

Dover District Council Local Plan Stakeholder Consultation Workshop

The Ark, Dover
17th July 2018



Introduction

Dover District Council has commenced a Local Plan Review which will cover the period up to 2037. In order to inform this process, two workshops were organised to obtain initial thoughts on a new vision and objectives for the District, and to reconsider how we make allocations for new housing. The focus of the events was on a fully participative process with small group discussions and plenary clustering of outcomes.

This second workshop held at The Ark, Dover on 17th July 2018 involved a wide-ranging group of invited stakeholders. The event was facilitated by Peter Woodward and Liz Gray, experienced independent facilitators. This report contains all the outcomes from the group discussions. These have been accurately transcribed. Inevitably they will require further reflection and refinement during the Local Plan preparation process.

Participants were welcomed by Councillor James Back, DDC Portfolio Holder for Built Environment and Chairman of the Local Plan Policy Advisory Group. In attendance were:

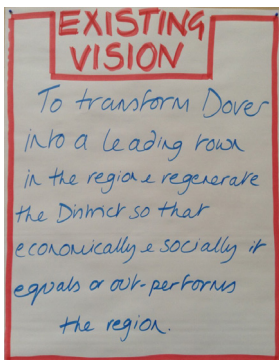
Alkham Parish Council
Ash Parish Council
Ashford Borough Council
Aylesham Parish Council
Canterbury Archaeological Trust
Caterbury City Council
Capel le Ferne Parish Council
CPRE
Deal and Walmer Chamber of Trade
Deal Town Council
Denton with Wootton Parish Council
Dover Arts Development Ltd
Dover Big Local
Dover Chamber of Commerce

Dover College
Portfolio Holder for Built Environment, Dover District Council
Representatives from the Labour Group, Dover District Council
Dover Grammar School for Boys
Dover Roman Painted House Trust
Dover Society
Dover Town Council
East Kent College Group
Representatives from the Environment Agency
Folkestone and Hythe District Council
Great Mongeham Parish Council
Guston Parish Council
Highways England
Homes England
KALC & Whitfield Parish Council
Kent County Council
Kent Downs AONB Unit
Kingsdown Conservation Group
Langdon Parish Council
Megger Instruments Ltd.
Monson Homes Ltd.
National Trust
NHS Canterbury and Coastal CCG
NHS South Kent Coast CCG
Nonington Parish Council
Port of Dover
Preston Parish Council
Sandwich Town Council
Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council
Sholden Parish Council
Thanet District Council
Walmer Parish Council
Woodnesborough Parish Council
Worth Parish Council

Reviewing our District Vision and Objectives

After an introductory presentation by Adrian Fox, participants were invited to reflect on DCC's past, present and future and to consider elements for an appropriate future vision and objectives to carry the whole District through to 2037.

Preliminary thoughts from the Council Leadership Forum on 11th July were presented, along with the existing vision statement. While being mindful of these, each table was asked to identify their own 10 key objectives and to compose their own vision statement. Delegates were encouraged to "**wear all three hats**" during the thought process representing their role as resident, official (representative of their organisation) and Dover District.



The group's thoughts were arranged together in clusters, which soon identified areas of common interest and priority:

Heritage, Environment and Tourism:

- Make more of our heritage and link these assets together, and how they interact within the District, neighbours and France.
- Build on the strengths of the District (maritime and heritage)
- Support local communities in promoting the local heritage within the District
- Harness tourist opportunities in Dover
- Promote tourism in an integrated way
- Use existing strengths to help overcome weaknesses

- Centre of excellence - interpreting the natural and social qualities of Dover District (science overlaps)
- Celebrate the unique character of Dover Town: AONB, cultural diversity, heritage
- Capitalise on heritage skills/arts/culture (College on preservation methods?)
- Natural environment - connecting people to nature = understanding and added value
- Make use of coastal heritage and natural assets. Promote tourism, USP, co-ordinated strategy
- Enhanced tourism (esp. at Port)
- Encourage longer-stay tourism
- Celebrate and better promote our natural and historic assets
- Exploit the District's heritage and natural resources (sustainably)
- Improving accessibility of assets (public information promotion)
- Work towards and better future in long term, rather than taking short-term actions
- Protect the natural environment
- Mitigate and adapt to the forecasted impact of climate change. Focus on flood risk, renewable resources, ecosystem services
- Low-carbon District!

Dover Town:

- Dynamic regeneration of Dover town high street and beyond
- Promote urban living, particularly in Dover town centre (above shops)
- Ensure that Dover and Port investment zone are jewels that add to Dover
- Making Dover a place to stay (rebranding, raising profile and understanding the brand)
- Focus business in Dover town centre, with good transport connections, creating footfall and critical mass
- Develop Dover town into a pleasant place to be!
- Engage new and different events to bring people into Dover town centre.
- Town centre focus!
- Regenerate Dover town centre and improve links to the Port and St. James's

Dover District:

- Take pride in the whole District
- Promote unique qualities of the District in a way that does not compete with neighboring districts



Business needs:

- Dover to be the gateway to Europe and a gateway to England. Manage Brexit impacts and exploit Brexit opportunities
- Centre for international businesses in Dover - make it a USP and build on links to the EU
- Exploit Brexit!
- Locally skilled workforce to support business needs
- Positively respond to Brexit pressures
- Small business start-ups, incentives and opportunities within Dover
- Supporting Discovery Park as a key employment area
- Encouraging new business to the District
- To encourage Small and Medium sized Enterprises by more investment e.g. introducing simplified planning zones
- Address low working age population. Increase investment, encourage economic development and cultural tourism
- Develop employment base building on the back of existing business
- Retain young people to live and work in the District. Better jobs, leisure and housing options
- District approach to raising aspirations and skills levels
- Enhance opportunities for education (for employment)
- Creating an environment for 'start up' businesses



Digital Connectivity:

- To improve and devise new technology to support economy
- Provide good digital connectivity
- Digital agenda - infrastructure and skills
- Top speed digital connectivity for everyone
- Enhance digital technology - particularly in rural areas

Education:

- Ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place to support development e.g. use education and learning to support social gains
- Develop opportunities for further education to bring people into the District
- Range of educational opportunities for all abilities and interest.

Infrastructure:

- Improve infrastructure and utilities with incentives
- Timely infrastructure delivery
- Matching housing infrastructure and transport
- Better management and control of contributions for infrastructure
- Collaboration - active promotion (bus, parishes, NHS, KCC etc.)
- Improve transport - encourage different modes of transport (buses, cycling, electric cars etc.)
- Work collaboratively with all partners on the delivery of key infrastructure
- Reduce the negative impacts of transport infrastructure and traffic (cross-Channel)
- Promote sustainable transport, especially in rural areas
- Transport resilience across the District (accessibility, key enabler)
- Improve strategic traffic management to, and through Dover Town
- Transport strategy - dual A2 - manage Port traffic and housing growth



Table 6:

- Dover transformed into a centre of international excellence supported by sustainable housing growth that meets the need of the new community
- Sandwich/Deal to retain their attractive character and historical significance
- Protect and retain rural character of remaining villages through proportional and organic growth
- Enhance and develop tourism. Sea and landscape features and assets
- Protect, enhance and improve accessibility of District's National Features (AONB)
- Improve transport, communications and infrastructure
- Co-ordinated strategy to deliver the vision

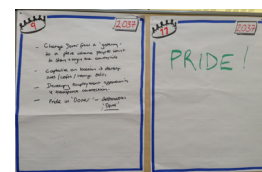
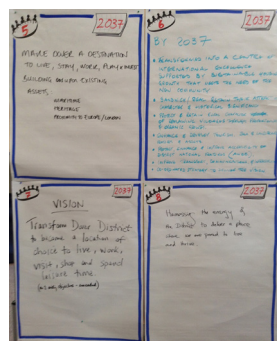


Table 7:

Transform Dover District to become a location of choice to live, work, visit, shop and spend leisure time.

Table 8:

Harnessing the energy of the District to deliver a place where we are proud to live and thrive.

Table 9:

- Change Dover from a gateway to a place where people want to stay and enjoy the countryside
- Capitalise on location and develop Arts, crafts and heritage skills
- Developing employment opportunities and transport connections
- Take pride in Dover - 'Destination Dover'

Table 11 (10):

Pride!

In Summary

Having reviewed everyone's ideas and vision statements, the room identified six key conclusions:

- Infrastructure is important
- We must enhance our pride and positivity to bring people into the area
- We must invest in our heritage and natural assets
- Need to highlight issues of deprivation
- Develop the right type of homes to encourage people to live and work in the District
- Dover: not *just* a route to Europe!

Informing the Local Plan Approach towards housing distribution

Participants listened to an introduction by Mike Ebbs, and were asked to identify '*Distinctly Dover District*' criteria (up to six for each table of delegates) to guide the approach to future housing distribution. Each table was given a copy of the Core National Criteria to refer to, but encouraged to come up with an approach that specifically met the needs of Dover District.

Again, feedback was clustered to try and identify priorities and trends in thought.

Proportional Development:

- Respecting the existing historic development/ grain of each settlement
- Development needs to fit in with the environment in which it's located
- Prefer development that is well related to existing settlements
- Development that is proportionate to existing settlements and phased over the plan period
- Proportionate growth in villages e.g. 20% increase proportionate to size of site
- Respecting the size of existing settlement - an increase of 10% in the size of the settlement is unlikely to change the character

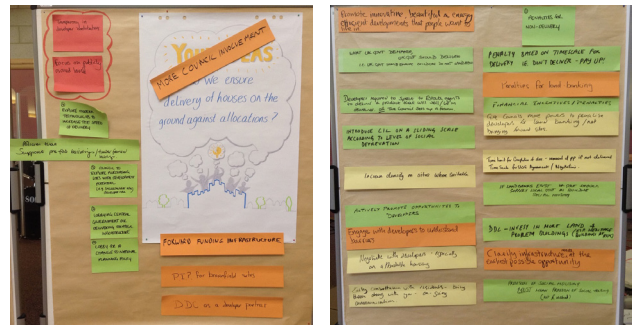


Development Type:

- Consider 'Cottage Style' development as per Outer London (e.g. 50 units max. at villages and hamlets)

Development Size:

- More, smaller sites are better than fewer, larger sites including villages
- Allocate medium and smaller sites instead of larger sites (including self-build sites)
- Allocate a range of different sized developments
- Economy of scale through enabling best use of infrastructure



Infrastructure:

- Supported by deliverable infrastructure (cost-effective infrastructure solutions)
- Incorporate foul drainage into site consideration
- Provision of existing infrastructure at locations
- Infrastructure capability
- Sites with existing infrastructure (road capacity, water, sewerage, schools etc.)

Land:

- Development in lower landscape value areas
- Development on least environmentally constrained land

Flood Risks:

- Encourage creative design to reduce the risk of building in flood risk areas
- Flood risk is a constraint in Dover District

Infrastructure Services and Transport:

- Sites accessible by a range of transport modes and pedestrian links or where it's easy to extend existing services
- Connections/relationship to existing settlements (footpaths/cycle routes)
- On-site infrastructure must be in place first
- Good access to services, open space, schools etc.
- Good transport links - build on existing hubs (road and rail)
- Accessible to services (e.g. GP surgeries). Services can support development!
- In sustainable locations with access to sufficient facilities
- Good infrastructure, including potential for green infrastructure
- Select sites that have minimum impact on existing infrastructure
- Access to a range of services
- Transport choices
- Access to open spaces
- Walkability - walkable neighbourhoods
- Social facilities - amenity spaces
- Facilities such as schools, shops, doctor surgeries

Types of Housing/Land-use:

- Focus on Dover Town, occupation of empty premises (absentee landlords etc.) to help revitalise the Town Centre (bearing in mind seagulls!)
- Incentivising development within Dover to prevent land-banking
- Smaller houses/flats in Dover town centre - above shops, using brownfield land and in areas that supports the town centre.
- Intervention to bring challenging sites to the market (utilities-contamination etc.)
- Brownfield sites are often key archaeological sites
- Houses - not lorry parks!

Housing Affordability:

- Viable sites which will deliver affordable housing
- Housing for local residents (social homes - avoid Howe Barracks!)

Employment Factors:

- Close to employment opportunities
- White Cliffs Business Park 3 - Housing
- Properties that align and support business needs

Housing Design and Use:

- More control over housing mix/design etc. More 'Distinctly Dover' housing to reflect local need.
- Land that can accommodate temporary accommodation
- Able to deliver modular housing (Light Gauge Steel)
- Clear standards for design - space standards and energy efficiency

General:

- New settlements if there is a suitable opportunity
- Housing strategy for our senior citizens - plan for an ageing population
- Provide diverse housing in rural areas
- Emphasis on the positive contribution that the development could make to the settlement

- Sites with potential for higher density
- Look at derelict buildings to see if there is enabling development that can assist with its restoration.

Delegates were asked to come up with ideas as to how this could be delivered on the ground:

General Thoughts and Policy:

- More Council involvement!
- Forward funding infrastructure
- Permission in Principle for brownfield sites
- DDC to act as a developer partner
- Transparency in developer contributions
- Focus on publicly owned land
- Explore modern technologies to increase the speed of delivery
- Policies that support pre-fab buildings and timber-framed buildings
- Council to explore purchasing sites with development potential (e.g. stakeholder role/ developer role)
- Lobbying central government for delivering strategic infrastructure



- Lobby for a change to national planning policy
- What UK government demands, UK government should deliver i.e. UK government should ensure builders do not land-bank
- Promote innovative, beautiful and energy efficient developments that people want to live in
- Developers required to speak to Estate Agents to deliver a product that will sell/be in demand OR the Council sets up a forum

- Introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy on a sliding scale according to level of social deprivation
- Increase density on sites where suitable
- Early consultation with residents - bring them along with you - on-going communication
- If landbanks exist - UK government should support local government in building social housing
- DDC should invest in more land and problem buildings (especially heritage buildings at risk)
- Clarify infrastructure needs at the earliest possible opportunity
- Provision of social housing **must** mean provision of social housing (not money instead!)

Developers:

- Actively promote opportunities to developers
- Engage with developers to understand barriers
- Negotiate with developers - especially on affordable housing

Penalties:

- Penalties for non-delivery
- Penalty based on timescale for delivery i.e. don't deliver - pay up!
- Penalties for land-banking
- Financial incentives/penalties
- Give councils more powers to penalise developers for land-banking and not bringing forward sites
- Time limit for completion of development. Removal of planning permission if not delivered
- Time-scale for s106 agreements/negotiations

Final plenary observations

- What's good for Dover is good for Britain!
- Focus on energy efficiency
- Need government to help us to help them!