



Heritage Strategy

24th February 2025

Consultation document

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy was commissioned by the council to ensure that the heritage of the district plays a clear and positive role in the future of the district. This heritage strategy has been produced to identify and understand the district's heritage and to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats

1.2 Furthermore, through the background papers, the strategy provides an evidence base for project funding bids as well as planning proposals. It provides an initial assessment on the significance of assets (grouped as 'themes') which could be used as the starting point for more detailed assessments in Heritage Statements.

1.3 Folkestone & Hythe District is located in southeast of Kent. It extends from the North Kent Downs in the north, through the Greensand Vale and southwards onto the Romney Marsh and the Dungeness shingle spit. It is a coastal district edged by high white chalk cliffs and sandy and shingle beaches interspersed with a number of coastal towns and settlements including the former port of Folkestone, which is the largest town within the district.

1.4 The district's heritage assets, from its individual features to wider landscapes, have all played a role in shaping its development and identity. While some of these heritage assets are instantly recognisable, such as the Martello towers along its coastline, there are many more that are less well known but that play a major role in creating its unique local character.

1.5 At a time when the council is seeking to develop a new garden settlement and promoting town centres within the district, its heritage assets provide a unique opportunity for place-making, guiding and stimulating regeneration and making significant contributions to recreation, tourism, the economy, health and education. These are identified as key priorities in the Corporate Plan 'Creating Tomorrow Together' (2021-30):

Service ambition 2: A thriving environment identifies the many heritage assets within the district's towns and villages that new development should complement.

Service ambition 3: A vibrant economy recognises the importance of heritage related activities in relation to opportunities for diversification and vibrancy.

1.6 The important role that heritage has to play within the district is recognised within the guiding principles of the plan, where there is an undertaking to safeguard the heritage of the district.

Please provide any comments on Section 1.0 - Introduction

2.0 Vision

2.1 To celebrate the importance of the district's heritage through its protection and sensitive use, to effectively engage and communicate with stakeholders and to ensure that heritage delivers long term economic, social and environmental benefits

to the district.

Please provide any comments on Section 2.0 - Vision

3.0 Policy Background

3.1 This strategy will continue to contribute to the suite of documents that form part of the evidence base for the next local plan, which will replace the Core Strategy Review and the Places and Policies Local Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the national policy on conservation in the historic environment, which is recognised as a key element of sustainable development.

3.3 There are wide variety of heritage within the district, which are irreplaceable assets and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

3.4 Local authorities should make plans that set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

3.5 The NPPF also sets out how planning applications that affect heritage assets should be considered. It states that when determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the *significance* of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

3.6 NPPF paragraph 205 reads - *When considering developments and the impact on a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.* The council will consider the significance of an asset when assessing the impact and the amount of harm the proposal will have. 'Substantial harm' to or 'loss of' would only be

permissible in exceptional (grade II listed buildings) or wholly exceptional (Grade I & II*, scheduled monuments) circumstances.

3.7 The NPPF states that applications should be refused if development would lead to substantial harm or loss of the significance unless it can be demonstrated that it is necessary for substantial public benefit or it met four criteria (set out in paragraph 207 of the NPPF).

3.8 If development proposals are considered to lead to 'less than substantial harm', then then this should be weighed against the public benefits. If it is considered that no harm to the significance would occur through the proposed development, then this process would not be followed.

Core Strategy Review 2022

3.9 The Core Strategy is the overarching planning policy document at the local level and provides a long-term vision and strategic policies for the district. The Core Strategy makes provision from 2006 to the end of March 2031. It sets out economic, social and environmental aims for the district and the amount and type of development and strategic development locations for major developments.

3.10 The Core Strategy Review recognises the importance of quality of life and sense of place in its Strategic Need C as a key element of its growth. Strategic Need B recognises the need to enhance the management and maintenance of the district's rich natural and heritage assets. These two aspects are fundamentally linked and should work together in regeneration, development and growth within the district. The Government in its 2016 Culture White Paper explains that "The development of our historic built environment can drive wider regeneration, job creation, business growth and prosperity."

Places and Policies Local Plan

3.11 The Places and Policies Local Plan sits below the Core Strategy and has two functions:

- To allocate enough land for future development to meet the requirements set out in the Core Strategy for residential, employment, community and other needs; and
- To provide development management policies that will be used to assess planning applications and guide future development.

3.12 The plan plays an important role in shaping the future of the district and ensuring that the aims set out in the Core Strategy are met, providing local communities, landowners, developers and infrastructure providers with certainty about the future pattern of development in the district.

3.13 The policies in the plan will ensure that new developments are sustainable, the natural and historic environment is maintained and that people's quality of life is improved and healthy lifestyles are encouraged.

Please provide any comments on Section 3.0 - Policy Background

4.0 The District's Rich Heritage

4.1 The district contains an exceptional wealth of heritage spanning from prehistoric times to the present day. The district features archaeological finds, historic structures and landscapes that are of outstanding significance having importance nationally and even internationally. Amongst the iconic assets within the district are the Martello Towers and Royal Military Canal which sit proudly amongst its unrivalled collection of Napoleonic period defences or the unique landscapes at Dungeness and the Romney Marsh.

4.2 Alongside these and other nationally important sites there are numerous sites of regional or local importance, less well known perhaps but treasured and valued by local communities as markers of their own history and that of their towns and villages.

4.3 The geography of the district plays an important role in its heritage and history. Located in the southeast of the country, separated from the Continent by the English Channel and the narrow Straits of Dover, the interaction with Europe through trade, new people, cultures and ideas and through cross channel travel, all play a part in the story of the district. The area has always been on the front line of potential invasion and this has left a particularly rich defensive record, expressed clearly in the Napoleonic defences and also in a remarkable collection of heritage assets that span from Roman times to the Second World War.

4.4 The district has a valuable and varied historic landscape which spans southward from the quintessential rolling Kentish chalk downland to the unique and vegetated shingles of Dungeness. In doing so it crosses the major coastal transport conduit of the Greensand Vale before dropping into the expansive Romney Marsh. The district's coastline, varying between the iconic White Cliffs and sand or shingle beaches with a seascape that includes views to France and the busy shipping routes through the Channel, makes a further major contribution to the outstanding local landscape.

4.5 The range of heritage assets and the way in which they can be explained through particular themes is described in section 6 of this heritage strategy; given the district's defensive location and coastal heritage defensive features that is the most prominent. There are however many other aspects that provide the area with its distinctive character; its settlements and rural landscapes, transport infrastructure and its church heritage are all examples.

Defensive Heritage

4.6 A strong legacy of defence is represented by the remains of various fortifications on the coastline and inland going back to the Iron Age and continuing through to the 20th century. They form an outstanding collection of assets that represent the nation's responses to foreign threats and the defence strategies that were employed as a result.

4.7 The earliest potential fortification in the district lies at Castle Hill. Here, the prominent hill overlooking Folkestone with its Norman castle earthworks possibly originated as an Iron Age hill fort, though this is yet to be confirmed. With the arrival of the Romans, we see the emergence of one of their main channel crossing points in the southeast at Lympne (Portus Lemanis). Roman travellers would cross the channel from Boulogne and travel onward from Portus Lemanis to Canterbury via Stone Street. Archaeological evidence, for example the villa at East Cliff in Folkestone, has highlighted the importance of the area in the activities of the Classis Britannica, the Roman channel fleet. The most prominent evidence in the district of the Roman's defence from seaborne raiding

survives at Lympne where the ruins of Stutfall Castle, a third century Roman fort of the Saxon Shore, one of a number that survive along the east and southern coast of England, can be seen. During the medieval period, possibly with Saxon origins, we see the rise of some of the most spectacular of the district's fortifications, its castles. These were designed more as defended seats of power rather than serving an anti-invasion purpose, the castles illustrate the changing nature and function of the fortifications over the time. Amongst them are the Norman earthwork castles at Castle Hill, Folkestone and at Stowting. The impressive, mainly 14th century castle at Saltwood which itself had a Norman precursor and the fortified manor house of Westenhanger Castle. Although now mostly lost to coastal erosion a castle once lay at the Bayle in Folkestone.

4.8 By the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries coastal defences again became important, meeting the threat of French raiding. Saltwood Castle would have played an important role in overlooking the Cinque Port at Hythe. Changes in both the military potential of France and Spain and schism with Catholic powers led Henry VIII to initiate a programme of new castles along the coast, linked by lines of fortifications and now designed both to deliver and withstand artillery fire. In this district we see the construction of one such castle at Sandgate in 1540. Sandgate Castle was short lived and became derelict by 1560, before its later modification, first during the English Civil War and later as part of the Martello scheme. Perhaps the most significant anti-invasion fortifications are the outstanding collection of Napoleonic (and Revolutionary Wars) period defences built along the coast. Although the numerous towers of the Martello scheme are the best known remains of these defences, redoubts at Shorncliffe and Dymchurch, several coastal batteries and the Royal Military Canal are all important surviving elements in this defensive arrangement, one of the best examples in the country.

4.9 From the late eighteenth century the district takes on a more prominent role in encamping and preparing troops for foreign expeditions. A camp was established at Shorncliffe in 1794, training troops for fighting in the Napoleonic Wars on the continent. It was again used as a staging post for troops destined for the Western Front embarking at Folkestone. Its association with Commonwealth troops is particularly notable; from 1915 a Canadian training division was formed there and since 2001 until recently it has been a base for the Royal Gurkha rifles. The training of troops has left its considerable mark on the district. A school of musketry was established at Hythe in 1853, where the wide-open beaches and proximity to the sea made it ideal for shooting. The school consisted of a dedicated body of instructors tasked with ensuring a standardised level of proficiency across the infantry. In 1861, it relocated to Fleetwood in Lancashire, before returning to Hythe six years later. Areas along the Hythe, Dymchurch to Lydd coast are still in use for military training today. The Downs north of Folkestone and Shorncliffe were also heavily used for training troops before departure to the Western Front in the First World War (WW1). An incredible footage of troops training is available in Canadian archives and aerial photography has revealed the survival of practice trenches and other defences across the landscape with particularly important survival at Tolsfold Hill where Canadian troops camped at Sandling.

4.10 The final stages of the development of the district's defences were during the twentieth century. The increasing threat of invasion saw defensive positions being established around the vital port of embarkation at Folkestone in WW1. The Second World War sees the development of new forms of warfare and the district's heritage assets illustrate the national response to new threats. Assets associated with air defence, coastal defence, troop support and supply, anti-invasion works, and civil defence are all well represented. Together these assets help to tell the story of Britain's changing fortunes in the war from initial preparations, through the dark days of the Battle of Britain and real invasion threat following the Dunkirk evacuation, to invasion planning and support for the Normandy landings evidenced by the remains of a Mulberry Harbour and the Pluto pipeline.

4.11 Kent's defensive role has now greatly diminished, but numerous sites survive, and many can still be visited to remind us of the dramatic events that occurred in the district, in the sea that surrounded it and the air above. The human cost of the wars can also be seen through the war memorials and monuments across the district.

Maritime Heritage

4.12 Most of the maritime traffic between the Atlantic and the North Sea travels through the English Channel and the Strait of Dover making it the busiest seaway in the world. This has been the case from early times resulting in a wealth of maritime heritage whether in the abundant wrecks that litter the seafloor between the district and the French coast as little as twenty-two miles away, or as features on the shoreline and inland within the district. Around 630 wrecks or reported sites of foundering of vessels are recorded on the Kent Heritage Environment Record for the local waters, representing a fraction of the losses in the area. The coastal heritage includes assets associated with navigation of this important sea route such as the lighthouses at Dungeness, lifeboat stations and the fishing industry. The expansive lengths of beaches flanking the Romney Marshes became synonymous with smuggling and the history of this is well represented in the towns and villages of the area. Elements of the chain of coast-guard stations still survive along the coastline.

Leisure Heritage

4.13 The district played an important role in the growth of seaside leisure in the nineteenth century. The coming of the railway to Folkestone in 1843 opened up access to the district's coastline. By the end of century Folkestone and Sandgate had developed into fashionable seaside resorts with luxurious hotels, villas, pleasure gardens and other seaside amenities. By the early twentieth centuries popular holiday camps were springing up along the coastline's sandy beaches at Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay and Romney Sands, access to which was greatly helped by the purpose-built opening of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway in 1927. Today much of the character of the district's coastal area is provided by the nineteenth and twentieth century leisure heritage assets there. Folkestone and Sandgate's Victorian and Edwardian built heritage is particularly significant with areas such as the Leas containing important assets such as the Leas Lift and Pavilion. Elsewhere settlements along the coast still capitalise on the sands and are popular leisure destinations. The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway is a particularly important heritage asset that plays an important role in the district's tourism offer and community as well as, in part, its aesthetic value to the coastal landscape.

Transport Heritage

4.14 The district's position at the channel end of the corridor through the Greensand Vale has meant the district has played an important role in transport since early times. Archaeological excavation has discovered the remains of a major late Iron Age coastal trading and production site at East Wear Bay, Folkestone. Evidence suggests that by 50BC the site was an important point of contact with the Roman world. It was particularly important for quern stone production, which took place on an industrial scale. In Roman times we see the establishment of Stone Street, a major road between Canterbury and the coastal port at Lympne (Portus Lemanis) enabling access cross channel into the wider Roman Empire. In the nineteenth century Folkestone developed into a major cross channel port with the coming of the railway with many of the harbour assets relating to this heritage. While the ferry services linking Folkestone to the continent have now gone, the development of the Channel Tunnel and its terminal at Cheriton plays a very significant role in the country's connection with its European neighbours. Lydd Airfield, built in 1954, was once one of the busiest airports in the country handling cross channel ferrying of cars to Le Touquet in France. Other branch railways have come and gone in the district for example the Elham Valley Line and the Hythe and Sandgate branch line though some parts survive as memories of these links. The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway has survived as a particularly special

reminder of the local network. It was opened in 1927 and runs thirteen and half miles from Hythe, through Dymchurch and New Romney before terminating at the Dungeness.

4.15 The religious heritage provides valuable and unique evidence of a long and varied history of spirituality and Christianity in Kent. It includes some examples of the earliest churches dating back to Anglo-Saxon times with one example All Saints, Lydd arguably including Romano-British religious architecture. Other early remains, discovered in recent excavations include an important early Christian monastic site attached to the fifth to eighth century royal Anglo-Saxon site at Lyminge. Of the fifty two churches known in the district a particularly important grouping are those that stand in isolation on the Romney Marsh, markers of the lost settlements that they once served.

4.16 The historic character of the district is underpinned by its historic landscapes which play an important role in its distinctiveness. Within the landscapes the pattern of settlement, farms, fields, tracks and lanes has evolved over millennia, influenced by the area's geology and by the movement of peoples through this important place connecting Britain to Europe. While many of the earliest remains survive only as archaeological remains buried beneath the ground, the influence they have on the district's landscape can still be traced. For example, at Saltwood investigations have revealed that the nineteenth century road network, sections of which that are still used today, had its origins at least as far back as the Iron Age.

4.17 The settlements in the district are rich and varied: the historic port towns at Folkestone and the Cinque Ports of Hythe and New Romney; the seaside heritage settlements stretching from Folkestone to Romney Sands; the unique settlement at Dungeness; the garrison town at Shorncliffe and the many small historic towns and villages scattered through the valleys of the North Downs and on the shingle banks of the Romney Marshes. These contain a wealth of historic buildings and buried archaeological remains that record their evolution, development and rich history. The built heritage in the district with its many listed buildings and many more that are of historic interest, which are not designated are distributed throughout every town and village in the district and are also scattered across its fields and along its coastline. They are buildings of special architectural or historic interest and tell the story of people's homes, places of work and worship for more than a thousand years. Some of are of national or international renown while others are of more local relevance telling the story of how ordinary people lived and worked in the district. All of these remains, whether listed or not, have helped to shape the character of the places where they stand and are valued landmarks for local communities. They provide character, interest and a sense of age within settlements, often defining the heart of an old settlement and linking new development with old.

Please provide any comments on 4.0 The District's Rich Heritage

5.0 Definition of a Heritage Asset

5.1 *A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)* NPPF December 2023 Annex 2.

5.2 A heritage asset will hold meaning to individuals and groups of individuals beyond their purely functional utility. Heritage assets have been shaped by people responding to their local environment but will also help to shape that environment in the future. They have a significant role to play in creating a sense of place and acting as a catalyst for regeneration and supporting local economic activity. The district's heritage assets add distinctiveness, meaning and identity to the place and are an exceptionally valuable local resource.

5.3 It is therefore important that the significance of the district's heritage assets is considered as part of any future development management, regeneration or maintenance decisions and opportunities are sought, wherever possible to enhance the district's heritage assets.

Types of assets and designations

5.4 The following statutory designations covering heritage assets that exist within Folkestone & Hythe District:

- **Scheduled Monuments:** are those archaeological sites which are considered to be nationally significant and as such have been given legal protection by being placed on a list by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.
- **Listed Buildings:** Significant historic buildings or structures are provided with statutory protection by being placed upon the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.
- **Conservation Areas** are designated where a place is of special historic or architectural interest and where it is desirable to preserve or enhance the character and appearance.
- **Registered Parks and Gardens:** This Register is specifically concerned with gardens, grounds and planned open-spaces and the emphasis is on the significance of the place as a designed landscape, rather than its botanical importance.
- **Protected Wreck Sites:** The Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) provides the legislative framework for designating the remains of vessels (or their contents) which are of historical, artistic or archaeological importance.

5.5 In addition to these specific protections heritage assets may indirectly benefit from other statutory designations, such as National Landscapes, which are designated to protect the natural beauty of a place; heritage assets are likely to form an important part of what makes an National Landscape special.

5.6 The chalk cliffs at Dover and Folkestone are defined as a Heritage Coast, one of thirty-two in England. The conservation, management and enhancement of the NL, including the Heritage Coast, for a five-year period is set out in the Kent Downs Management Plan 2021-2026 which includes a vision for the NL to 2041.

5.7 The historic environment and the natural environment are not mutually exclusive and designations aimed at the conservation of the natural environment such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) can play an important part in conserving the special and distinctive historic character of an area and afford protection to its heritage assets. Within the district there are three SACs at Dungeness, the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment and at Parkgate Down. Dungeness and Romney Marsh are designated as a SPA. Numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest fall within these and other areas of the district.

Non-designated heritage assets

5.8 The majority of heritage assets are not designated, either because they do not warrant formal designation or their significance has only recently been revealed or has not been considered. Some of the undesignated heritage assets are of equivalent significance to those that are. Non-designated heritage assets are all those recognised elements of the historic environment not covered by one of the previous designations. Some assets may have a locally defined designation; these do not have any statutory framework underpinning them but represent recognised heritage assets of local significance or value. As there is no currently adopted local list of buildings for the district, the only locally defined heritage assets are the Historic Parks and Gardens included in the Kent Gardens Compendium 1996.

5.9 As part of the outputs from this strategy and in conjunction with Places and Policies Local Plan, the council will be seeking to develop its own local list of heritage assets.

Once the list is functional new development on locally listed heritage assets will be measured against Places and Policies Local Plan Policy HE3 - Local List of Heritage Assets.

Please provide any comments on Section 5.0 Definition of a Heritage Asset

6.0 Introduction to the themes

6.1 The heritage of the district is exceptionally rich, varied and extensive. It comprises thousands of known and recorded heritage assets and many more that are not known. Those assets occur in several forms: archaeology, built heritage, landscapes and townscapes, wrecks, customs, traditions and stories. Some assets are specifically protected by designation, but the majority are not. To properly define and characterise these assets this strategy uses a thematic approach, one that was developed and successfully used on the Dover District Heritage Strategy.

6.2 A thematic approach has considerable strengths:

- It allows a mixture of asset types to be brought together into a coherent and accessible story that explains their context and collective significance;
- It explains the contribution that the vast number of undesignated heritage assets can make to the overall significance of the district's heritage; and
- It allows broader links to be made across the district's heritage and heritage activity enabling co-ordinated effort, project development and promotion.

6.3 The themes that have been identified for Folkestone and Hythe are:

Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Themes

1. Landscape

1. Romney Marsh
2. North Downs & Greensand Vale
3. Dungeness
4. The District's Coastline

2. Coastal Heritage - Harbours & Ports

1. Early Harbours
2. Cinque Ports, Limbs & Connected Towns
3. Folkestone as a Cross Channel Port

3. Coastal Heritage - Seaside Leisure & Tourism

1. Folkestone & Sandgate as seaside resorts
2. Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay & Romney Sands
3. The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway

4. Coastal Heritage - The District's Maritime Coast

1. Fishing
2. Safeguarding the coast
3. Wrecks

5. Defence Heritage

1. Invasion Coast
2. Castles
3. Napoleonic
4. Great War
5. Second World War
6. Camps, training grounds and ranges

6 Church

7 Settlement

8 Farming & farmsteads

9 Parks, gardens and estates

10 Transport

11 Archaeology

12 Built Heritage

13 Conservation Areas

6.4 It is recognised that there are significant heritage assets within the district that do not easily fall into the above themes it is for this reason we have adopted a thematic approach. The thematic approach provides flexibility, can be added to through future studies and be applied at different scales perhaps focusing on a particular collection of assets or an area of the district.

Themes methodology, values and significance

6.5 The historic themes are derived from desk top studies of the district. They are intended to provide an illustration of significant elements, examples or key groupings of the district's heritage assets that contribute to the significance of the theme. The nature of such a theme-based approach means that there will be considerable overlap between themes, groups and sub-themes. As such some heritage assets feature in multiple themes.

6.6 The theme studies as background papers are available to read separately and can be viewed within the heritage section of the website.

6.7 The importance of identifying the significance of a heritage asset for the consideration of planning applications is set out in the NPPF and summarised earlier in the strategy.

6.8 To provide a starting point for any applicants, the council has assessed the significance of each of the themes. To do this, the council has based on values set out in English Heritage's Conservation Principle, which are as follows:

Evidential value derives from the potential for heritage assets to yield further evidence of past human activity.

Historical values may be represented through the ability of an asset to illustrate an aspect of history or prehistory on a wider scale, or by association with a specific notable family, person, event or movement.

Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory or intellectual stimulation from a place. It is recognised in the present study that some assets may have an aesthetic value as a result of deliberate and conscious designs, whereas the aesthetic value of other places may be accidental or secondary to their primary function.

Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. As part of the communal value consideration has also been given to the amenity value of themes or elements therein.

6.9 The overall assessment of significance is considered in terms of its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values and is intended to reflect the theme, group or sub-theme as a whole. Assets may individually be of greater or lesser significance or may contribute to the significance of multiple themes or have an additional group value. This assessment is intended as a starting point for individual assets, where proposals would require an individual evaluation to establish the particular significance of each asset.

6.10 The degrees of significance adopted in the Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy are:

- **Outstanding Significance:** themes which are of key national or international significance. These contain significant heritage assets, which are among the best (or the only surviving example) of an important type of monument or are outstanding representatives of important social or cultural phenomena or are of very major regional or local significance.
- **Considerable Significance:** themes which contain heritage assets that are good and representative examples of an important class of monument (or the only example locally) or have a particular significance through association (although surviving examples may be relatively common on a national scale).

- **Moderate Significance:** themes which contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the district, or which provide an historical or cultural context for other themes that may be of individually greater significance.
- **Low Significance:** themes which are of individually low value in general terms or have little or no significance in promoting understanding or appreciation of the district, without being intrusive.
- **Uncertain Significance:** themes or elements therein which have the potential to be significant (e.g., buried archaeological remains) but where it is not possible to be certain on the evidence currently available.
- **Intrusive:** themes or elements therein which detract visually from or which obscure understanding of significant elements or values of the district. Recommendations may be made on their removal or other methods of mitigation.

6.11 The table below sets out the significance of each of the themes assessed for the heritage strategy.

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Theme	Significance
Significance	Outstanding
1a Romney Marsh	Outstanding
Outstanding	Outstanding
1b North Downs & Greensand Vale	Outstanding
Outstanding	Outstanding
1c Dungeness	Considerable
Outstanding	Considerable
1d The District's Coastline	Considerable
Outstanding	Moderate - Considerable
2a Early Harbours	Considerable
Outstanding	Considerable
2b Cinque Ports, Limbs & Connected Towns	Considerable
Considerable	Outstanding
2c Folkestone as a Cross Channel Port	Considerable - Outstanding
Considerable	Considerable - Outstanding
3a Folkestone & Sandgate as seaside resorts	Outstanding
Considerable	Considerable

3b Hythe, Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay & Romney Sands	Considerable
Moderate - Considerable	Considerable
3c The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway	Outstanding
Considerable	Outstanding
4a Fishing	Moderate
Considerable	Considerable
4b Safeguarding the coast	Considerable
Considerable	Outstanding
4c Wrecks	Outstanding
Outstanding	Outstanding
	-
-	-

Please provide any comments on Section 6.0 Introduction to the themes

7.0 Opportunities – Making the most of the district's heritage

7.1 The rich historic environment offers many opportunities to those who live, work, visit and invest in the district. Heritage plays a vital role in the environmental, social and economic well-being of the district and its sustainable future. This is recognised in the Core Strategy Review and the NPPF (para196 b) which directs this strategy to take into account “the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.”

7.2 There is great enthusiasm and pride amongst local communities in their heritage and the positive role that it can play in the area's future. None-the-less heritage assets can often be seen as a constraint on change and it is the ambition of this strategy to change that perception and explain the various ways in which the heritage can provide meaningful and tangible value.

7.3 Heritage can play a positive role in the future of the district in the following ways:

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as a catalyst for economic and social regeneration;

- in realising tourism and visitor potential;
- contributing to improved public health and wellbeing.

7.4 The historic environment offers great potential as a resource for enhancing the quality of life in the district. It can act as a framework for regeneration, complementing and supporting the economic development of the area. This can help produce higher quality and more sustainable development that is successfully integrated into life here. The historic environment can also play a key role in social regeneration and in the cultural offering of the district. Successful heritage-led regeneration, where appropriate acting in partnership with community projects, can help to connect people with their urban and rural landscapes, with their heritage and with each other. The linking of heritage with the culture and arts sector can provide significant benefits together and be a strong catalyst to creating wealth and regeneration.

7.5 Successful regeneration must have a lasting long-term positive effect on places and the communities that live in them. It is not just about improving the physical fabric of a place; it is about bringing about social cohesion, encouraging economic growth and restoring vibrancy to communities.

7.6 The incorporation of heritage in a holistic regeneration approach brings a number of benefits which may include:

- Creating a sense of place;
- Re-use of heritage assets;
- Adding value to new development;
- Attracting business and commercial activities;
- Durability of regeneration;
- Optimising regeneration projects
- Improving tourism offer

Please provide any comments on Section 7.0 Opportunities – Making the most of the district's heritage

8.0 Vulnerability of Heritage Assets

8.1 Heritage assets are vulnerable to change in a number of different ways. The heritage asset may be affected physically through a specific action or it may be affected passively by change over time through environmental factors or neglect.

8.2 The setting of a heritage asset is also vulnerable to change. The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral’.

Vulnerabilities

8.3 The districts heritage assets are generally vulnerable to:

- Natural processes such as coastal erosion, sea level change, change in hydrology and climate change;
- Rural activities such as ploughing and use of machinery, changes in farming regime and leisure use of the countryside;
- The development and maintenance of infrastructure such as utilities, power generation, roads and railways.
- Development of sites including house building, commercial and industrial properties, extraction of minerals, change in land use, flood and coastal defence works;
- Change through alteration or economic decline and neglect;
- Policy and management gaps, designation thresholds and capacity for monitoring and enforcement;
- Criminal actions such as arson, theft, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

8.4 Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register* identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. The register is updated annually. This can be viewed at [Search the Heritage at Risk Register | Historic England](#)

8.5 The 2024 register included the following Folkestone and Hythe historic assets:

-	-
Historic Asset	Means of protection and status
Church of St James the Great, Elmsted	Grade I
	Grade II*
	Grade II*
	Scheduled Monument
	Scheduled Monument
Martello No 5, Folkestone School for Girls	Scheduled Monument
	Grade II listed & Scheduled Monument
	Grade II listed & Scheduled Monument
	Grade II listed & Scheduled Monument
	Scheduled Monument
	Scheduled Monument
	Scheduled Monument

	Scheduled Monument
	-

Heritage Crime

8.6 Heritage crime is defined by Historic England as “any offence which harms the value of England’s heritage assets and their settings to this and future generations”. It includes crimes against landmarks, archaeological sites and built heritage, historical artefacts and museums. Heritage crime covers a wide range of criminal activity that can result in the irreplaceable loss of or serious damage to heritage assets. As well as the impact that heritage crime can have in its own terms on our heritage and the values our communities place on their heritage, in many cases the financial cost of the heritage crime, protecting and repairing the remaining heritage asset can be substantial. Heritage crime includes:

- criminal damage or vandalism;
- arson;
- theft of heritage and cultural property;
- anti-social behaviour;
- damage by vehicles and trespass;
- unauthorised excavation and metal detecting.

Tackling Heritage Crime

8.7 Local communities, societies and special interest groups have a valuable role to play in the fight against heritage crime and anti-social behaviour through monitoring the condition of heritage assets and reporting crime in their area. The Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH), was launched in 2011. The overriding objective of the group is to reduce the amount of crime that causes damage to or interferes with the enjoyment of heritage assets in England. Members of ARCH have a shared interest in preventing and seeing effective enforcement of heritage crime.

8.8 Further information on ARCH can be obtained from Historic England - [Contact Historic England | Historic England](#)

8.9 Heritage crime can be reported as any other crime directly to the police, in an emergency situation, such as when a crime is in progress, when someone suspected of a crime is nearby, when it is considered that there is danger to life or property or when violence is being used or threatened this can be done by dialling 999.

8.10 In other situations where it is not an emergency and does not require immediate attention the number 101 can be used, or an online report can be made.

Planning Enforcement

8.11 Where a breach of listed building consent (or planning permission) is suspected it can be investigated by the council’s planning team. More details and a link to report suspected violations can be found at [Breach of planning controls | Folkestone & Hythe District Council](#)

Please provide any comments on Section 8.0 Vulnerability of Heritage Assets

9.0 Taking the Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy forward

9.1 From the analysis of research, consultation and feedback from early consultation of the strategy, four broad objectives have been identified to take forward. These are set out below:

Objective 1 - Leadership - The district council will seek to promote the rich heritage of the district and related activity.

Objective 2 - Heritage Management – The district council will seek to ensure that the district's heritage assets are sustained and enhanced so as to best meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to appreciate their significance; ways may be investigated to help manage, inform and guide the process of change in the district.

Objective 3 - Place Shaping – The district council will seek to promote the use of the historic environment and heritage assets to enable and inform development, regeneration and place making.

Objective 4 - Capitalising – The district council will seek to realise the economic and social potential of rich historic environment of the district, together with its heritage assets and heritage activity

9.2 The heritage strategy has identified a considerable number of potential actions and recommendations at varying scales and levels of importance to delivering the objectives set out above. It would be unrealistic to expect that all of these can be addressed in the short term though some progress can and in fact already is being made on many.

9.3 Leading from the objectives Folkestone & Hythe District Council have identified nine priorities, which are initiatives that may be considered to take forward.

9.4 These are set out and discussed below. The order does not reflect any ranking of priorities.

1. The district council will seek opportunities to support agreed projects of the numerous heritage related groups and activities in the district.

- The development of the heritage strategy has identified the large number of heritage related stakeholders and activity within the district. This is seen as a particular strength and is an aspect that can be positively built upon. The district council is keen that the scale of heritage activity and potential connections be examined as part of the strategy development
- Creation of a single website that promotes and explains the district's rich heritage and the wealth of activity that is taking place will help to promote the work of the stakeholders to the wider public and encourage wider participation. A calendar of activities and events could be included on such a site. The website could also include information on access to assets and visitor sites, guidance to managing the district's heritage and downloadable toolkits to support heritage work.

2. The district's heritage and its significance will be recognised and considered at the earliest stages of development, regeneration and plan-making. The heritage strategy will be taken into account when developing strategies and policies by the council.

The district's heritage can play a key role in helping to create new places, in development and in regeneration, in association with the following guiding principles:

- The historic environment should be considered as an important element in proposals for new development to help develop a strong 'sense of place' and an identity for existing and new communities.
- Proposals for change should be sensitive to the character of a place, adding to and developing its distinctiveness.
- Proposals for regeneration and development should take account of all its heritage, including that which is undesignated at an early stage and should be reflected in master plans.
- The sustainable and beneficial reuse of heritage assets, conserving them in a manner that is appropriate to their significance, should be encouraged in new development and given appropriate weight in making planning decisions.
- The Regeneration Checklist published in Regeneration and the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2005), or any updates, should be taken account of in regeneration proposals.

3. To make heritage information readily available and understood by those involved in the process of change and heritage activities.

- Paragraph 199 of the NPPF reads - *Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.*
- The Kent Historic Environment Record should remain as the main repository and source of information concerning the district's historic environment, it is intended that a new web page on the council's website might be used as a location for links to local heritage bodies and local heritage interests.

4. To seek to undertake a long-term programme of conservation area appraisal and review and develop management plans and guidance for the district's conservation areas.

A number of the district's conservation areas lack conservation area appraisals, others have draft appraisals and the remainder have appraisals that have not been recently reviewed; without such appraisals it is difficult for decision-makers to understand the special significance of a conservation area and make informed management decisions. A priority for the heritage strategy might include an initiative to undertake a programme of conservation area appraisal for the remaining conservation areas that are yet to be covered and to review those that have been published in adopted or draft form.

5. The Council will develop and make available to planning applicants, guidance for the compilation and content of Heritage Statements.

- This should include:
 - A methodology for checking proposals against the district's heritage themes;
 - Statements that clearly set out the significance of the heritage assets present;
 -

Statements that clearly set out the potential impact of proposals on the significance of heritage assets both physically and on their setting.

- The opening sentence of Paragraph 196 within the NPPF reads *Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.*
- Historic England only include those heritage assets designated at the highest level i.e. Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I Registered Parks and Gardens and Protected Wreck Sites on their Heritage at Risk Register. Many of the district's heritage assets, designated at a lower level or undesignated are not regularly monitored and consequently the risk to them is not understood.

- This might be achieved through a new web page for the historic environment. This could be used to advertise links to such initiatives as Country Eye or to advertise local heritage crime related issues.

- The List shall:
 - include all types of heritage assets - e.g. built heritage, archaeology, landscape features;
 - have clear and robust criteria for selection of heritage assets on the list;
 - require supporting statements of significance, condition, vulnerability and potential opportunities for sustainable use
- There are locally important heritage assets that make up the district's heritage and contribute to the sense of place of its historic areas. Others also contribute positively to areas that are considered less historic. Most people in the district interact with undesignated heritage assets, they provide the distinctive character of their places and defines their perception of the district as much as key sites and landscapes do. When proposals for change come forward there are considerable problems in recognising the value of undesignated heritage assets, often with the result that master-planning and development does not give them due consideration at an early enough stage.

- Developing and promoting the heritage of the district in a thematic way can help to:
 - promote tourism by creating packages that link a number of heritage assets across the district encouraging longer or return visits;
 - provide a mix of key heritage assets that are promoted as visitor attractions with heritage that can be found in other publicly accessible locations, thereby drawing visitors into local areas with greater contribution to the local economy;
 - provide a suitable mechanism to support and co-ordinate the efforts of stakeholders and their activities;

U provide stories that can be readily understood, marketed and celebrated. Such stories help to provide context for the visitor to the heritage.

- Most of the district's heritage themes could be developed for visitors though some have particular strengths e.g., defence and military heritage (especially the Napoleonic defences), church, Romney Marsh and Dun- geness (linking with the natural heritage) and Victorian and Edwardian Folkestone.
- Many visitors may desire a mix of experiences from their trip rather than simply heritage. It is important therefore that the heritage offer becomes more integrated into the wider offer available in the district and benefits are realised from both directions.
- It is important that promotion and explanation of the heritage of the district is aimed equally at those who live and work there as it is to visitors. They are the people who will interact with the general heritage on a daily basis and in many cases this will not be readily recognised or appreciated. The thematic approach lends itself to presenting the heritage of the district as stories which explains the context of the heritage in an engaging and more readily understood way. Understanding an area's heritage helps to improve a sense of place and pride for those who live and work there.
- There is great potential for the heritage of the district to contribute to the education and learning sector. The heritage themes can fit well into the curriculum and local heritage assets can potentially provide for a more convenient and cheaper resource for school visits. Additional benefits of using local heritage packages for education will be to develop wider appreciation for the district's heritage and encourage students and their families to visit the sites themselves

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Please provide any comments on Section 9.0 Taking the Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy forward

Any other comments

Please provide any other comments not related to the sections above.

