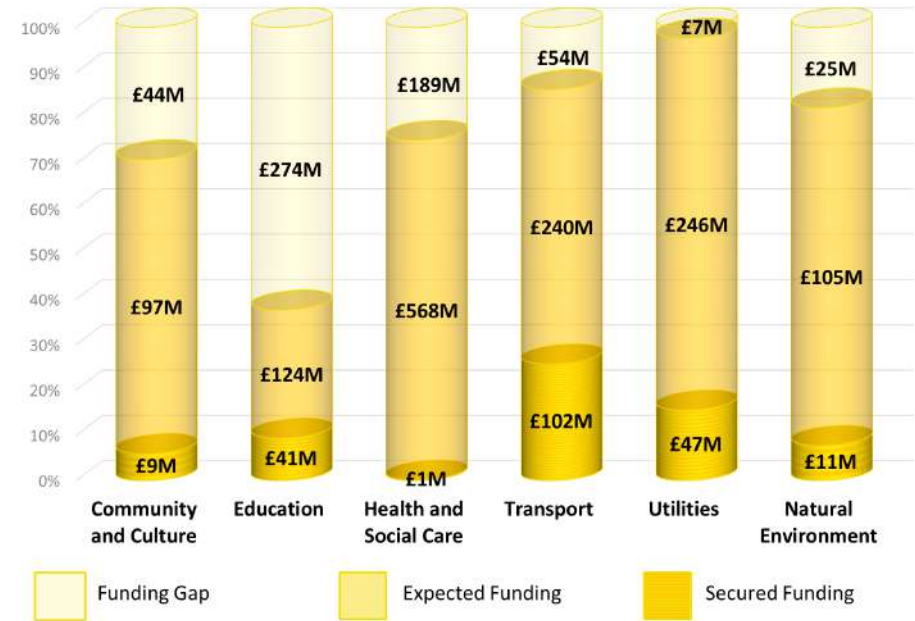


Figure 7.8: East Kent Service Sector Breakdown (Funding vs Gap)