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10 May 2010

To the Members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend an **EXTRAORDINARY** meeting of the **COUNCIL** to be held in the Council Chamber at these Offices on Wednesday 19 May 2010 at 6.30 pm or on the rising of the Annual Council meeting for the transaction of the business set out in the Agenda.

  
Chief Executive

Members of the Council:

B W Bano	G J Hood	J C Record
T J Bartlett	L A Keen	V J Revell
T A Bond	N S Kenton	A F Richardson
B W Butcher	C E Kirby	C Rook
S S Chandler	P S Le Chevalier	J A Rook
N J Collor	S M Le Chevalier	F J W Scales
M D Conolly	S G Leith	D G Smallwood
G Cowan	D R Lloyd-Jones	A R Smith
M R Eddy	P A Lodge	C J Smith
C M Edwards	S C Manion	J M Smith
R Frayne	D A Mayes	R J Thompson
A Friend	C J Meredith	J F Tranter
M S Furnival	K Mills	R S Walkden
J H Goodwin	J M Munt	I H Ward
P G Heath	S R Nicholas	P A Watkins

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are required to disclose the existence and nature of a personal interest at the commencement of the item of business to which the interest relates or when the interest becomes apparent. An explanation in general terms of the interest should also be given to the meeting. If the interest is also a prejudicial interest, the Member should then withdraw from the room or chamber.

## AGENDA

### 1. **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 2. **EMPLOYMENT STABILITY PHASE 2 – THE WAY FORWARD** (Pages 7-19)

The Cabinet at its meetings on 1 March 2010 and 12 April 2010 and the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee at its meeting on 9 March 2010 considered the report of the Head of Paid Service upon Employment Stability Phase 2 – The Way Forward (copy attached – Appendix A). The following is recommended to Council:

#### Cabinet – 1 March 2010

- "(a) That the enhanced Employment Stability Approach as outlined in Option 2 of the report be adopted as the Council's policy as part of a range of measures to manage the Council's financial pressures.
- (b) That it be recognised that, through the enhanced Employment Stability process, priority functions will be identified and performance targets will be set for 2011/12.
- (c) That it be recognised that the Chief Executive will:
  - (i) Develop a process that fully engages with Members to identify priority and non-priority functions and which enables Option 2 to be effectively delivered.
  - (ii) Develop a behavioural competency framework to help further shape organisational culture, develop our managers and staff and improve service performance across the Council.
  - (iii) Develop a Consultation and Communications Strategy for this project to ensure that the proposals emerging are properly consulted upon and communicated in line with the Council's procedures.
  - (iv) Recognise that providing priority redeployment opportunities to staff, identified in non-priority functions, must meet TUPE and other employment law requirements.
  - (v) Ensure that future recruitment is targeted towards the Council's agreed priority functions.
  - (vi) As an ongoing process and specifically as part of the 2011/12 budget process, align budgets and service plans to the agreed performance targets for the Council's priority functions.
  - (vii) Develop a series of evolving Shadow Organisational Structures for the Council as target structures from

2011/12 onwards, to reflect changes to the workforce structures."

Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee – 9 March 2010

"That Council be recommended to approve Cabinet Decision CAB 112 and adopt the recommendations as set out in the report."

Cabinet – 12 April 2010

"(a) It was agreed that the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee's endorsement of Cabinet decision CAB 112 (Minute No 473), made at its meeting held on 9 March 2010, be acknowledged.

(b) It was agreed to recommend to Council that Cabinet decision CAB 112 be reaffirmed."

3. **APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CHIEF OFFICER AND REDESIGNATE EXISTING HEADS OF SERVICE AS DIRECTORS** (Pages 20-24)

To consider the report of the Chief Executive (copy attached – Appendix B).

4. **EAST KENT JOINT SERVICES – STRATEGIC CASE** (Pages 25-82)

The Cabinet at its meetings on 11 January 2010 and 8 February 2010 and the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2010 considered the report of the Chief Executive upon the East Kent Joint Services – Strategic Case (copy attached – Appendix C). The following is recommended to Council:

Cabinet – 11 January 2010

"It was agreed that the report at Annex 1 of the report presented to Cabinet entitled 'East Kent Joint Services – Strategic Case' be approved as an appropriate basis for progressing joint services with the Council's East Kent Partners."

Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee – 20 January 2010

"That it be recommended to the Cabinet that decision CAB 90 be endorsed and the report as set out at Annex 1 of the report entitled 'East Kent Joint Services – Strategic Case' be approved as an appropriate basis for progressing joint services with the Council's East Kent Partners."

Cabinet – 8 February 2010

"(a) That the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee's endorsement of Cabinet decision CAB 90 (Minute No 377), made at its meeting held on 20 January 2010, be acknowledged.

(b) That CAB decision 90 be reaffirmed."

5. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015** (Pages 83-148)

The Strategic Housing Committee of the Executive at its meeting on 12 April 2010 considered the report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety upon the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 (copy attached – Appendix D). The Committee recommended the following to Council:

"It was agreed to recommend to Council that the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be approved, subject to the inclusion of reference to a review in the Strategy's foreword and the housekeeping amendments raised by Committee Members and Forward Planning."

6. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2015** (Pages 149-197)

The Strategic Housing Committee of the Executive at its meeting on 12 April 2010 considered the report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety upon the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 (copy attached – Appendix E). The Committee recommended the following to Council:

"It was agreed to recommend to Council that the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be approved, subject to the inclusion of reference to a review in the Plan's foreword and the housekeeping amendments raised by Committee Members and Forward Planning."

7. **HOUSING STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE 2010-2015** (Pages 198-257)

The Strategic Housing Committee of the Executive at its meeting on 12 April 2010 considered the report of the Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety upon the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015 (copy attached – Appendix F). The Committee recommended the following to Council:

"It was agreed to recommend to Council that the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be approved, subject to the inclusion of reference to a review in the Strategy's foreword, and the incorporation of the updates and housekeeping amendments raised by Committee Members and Forward Planning."

8. **AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION – POLICY STATEMENT ON WRITE-OFFS** (Pages 258-260)

The Governance Committee at its meeting on 24 March 2010 considered the report of the Head of Finance and ICT upon an Amendment to the Constitution – Policy Statement on Write-Offs (copy attached – Appendix G). The Governance Committee recommended the following to Council:

"That, subject to the agreement of Council, the amended Appendix 8 to Part 4 of the Constitution – Rules of Procedure (Financial Procedure Rules), "Proposed revised policy statement on write offs" as now submitted, be approved to provide the S151 officer with authority to delegate action on write-offs to other officers."

9. **PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2009/2010 – 2012/13** (Pages 261-264)

The Cabinet at its meeting on 10 May 2010 considered the report of the Head of Finance and ICT upon the Prudential Indicators 2009/10 – 2012/13 (copy attached – Appendix H). The Cabinet recommendation will be circulated at the meeting.

10. **ADOPTION OF A PETITION SCHEME** (Pages 265-285)

To consider the report of the Head of Governance (copy attached – Appendix I).

11. **URGENT BUSINESS TIME**

To consider any other items deemed by the Chairman of the Council to be urgent in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC** (Page 286)

The recommendation is attached (Appendix J).

**MATTERS WHICH THE MANAGEMENT TEAM SUGGESTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE AS THE REPORTS CONTAIN EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED WITHIN PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS INDICATED AND IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE PROPER OFFICER CONSIDERS THAT THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE EXEMPTION OUTWEIGHS THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN DISCLOSING THE INFORMATION**

13. **DOVER TOWN INVESTMENT ZONE** (Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person)

To receive a presentation from Bond City Limited on the Dover Town Investment Zone.

14. **TENDERS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DEAL INDOOR TENNIS CENTRE** (Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person) (Pages 287-298)

The Cabinet at its meeting on 10 May 2010 considered the report of the Head of Property, Leisure and Waste Management upon the Tenders for the Construction of the Deal Indoor Tennis Centre (copy attached – Appendix K). The Cabinet recommendation will be circulated at the meeting.

15. **HARBOUR REVISION ORDER** (Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person)

To consider the report of the Head of Regeneration (copy to follow – Appendix L).

### **Access to Meetings and Information**

- Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees. You may remain present throughout them except during the consideration of exempt or confidential information. Seating is available within the Council Chamber for the press and up to 35 members of the public
- All meetings are held at the Council Offices, Whitfield unless otherwise indicated on the front page of the agenda. There is disabled access via the Council Chamber entrance and a disabled toilet is available in the foyer. In addition, there is a PA system and hearing loop within the Council Chamber.
- Agenda papers are published five clear working days before the meeting. Alternatively, a limited supply of agendas will be available at the meeting, free of charge, and all agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed and downloaded from our website [www.dover.gov.uk](http://www.dover.gov.uk). Minutes are normally published within five working days of each meeting. All agenda papers and minutes are available for public inspection for a period of six years from the date of the meeting. Basic translations of specific reports and the Minutes are available on request in 12 different languages.
- Refreshments will be available for Members in the HMS Brave Room prior to the meeting.
- If you require any further information about the contents of this agenda or your rights to gain access to information held by the Council please contact Louise Cooke, Democratic Services Manager (telephone: (01304) 872352 or e-mail [louisecooke@dover.gov.uk](mailto:louisecooke@dover.gov.uk)).

**Large print copies of this agenda can be supplied on request.**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

RESPONSIBILITY – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

NON-KEY DECISION

**BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK**

CABINET – 1 MARCH 2010

SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE – 9 MARCH 2010

CABINET – 12 APRIL 2010

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**EMPLOYMENT STABILITY PHASE 2 – THE WAY FORWARD****Recommendation**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a)</li> <li>(b)</li> <li>(c)</li> <li>(d)</li> <li>(e)</li> <li>(f)</li> <li>(g)</li> </ol> | <p><i>Council adopts the enhanced Employment Stability Approach as outlined in Option 2 as its policy as part of a range of measures to manage the Council's financial pressures.</i></p> <p><i>Council recognises that through the enhanced Employment Stability process, priority functions will be identified and performance targets will be set for 2011/12.</i></p> <p><i>Council recognises that the Chief Executive will:</i></p> <p><i>Develop a process that fully engages with Members to identify priority and non priority functions which enables option 2 to be effectively delivered.</i></p> <p><i>Develop a behavioural Competency Framework to help further shape organisational culture, develop our managers and staff and improve service performance across the Council.</i></p> <p><i>Develop a Consultation and Communications Strategy for this project to ensure that the proposals emerging are properly consulted upon and communicated in line with the Council's procedures.</i></p> <p><i>Recognise that providing priority redeployment opportunities to staff, identified in non priority functions must meet TUPE and other employment law requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure future recruitment is targeted towards the Council's agreed priority functions.</i></p> <p><i>As an ongoing process and specifically as part of the 2010/11 budget process, align budgets and service plans to the agreed performance targets for the Council's priority functions.</i></p> <p><i>Develop a series of evolving Shadow Organisational Structures for the Council as target structures from 2011/12 onwards, to reflect changes to the workforce structures.</i></p> |
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Contact Officer: David Randall, extension 2141.

### Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2010 – 2013 clearly identifies a number of significant events at a national and global level that have contributed to the recession and economic downturn, which is unparalleled in recent times. These include:
  - (a) Unprecedented support provided to banks across major economies;
  - (b) The virtual collapse of the Icelandic economy and current severe pressure on the Greek economy;
  - (c) Volatility of commodity prices;
  - (d) Oil prices rising to over \$140 per barrel and then falling back to \$40 per barrel
  - (e) Inflation followed by deflation in major economies;
  - (f) Widespread fall in asset values;
  - (g) Fall in stock market values;
  - (h) Lower interest rates;
  - (i) Increased unemployment.
  
2. It seems that the worst of the banking crisis is over, with some measure of stability now being achieved within the banking sector. There has also been some stabilisation of asset values. However, outside the banking sector the economic background continues to be extremely challenging. These are substantiated by:
  - (a) The UK economy just emerging from recession;
  - (b) The speed and strength of the economic recovery remaining uncertain;
  - (c) Over the last year the Government has stimulated the economy through "quantitative easing", however this process is due to come to an end in the near future;
  - (d) The Government faces a significant budget deficit (estimated to be in excess of £175bn) and therefore there is a need to rebuild public finances;
  - (e) The combined effect on the economy of the end of quantitative easing and a rebalancing of public finances (whether through taxation, reduced expenditure or both) is uncertain, but may lead to a slower recovery or even a second period of recession; and
  - (f) There is a forthcoming national election and at present it is unclear how the new Government's policies will impact on the economy, the public sector in general and local government in particular.
  
3. The ongoing impact and uncertainty of the above is contributing to a significant increase in pressure on the Council's budgets, in particular adversely impacting on our income, which includes the likelihood of a lower Revenue Support Grant (RSG) settlement from Central Government, below the current circa £10.2m. The working assumption in the Medium Term Financial Plan is that the RSG for this Council will reduce by 3% in 2011/2012 and a further 3% in 2012/13. The Council Tax is the second largest income stream for this Council at circa £6.4m, this is expected to be capped by a new incoming Government, restricting the opportunity to offset RSG reductions.
  
4. Therefore this Council needs to act immediately to start to address the pressures and ensure that we manage the General Fund deficit. However, as this Council is already low taxing, has a very lean management and staffing structure and has already delivered many efficiencies over a number of years, there is no magic solution. Addressing this will require a range of measures as identified in the paragraph overleaf, however, some of these will take time to come to fruition and therefore in the short term the Council must continue to utilise approaches that will



5. This Council continues to be committed to a long term strategy of driving business efficiencies and value for money through a number of strands, these include:
- (a) The transformation agenda. Systematically reviewing the Council's sixty plus services to identify and drive out business efficiencies.
  - (b) Effective budget management and prioritisation. Requiring the Council to focus expenditure on strategic support. For example, this Council successfully realigned its expenditure on Economic Development and Tourism as part of a change of focus and role for the district council.
  - (c) Joint Services. A number of years ago, Dover District Council in collaboration with the other East Kent district authorities successfully introduced the first East Kent Partnership for the Internal Audit service and this year the East Kent district authorities with Kent County Council have introduced the Human Resources and Payroll Partnership. We are also currently developing joint working opportunities for Waste Management, Housing services and support services. Inevitably the thrust towards joint working will lead to a convergence of the terms and conditions of the four East Kent district authorities, which will require detailed consultation on this and a range of other issues. At a future date relevant reports will be brought for Member consideration and determination.
  - (d) Employment Stability. Bi-monthly evaluation by the Head of Paid Service of current vacancies to determine whether vacancies are of sufficient priority to be filled, when considered against agreed corporate priorities and performance targets. To date over a 100 posts have been evaluated.
6. One of the key short term approaches available is through an enhanced process of Employment Stability 5(d) by further capping of the establishment and progressive reduction of the headcount, clearly linked to corporate priorities. However, it is important to continue to recognise and understand the impact that this approach may have on staff morale, resilience, capacity and performance. It is already recognised that this Council is low taxing and lean, any further cuts to the establishment and re-engineering of services must be clearly linked to a clear recognition of the Council's priority functions, services and performance levels, and a clear recognition of what elements of a service or function that the Council is no longer delivering or is delivering to a different level. This must clearly link to the Council's corporate plan and divisional service plans. The approach must also allow for increased flexibility and transferability of staff, within defined employment law, so as to avoid potential situations of perceived or actual redundancy and constructive dismissal. It is a fine balance that will require careful management.

## **Background**

7. Council on 22 October 2008 approved the use of a combination of capping the size of the establishment and the active use of redeployment and vacancy opportunities to ratchet down the size of the organisation over time, as outlined in the report entitled Employment Stability through Change and Economic Downturn. This has achieved its objectives of slowing growth in the organisation and reducing the budget pressure from salaries. The original report also recognised that this approach could

8. As acknowledged at the time of the original report, the current employment stability process of capping and ratchet has some limitations. The main issue being a lack of equity across the Council, as it targets only those posts that become vacant and does not take a wider view of all posts across the organisation. Therefore managers who have vacancies are subject to rigorous examination before a replacement is even considered for approval and in many cases the post fails to meet the robust criteria and is not filled. This approach is a recognised practice used by many organisations either formally or informally and through this process the Council has in effect established a number of non-priority vacancies and although this rationale is sound, as previously outlined, the treatment and criteria is not currently applied to all posts across the organisation, only to those posts that become vacant. However, it is also important to recognise that the process has now evaluated in excess of a quarter of the organisation and in terms of employment law, it is much easier for the Council to address a vacancy situation as there are no employee contractual issues, than to deal with the range of employment law issues that impact on an existing post holder, although as acknowledged managing the vacancy can have a knock on effect to the employment rights of other existing staff.
9. Although there are some acknowledged limitations to the original employment stability process, it is accepted that it is better than most alternatives and it has achieved its desired objectives, evidenced by year to date savings (09/10) from a combination of Vacancy and Employment Stability Provisions at 30 September 2009 of £537,000, through slowing down the filling of vacant posts and/or not filling non priority vacancies. (It is acknowledged that there was a measurable vacancy provision before employment stability was introduced.) The economic climate now requires this process to be expanded in a measured way and this report looks to how we can widen the process across all services and functions within the Council as part of a number of measures available to the Council.
10. The Head of Governance, Head of Finance and ICT and the Human Resources Manager, who have formed a bi-monthly Employment Stability Review Team, have successfully administered the original process. They have carefully considered each request to fill a vacant post, scoring against a robust and consistent set of criteria and then made recommendations to the Chief Executive in his role as Head of Paid Service and he has in turn consulted with the Trade Unions and senior politicians from the Executive in arriving at his final decision on each post from each exercise. The review team has ensured consistency in the evaluation of posts and a transparent, fair process has resulted. It is proposed that the bi-monthly review process will continue in its current form enhanced by greater clarity of the Council's priority functions, services and performance levels. Managers will continue to

## Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

### **Way Forward**

11. After eight exercises using the original employment stability process, it is now necessary to enhance and move forward. This report explores the rationale for expanding the Employment Stability process across all functions and services in the organisation, in an open and transparent manner, alongside a number of longer term measures and approaches to establish a smaller and leaner organisation. This process will also help inform the longer term strands, including the shared service agenda and although the final shape of shared services and the residual Council at the end of this process is not yet clear, what is known is that all Councils in East Kent will clearly need to identify what services they want to and are required to deliver and how, what are discretionary and whether they meet corporate priorities and what are now lesser non-priority, and for all functions, what level of performance is required and how these services can be best delivered within reduced resources.

### **Option 1**

12. Wait and see if Central Government impose the anticipated sweeping funding cuts which will impact on the future shape of the Council and only then try to respond in terms of downsizing. We already have a high level workforce development strategy and as expected as a Council are already considering the implication of potential government funding cuts, so this option is somewhat unreal. However, if we did just wait, this would be a responsive reaction, required in a very short timescale, without arguably the time for proper consultation, staff involvement and buy-in. Recently, both employment law specialists and Human Resources professionals have been drawing attention to case law which effectively establishes that if an employer imposes an efficiency cut purely for economic reasons without a concomitant cut in the amount of work, there is a significant risk that posts affected are not redundant and staff could claim constructive unfair dismissal, with the potential for the Council being ordered to pay compensation. There are also significant financial and performance risks with this approach, in particular due to the age profile of the organisation, the risk of significant redundancy and pension costs if the organisation was to immediately downsize. There is no budget reserve set aside for this expenditure, which means it would need to be funded from either the General Fund or the Invest to Save fund, requiring additional posts to be removed to pay for this cost, with a high probability that this will directly impact on service delivery and performance. In addition, there is a significant potential risk if not handled correctly in the resultant short timescale, that a range of employment law matters impact on the Council. These could range from claims for unfair dismissal to not offering suitable alternative employment. For these reasons this approach is not recommended.

### **Option 2**

13. Establish a series of Shadow Organisational Structures to identify proposed changes to the future workforce and service structure. This will be achieved using an agreed review process. The Executive and Corporate Management Team will identify priority and non-priority functions, service and performance levels across the whole Council, to achieve the new leaner structures, in advance of any centrally applied

14. Once the priorities are approved, management will use a range of methods to re-model services and functions. This approach will build on the Employment Stability evaluation criteria currently used to evaluate current vacancies, utilise the job evaluation questionnaires and involve an analytical review against the Council's Corporate Plan and divisional Service Plans. This will consume a great deal of management time over the next year and may impact on short term performance, but long term if done well, will leave the Council in a strong position.
15. The intention will be to then incrementally implement the re-modelling findings, minimising redundancy costs and looking wherever possible to redeployment opportunities. This option is not actively seeking to make staff redundant, it is actively trying to avoid the situation by identifying at an early stage the requirements for a leaner structure and utilising wherever possible redeployment opportunities, however there may still be some resultant redundancies if changes are significant, although it is important to emphasise that at this stage nothing has been contemplated.
16. It is important to emphasise that if the process of remodelling and determining priority functions is not properly followed there are potential risks and consequences.
17. For clarity a redundancy situation occurs when:
  - (a) the employer has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was so employed; or
  - (b) the requirements of the business for employees to carry out work of a particular kind has ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish; or
  - (c) the requirements of the business for the employees to carry out work of a particular kind, in the place where they were so employed, has ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish.
18. Therefore, in order for there to be a genuine potential redundancy situation and an opportunity to explore redeployment, it will be important to demonstrate a diminished need for functions and also to demonstrate that the service has been remodelled so that functions and posts no longer exist. For this reason, a detailed remodelling process must be followed. This information will then be used incrementally to reduce the size of the Council's workforce, with non priority functions gradually being removed and staff affected being offered, wherever possible priority redeployment opportunities. The priority redeployment terminology is not a legal definition, but in-house language to describe the move to a Shadow Structure Organisation.
19. This is certainly not a risk free option and some redundancy costs may still be incurred, as for some posts redeployment may not be possible, and for staff successfully being re-deployed there will be training costs, in some cases leading to formal qualifications. A number of staff in non priority functions will no doubt be working to a high level of performance and/or positively seek the redeployment opportunity afforded them, providing the process is properly managed, however a

20. It is recognised that in identifying a non priority function, there is a significant risk that staff undertaking identified non priority functions, but working to a high level, could easily become disillusioned and feel under valued. This would need careful handling to ensure that the staff understood that it is the function and not the post that is being diminished or terminated. However, it is recognised that this will not be easy, a "them and us" mentality could easily develop, therefore wherever possible redeployment opportunities will be offered quickly and efficiently within the restrictions of business need.
21. In determining a non priority function, there is also the distinct possibility of identifying part of someone's job or parts of a number of people's jobs. This again will require careful and consistent handling and the support of HR professionals to ensure existing Council policies are adhered to and employment law is not breached.
22. Another key risk and consideration that will need to be managed is that post holders who are not offered the priority deployment status may feel unfairly disadvantaged. Particularly, if they wish to apply for a post that they see as potentially ring fenced for a redeployment employee. This will be overcome by clearly identifying that priority re-deployment designation only ensures an employee an interview and not a certain job, therefore opening the field to others if the redeployed post holder does not meet the criteria for the job. This may result in a scenario where one priority vacancy may trigger a chain reaction of job movement, which ultimately leads to a priority redeployment post being successful in securing a different post.
23. The long term objective from this approach will be a managed transition to the new shadow structure, with minimal redundancies and ultimately a smaller, highly skilled and motivated organisation, which is suitably rewarded. This is the recommended approach.

### **Option 3**

24. An alternative to an incremental change would be an exercise that although meeting employment law criteria, immediately seeks to address all the non-priority functions. This would activate many of the risks identified in option 2, but would also potentially create additional staffing and financial implications. All staff in the identified non-priority functions could be put immediately "at risk" of redundancy by the Council and redeployment opportunities would be sought for these staff. However, in terms of employee relations and financial pressures, this would create a number of difficulties for the Council:
  - (a) Firstly the risk of redundancy costs being activated if the "at risk" status is not removed for all staff not successfully redeployed by the agreed deadline;

- (b) Secondly, if it was decided that an "at risk" status is subsequently removed, it could create a potential constructive dismissal claim, uncertainty and possible mistrust and certainly would not demonstrate Dover District Council as a caring employer of choice; and
  - (c) Thirdly it assumes management and the wider organisation has the resource capacity to achieve this approach immediately. To try and enforce a quick and wholesale move from non-priority to priority functions and services and the resultant staffing implications, would be fraught with difficulties, in particular the risk of breaching a range of employment laws, resulting in claims of unfair and constructive dismissal, or a claim of not suitable alternative employment and associated redundancy and pension costs which the Council can ill afford.
25. Unless micro managed, the Council could very easily lose control of this process, suffering significant redundancy costs and risk breaching employment law. This approach is therefore not recommended.

#### **Option 4**

26. As proposals for shared services across East Kent gain momentum, solely focus our attention on determining, how we can better share services and resources across the boundaries to downsize staff costs, achieve the desired efficiencies by spreading resources and improving resilience. This is a perfectly valid approach, which sits alongside the re-modelling of services and functions and forms part of the overall solution for this Council. However, the shared service pace of change at present is relatively slow and requires some significant groundwork before the benefits are realised. Therefore although being pursued, it does not offer the shorter term solution required to address our MTFP needs.
27. For the reasons outlined in the four options above, an organic change within a clearly defined framework as outlined in option 2, is considered to be the only sensible way to proceed, in both employee relations and financial terms, although it is acknowledged that this is not a risk free solution.

#### **Information to be considered in taking the decision**

28. Although it is recognised that this Council is already lean, low taxing, committed to driving continued business efficiencies and improving performance, the current recession and economic climate has put unprecedented financial pressures on to the Council. It has been widely reported by all political parties that they will be imposing significant funding cuts after the next General Election, at a time when income streams are being severely tested. Dover District Council therefore needs to respond in a measured and proportionate manner to ensure that key services and statutory responsibilities are provided to a good standard and the Council is able to deliver a balanced budget. The biggest asset of this Council is undoubtedly its hardworking and committed staff. However, it is also the biggest cost to the Council. The exercise to identify priority and non-priority functions, must involve members, senior management, service managers and staff and also the trade unions and key stakeholders, to ensure that there is a clear and transparent process to identify the priority functions, services and performance standards within the Council and ultimately remodelling the services. This will not be an easy process, as staffing levels are already extremely tight and the process will not be identifying any posts that are currently considered non priority. The process will be determining in the

29. The outcomes from Option 2 will not be achieved immediately, but undertaken correctly will provide Dover District Council with robust and reliable service and function structures, which when coupled with its workforce development strategy will take the Council forward through the next decade and enable the Council to be best placed to respond to all of the forthcoming pressures, such as funding shortfalls and joint working initiatives. A key element of this process will be the successful introduction of a behavioural and skills based competency framework across the Council, helping to further develop our organisational culture, forming part of a package of management tools for maximising performance, which also includes the current performance appraisal process, existing performance management processes (disciplinary, grievance, capability, dignity at work etc) and absence management. CMT have committed to the competency framework, which although requiring short term time commitment, will in the long term establish core behavioural and skill requirements for each post across the Council. This in turn will help set performance standards for each post. A Council-wide scheme, with behavioural competencies, will allow good staff to grow, identify future stars, enable easier movement between posts, as job requirements will be better defined in terms of outputs and will also allow the organisation to work with those staff who are not achieving the required standard, with the clear intention of helping them to improve. However, it may also ultimately manage out those staff who cannot or will not improve their performance. Although a management tool, Members will be kept informed as the framework is developed and invited to presentations.

### **Outcome**

30. This process will clearly help inform future budget priorities, with the clear intention that budget funding will clearly follow the priority functions and performance standards. The process will clearly identify to all staff which services and functions are considered priority, the agreed performance levels and how the service will be delivered in the future. Non-priority functions will start to be removed from the organisation, and as the establishment continues to reduce, recruitment will be targeted at the priority functions. Staff in non-priority functions will be given priority redeployment status and actively encouraged to apply for the priority posts, with the effect of releasing the budget from their current non priority function and post. The use of the competency framework will be invaluable, in that it will clearly identify the harder to measure, deep seated behavioural skills that can positively influence performance and make a real difference to a priority post. A successful and workable competency framework will also identify over time those competencies and skills that can be reasonably transferred as part of any proposed redeployment, helping to demonstrate reasonable adjustment and that particular changes do not necessarily represent a wholesale and substantial change in an employees working conditions.

### **Process**

31. If Members approve the proposed approach, all service and functions across the Council will be examined as part of this process:

- (a) The Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team will work both independently and together with the Leader and his Executive in determining their understanding of service and function priorities, and the associated performance standards.
  - (b) Corporate Management Team subjects the proposed priority functions to a rigorous examination. As required, Equality Impact Assessments and Customer Access Reviews will be undertaken. As a result, recommendations on options for priority functions and performance levels will be determined.
  - (c) Cabinet, with scrutiny from the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee will approve the options for the priority functions and services for consultation with key stakeholders and the recognised trade unions. (A clear consultation and communication plan will be developed prior to this stage).
  - (d) Formal and meaningful consultation will be completed with the recognised Trade Unions and external stakeholders. This may include the use of SIMALTO (Forced Choice consultation), feedback is then analysed and a final set of proposals come forward.
  - (e) The Cabinet with scrutiny by the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee, will consider the final proposals, agreeing priority functions and associated performance targets to be set for 2011/12.
  - (f) Heads of Service, working with their divisional managers and their teams examine re-modelling opportunities for all functions. This could be undertaken alongside the development of new job descriptions linked to the competency framework.
  - (g) The Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service will then use the established priority and non-priority services and functions and develop a series of evolving shadow organisational structures to achieve the priorities.
  - (h) The pace and scope of services evolving as part of the shared services agenda will also influence the shadow organisational structures.
  - (i) Management work with HR to effectively address the emerging staffing issues, using established practices. (The precise issues will not be identified until priorities, service standards and structures are finalised).
  - (j) The current Employment Stability process continues to move the organisation towards its shadow structures.
32. Throughout this process the Chief Executive will consult with the Trade Unions, be aware of the emerging East Kent shared services agenda, and as a result discuss initial findings with the other East Kent Chief Executives (as appropriate) to ensure consistency across East Kent.

### Background Papers

Employment Stability Exercises

National Reports on the impact of the recession on Local Government

Employment Stability through Change and Economic Downturn (report to Council of 22 October 2008)

Workforce Development Strategy



## **Resource Implications**

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
Overall net savings from the Employment Stability process, although there is the potential for some re-training through redeployment and redundancy expenditure to be taken from the Invest to Save Reserve	None	Net saving to be achieved, however there are potential training and redundancy costs not yet determined as the process has not commenced

This exercise will be undertaken in-house using existing resources. It is recognised that management resources will become stretched as the Council implements a process to address the pressures. However there is no realistic alternative course of action and some other priorities may need to be re-scheduled.

Once the exercise is complete, the outcomes will help inform the budget process for 2011/12 and the longer term Medium Term Financial Plan.

Option 2 if adopted carries some risk of as yet unknown re-training and redundancy costs being incurred, which would need to be funded from the Invest to Save Reserve.

## **Comments from Finance**

The preferred option aims to minimise the direct financial pressures and does not actively seek to achieve savings from redundancies. If option 1 or 3 is chosen, Council needs to be aware that it does not have a redundancy reserve to pay for the downsizing. Any redundancy costs that occur would require a reasonable payback period to be cost effective and need to be funded from either the General Fund or the Invest to Save reserve, which would in effect be a one off fix, resulting in the Council buying the savings and not replenishing the General Fund or reserve.

## **Communication Statement**

The Leader and Chief Executive have briefed the media, staff and the Town and Parish Councils on the high level impact of the economic downturn on Dover District Council's finances and capacity.

If adopted, option 2 would need to be effectively communicated, including once developed the proposed performance targets and service standards. A detailed consultation and communication plan will be developed, if members approve the way forward.

## **Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks**

Fundamental. The Corporate Plan will help inform this process. This process will help inform future Corporate Plans. The corporate risks are explored as part of the option appraisal to this report.

### **Customer Access Review**

This will form an important part of the evaluation process, to determine priority functions. Following this exercise, individual services may need to revisit their existing CAR action plans.

### **Comments from Equalities Officer**

Customer Access Reviews will be carried out on as highlighted in the report. Support will be given to revise existing reviews where required.

### **Attachments**

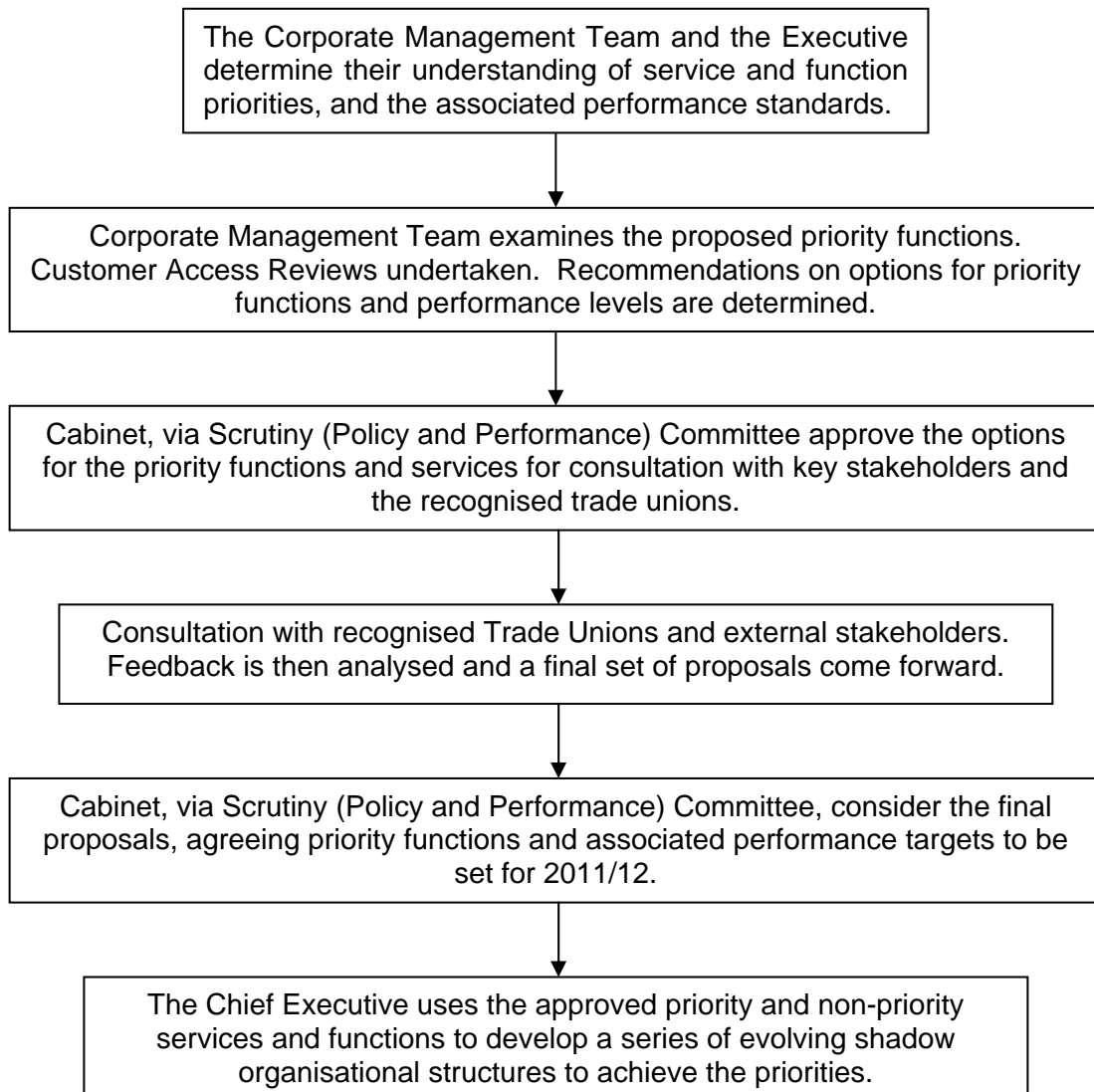
Annex 1 – Flow Chart for the proposed enhanced Employment Stability Process.

NADEEM AZIZ

Head of Paid Service

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Head of Governance, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2141.

### Flow Chart for the proposed enhanced Employment Stability Process



## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CHIEF OFFICER AND REDESIGNATE EXISTING HEADS OF SERVICE AS DIRECTORS****Recommendation**

1. *That the Chief Officer Posts as defined in the Officer Employment Rules, paragraph 4 (Annex 1) be amended to:  
  
(a) redesignate Heads of Service as Directors;  
(b) add a new Chief officer post of Director of Regeneration.*
2. *That an Appointments Committee comprising of five Members (at least one from the Executive) be convened to consider making an internal appointment to the new Chief Officer post of Director of Regeneration.*
3. *That there are no cost implications arising from the re-designation of the current Heads of Service as Directors.*
4. *That the Head of Governance is authorised to make any consequential Constitutional changes.*

Contact Officer: Nadeem Aziz, extension 2400.

**Reasons why a decision is required**

1. The purpose of this report is to formally re-designate the Heads of Service job titles at no additional financial cost to the Council and make an internal appointment to a new Chief Officer post, for which any re-grading will be contained within existing budgets.
2. Dover operates a flat management structure, with current Heads of Service undertaking both strategic and operational duties, it is a key element of the proposals in this report to recognise that this cost effective flat structure will continue to operate. In fact, as the shared service agenda and employment stability process moves forward, it is envisaged that the number of Chief Officers will be reduced. However, in the shorter term the current designations of Dover's Chief Officers are causing some difficulties, as outlined in this report. This can be particularly significant when operating in wider forums where other agencies are present, where the current designations can induce an imbalance and place the weight against the Council when we are trying to advocate our points.
3. It is recognised that Dover has the leanest staffing complement and this is reflected in a comparison of the four management structures in East Kent. This information is correct at 15 April 2010, although it is recognised that Canterbury City Council may have further changes following their senior management re-structure:

Authority	Dover	Canterbury	Shepway	Thanet
<b>Management Team Structure</b>	Chief Executive Heads of Service x 6	Chief Executive Strategic Director x 3 Heads of Service x 12	Chief Executive Corporate Directors x 3 Heads of Service x 7	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive (vacant) Directors x 5 Head of Service x 1
<b>Total</b>	7 proposed 8	16	11	8

### Designations

4. As contact with external partners continues to increase and the Shared Service agenda progresses with the other East Kent authorities, increasingly, Dover's Chief Officers are encountering misunderstanding regarding their designation, role and responsibility as Head of Service. In the other East Kent authorities, this designation often refers to a different level of responsibility. The current confusion is evidenced by:
- (a) The direct comparison to a Head of Service at Dover is an East Kent Director, with some overlap to their number two, a Head of Service.
  - (b) Confusion developing in job titles as the shared service agenda moves forward, senior managers of these new partnership bodies are taking the title "Head of". At present there is the Head of the East Kent Audit Partnership and Head of the East Kent Human Resources Partnership. Both of these are line managed by the host employer, Dover District Council and the Head of Governance.
  - (c) The Head of Property, Leisure and Waste, is a Chief Officer at Dover District Council, whilst fulfilling a second tier function at Shepway District Council reporting to a Director/Chief Officer.
  - (d) Administrative Collaborative Agreements that are being developed for the various shared services/partnerships. In these agreements, "Director" designations are used to identify a range of issues including responsibilities and representatives from each Council on the strategic boards that oversee the partnerships. Changing the designation would help avoid misunderstanding or the need for phrases such as "Director or equivalent" being used in these documents to reflect Dover's current structure.
  - (e) A number of Dover's existing Chief Officers will as the shared service agenda develops, no doubt be required to compete with other Chief Officers at East Kent neighbouring authorities for various partnership jobs. Ideally, during any interview process the Chief Officer designation should be the key descriptor in determining an officer's level of responsibility, rather than individual job titles or whether officers are titled as Director or Head of Service. However, in reality, there is a risk of Dover's senior officers being placed at a disadvantage by their current designation as "Heads of" and the designation of Director could unfairly have added weight and this could potentially disadvantage Dover's Chief Officers.
5. The new job evaluation scheme describes the current Heads of Service job factor as:

"Heads of Service with a range of responsibilities typically commensurate with that of a director of a large organisation".

6. For the reasons outlined in paragraph 3 and 4, this report looks to formalise the title of "Director" for Dover District Council's Chief Officers. This new designation wouldn't change the pay or conditions of service for the Chief Officers.

#### New Chief Officer

7. The current Head of Regeneration's role has developed significantly over the last two years, especially in the area of external contact and influence and he is now considered to be a key member of the Corporate Management Team, although not a Chief Officer. It is now considered that the role has sufficiently developed to be that of a Chief Officer and it is proposed that the post of Head of Regeneration, which is already within the Council's establishment, is designated as a Chief Officer post as Director of Regeneration.
8. To achieve this status for the post, the Officer Employment Procedure Rules need to be fully complied with, requiring the formation of an appropriate sub-committee to formally consider whether to appoint internally to the new Chief Officer post. If an appointment is to be offered, the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service is required to notify every member of the executive of the name of the person to whom he wishes to make the appointment, any other relevant particulars and the period for any objection. An offer can be made if there is no well-founded objection from the executive.

#### Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

9. (1) Change the designation of the Heads of Service to Directors. This is the preferred option, to clearly define the Chief Officers at Dover to external partners and neighbouring authorities, and better reflect the duties undertaken as described in the job evaluation scheme.  
  
Increase the number of Chief Officers by one to eight to include the new post of Director of Regeneration and select for this post from existing officers.
- (2) Retain the existing designations, as Head of Service for the existing Chief Officers.  
  
Increase the number of Chief Officers by one to eight to include the new post of Head of Regeneration and select for this post from existing officers.
- (3) Retain the existing number of Chief Officers as outlined in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, paragraph 4 and do not add the Head of Regeneration post as a Chief Officer.

#### Background Papers

The Senior Management structures at the other East Kent authorities.

#### **Resource Implications**

If approved the Director of Regeneration post will be subject to a new job evaluation and any re-grading will be contained within existing budgets. The change of title to Directors would incur very minimal expenditure, such as new business cards, which

will be contained within existing budget provision. Other than this there will be no additional costs incurred and no re-evaluation of jobs.

### **Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks**

Dover District Council is increasingly working with partners to deliver its corporate objectives.

### **Equalities Statement**

Appointments to the Corporate Management Team have and will continue to follow the Council recruitment policy as well as legal requirements, all of which have been subject to Equality Assessment.

### **Attachments**

Annex 1 – Extract from Officer Employment Procedure Rules, Paragraphs 2 & 4.

NADEEM AZIZ

Chief Executive

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Head of Governance, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2141.

**Extract from**

## **Officer Employment Procedure Rules**

### **2. Recruitment of head of paid service and chief officers**

Where the Council proposes to appoint a chief officer and it is not proposed that the appointment be made exclusively from among their existing officers, the Council will:

- (a) draw up a statement specifying:
  - (i) the duties of the officer concerned; and
  - (ii) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;
- (b) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and
- (c) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph (1) to be sent to any person on request.

### **4. Appointment of chief officers**

*This process will be subject to any mandatory standing orders.*

- (a) A committee or sub-committee of the Council will appoint chief officers. That committee or sub-committee must include at least one member of the executive.
- (b) An offer of employment as a chief officer shall only be made where no well-founded objection from any member of the executive has been received.

**NB** Chief officer posts shall be:

- Chief Executive
- Head of Development and Public Protection
- Head of Finance and ICT
- Head of Governance
- Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety
- Head of Property, Leisure and Waste Management
- Head of Business and Community Transformation



## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## RESPONSIBILITY – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

## KEY DECISION

**BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK**

CABINET – 11 JANUARY 2010

SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2010

CABINET – 8 FEBRUARY 2010

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**EAST KENT JOINT SERVICES – STRATEGIC CASE****Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Cabinet approve the attached report (Annex 1) "East Kent Joint Services - Strategic Case" as an appropriate basis for progressing joint services with the Council's East Kent Partners.*

Contact Officer: Mike Davis, extension 2107

**Reasons why a decision is required**

1. This report has been produced to obtain Cabinet approval for the basis under which joint working is to progress.

**Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option**

2. There are three options available to the Council. They are:
  - To continue working largely on an individual basis, as at present. This is the "do nothing" option.
  - To seek other partners outside of the four East Kent Authorities (and Kent County Council) for joint working projects.
  - To approve the report at Annex 1 as the basis for future joint working within East Kent. This is the recommended option.
3. Public sector finances are under unprecedented pressure. Local Government in general, and district councils in particular, are not exempt from this pressure. Indeed, if public expenditure of education and health is protected from the worst of these pressures, then they are likely to bear down, disproportionately upon the remaining service areas, and especially upon district councils.
4. At the same time, it is clear that district councils, acting individually, face limits as to the level of savings that they can generate through economies of scale and service transformation, and that they are now expected to seek alternative and more radical ways of maintaining service delivery with reduced resources. For these reasons, the "do nothing" option is not recommended.
5. Nonetheless, partnership working is often complex and time consuming to establish, and requires the development of robust arrangements and a level of trust and

6. The report at Annex 1 provides a framework of arrangements within which the East Kent authorities can develop joint working arrangements across a number of service areas. The governance arrangements (including East Kent Forum (EKF), East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee (EKJAC) and East Kent Joint Scrutiny Committee (EKJSC)) are now established and operational, and joint arrangements for Internal Audit and Payroll and HR are already in place. Projects for Waste and Landlord Services are also advancing. These achievements evidence the level of trust already established. They also evidence the practicality of working with our geographic neighbours.
7. For these reasons, the proposals within the report at Annex 1 are believed to provide a practical basis for progressing joint working at an acceptable pace, and this is therefore the preferred option.

Information to be considered in taking the decision

8. The report at Annex 1 represents a framework approach. The detailed operation will develop and be enhanced as the partners understanding of the most effective means of joint working proceeds.
9. Approval, by Cabinet, of the report, will indicate that it is accepted as a direction of travel. The individual service business cases will be developed in accordance with the guidelines, protocols and principles set out in the report, and will also be brought back to Cabinet if they do not meet the criteria set out in Annex 1, or if the Chief Executive decides that there are any other reasons for referring the business case to the Cabinet or Council. Approval of the report does not, therefore, commit partners to joint working in specific service areas, since they will be able to consider the individual business cases as they are completed.
10. The report was considered by EKJAC on 18 December 2009, and the relevant section of the minutes is attached at Annex 2. Members will note from the minutes that issues have been raised both by Shepway District Council and EKJSC. An additional EKJSC meeting has been arranged for 14 January 2010, at which these issues can be considered, together with a response from the project team.
11. The timetable (see Section 15 of Annex 1) also provides for consideration of this report by Dover Scrutiny Policy and Performance Committee on 20 January 2010.
12. It is therefore proposed that this report, together with the recommendations of EKJSC and Dover Scrutiny Policy and Performance Committee will be considered again by Cabinet on 8 February 2010.

**Resource Implications**

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
None	-	-

Comments from Finance

No additional comments to make.

**Customer Access Review**

Customer Access issues will be considered under the individual service business cases.

**Attachments**

Annex 1 – East Kent Joint Services – Strategic Case  
Annex 2 – Minutes of the EKJAC 18 December 2009.

NADEEM AZIZ

Chief Executive

**EAST KENT JOINT ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE**

**18 December 2009**

- Subject:** East Kent Joint Services – Strategic case
- Director/Head of Service:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Canterbury)  
Head of Policy and Improvement (Canterbury)  
Head of Finance and ICT (Dover)  
Corporate Director (Shepway)  
Director of Customer Services and Business Transformation (Thanet)
- Decision Issues:** These matters are within the authority of each Council
- Decision type:** Treated as Key
- Classification:** This report is open to the public.
- Summary:** *Attached to this report is the Strategic case for the sharing of certain services between the District Councils of East Kent. It makes recommendations to each council of the services to be considered in a first tranche and the process by which each council will determine whether or not it will participate in each proposed shared service.*
- To Recommend:** The East Kent District Councils of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, The District Council of Shepway and Thanet District Council ("the East Kent Authorities") are minded to merge the delivery of each of the services generally described as ICT, face to face and contact centre customer services, revenues and benefits, residual housing services and building control ("the services") between two or more of them subject to the following process:-
- (a) A business case or business cases shall be prepared in respect of each of the services which shall amongst other things describe the proposed merged service, the arrangements between the parties, the savings to be achieved both generally and for each Council and the level of service it is proposed to provide, such business cases to be presented in an agreed format to each of the East Kent Authorities.

- (b) Each of the East Kent Authorities shall delegate to its Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader the power to approve a business case on its behalf mindful that the business case shows to his satisfaction that savings of 10% against the existing combined budgets must be achieved in the first two years and that an acceptable level of service to his council can be delivered.
- (c) If the Chief Executive is not so satisfied for those or any other reasons he shall expeditiously refer the business case for consideration to the Council's executive if it concerns an executive function or to the appropriate committee if it is a council function
- (d) If The Chief Executive or the executive or the committee as the case may be is so satisfied then a delegation to the East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee shall thereupon occur of the powers and duties of the Council as defined in the business case such delegation to take effect on 1st April 2011 or such other date or dates as the Chief Executives of the East Kent Authorities who have made similar delegations shall mutually agree in respect of that service.
- (e) The East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee will delegate such powers to officers as it thinks fit in relation to the services and is requested to appoint one of the East Kent Authorities as the host authority by whom all such officers will be employed.
- (f) Vacancy management arrangements shall be developed by the Chief Executives of the East Kent Authorities in relation to each of the services proposed to be merged pending such merger.
- (g) Any decision regarding the delivery of the services by other methods by each of the East Kent Authorities be deferred and be reconsidered no earlier than May 2011.
- (h) To authorise the Chief Executives of each of the East Kent Authorities to take any steps necessary on behalf of their authorities to explore or facilitate the joint delivery of the services.
- (i) To appoint the Director of Shared Services with the intent he or she will take up their post as quickly as possible after the East Kent Authorities have adopted these proposals.

**Next stage in process:**      **Each council will take this report through their own decision making process.**

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1. Introduction**

Against a background of anticipated significant reductions in government spending and a desire to improve services, the four district councils, working in partnership with Kent County Council are addressing joint working in different areas. On district council functions, the four East Kent Districts propose to share a raft of services over the next three years. The proposal in this report relates to what is described as the first tranche, but establishes a process which may be used for further services.

### **2. Detail**

Members are advised to read the East Kent Joint Services Strategic case attached to this report carefully. There is much detail yet to be worked up, but it sets out an approach which is intended to allow reasonably quick and efficient decision making, whilst enabling wider consultations to be held by individual councils, if it is felt necessary to do so. It is hoped that would be on an exceptions basis. In other words, if for example, a business case showed the two prime criteria of savings and service standard were met, members would accept very limited if any consultation.

In the background section the Strategic case describes how the four councils arrived at this point. The proposal has evolved, after discussion and debate, to the point where it needs now to be considered by each council through their own processes. It is to be hoped that all the recommendations will be endorsed by all parties but each council is sovereign and will come to its own view.

### **3. Relevant Council Policy/Strategies/Budgetary Documents**

See the Strategic case. Each council will have their own budget.

### **4. Consultation planned or undertaken**

See the Strategic case. Each authority either has or will have both informal briefings and formal scrutiny processes. In addition the East Kent Joint Scrutiny Committee is considering the Strategic case before this committee and its comments will be presented to this committee.

### **5. Options available with reasons for suitability**

Each council will be free to accept, reject or amend the recommendations. The best option is for each council to agree the recommendations in their entirety as we will then have a single approach which will make the delivery of this difficult project on time much more likely. A patchwork of resolutions is likely to cause delay and perhaps differing expectations between the parties. Rejecting the recommendations in their entirety would be disappointing but the process could still carry on between two or three councils.

**6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment**

For the reasons given above supporting the recommendations at this stage presents least risk. The councils are being asked to commit to a process, not that inevitably each will share all the services identified. Those service decisions will be taken on behalf of each council considering whether in any case it is in its best interests to share a particular service.

**7. Implications**

- (a) Financial Implications  
See the Strategic case.
- (b) Legal Implications  
See the Strategic case. We will be using the powers identified in the existing East Kent arrangements for sharing services.
- (c) Staffing/resource  
See the Strategic case. In particular the section headed Future investment needs for the project.

**8. Conclusions**

The Strategic case sets out a considered proposal which it is intended delivers what the four East Kent Districts collectively want. It provides a means of increasing the pace of joint working while seeking to preserve the independence of each council.

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Version 1  
Date 8 December 2009  
Time 14:03



## East Kent Joint Services Strategic Case



Version	Author	Approved by
V 1.0	Project team	

**Project team**

- Mark Ellender (Canterbury City Council)
- Mark Bursnell (Canterbury City Council)
- Mike Davis (Dover District Council)
- Kathryn Beldon (Shepway District Council)
- Donna Reed (Thanet District Council)

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## **1.0 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 A major and dramatic reform of public services is now inevitable as government spending is significantly cut in the years to come. The four districts in East Kent working in partnership with Kent County Council recognise that the funding landscape within which local authorities operate will look very different in future and therefore a radical response is needed that fundamentally challenges the way local authorities organise, design and deliver services. However, the response is not just about the need to save money.
- 1.2 It is also directed by the desire to improve the quality of services and build greater resilience and capacity in the shared services that will be created by combining expertise and strength in depth. There is also a strong desire to respond effectively to the emerging regional agenda and the place of East Kent within this. By releasing senior management capacity the four councils can develop a coherent and cogent argument for East Kent. As an economic sub-region, to take a leading role in framing regeneration strategies that reflect and meet the distinctive needs of East Kent.
- 1.3 The central proposal is therefore to create a raft of shared services for a range of support and frontline services across the four districts within the next three years. Services would transfer over to the shared service arrangement in manageable tranches. The assumption being all four councils will generally opt into shared arrangements for the relevant services based on a common service specification and a baseline minimum level of service agreed beforehand. Individual councils have the option of paying for a top up in service levels if they wish. It should be stressed that as long as two councils opt into a shared arrangement for a particular service that is sufficient to proceed. Councils do not have to opt in individual services. The councils will consider this at two points. Firstly, when the tranche of services is delegated to EKJAC and secondly, when the business case is completed. While the majority of services will go into shared service arrangement, some services deemed as central to ensuring local democratic control or key to delivering local strategic priorities will stay outside the arrangement.
- 1.4 At this stage predictive savings, globally and for specific services have not been established. However, based on experience elsewhere and the pilot shared services already undertaken in East Kent suggest indicative savings of around at least 10% are anticipated. A key part of delivering increased savings will be to undertake a business process and a systems thinking approach review of each service.
- 1.5 The appropriate delivery vehicle for the shared service arrangement has yet to be finally determined. The joint Cabinets/Executive

meeting on 23 September agreed a “twintrack” approach to pursue a host authority model until the legality of a company controlled by the East Kent councils called the Joint Services Group (JSG) is resolved. If the legal powers to create a JSG become available in early 2010 an analysis will be carried out on the cost benefit of continuing with the hosting arrangement or moving down the JSG track. However, the hosting arrangement will stay in place until of the next council elections in May 2011 to allow some continuity around planning joint services. In making a decision about which option to take, Members will be guided by the following criteria: evidence around a financial appraisal; business review and legal justification prepared by senior officers at each council.

- 1.6 There is a crucial issue around the potential for externalising services in future with a preferred private sector partner or contractor. Given the resource commitment to setting up the hosting arrangement and the ambitious timetable envisaged it is not feasible to embark on a market testing exercise before May 2011, as this would involve producing a contract specification, competitive tendering and contractor selection tasks on top of all the other tasks and workstreams associated with hosting. Besides, the councils will want to drive out any significant savings first before considering externalisation. However, once the service business case has been completed and all the relevant data gathered and agreed a viable shared service should emerge that will be suitable, should the councils so wish, to be market tested in future. In any case the JSG will periodically demonstrate its delivering VFM or, will take steps to do so to the satisfaction of Members.
- 1.7 The Shared Services will come under the control of EKJAC which although it can delegate powers to officers, it is not a legal entity and cannot employ them. Therefore, they will be employed by one of the councils. Which council will host the shared service arrangement has not yet been decided, but a recommendation will be made to each council in the near future. However, it should be stressed that the host authority will be completely separate to the services that go into the hosting arrangement.
- 1.8 The Chief Executives of each council will have delegated powers to approve business cases bearing in mind two conditions (achieving a minimum threshold of 10% of the combined revenue budgets by the end of the second year and achieving satisfactory performance levels). If those two criteria are not met, or for any other reason, a Chief Executive can refer the matter to Members. If it concerns an Executive function, it would be considered by the Executive, and if a Council function, by the relevant committee. Members would then consider the case for and against the particular service being shared.

## **2.0 Background – how did we get here?**

- 2.1 At the beginning of 2007 all four district councils decided not to submit a bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government to be a unitary authority under the invitation which accompanied the 2006 Local Government White Paper. The councils, in agreement with the other councils in Kent also declined an offer to submit a bid to be a “two-tier pathfinder” contained in the same white paper. However, all four councils did agree to support a Kent wide submission which set out a statement committing all Kent councils to closer collaborative working in future, including looking at ways of establishing shared services as a way of improving the two-tier system.
- 2.2 In the context of the Kent wide submission, work was commissioned from a consultant to develop a paper on the same theme particularly for East Kent. The report built on the joint work the four East Kent councils have developed for some years on the concept of sharing the delivery of services between themselves, either to achieve cost savings or to enhance the resilience of these services by way of a larger staff grouping.
- 2.3 The four councils agreed in January 2006, to a protocol which governed these joint working arrangements. The progress achieved so far in creating shared services includes – Personnel and Payroll, Internal Audit, Landlord Housing Services and Waste Collection – originate from the decision of all four councils to sign the protocol.
- 2.4 After all four East Kent district councils decided in early 2007 to give a formal commitment to closer collaborative working in future things have moved on. This commitment has been translated into a number of important innovations. For example, a joint East Kent Local Strategic Partnership was established in April 2008 to provide a far sighted strategic vision for the sub-region up to 2030. A shared sustainable community strategy vision was adopted by all four councils earlier this year. The East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee was also set up in June 2008 to facilitate decision making around creating joint East Kent Services based on an agreed programme.
- 2.5 Given the tough economic situation local government faces and the pressing need to find savings this commitment has developed apace and options have been developed, based on what is happening elsewhere in the country. An appointed project group drawn from senior managers from each of the four districts was established in May 2009 to flesh out these different options.

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- 2.6 The officer group identified four options – lead authority hosting, externalising services through contracting out to a private sector provider, joint management arrangement and a Joint Services Group (JSG). A SWOT analysis was produced for each of these four models. The SWOT analysis showed all four models had their strengths and weaknesses and each had been adopted as a viable option somewhere else.
- 2.7 The officer project team organised an away day programme for managers whose services were most likely to be directly affected by any move towards closer working amongst the four districts – Personnel, Finance, ICT and Legal services. The awayday took place on 24 June and part of that day’s task was to identify a preferred option from the four discussed, based on the SWOT analysis, which could be put to a joint meeting of the four cabinets/executive planned on 8 July. As a result of the debate on the 8 July a majority preference did emerge for the Joint Services Group (JSG) model, as it offered a more all embracing and holistic solution and was radical enough to address the unprecedented challenges now facing local government. This outcome broadly accorded with the conclusions reached at the managers awayday, although the hosting arrangement also received support.
- 2.8 A JSG provides a single framework within which to bring together all services, rather than having to make separate arrangements on a service by service basis. However, it should be noted support for the JSG was not unanimous across all the councils.
- 2.9 The lead authority hosting model emerged as the second best option and shares many of the same features as the JSG, for example the need to harmonise terms and conditions for employees, the rationalisation of management numbers and achieving economies of scale. It should be stressed that a great deal of commonality between the hosting and JSG models exists and therefore it would be possible to move towards the hosting model and then JSG, if the decision was made, after May 2011. It should also be stressed that none of the four models that were evaluated are mutually exclusive. Features from each model can fit into other options and there will be elements from all models that will be reflected in the final outcome.
- 2.10 Whichever model is chosen, be it the JSG or hosting, both are really methods of procurement, the hosting or JSG method might provide the service in-house or contract it out and therefore will lead to a mixed economy.
- 2.11 The last joint Cabinets/Executive meeting on 23 September agreed a “twintrack” approach, to pursue both the JSG and host authority models until the issue of the legality of the JSG was finally resolved. Therefore, the hosting arrangement could represent an interim position or become permanent. If the legal power to create a JSG became available next year an analysis will be undertaken on the
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cost benefit of continuing with the hosting arrangement against the establishment of a JSG.

- 2.12 The intention is that when a service becomes shared, it does so under the control of EKJAC. EKJAC can delegate functions to officers in the same fashion as one of its member councils. For ease of administration it will be recommended to EKJAC to ensure that those officers are all employed by one authority, called in this report “the host”. These officers may be drawn from any one of the partner councils or be externally appointed. Thus a single council, to be confirmed by EKJAC, will be selected to host services transferred (using powers under S101 and S102 of the 1972 Local Government Act and other enabling powers). Clearly the host would have to be prepared to accept the responsibility. Within the host authority shared services transferred over will be ring fenced and not form part of the host authority’s management structure.

### **3.0 Vision**

East Kent hosting arrangement concept

#### **3.1 Project Summary**

The key elements of the proposal discussed at the joint Cabinet meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September and by Chief Executives on 30 September are:

- The four partner Councils will approve participation in a joint services project and will give EKJAC authority to approve a “host” authority”.
- The decision to set up this host authority structure will be made by March 2010 at the latest, by each council. This will include a suggested phased programme of services to be transferred into the host arrangement.
- A programme will be agreed for the phased transfer of services to the host over a defined period. This will be by using the powers set out in operating arrangements adopted for EKJAC .
- The host will “ring fence” the services, so that they are distinct from the management arrangements for the rest of the host authority.
- The Director of Shared Services will be accountable to EKJAC for the performance and management of shared services
- EKJAC will also be answerable to the client Councils for service delivery to meet the requirements of SLAs.

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- Ultimately, legal responsibility for the services still rests with each of the councils

The host councils obligations will be:

- The host authority will become the legal employer of relevant staff. Affected staff will be added to the host's payroll, through their general ledger.
- A prime task is to establish the terms and conditions upon which these staff will transfer to the newly established joint services. It is expected there will be a separate set of terms and conditions for the host, which will reflect the most expedient option. The Head of Shared HR Services will lead on a workstream to establish the legality of this arrangement.
- Each council will agree to the lowest baseline service acceptable to all and contribute a fair proportion of the cost to provide that service. Individual councils have the option of paying for a top up level of service above the agreed core if they so decide.
- An opportunity will emerge to rationalise property assets following the creation of shared services, which will lead to the rapid optimum use of existing council buildings. But at this stage it's too early to quantify potential savings through selling surplus property.

### 3.2 Legal Position

Given the present uncertainty on the reach of the wellbeing powers, as they affect the potential to establish a JSG, a hosting arrangement could represent an interim position or become permanent. Even if the legal powers to create a JSG are enacted, the four councils may still decide to retain the hosting arrangement, if the criteria set out in the Executive summary doesn't support the JSG option.

### 3.3 Producing the Strategic Case

This document will be presented to EKJAC on 18 December 2009 setting out the case for the phased transfer of a programme of services to the host authority. This document provides the rationale for pursuing the hosting option, and in due course, if Members so decide, moving towards a JSG.

The strategic case includes:

- standard governance template for services transferring to the host



- broad indicative savings
- indicative investment requirements
- basis for charging service costs to partners
- an evaluation of the sequence / phasing for the transfer of different services.

As the programme proceeds each Council will have to make decisions about each specific service and whether it should be included. The decision may be for political, strategic or business reasons but it must be reasonable for each authority to have an indication of the cost to it of entering the Joint Service.

In relation to each service, each Council will need:

- an analysis of current costs
- an agreement on the base specification and service design of the joint service.
- an assessment of the likely costs of a shared service operation based on evidence from other authorities / projects, and also based on the potential for savings against current provision
- an indication of the potential charges to each authority
- a view as to whether to commission the base specification service or a higher level.

The East Kent shared services strategic case once approved by EKJAC on 18 December will go through each councils decision making process between January – February 2010.

#### **4.0 Objectives behind the project**

4.1 All councils face a challenging financial future. There is a pressing and ongoing need to achieve efficiency savings, simply to balance budgets and safeguard basic services. Without significant savings major cuts in front line services will be inevitable.

4.2 The economic downturn has accelerated budgeting pressures on local authorities with every indication that future reduced, or at best,

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frozen central government grant settlements for councils will mean major economies need to be found to maintain current services. The reasons for closer collaboration are not based solely on the necessity of finding financial savings. There are issues around capacity and resilience facing the East Kent councils. Therefore capitalising on opportunities to share scarce specialist skills and knowledge, which a single council cannot afford or which are vulnerable when staff leave or are absent, need to be taken.

- 4.3 Anecdotal evidence would suggest that simple joint working could yield savings of between 5 to 10%. When opportunities to transform services can be taken, it may be possible to increase those savings to 10 to 20%. However, joint working alone should not be seen as a complete solution to budget problems.
- 4.4 Rapid changes in the capability of ICT systems provide a strong impetus for business transformation. Collaborative working provides the opportunity to make the investment and drive step changes that will improve the quality of service experienced by customers.
- 4.5 The general advantages of a shared service solution can be summarised as the following:
- Efficiency savings by streamlining business processes, achieving economies of scale and rationalising management.
  - Maintain and improve where possible quality of service by driving up performance through adopting current best practice across east Kent.
  - Generating capacity by sharing specialist expertise and reducing dependence on a few key staff.
  - Convergence of policies, processes and technology.
  - Business transformation through applying business process re-engineering techniques to review existing service operations and secure improvements.
  - Creating a more highly trained and motivated workforce through increased opportunity for personal development.

## 5.0 Options appraisal

5.1 As was stated in the background section, the project group explored four options initially – hosting authority, externalising services through contracting out to a private sector provider, joint management arrangement and a Joint Services Group (JSG) – and through a process of elimination, the first and fourth options have been identified as having the greatest merit and form the basis on which to move forward.

A SWOT analysis for the four options was developed by the project group to inform the choice of options selected.

In developing these models it is recognised there are similarities between them. The hosting and JSG models in particular, have several commonalities and points of convergence and were agreed by the project group and the Cabinets/Executive meeting on 23 September as the best option to pursue further.

5.2 The advantages of both models are similar:

- Achieving efficiency savings by streamlining processes, achieving economies of scale and rationalising management;
- Generating capacity by sharing specialist expertise;
- Convergence of processes, policies and technology;
- Business transformation through applying business process reengineering techniques;
- Creation of a single and unified set of HR policies e.g. common employment terms and conditions and a job evaluation scheme

For either hosting or a JSG each council can have a commissioning and contract management/monitoring role with the host for individual services. However, to achieve high levels of savings these will need to be kept to an acceptable level of activity. The exact nature of the client role will need to be determined by the four individual councils and closely related to the shared specification and any agreed top ups for that particular service.

5.3 For either hosting or a JSG it is also assumed democratic services, elements of finance and legal advice and policy development services will be kept as residual functions by each council. There is an issue of what other services should stay outside any hosting arrangement. Some councils may wish to also keep distinctively

local or 'place shaping' services such as regeneration, community development, leisure etc. in-house.

- 5.4 What stays out of the hosting arrangement will need to be identified before those services deemed suitable for transfer to a hosting arrangement are incorporated into a programme.

## **6.0. Benefits for local residents**

- 6.1 Our aim is to design our shared services so that the customer is at the heart of all the services we deliver; whether it's by telephone, face to face or the web.

- 6.2 Alongside this initiative we will work with Gateway Kent in order to give our customers access to a multi agency approach e.g. health, county services, the voluntary sector.

- 6.3 Our customers will benefit from having a workforce that uses the best working practices across East Kent, with processes and procedures that are efficient, but reflect the customer need – not the other way round.

- 6.4 The shared service arrangement will ensure that the residents of East Kent will achieve value for money from their council tax charge.

## **7.0 Financial appraisal**

The financial appraisal will occur in two stages.

- 7.1 The first stage is to determine the overall potential for generating savings from joint working. This cannot be calculated with precision, since it is dependant upon a number of factors including:-

- the specific services which Members agree should be included in joint working
- the phasing of those services
- the baseline standard of service that partners agree to establish
- whether the services are managed / retained at local sites or placed within a centralised service
- the level of ICT and other investment
- the costs of redundancies

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- the size and scope of the client side operations
- 7.2 However, in order to provide an indication of the scope of potential savings, Appendix 1 contains a schedule analysing the expenditure and headcount of services across the four partner authorities. For illustrative purposes it is assumed that a net saving of 10% could be achieved on the salary budget, then that indicates a saving of approximately £7.0m. This figure is a starting point and it is anticipated that greater savings will be achieved, but it is prudent to set the initial target at a realistic level. The Chief Executives will contemplate the impact of a greater level of savings on services.
- 7.3 The potential redundancy costs could bring into question the viability of the shared services, but some redundancies are inevitable as posts are reduced.
- 7.4 However, this could be mitigated by ensuring current staff can be redeployed into the new joint arrangement where possible. Part of this approach would be to ensure that staff were given the right skills through training and mentoring.
- 7.5 The second stage arises when the overall project is underway, and the detailed proposals for joint working are developed on a service by service basis. However, it is intended that the senior management costs will be reflected in any savings put forward in the business case.
- 7.6 The ideal solution is that the service proposal will be focused on how four separate teams can be structured to start working together and make savings (generally from headcount and procurement). It should therefore be simple and relatively straight forward to make the business case.
- 7.7 To avoid any confusion regarding sharing costs etc. a number of protocols have been developed to guide the development of a business case (see Appendix 2). These protocols will continue to be developed as projects progress, in order to further minimise the time it takes to agree a specific proposal, and also to reduce the risk of significant omissions. In general, the Appendices to this report will evolve and will be developed and enhanced as the process goes on.
- 7.8 A critical stage in joining the four authorities' services together will be the review of business processes. This will be part of the tool kit as evidence from other areas has identified an increase in savings when this work has been undertaken.

**8.0 Proposed phasing programme of shared services to the host**

- 8.1 Services will migrate to the host authority based on an agreed phasing programme. Phase one services would need to start to consider joint service level agreements and joint protocols soon. Joint working and familiarisation between the teams across the four districts should start now. Criteria will have been developed to identify which services should transfer and their order of priority (see Appendix 3).
- 8.2 The first tranche of services has been identified based on their scope to generate major savings and their synergy. Given the main reason for pursuing the hosting arrangement is to generate efficiencies, up front indicative savings are expected to be identified in the service business case before final transfer to the host authority. These savings should be based on the best comparable evidence from elsewhere and a realistic assessment from relevant managers and their accountant colleagues.
- 8.3 If the wider sharing of services envisaged in this document takes place then it is probable that Personnel and Payroll would join the proposed hosting arrangement on a date to be agreed, although it may be that internal audit remains outside because of the particular nature of that service.
- 8.4 All services deemed suitable to be included in a hosting arrangement should be able to be transferred ideally over a three year period starting from April 2011. It is likely that if the hosting arrangement starts from February 2010, it will take a year to prepare and organise the transfer of services. The phasing of services in tranche one to the host will be agreed by February 2010 and the phasing must be completed by April 2013. The project group have developed an indicative planning timetable based on the scoring matrix (see appendix 4). This timetable is optimistic and much will depend on the number and complexity of the services that transfer to the host authority, the capacity to receive them and the level of project support made available by the four councils to facilitate this.
- 8.5 Services in the tranches will need to be commissioned well in advance to allow sufficient time to complete the service business case and prepare for the “going live” of the new joint service. Therefore for the April 2011 tranche, work will need to begin from February 2010 and the same timings will be necessary for the two subsequent tranches.
- 8.6 The methodology for developing shared services will be developed. Therefore it is likely a designated project lead officer, drawn from the top tier of management from one of the four councils, and not

drawn from the particular services concerned, will have the responsibility to oversee the project plan and ensure the delivery of key milestones. The project group will support the designated lead officer in developing the project plan, monitoring delivery and providing ongoing challenge.

- 8.7 Once Members agree a tranche of services in February of each year, starting in February 2010, it is assumed a Service Transformation Manager will be appointed as quickly as possible. The Transformation Manager is likely to be appointed in April/May on a seconded basis and will be employed by the host. There is an expectation that the Director of Shared Services, who will be appointed around March/April will have an influence on the appointment in conjunction with one or more of the the Chief Executives.If a suitable internal candidate exists from one of the four councils, the presumption is the post will not be advertised externally, but recruited internally. Once recruited the Transformation Manager will work with his or her equivalents as a project team to deliver the business case for creating the joint service.
- 8.8 The appointed Transformation Manager will take the lead in building the business case, on which to plan the design of the joint services and an officer structure to deliver it based on what is affordable. This will include an output based specification within the budget resources available from the four councils and minimum service standards. This package, developed jointly with the Director of Shared Services, would in effect provide a service offer with a price to the four clients around October/November, for their consideration and approval. Under the scheme of delegation agreed by Members, the EKF will oversee the final structure and configuration of each service placed in the hosting arrangement.
- 8.9 Each Chief Executive will need to consider how he is to support the members of the project team. In each service area there will also be involvement in staff support from; ICT, finance, legal, HR as well as the service itself. The project group need a central fund on which it can draw, for example for inter-service evaluation, events, and the validation of the project groups analysis (especially around phasing the delegation of services to the host).The project group will be tasked with identifying in more detail what actual sums will be needed to deliver the project in full. It is also to be assumed that disruption to services is to be avoided as far as possible.
- 8.10 Once agreed, services would legally transfer to EKJAC and through them the host authority would assume responsibility along with staff and other relevant costs. Services could remain at their present location and be managed from a distance. Although there might be no immediate change to the cost base for individual authorities, moving to a shared baseline service specification with the ability to 'top up' if individual councils so choose will have an impact on the cost base in the medium to long term for all four councils.

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- 8.11 By the quote no “immediate change to the cost base” this is taken to mean that as from the council decisions approving this project, no individual council will undertake a significant restructure of its service without prior consultation with the other councils to ensure that it doesn’t have a negative impact on the future viability of that service. This is to ensure that staff and other resources are protected and that a council’s service is put forward on its true cost base rather than being artificially inflated or deflated. However, this could create a tension when one council is satisfied with a level of service below the minimum baseline agreed by the others.

## **9.0 Features of residual council and retained services**

- 9.1 All four councils have the option of retaining those services they wish to keep in-house. The phasing programme assumes services that constitute the democratic core of the councils (committee administration, policy support, legal advice, elections, etc) will stay under the direct control of each council.
- 9.2 The project group have also made the assumption that there are several services that because of their value in delivering each council’s strategic priorities (regeneration, cultural services, community development, tourism, leisure, etc), Members would prefer to keep these services in-house (these proposed retained services are shown in appendix 4). There are also issues around each council investing in these discretionary services at different levels based on their relative priority. This therefore resolves the issue of why it is suggested these services are not included in the hosting or JSG arrangement. A common baseline of service and costs would be difficult to establish across the four councils at a level acceptable to all.

## **10. Member involvement in the process**

- 10.1 The councils will retain their status as independent, separately elected bodies. Policy decisions, forward plans, strategies, budgets etc will still be decided by each of the four councils. 10.2 A “democratic core” of services will still be kept by each council to carry out the statutory functions e.g. committee services, legal advice and policy support. There will also be a retained client role for commissioning services and monitoring outputs through a formal contract or SLA arrangement with the host authority or the JSG. The performance of services delivered through the host authority arrangement will also be held to account by the scrutiny committees of each of the four councils.
- 10.2 Each council will have the option of deciding which services transfer into the hosting or JSG arrangement and which remain under the control of the individual council. Some councils may wish to keep in-house high profile “place shaping” services like regeneration, culture,



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leisure etc, which are seen as key to delivering the authority's strategic priorities.

- 10.3 Member involvement to date in the development of the shared service models has largely been at the Cabinet/Executive level for each of the four councils and a Member sounding board drawing on one Member from each council. Joint Cabinet/Executive meetings to shape and steer the proposals emerging from the officer project group and the Chief Executives have been held on 7 July and 23 September. The Member sounding board, selected from Members with an interest or expertise in joint service delivery issues, scrutinises officers proposals and reports before they reach the joint Cabinet/Executive meetings. The Member sounding board has met on 15 September and 16 November.
- 10.4 The Member Sounding Board would continue to act as a critical friend through the course of the next phase in order to provide Members with some reassurance that the programme was being carefully monitored. This point was made in recognition of the tension between the desire to become intimately involved in the formulation of the service at Member level and the desire to see the timetable met and for reporting back to Members to be on an exception basis only.
- 10.5 Each council has planned a programme of briefings to ensure Members are properly engaged in this process and brought up to speed with developments

## **11. Proposed governance arrangements**

- 11.1 Decisions on business cases with associated service specifications, SLAs, staffing structures, etc for particular services will be delegated by the four councils to their Chief Executives. On receiving the business case from the Director for Shared Services, the Chief Executives will consult their respective leaders and receive advice from their Monitoring Officers, S151 Officers and the project group.
- 11.2 For the future it is assumed that on or about February 2011 and February 2012 each council will approve an outline business case for a tranche of services which each council will then delegate to its Chief Executive in a similar way to what is currently proposed ..
- 11.3 Within the host authority the shared service arrangement will be treated as organisationally discrete, and not as part of the host authority's management structure. The host Chief Executive (as head of paid service) will be expected to have some line management responsibility for the Director of Shared Services. Management decisions affecting shared services vested with the host authority would be taken by the Director of Shared Services employed by the host but under overall direction of EKJAC rather than the host council

These decisions will in practice be taken in consultation with the EKF. It is assumed that unless a suitable candidate is identified within one of the four councils, the post will be advertised externally. Senior Members on advice from the Chief Executives from each council will make the appointment. Any other posts created below, this will be appointed by the Director for Shared Services and if necessary a panel drawn from the four Chief Executives.

- 11.4 Given the scale and complexity of the work involved in creating shared services there is a strong presumption in favour of rapid phasing of agreed services over to the hosting arrangement. Therefore the principle is set out that once each council agrees which service transfers over to the host and when, the substantive detail of how this is managed is delegated to the four Chief Executives individually who will consult each other through the vehicle of the East Kent Forum.
- 11.5 It is proposed to effect the transfer of relevant services through three annual tranches starting in April 2011. Member scrutiny of the service business cases for each tranche would be on an exceptional basis only. Such activity would have to be time limited and be in accordance with the following criteria: projected savings targets were unlikely to be met; significant information or key facts were absent from the business service case, or if there was disagreement at the EKF as to the structure, funding arrangements or configuration of the new shared service. Although each council will approve the phasing of individual services through the three tranches, it is assumed this will be at a high level of scrutiny asking questions around principle – what will the new shared service look like? how much will it cost? what are the key milestones in setting up the shared service?, etc – not detailed matters.
- 11.6 There is a large element of trust built into this proposed way of working with Members, allowing senior managers to lead on the substantive issues around establishing shared services and carrying out appropriate consultation with Members.

The process of decision making for approving service business cases is as follows:

- Strategic case for shared services prepared by Project Group
- Proposed phasing of services to hosting arrangement
- Template for service specific business cases (see appendix 5)
- All included in the shared service proposal to be adopted by the four councils by March 2010 following EKJAC recommendation in December 2009

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- Responsibility for developing service business cases given to service project teams using adopted template. Designated lead officers to complete business case template and agreed by EKF
  - Lead officer to work with the service project team (consisting of the four Heads of Service or equivalent) in assembling the information and data needed for the completion of the business case
  - Director of Shared Services to have strategic overview of the hosting arrangement and ensuring service business cases are completed on time and phasing achieved
  - Project group to work closely with Director of Shared Services in helping lead officers prepare service business cases and being a source of advice and challenge for the EKF
  - Chief Executives in consultation with their Leaders to approve business cases subject to criteria.
  - Referral by the Chief Executives to Members for decision will occur if the service business case fails to meet the two following conditions: 10% revenue budget savings per annum by the end of the second year cannot be delivered; and levels of performance or standards of service for the new shared service cannot achieve satisfactory levels. Not meeting one or both of these conditions will trigger the involvement of Members in making a decision about transferring the service to the hosting arrangement or not. A Chief Executive may refer this to the Executive or a committee as appropriate.

11.7 A delegation to EKJAC can be reversed by one of the councils. In practice the business case and the arrangements between the parties will address an exit strategy. In most, if not all cases, the arrangements will provide that withdrawal of a party can only take place on terms which are likely to include a minimum period of notice and compensatory provisions for the other authorities if they incur costs as a result of the withdrawal.

## 12. Risks for the hosting arrangement and Joint Service Group (JSG)

12.1 The high level risks have been identified at this early stage as follows:

- **Employment:** The hosting arrangement and JSG depends on an harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment to a level that is financially acceptable to all four councils, which in turn means revised pay grades, equal pay evaluations and bringing together pension rights and liabilities.

There might also be a risk of key staff leaving the employ of the four councils if the transfer of services to the hosting arrangement or JSG becomes protracted.

- **Financial:** The host council will be the employer and under the JSG a new employment body would be created. These carry significant overheads, which would have to be covered through efficiency savings as services transfer over. Each council will become a partner in underwriting the liabilities of the JSG, such as future pension liabilities. Savings will depend on more effective utilisation of technology, rationalising business processes and a reduction in the number of managers. The latter assumes some redundancy costs. There will be the need for some upfront investment, eg new ICT systems, which relies on future savings to provide sufficient payback.
- **Technological:** The challenge of working across four districts requires good communications links to work between the sites. The complexity of ICT systems and the scale of data transfer means that communication links must be effective and resilient enough to deal with service needs.
- **Political:** The hosting arrangement or JSG will take time to put in place and there is a risk that one or more of the four councils decides to reconsider support for the hosting arrangement or the JSG prior to all the agreed services in the programme being transferred. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring consistent political support for the hosting arrangement or JSG from across all four councils and that communications to members on the development of the hosting arrangement or the JSG is kept regular and explained in an intelligible way. A member engagements strategy will be a crucial element of the project management framework.

A definitive list of which services, functions and assets stay under the purview of each council will be developed, with a justification of why they need to stay in-house.

- **Legal:** Joint working with a joint committee and a hosting arrangement is permissible under existing legislation. The legal powers to establish an JSG are not clear at this time. Currently under Section 101 and Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and relevant regulations a local authority may delegate a function to a joint committee, officer or another council. This excludes an outside body for most functions unless permitted under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994. Giving joint committees separate legal status or broadening the wellbeing power in the Local Government Act 2000 would be helpful.

Recent case law indicates that the creation of a JSG under the usual well-being powers solely for the purpose of saving money is not lawful. It is assumed this will be addressed by the Government in the near future. Until it is the justification for the creation of an JSG, it

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has to be directly referable to the well-being of the communities of the respective Councils, not simply beneficial to the Councils themselves.

**13. Workforce plan (harmonisation of employment terms and conditions, etc)**

13.1 Chief Executives have commissioned this already from the Head of the Shared HR Service .

**14. Future investment needs for the project**

14.1 As well as the appointment of the Director of Shared Services, it will be necessary to recruit, possibly through secondment, a project manager to produce and manage on a day-to-day basis the overall project plan for monitoring the delivery of key milestones associated with each service to be transferred. Other resources might need to be bought in as the requirements of the project become clearer. It is assumed the Director will be appointed on a two year basis to establish and oversee the host or JSG arrangements.

14.2 The demands on the time of the Chief Executives, project group and the designated lead officers for each transferring service should not be underestimated, in seeing this very ambitious project through to its conclusion.

14.3 There will be a huge opportunity cost involved for senior managers across all four districts.

**15. Milestones and timetable to establish hosting arrangement**

9 December	East Kent Joint Cabinet meeting
14 December	East Kent Joint Scrutiny Committee
18 December	East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee
6 January	Canterbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11 January	Dover Cabinet
20 January	Dover Scrutiny Policy and Performance Committee
4 February	Canterbury Executive Thanet Overview & Scrutiny Panel
8 February	Dover Cabinet
11 February	Thanet Cabinet
17 February	Shepway Cabinet
18 February	Canterbury Council
23 February	Thanet Council
3 March	Dover Council
17 March	Shepway Council

**16. Recommendation for taking forward the proposal**

The East Kent District Councils of Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, The District Council of Shepway and Thanet District Council ("the East Kent Authorities") are minded to merge the delivery of each of the services generally described as ICT, face to face and contact centre customer services, revenues and benefits, residual housing services and building control ("the services") between two or more of them subject to the following process:-

- a) A business case or business cases shall be prepared in respect of each of the services which shall amongst other things describe the proposed merged service, the arrangements between the parties, the savings to be achieved both generally and for each Council and the level of service it is proposed to provide, such business cases to be presented in an agreed format to each of the East Kent Authorities.
- b) Each of the East Kent Authorities shall delegate to its Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader the power to approve a business case on its behalf mindful that the business case shows to his satisfaction that savings of 10% against the existing combined budgets must be achieved in the first two years and that an acceptable level of service to his council can be delivered.
- c) If the Chief Executive is not so satisfied for those or any other reasons he shall expeditiously refer the business case for consideration to the Council's executive if it concerns an executive function or to the appropriate committee if it is a council function
- d) If The Chief Executive or the executive or the committee as the case may be is so satisfied then a delegation to the East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee shall thereupon occur of the powers and duties of the Council as defined in the business case such delegation to take effect on 1st April 2011 or such other date or dates as the Chief Executives of the East Kent Authorities who have made similar delegations shall mutually agree in respect of that service.
- e) The East Kent Joint Arrangements Committee will delegate such powers to officers as it thinks fit in relation to the services and is requested to appoint one of the East Kent Authorities as the host authority by whom all such officers will be employed.
- f) Vacancy management arrangements shall be developed by the Chief Executives of the East Kent Authorities in relation to each of the services proposed to be merged pending such merger
- g) Any decision regarding the delivery of the services by other methods by each of the East Kent Authorities be deferred and be reconsidered no earlier than May 2011.

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- h) To authorise the Chief Executives of each of the East Kent Authorities to take any steps necessary on behalf of their authorities to explore or facilitate the joint delivery of the services.
  - i) To appoint the Director of Shared Services with the intent he or she will take up their post as quickly as possible after the East Kent Authorities have adopted these proposals.

## Appendix 1

**Indicative Redundancy Costs**

To assist in the initial preparation of a business case the table below has been produced, giving indicative statutory redundancy figures:

		Salary			
		£20k	£30k	£40k	£50k
Service Length	5 years	1,923	2,885	3,846	4,808
	10 years	3,846	5,769	7,692	9,615
	15 years	5,769	8,654	11,538	14,423
	20 years	8,462	12,692	16,923	21,154
	25 years	9,423	14,135	18,846	23,558

**Indicative Per Capita Premises Fit-Out Costs**

In practice the cost of fitting out premises will vary from service to service, and premises to premises. However, at the business case stage it is unlikely that the specific premises will have been identified, and that an accurate estimate can be calculated.

In order to progress this, the premises fit-out costs of the HR service will be used. This provided accommodation for 28 staff, and the main costs were:

	Type of Costs	Costs £k
1	Partitions, redecorations and carpeting	22.0
2	Desks and other furniture	20.0
3	Cabling	0.0
4	Telephony	0.0
5	PCs and laptops	21.0
6	Removals	1.0
7	Re-location and travel costs	1.1
<b>8</b>	<b>Total for 28 staff</b>	<b>65.1</b>
9	Average per capita cost	2.3



### Indicative ICT Systems

The costs of replacing systems will vary significantly from authority to authority, and from supplier to supplier.

However, when reviewing business cases it is important to have some broad indication of the potential scale of expenditure.

The table below provides a broad indication of the historic costs and age of the main IT systems within Dover District Council:

System	DDC <sup>4</sup>	
	Age	£k
Accounting	10	200
Housing <sup>1</sup>	4	400
Revenues and Benefits	10	250
Cash Receipting <sup>2</sup>	0	50
CRM	4	300
Telephony <sup>3</sup>	14	100

Notes:

- 1 Housing system support ends in 2013; an alternative will be required before then (DDC or shared service).
- 2 Cash Receipting/Income is planned to go live December 2009.
- 3 The telephone system was replaced in 2005-2006.
- 4 There are no plans or requirements to upgrade/replace any of the other major systems, as they are providing sufficient functionality, and are being maintained / enhanced by the suppliers.

## **East Kent Shared Services**

### **Indicative Potential Savings from Joint Working**

#### **Guidance Notes**

##### Service Definitions

This table is intended to be indicative. The service definitions have to be very general. Don't agonise over precise definitions.

##### Financial Year

2009/10 budgets have been utilised, since these are complete and available. Comments have been added where there are significant service / budget changes expected in 2010/11, however these have not been incorporated into the figures.

##### Rest of the Council

This line is there to reconcile to the total budget. The aim is to avoid understatement that has led to puzzling outcomes in the Price Book.

##### Direct Service Expenditure

Direct service expenditure has been used. This excludes capital charges and FRS17 pension adjustments, because historic decisions and assets could otherwise distort the picture. Central support costs & recharges have also been excluded to prevent the risk of double counting and to show the direct cost of each service in its own right. The aim is to give a sense of the size of each service.

##### Net Service Expenditure

The aim is to provide a link to overall net service expenditure.

##### F.T.E. & Salary Costs

Again, provides indicative scope for savings.

##### Potential Savings

This is currently based on 5% of salary costs for each area. No consideration has been given at this time to the practicality of achieving this through the link to the saving of complete posts.

##### S.151 Officer Sign Off

The figures included are currently provisional and subject to Section 151 Officer review.

	1. Direct Service Expenditure  £	2. Direct Service Income  £	3. Net Direct Expenditure  £	4. F.T.E.	5. Salary Costs  £	6. Potential Saving (10% of Salaries)  £	Notes / Comments
<b>Central support and Back office services</b>							
CE, Directors / Heads of Service, PAs & WPOs	4,024,510	-400	4,024,110	52	3,255,250	325,525	
Personnel and Payroll	1,943,480	-4,750	1,938,730	32	1,206,860	120,686	Costs based on 09/10 original budget before shared service implementation
Finance accountancy	3,294,998	-50,338	3,244,661	76	3,034,150	303,415	NB - TDC & CCC budgeting for savings in 2010/11
Procurement	340,860	-10,160	330,700	10	329,110	32,911	
ICT	4,632,211	-12,160	4,620,051	68	2,688,050	268,805	
Legal Services	1,645,040	-125,320	1,519,720	31	1,395,860	139,586	
Policy and Performance	1,130,142	-13,252	1,116,889	23	1,001,520	100,152	

	<b>1. Direct Service Expenditure</b>	<b>2. Direct Service Income</b>	<b>3. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>4. F.T.E.</b>	<b>5. Salary Costs</b>	<b>6. Potential Saving (10% of Salaries)</b>	<b>Notes / Comments</b>
	£	£	£		£	£	
Mail services	676,760	-500	676,260	17	391,880	39,188	
Printing services	1,130,170	-16,750	1,113,420	14	434,710	43,471	
Customer services	3,511,760	-6,000	3,505,760	136	3,489,940	348,994	
Democratic Services (including elections)	3,609,770	-241,750	3,368,020	42	1,394,680	139,468	
Marketing & Communications	1,126,220	-115,000	1,011,220	22	854,630	85,463	NB - TDC budgeting for post savings in 2010/11
<b><u>Predominately statutory services</u></b>							
Development Control	3,900,040	-2,669,200	1,230,840	90	3,172,720	317,272	
Planning Policy	1,905,000	-41,520	1,863,480	33	1,299,770	219,977	
Building Control	2,110,790	-1,757,120	353,670	43	1,807,750	180,775	

	<b>1. Direct Service Expenditure</b>	<b>2. Direct Service Income</b>	<b>3. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>4. F.T.E.</b>	<b>5. Salary Costs</b>	<b>6. Potential Saving (10% of Salaries)</b>	<b>Notes / Comments</b>
	£	£	£		£	£	
Environmental Health	3,490,120	-639,850	2,850,270	65	2,376,520	237,652	
Land charges	598,620	-1,101,700	-503,080	7	196,340	19,634	
Revenues & Benefits	9,409,930	-4,595,700	4,814,230	252	7,664,470	766,447	NB - TDC budgeting for £400k savings against this in 2010/11. DDC budgeting for £120k pa saving.
Subsidy Payments / Income	180,187,760	-183,714,620	-3,526,860	0	0	0	
Waste collection & recycling	14,128,910	-2,492,120	11,636,790	194	4,161,390	416,139	
Street cleansing	4,090,430	-139,110	3,951,320	41	825,700	82,570	
Grounds maintenance	5,688,600	-170,120	5,518,480	125	2,378,560	237,856	
Parks & Open Spaces	1,575,040	-534,170	1,040,870	14	468,430	46,843	

	<b>1. Direct Service Expenditure</b>  £	<b>2. Direct Service Income</b>  £	<b>3. Net Direct Expenditure</b>  £	<b>4. F.T.E.</b>	<b>5. Salary Costs</b>  £	<b>6. Potential Saving (10% of Salaries)</b>  £	<b>Notes / Comments</b>
Beaches & Foreshores	944,000	-541,770	402,230	16	297,610	29,761	
Licensing	1,357,100	-929,320	427,780	35	1,158,820	115,882	
GF Housing	5,996,150	-3,334,550	2,661,600	79	2,873,170	287,317	
<b><u>Predominately non statutory services</u></b>							
Property	6,214,810	-6,668,700	-453,890	100	3,916,430	391,643	
Cemeteries, Crematoria & Closed Churchyards	804,950	-1,366,490	-561,540	15	295,840	29,584	NB - TDC manages a Crematorium
Public Conveniences	1,369,640	-79,230	1,290,410	5	114,480	11,448	
Council Offices	2,781,380	-145,120	2,636,260	26	614,140	61,414	NB - CCC will be budgeting for 1 divisional office closure in 2010/11

	<b>1. Direct Service Expenditure</b>	<b>2. Direct Service Income</b>	<b>3. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>4. F.T.E.</b>	<b>5. Salary Costs</b>	<b>6. Potential Saving (10% of Salaries)</b>	<b>Notes / Comments</b>
	£	£	£		£	£	
Parking	7,500,700	-12,600,710	-5,100,010	103	2,600,840	260,084	
Leisure Services (including leisure trusts)	2,713,810	-709,720	2,004,090	25	787,370	78,737	
Community Development	2,966,060	-1,552,880	1,413,180	47	1,255,710	125,571	
Community Safety (including CCTV)	3,395,950	-1,283,970	2,111,980	71	2,032,870	203,287	
Cultural development	2,980,250	-911,270	2,068,980	40	1,059,980	105,998	
Museums	1,338,520	-270,890	1,067,630	18	800,640	80,064	
Regeneration & Economic Development	2,397,884	-457,410	1,940,474	36	1,543,920	154,392	
Tourism	1,761,140	-455,410	1,305,730	28	833,200	83,320	

	<b>1. Direct Service Expenditure</b>	<b>2. Direct Service Income</b>	<b>3. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>4. F.T.E.</b>	<b>5. Salary Costs</b>	<b>6. Potential Saving (10% of Salaries)</b>	<b>Notes / Comments</b>
	£	£	£		£	£	
Traffic & Transportation	769,956	-77,650	692,306	9	318,270	31,827	
Concessionary Fares	6,676,880	-1,830,730	4,846,150	3	56,200	5,620	
<b><u>Corporate / Reconciliation Information</u></b>							
Backfunding	7,412,800	-466,740	6,946,060	0	1,340,000	134,000	
Recharges to Non-GF budgets	-5,751,260	0	-5,751,260	0	0	0	Excludes figures from Thanet
Rest of the Council	10,497,750	-5,429,700	5,068,050	126	3,983,530	398,353	Excludes figures from Thanet
<b>Total (should reconcile to net service expenditure and F.T.E.)</b>	<b>217,145,690</b>	<b>-158,656,140</b>	<b>58,489,550</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>50,017,550</b>	<b>6,971,131</b>	Excludes figures from Thanet



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## **Protocols and Guidance for Developing Joint Working Business Cases**

### **Overview**

A number of issues were identified and considered in the development of the Joint HR project. These notes attempt to consolidate the lessons from the Joint HR project into more general guidelines, that should be broadly applicable to all projects.

This approach will serve to:-

- provide a degree of certainty to partners in relation to the “rules” facilitate the production of business cases
- ensure that these issues are debated once, rather than being debated during every project.

It is proposed that the following protocols are adopted. It is also recognised that in some cases, it may, exceptionally, be necessary to vary these protocols, but they should be adopted as the default options.

The key areas considered below are:-

- a) Redundancy Costs
- b) Early Retirement Costs
- c) Staff Protection Costs
- d) Treatment of backfunding
- e) Charges to users
- f) Capital assets
- g) Group accounts
- h) Audit fees
- i) Premises fit-out costs
- j) IT Systems

### **a) Redundancy Costs**

The overriding principles in developing these guidelines are that:

- Partners will pool statutory costs and will share them equally as a set-up cost  
If partnership working is to be successful, then the impact of redundancy has to be shared by the partners<sup>1</sup>. This approach has to be agreed at the outset, since decisions about redundancy will be led by the head of the new service, and are therefore once the joint service is initiated they will generally be outside of the direct control of the partners.
- The costs of enhancements will be charged back to the original partner  
Eventually it is to be hoped that the partners will adopt common terms and conditions, including those relating to redundancy. However, until this happens, the costs of enhancements beyond the statutory minimum, will be recharged to the original authority that conferred these extra benefits on the staff.

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<sup>1</sup> If all the staff to be made redundant following creation of a joint service originated from one or two of the partners and were recharged, in full, back to those partners, then the project could be prohibitive to those partners.

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- **Transfer of Staff to a Joint Service**

It is essential that partners do not undermine mutual trust by transferring staff into a joint service as a means of obtaining contributions from other partners towards redundancy costs.

To assist in the initial preparation of a business case the table below has been produced, giving indicative statutory redundancy figures.

		Salary			
		£20k	£30k	£40k	£50k
Service Length	5 years	1,923	2,885	3,846	4,808
	10	3,846	5,769	7,692	9,615
	15	5,769	8,654	11,538	14,423
	20	8,462	12,692	16,923	21,154
	25	9,423	14,135	18,846	23,558

### b) Early Retirement Costs

The basic actuarial strain arising from early retirement will be created as a partnership cost to be shared between the partners. Any actuarial strain arising from any enhancements (added years etc) will be treated as a direct charge back to the authority that conferred the benefit on their staff. It is assumed that all such costs will be a set-up cost of the partnership. They will not be an on-going cost to the partnership.

### c) Staff Protection Costs

The baseline minimum staff protection costs are assumed to be a stepped reduction in protection of terms and conditions over 3 years. The costs of this protection will be treated as a cost of the partnership and will be included in the recharges over the first 3 years.

The costs of additional protection, above the baseline level set out above (such as full protection of terms and conditions for 3 years) will be treated as a specific cost to the authority that conferred the benefit and will be recharged directly to that authority.

### d) Treatment of Pension Fund Backfunding

“Backfunding” is the cost, to employers, of additional pension fund contributions to make up any shortfall in the pension fund, caused by a number of factors including lower than expected investment performance by the fund, increased longevity of members, the age profile of members (the “maturity of the scheme”), reduced returns on gilts etc.

An additional key factor is the way in which employers choose to make contributions to the deficit. In the past the normal practice was to add an employers on-cost to the basic salary cost, in order to generate the total payment to the pension fund. This on-cost rate was determined by the actuaries at every triennial valuation, on an authority by authority basis, and was typically designed to correct the deficit in the future – typically over the next 20 years.

This approach worked while staff numbers were relatively stable. However, as staff numbers (and hence the aggregate value of basic pay) declined, then so did the overall contribution to the deficit, thus worsening the deficit and leading to increased contribution rates at the next triennial valuation. For this reason, many authorities have switched to making a specific fixed annual lump sum contribution to the deficit (for DDC this is about £1.7m pa) regardless of any decline in staff numbers.

The transfer of large numbers of staff, and the treatment of any deficit associated with those staff, therefore has potentially profound effects upon the original authority, the hosting authority and any SSV.

It will have an even more profound effect if a hosted service is wound up, since the host could potentially find itself responsible for the pension fund deficit of the transferred staff.

In the recent joint working initiatives (Internal Audit and HR) the staff numbers have not been large enough for these issues to have been formally recognised and addressed. It should also be noted that employers have the discretion to agree the basis of the pension fund transfer values of staff (ie with a deficit, or fully funded), but again, this has never been formally addressed in the recent past, and the Pension Fund managers have not asked for a view from the authorities involved as to the preferences in relation to transfer values.

In order to address these issues it is proposed that the following approach to the hosted service is investigated:-

- A separate pension fund registration is set up for the hosted service. KCC have been approached, but the practicality will depend on how many separate hosted services are created.
- Staff will transfer to the hosted service with a fully funded transfer value. This will have the effect of leaving the deficit with the original employer where it arose.
- It may also have the effect that, when staff numbers in the partner authorities have dwindled, then the backfunding contribution will appear disproportionately large in relation to the salary base. This will create a “presentational” problem, rather than a financial one – the deficit existed anyway, it is simply a matter of where it appears in the accounts.
- The hosted service costs will include on-going pension fund contributions, and these will be recovered via charges to users.
- Over time, the hosted services pension fund may accrue its own deficit (or surplus) and will need to adjust contributions accordingly. These changes in costs will be included in the recharges to users.
- If the hosted service is wound up, then any pension fund deficit or surplus will need to be returned to the partner authorities. This should be done pro rata to the charges for the service since its inception, or over the last 5 years.

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- If the service has expanded to provide services to “non partner” authorities, this bears the risk that staff numbers, and potential deficits, will have grown, but if the service is subsequently closed, then the increased deficit will fall solely on the partners.
  - For employees who are recruited to the hosted service or SSV (rather than transferees) it is assumed that new terms and conditions will apply, and these will not include the same pension arrangements and entitlements.

More work is needed to establish the treatment of any pension fund deficit that could arise under the SSV and the timescale within which the deficit must be addressed. If the timescale for the SSV to make up any deficit is short, then creation of an SSV could lead to higher pension fund costs being incurred and included in recharges to the partners in the short term.

### **e) Charges to Users**

The two main alternatives are:-

- Charge a unit cost to the users, so that the set-up costs are recovered over, say, the first 5 years of the service. This leaves the host with a cash-flow deficit, but recharges the set-up to users, pro rata to useage. It marginally favours the smaller authorities.
- Share set-up costs equally between partners, then charge the annual costs pro rata to useage. This is simpler, and avoids the cash-flow issues, but marginally favours the bigger authorities.

It is proposed that the second of the 2 options above is adopted, but that if the service is subsequently provided to non partners, that they pay a premium, to reflect the set up costs and the risks, and that this premium is used to reduce the costs to the partners.

### **f) Ownership, Replacement and Charging for Assets**

Some of the services will require the use of / access to significant capital assets. This section has not been written to consider the general issues, but it is likely that these will mostly relate to ICT assets.<sup>2</sup>

The main issues to consider are:

- Asset ownership
- Financing of capital assets
- Providing for asset replacement
- Accounting and charging treatment

#### **Asset Ownership**

Where the host, or SSV, requires access to, or the use of, significant assets, the ownership of that asset will become an issue.

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<sup>2</sup> This section assumes that the asset will remain with the original partner(s), the host or the SSV. If a private sector partner is included for the provision of some ICT services, then they may take over ownership of the assets, and all associated costs will be included in their fee.

Options include:

- Each partner retains their own systems – this may prevent a full centralisation / standardisation of the service and the full achievement of potential savings.
- One partner takes ownership of existing systems, or provides one system.
- The existing system(s) are transferred into an SSV or the SSV procures a new system.

Determining the best option requires consideration of the implications of the different accounting approaches to be adopted by the host (local authority accounting) and an SSV (commercial accounting).

### **Financing of capital assets**

Typically, a local authority finances its capital assets through one of:

- Capital receipts
- Borrowing
- Capital grant

Having purchased the asset, there is a depreciation charge in the accounts, but this is reversed out, so that there is no charge to the tax payer for depreciation and the true total revenue costs of services is understated. The only revenue cost is likely to arise from Minimum Revenue Provisions (MRPs) to provide for the repayment of the borrowing, if any borrowing has been used to finance the assets.

### **Providing for Asset Replacement**

Local authorities do not, generally, make provision for the replacement of assets through their life, but if the asset is used for the production of a joint service, then failure to include a charge for the use of the asset means that some of the partners may, effectively, be getting access to, or use of, an asset for free.

### **Accounting and Charging Treatment**

It is proposed that:

- where an asset is provided by one partner, for the use of all, a depreciation charge is introduced into the costing, and included in the unit costs. In this way, all partners will pay an equitable share of the costs.
- Where an asset is to be replaced, or purchased for joint working:
  - if one partner funds the asset replacement, then it can charge “depreciation” to the others.
  - if all partners share in the cost of the replacement, then the depreciation charge is not required.
- If the service is being provided by an SSV, then it will be necessary to decide whether the SSV will own the service assets, or whether the asset should stay in the ownership of one, or more, of the partners.

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- If the SSV is to own the assets then it will have to be given the partner(s) assets, or sufficient finance to procure them itself. It would then include a depreciation charge in the recharges.
  - if the SSV is also expected to finance the replacement of the assets in the future, it may need to add to its recharges so that it can build up sufficient reserves to make the purchases.

Alternatively, it may be possible for the partners to make capital grants to the SSV, to finance the purchase. This would enable partners to continue to apply capital receipts (should they have them) for this purpose, but could lead to problems if some of the partners are unable to finance the grant.

#### **g) Group Accounts with an SSV**

It is anticipated that, by owning 25% of the SSV, and by not having overall control vested within one partner, that the issue of group accounts will not arise. However, the required treatment under IFRS will have to be examined to ensure that all efforts are made to avoid the requirements of group accounting, and any requirement to consolidate the SSV into the partners' accounts.

#### **h) Audit Fees**

Joint working is likely to increase overall audit fees. The main considerations are:-

- Hosted services will require additional auditing to check that the recharging of the costs of such services are reasonable and equitable, and that the accounting treatment for assets etc are reasonable.
  - The SSV is likely to require its own audit on its accounts, as well as some involvement from the audit commission to check that the recharging of the costs of such services are reasonable and equitable, and that the accounting treatment for assets etc are reasonable.
- The overall EKJAC arrangements are also likely to be subject to some degree of audit review.

#### **i) Premises Fit-Out Costs**

In practice the cost of fitting out premises will vary from service to service, and premises to premises. However, at the business case stage it is unlikely that the specific premises will have been identified, and that an accurate estimate can be calculated.

In order to progress this, the premises fit-out costs of the HR service will be used. This provided accommodation for 28 staff, and the main costs were:-

	Type of Costs	Costs £k
1	Partitions, redecorations and carpeting	22.0
2	Desks and other furniture	20.0
3	Cabling	0.0
4	Telephony	0.0
5	PCs and laptops	21.0
6	Removals	1.0
7	Re-location and travel costs	1.1
<b>8</b>	<b>Total for 28 staff</b>	<b>65.1</b>
9	Average per capita cost	2.3

### j) IT Systems

The costs of replacing systems will vary significantly from authority to authority, and from supplier to supplier.

However, when reviewing business cases it is important to have some broad indication of the potential scale of expenditure.

The table below provides a broad indication of the costs and age of the main IT systems within Dover District Council:

System	DDC	
	Age	£k
Accounting	10	200
Housing	4	400
Revenues and Benefits	10	250
Cash Receipting	0	50
CRM	4	300
Telephony	14	100

**8. Proposed phasing programme of shared services to the host authority****Appendix 3****Criteria for prioritising shared services and scores agreed by the East Kent Shared Services Project Group**

Scoring is based on answering each criterion yes or no, with yes scoring one point. Because of the importance of generating savings the first criterion scores three points. The assumption is made that services with the highest scores transfer over to the hosting arrangement first. It is suggested that four tranches (two tranches per year 2011/12 and 2012/13) are agreed to make the programme more manageable. Some of the services listed will remain in each of the four councils as residual services. This is because they are part of the democratic core for each of the four councils or these are services that contribute to delivering "place shaping" objectives set out in each council's strategic priorities.

	<b>1. Are there potentially significant savings to be made?</b>	<b>2. Are the same core ICT systems and software used by two or more districts?</b>	<b>3. Are these Services broadly delivered in the same way</b>	<b>4. Is it difficult to maintain the resilience of the service?</b>	<b>5. Is the same provider used to deliver this service shared by two or more of the districts?</b>	<b>6. Is there a track record of collaborative working for this service between two or more districts?</b>	<b>7. Is this service key to the hosting arrangement being able to deliver its services from the beginning?</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Date to start under the hosting arrangement</b>
ICT	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	April 2011
Revenues & Benefits	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	April 2011
Contact Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	8	April 2011



	<b>1. Are there potentially significant savings to be made?</b>	<b>2. Are the same core ICT systems and software used by two or more districts?</b>	<b>3. Are these Services broadly delivered in the same way</b>	<b>4. Is it difficult to maintain the resilience of the service?</b>	<b>5. Is the same provider used to deliver this service shared by two or more of the districts?</b>	<b>6. Is there a track record of collaborative working for this service between two or more districts?</b>	<b>7. Is this service key to the hosting arrangement being able to deliver its services from the beginning?</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Date to start under the hosting arrangement</b>
Face-to-face customer services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	8	April 2011
Finance transactional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	7	April 2012
Procurement	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	7	April 2012
Building Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	7	April 2011
Printing services	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	6	April 2012
Development Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	6	April 2012

	<b>1. Are there potentially significant savings to be made?</b>	<b>2. Are the same core ICT systems and software used by two or more districts?</b>	<b>3. Are these Services broadly delivered in the same way</b>	<b>4. Is it difficult to maintain the resilience of the service?</b>	<b>5. Is the same provider used to deliver this service shared by two or more of the districts?</b>	<b>6. Is there a track record of collaborative working for this service between two or more districts?</b>	<b>7. Is this service key to the hosting arrangement being able to deliver its services from the beginning?</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Date to start under the hosting arrangement</b>
Environmental Health	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	6	April 2012
Development Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	6	April 2012
Mail services	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	6	April 2012
Finance accountancy	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	5	April 2012
Community Safety	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	5	April 2013
Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	5	April 2013
Land charges	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	5	April 2013

	<b>1. Are there potentially significant savings to be made?</b>	<b>2. Are the same core ICT systems and software used by two or more districts?</b>	<b>3. Are these Services broadly delivered in the same way</b>	<b>4. Is it difficult to maintain the resilience of the service?</b>	<b>5. Is the same provider used to deliver this service shared by two or more of the districts?</b>	<b>6. Is there a track record of collaborative working for this service between two or more districts?</b>	<b>7. Is this service key to the hosting arrangement being able to deliver its services from the beginning?</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Date to start under the hosting arrangement</b>
Licensing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	5	April 2013
Engineering	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	5	April 2012
Legal Services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	4	April 2013
Property	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	4	April 2013
Grounds maintenance	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	4	October 2013

**East Kent shared services under the hosting arrangement**

**Appendix 4**

**Based on project group scoring matrix**

Agreed services to be transferred to the hosting arrangement over a three year period in annual tranches starting in April 2011

September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources and Payroll</li> </ul>	<p>Services retained by each authority because of “democratic core” or “place shaping” reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance (corporate)</li> <li>• Legal (corporate)</li> <li>• Democratic services</li> <li>• Elections</li> <li>• Policy &amp; Scrutiny</li> <li>• Theatres/museums</li> <li>• Cultural development</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Planning policy</li> <li>• Community development</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Strategic marketing &amp; communications</li> <li>• Leisure services</li> <li>• Property – client</li> <li>• Traffic &amp; Transportation</li> </ul>
April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• Contact Centre</li> <li>• Face-to-face customer services (Gateways)</li> <li>• Revenues and Benefits</li> <li>• Landlord services</li> <li>• Residual Housing Services</li> <li>• Building Control</li> </ul>	
April 2012 or April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Control</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Finance (Accountancy)</li> <li>• Finance (Transactional)</li> <li>• Printing Services</li> <li>• Mail Services</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Property Services</li> <li>• Land Charges</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Legal services</li> <li>• Licensing</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Grounds maintenance</li> </ul>	

The Waste Management contract between the four districts and KCC is not technically a shared service, but a joint contract, so doesn't appear on the schedule of hosted services.

There will be an annual review for the tranche two and three in February 2011 and February 2012 to decide the final phasing. The associated project work around completing the business case and identifying the workstreams will start immediately after.

## Commissioning Shared Services through hosting arrangement

### Business Case template

This template sets out the questions that need to be addressed in the business case for consideration by the East Kent Joint Arrangement Committee. A robust business case is essential to set out how and when a new shared service will be designed.

The process will operate in the way that the business case will be considered first by the respective management teams and then by the Chief Executive Forum, using delegated powers granted by EKJAC.

#### Proposed template for the service business cases (for consideration by East Kent Forum)

##### Executive summary

This will encapsulate the key facts and figures in making the business case for the service distilled from each of the four councils.

<b>A. Strategic overview of project</b>	
Insert name of service	
1. What is the purpose of the project?	
2. What organisational benefits will the project bring? (see page 54)	
3. Which criteria are most relevant to assess potential benefits? (see page 55)	
4. Who are the stakeholders in the success of the project?	
5. Are there common service definitions available for each authority set out in service or business plans? At this stage its important to scope the service, so the parameters of the shared service can be identified from the onset	
6. What is the vision for the combined service after three years?	
<b>B. Resources for the project</b>	
7. What are the full contact details of the lead officer?	
8. What other resources are involved in the project and the impact on other services?	
9. Is any funding being provided to deliver the project? If yes, from what source and who has it been agreed with?	
10. What % of time will the lead officer be	

working on the project?	
11. What is the project timetable and the critical milestones to be achieved?	
<b>C. Key service information</b>	
<p>12.</p> <p>i) What are the basic facts we need to know about the service across the four authorities over the last three years? (location, outputs, service volumes, high level KPIs – for benchmarking purposes)</p> <p>ii) What is the combined total service budget (both in revenue and capital) for the four authorities?</p> <p>iii) What is the spend on key elements of service per head of population for each authority</p> <p>iv) What are the main income streams for the service? Are there any outstanding loans relevant to the service? Is there any current prudential borrowing for the service?</p> <p>v) What are the combined total service staff numbers for the four authorities? Is there a staff structure chart available in all cases? And does it include current pay grades?</p> <p>vi) What are the anticipated savings for the shared service per annum for each council for the first five years?</p> <p>vii) What are the current hardware and software ICT systems used by the service and their likely lifespan? And what is the current level of integration of systems between the authorities?</p> <p>viii) Are any elements of the service provided by contractors or other external partners? And what is the lifespan of the current contracts?</p> <p>ix) Can any relevant contract be terminated without incurring penalties? And if so, what are these likely to be?</p> <p>x) Are there likely to be additional capital investments required to achieve shared services? e.g. new ICT systems</p> <p>xi) Are there likely to be significant redundancy costs at the initial phase of creating the new joint service?</p>	

<p>xii) What are the accommodation needs for the shared service and is there likely to be any immediate savings as a result of disposing of surplus accommodation at the start of the shared service?  xiii) When will a common charging protocol for services be adopted if relevant?  xiv) What will be the impact on the residual council of creating this shared service?  xv) Is there an exit arrangement prepared if the shared service fails for whatever reason?</p>	
<p><b>D. Key risks associated with providing a joint service. Lead officers will need to provide general mitigation (likelihood/impact) against the following risks:</b></p>	
<p>13. Financial risks:  The joint service fails to reduce overall costs for the service or does not create the potential for future savings (do all partners use the same accounting treatment methodology e.g. CIPFA Code of Practice compliant)</p>	
<p>14. Operational risks:  The phasing of changes will threaten continuity of services for partner authorities and risk a deterioration in service improvement in the run up to creating a joint service.</p>	
<p>15. Staff risks:  The disruption and change associated with merging services exposes partner authorities to losing well trained and experienced staff.</p>	
<p>16. Reputation risks:  The move towards creating a joint service fails to achieve the key benefits envisaged and this along with the disruption involved damages the reputation of the partners.</p>	
<p>17. Strategic risks:  Relationships with key partnership and stakeholders suffers as a result of the changes involved and some of its major strategic aims are not achieved because of the diversion of management energy and resources.</p>	

<p>18. Governance risks That there are misunderstandings and disputes between the parties. Amongst other measures the business case should identify the arrangements between the parties to ensure fairness and equity, provide a means of resolving disputes and address the departure of one or more parties</p>	
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## E. Implications

The creation of joint services would need the following major implications explained. At this stage the information needed will be basic. More depth will be required following the adoption of the outline business case..

### i) Staffing implications:

It is likely there would need to be a convergence of salaries and terms and conditions of employment between staff if joint services were established and what impact this would have on overall costs for the service and the baseline costs for individual councils.

### ii) Legal implications:

The EKJAC operating arrangements set out the basis upon which functions or services can be delegated to it. Reference should be made to those And any joint service partnership would need to identify any relevant legislation.

Follow up actions by lead officer once service plan business case is adopted

- Views of employees and trades union. Consultations will have taken place or planned with staff and Unison regarding the proposed changes and comments received or awaited.
- Dispute mechanism for resolution – method of arbitration
- Developing an options appraisal methodology setting out the different models of managing a joint service and evaluating these against agreed criteria to emerge with a preferred option.
- Developing a communications plan to keep staff aware of and involved in decisions affecting the service in the run up to a joint service.
- Developing a project risk register and designating a project team member responsible for mitigating individual risks based on impact likelihood methodology
- Identifying proposed governance arrangements to be put in place during the transition to a joint service arrangement.
- Addressing issues around a single service specification.



**General benefits of establishing future joint services through a hosting arrangement. All services will be expected to demonstrate most of the following outcomes:**

**1. Building capacity and adding resilience to services:**

- Attracting new recruits and retaining existing staff more easily through better career opportunities and structured training.
- Developing common strategies, policies and business plans.
- Expanding officer expertise and filling existing skills gaps.

**2. Creating more efficient services:**

- Integrating software and information systems to create shared platforms.
- Setting common targets and PIs.
- Achieving economies of scale and lowering unit costs for key element of service (an indicative total savings figure will need to be identified at this stage)
- Rationalisation of sites.

**3. Improving customer focus:**

- Alignment of systems, procedures, forms, letters etc.
- Develop shared website pages.
- Common approach to customer care/service standards.

**How far do the relevant services meet the potential benefits identified? What criteria do we need to assess this?**

**1. Building capacity and adding resilience:**

- Is it difficult to replace or recruit critical staff or managers for this service in order to build resilience?
- Does more than one authority use the same ICT systems and software to deliver the relevant service in question
- Do the districts already have a track record of collaborative working in this service area?

**2. Creating more efficient services:**

- Are there potential efficiency savings to be made through economies of scale if services are combined?
- Is the service suitable for invest to save? What is the likely payback period if managed on a different basis?
- Do one or more districts have difficulty in retaining current levels of service because of budget pressures?

**3. Improving customer focus:**

- Do some of the districts use the same CRM systems. What represents the best fit with existing suppliers in terms of getting current systems to work together?
- Is this service largely provided according to standard national template or is there scope for local political choice in service delivery?
- Is one or more district performing consistently above the family or national average for the relevant service in question and what are the implications for other partner councils?

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

KEY DECISION

**BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK**

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015****Recommendation**

*That the Council approves the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015, attached at Annex A.*

Contact Officer: Robin Kennedy, extension 2221.

Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Strategy is one of a number of new plans and strategies that underpin the new Housing Strategy for 2010-2015. It has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been subject to wider public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact.
2. The new strategy reflects the changes that have taken place in recent years including new powers contained in the Housing Act 2004. It also takes into account the Private Sector Housing Condition survey of 2008 whose results have been used in the preparation of the Strategy.

Evaluation of options available to the Council

3.
  - (1) To approve the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015.
  - (2) To make amendments to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015.
  - (3) To reject the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

Information to be considered before taking a decision

4. Over 85% of housing in the district is in the private sector, either owner occupied or privately rented. Despite recent initiatives much of this stock remains in poor condition and as much as 41% requires improvement. This strategy, covering the period 2010-2015, sets out our priorities over the next five years to secure such improvements in Dover's private sector housing.
5. The strategy has been written taking account of the Private Sector House Condition surveys carried out in 2001 and 2008. These reveal a stock built predominately before 1944, which is below average condition with a high proportion in poor repair. Consultation with key stakeholders has already been undertaken to identify priorities for the future.
6. The strategy also reflects the changes made in 2006 following the Housing Act 2004, which requires homes to be assessed in respect of their influence on health and safety rather than its physical condition. It is also influenced by the large numbers of homes in our district that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard and the

increasing needs of an older population who wish to live safe and independent lives in their own homes for as long as possible.

7. The Strategy is a key supporting document to the higher level Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

**Background Papers**

None

**Resource Implications**

The strategy recognises the benefits to Dover of area renewal linked to areas of poor housing and other regeneration strategies. This is an ideal solution, which if the Council wished to adopt would require additional resources. If this was not adopted then no additional resources would be required.

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
Requires existing budget	None	None

**Consultation Statement**

Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including Homes Improvement Agency, Registered Social Landlords, Dover Society, landlords, agents and their comments have already been used to help shape the strategy.

The Strategy has been subject to further and wider consultation with stakeholders and the public including KCC, East Kent Councils, members, parish and town councils, Fire Services, RSL's, landlords, estate agents and various community groups. Details of the consultation feedback and consideration of the matters raised is set out in a table attached at Appendix B. Where amendments have been made to the Strategy in response to the comments received this is highlighted in the table.

**Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks**

Both the *Corporate Plan* and the *Housing Strategy* recognise that regeneration and the need to improve private sector housing is a key objective of the Council.

**Customer access Review**

A CAR screening form has been completed.

**Attachments**

- Annex A: Draft Private Sector Strategy 2010-2015.
- Annex B: Analysis of consultation feedback

CHRISTINE WATERMAN

Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

**DOVER  
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 - 2015**

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## **DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 – 2015**

### Executive Summary and Action Plan

#### **Introduction**

We believe that all residents, whether in public or private sectors, should have the opportunity to live in a good quality, affordable home which is decent, warm and secure. Over 85% of housing in the district is in the private sector, either owner occupied or privately rented. Despite recent initiatives much of this stock remains in poor condition and as much as 41% requires improvement. This strategy, covering the period 2010-2015, sets out our priorities over the next five years to secure improvements in Dover district private sector housing.

#### **The Condition of Dover's Private Housing Stock**

Private Houses in Dover District are much older compared with most other areas and there is an above average percentage of rented accommodation. Both these factors are associated with poorer housing conditions. Our House condition Survey in 2001 found that we had the highest percentage of unfit homes in the south east.

In 2008 a further survey was carried out. Comparisons with the 2001 figures are difficult to make as the condition of housing is now measured in very different ways based on a hazard rating system rather than unfitness measure. However, this new system shows that the rate of serious (category 1) hazards at 25.2% is above the national average of 21.7% and the overall rate of non decency at 41.2% is worse than the national figure of 35%. Of particular concern is the low number of vulnerable households living in decent homes which is only 50.6% compared with the target for 2010 of 70%. An estimated 3,040 homes occupied by vulnerable households would have to be made decent to meet the 2010 target set previously by Government.

The district also has above average levels of empty private sector homes compared to England and the South-East and the problem has been getting worse. From 2005 to 2009, the number of long term empty homes rose by 41%. These issues are covered in more detail in our recent Empty Homes Strategy

#### **Our Key Objectives**

In delivering private sector housing services, we have seven key objectives. These are to:

- target resources at areas having the worst housing condition and support and link into other national ,regional and local regeneration projects
- take appropriate and necessary action to ensure that properties are free of serious hazards and meet statutory standards;
- provide services which assist older and disabled residents to maintain independent living in their homes;
- bring long term empty homes back into use;
- improve energy efficiency in homes and reduce fuel poverty;
- provide financial assistance in the areas of greatest need to help provide decent, safe, secure homes.
- give effective advice and information to residents with housing problems

## The Strategic Context

No Council strategy will be effective unless it is consistent with policies at national, region and local level, and this strategy has been developed to achieve that.

At national level, there are three key policy drivers:

1. The Regulatory Reform Order 2002, which allowed local authorities flexibility to offer discretionary financial assistance taking into account local needs and resources.
2. The Housing Act 2004, which replaced the housing fitness standard with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), introduced mandatory licensing for higher risk houses in multiple occupation and gave local authorities stronger powers to deal with long term empty homes.
3. The Decent Homes Standard, which requires a property to meet the minimum legal standard to be in reasonable repair, have modern facilities and amenities and reasonable thermal comfort.

This strategy also has to fit with plans developed by the South East region, the East Kent sub-region, Kent County Council and all other local plans. A number of consistent themes emerge from the regional and local strategies:

- reducing the number of non-decent homes;
- reducing the number of long term empty homes;
- promoting equity release;
- improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty;
- supporting vulnerable people and promoting independent living;
- regenerating run down Dover town centre areas;
- increasing the number of affordable homes;
- reducing homelessness and promoting access to the privately rented sector

The Core Strategy of our Local Development Framework identifies a need for 10,100 new local homes by 2026 but making best use of existing housing is also a priority in order to achieve our corporate aim of *"providing a wide range of quality and accessible housing which meets the needs of the whole community"*.

We have endeavoured to reflect all of these themes in our revised approach to the private sector.

## What We Do Now

The strategy looks at what we do now and there are many areas where we feel that we deliver services well;

### **Grants and loans for cold homes and other improvements**

In recognition of the poor condition of much of its private stock the district has received over £5.4m in project funding allocations from the Regional Housing Board since 2006 to address cold homes and houses needing substantial improvements. These programmes continue to 2011 and to date 361 homes have been improved and a further 288 will be by 2011.



Whilst this has made a significant difference to the lives of many individuals, it is recognised that a great deal still needs to be done and that in some areas, especially in urban Dover, wholesale area renewal would be the best solution.

### **Enforcement**

Between 2007/8 and 2008/09 we more than trebled from 26 to 88 the number of notices served on properties in poor condition or with hazards and these are set to increase again in 2009/10

### **Empty properties**

For the two year period 2007/09 we have enabled 44 empty properties in the district to be brought back into use and for 2009/10 we have a target of 25 properties being brought back into use which we are on course to exceed.

### **Waiting times for disabled facilities grants in the Private Sector.**

These have been substantially reduced to the point where following an approved application no more than 5 months should elapse before the work is completed, depending on the nature of the adaption

### **SAP Rating**

The SAP is the Government's recommended system for energy rating of dwellings. The SAP average for this district is 57, higher than the national average of 50 despite high numbers of older properties with solid walls in this area.

### The Future

The strategy introduces changes in the ways we offer information, advice & specialist support, financial assistance and for further improvements in our enforcement procedures. We have been mindful of the resources currently available to us and of the fact that we are likely to be entering a period of reduced public spending. Major progress since 2006 has been made because of substantial additional funds from the Regional Housing Board, allowing us to assist many property owners with decent homes loans. Whilst this funding remains in place for the next financial year, we will explore new ways to facilitate equity release.

Over the next five years, we will keep focused on our statutory responsibilities – category 1 hazards, houses in multiple occupation, long term empty homes and mandatory DFGs. (Disabled Facilities Grants) We will look closely for and at opportunities for area based housing renewal to tie in with wider regeneration programmes in Dover. However, our main driver will be to increase the number of vulnerable households living in decent homes, and we aim to take action to make 400 properties occupied by such households decent each year. This will be achieved through enforcement, housing assistance and warm front activity. These figures will be reported to the quarterly Homes Improvement Board.

*Information, advice and specialist support:* We will increase access to energy efficiency information focusing on those in greatest need, review and seek to expand Handyperson services, explore way to offer advice to offer repairs and maintenance advice to householders and also link the Bond Guarantee Scheme to accreditation standards.

*Inspection and Enforcement:* We will adopt a fast track approach to enforcement, introduce charging for statutory notices, dedicate Officer time to planned inspections in areas of unsatisfactory housing, link proactive work to regeneration and continue to enforce high standards in Houses in multiple occupation.

We will increase staff resources for at least two years to tackle long term empty homes by using the performance reward grant we recently obtained and increase the budget for compulsory purchase and introduce and follow all measures in our 2010-2015 Empty Homes Strategy.

*Financial assistance:* We will continue to target financial assistance on arrears of unsatisfactory housing and link this to planned enforcement inspections, look at the introduction of a minor works loan, explore the opportunities to offer energy efficiency under the Community Energy Savings Programme and start looking now at alternative ways to facilitate equity release drawing on private sector funds.

These aims are spelt out in more detail in the action plan attached to this strategy, which will be reviewed annually.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### What is this strategy about?

- 1.1 Owner occupied and privately rented properties make up over 85% of homes in Dover district, and over half were built before 1945. This strategy sets out our plans for achieving good quality housing across the existing private sector stock - we believe that all residents should have the opportunity to live in a decent home.
- 1.2 This strategy explains:
- where the Council may offer financial help to repair, improve and/or or adapt homes;
  - how the Council will provide advice, assistance and specialist support to householders and landlords;
  - how the Council will use, where appropriate, enforcement powers to ensure unsatisfactory properties meet minimum legal standards.

### Our Overall Vision and Objectives

- 1.3 Research has shown clear links between sub-standard homes and poor health.<sup>1</sup> Damp homes can lead to allergic disease such as asthma, rhinitis and eczema. Cold homes make the circulatory system work harder; studies have shown that heart attacks and strokes increase significantly during the winter months. The condition of a home can also present a serious hazard to its occupants – falls, burns, scalds, electric shock, carbon monoxide poisoning, etc. The new Housing Health and Safety Rating System<sup>2</sup> has been introduced to help local authorities tackle hazards in residential properties.
- 1.4 This strategy is important not just because it sets out action to deal with poor quality housing but because it will help to tackle health inequalities.
- 1.5 *We want every resident of Dover to live in a property that allows them to be healthy and safe, and we want to give all Dover residents the opportunity to live in a good quality, affordable home which is decent, warm and secure.*
- 1.6 Like all local authorities, what we can do is limited by resources. Although there are constraints, our key objectives are to:
- 1.7 Take appropriate and necessary action to ensure that properties are free of serious hazards and meet statutory standards;
- 1.8 Provide services which assist older and disabled residents to maintain independent living in their homes;

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<sup>1</sup> Good Housing Leads to Good Health Sept 2008-CIEH/BRE  
Housing and public Health Evidence Briefing December 2005 NHS- NICE

<sup>2</sup> Details of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) are set out in Appendix 2.

- 1.9 Bring long term empty homes back into use;
- 1.10 Improve energy efficiency in homes and reduce fuel poverty;
- 1.11 Provide financial assistance in the areas of greatest need to help provide decent, safe, secure homes;
- 1.12 Target resources at areas having the worst housing condition and support and link into other regeneration projects.
- 1.13 Give effective advice and information to residents with housing problems

## **2.0 THE WIDER PICTURE – THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

### **National Policies**

- 2.1 The Regulatory Reform Order 2002<sup>3</sup> abolished most of the national framework for offering grants and other assistance (apart from mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants) and gave local authorities much greater flexibility to offer financial assistance tailored to local needs, circumstances and resources. The Government has emphasised that the prime responsibility for the condition of a private sector home rests with its owner. In particular, the Government now feels that in most cases the equity in private sector homes should be used to finance essential repair and improvement works. Since 2006, the majority of the discretionary financial assistance offered by Dover Council has been through a combination of interest free loans with a limited grant element.
- 2.2 Along with moves to improve housing, the Government brought out its 2003 Sustainable Communities Plan aimed at building cohesive communities, updated in January 2005 with “Sustainable Communities: Homes for All” and “People, Places, Prosperity”. These highlighted the need to:
- Promote sustainable home ownership;
  - Provide quality and choice for those who rent;
  - Revive communities and housing markets;
  - Support those who need it – promotion of independent living and reduction of homelessness.
- 2.3 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a number of substantial changes including the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)<sup>4</sup> to replace the out of date housing fitness standard, mandatory licensing of higher risk HMOs, and stronger powers to deal with long term empty homes.
- 2.4 The Decent Homes Standard is key part of Government policy and is an important benchmark. To meet the standard<sup>5</sup> a home has to:
- a. be free of serious hazards under the HHSRS;
  - b. be in a reasonable state of repair;
  - c. have reasonably modern facilities & services; and
  - d. provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).
- 2.5 The Public Service Agreement (PSA) 7 target for the private sector set targets relating to the numbers of vulnerable households (essentially those in receipt of income or disability related benefit) living in decent homes:

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<sup>3</sup> The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002

<sup>4</sup> Details of the HHSRS are set out in Appendix 2

<sup>5</sup> Full details of the Decent Homes Standard are given at Appendix 1

- 70% living in decent homes by October 2010
  - 75% living in decent homes by October 2021
- 2.6 Although since April 2008 this target is no longer a national indicator for private sector housing, all Councils are still required to provide this information annually and we feel the target acts as an essential benchmark on our past and future performance. It also remains important to funding applications and so will remain an important feature of this strategy. The 2008 House Condition Survey report showed that we fell short of the 2010 target and this strategy sets out what we intend to do to deal with this.
- 2.7 “Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods”<sup>6</sup> sets out the Government’s response to the challenges posed by a society with increasing numbers of older people. It included significant changes to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), an expanded role for home improvement agencies and further promotion of equity release schemes.
- 2.8 The strategy links closely with the “Independent Living Strategy”<sup>7</sup> which commits the Government to increasing funding for DFGs and other measures to promote independent living. The need for a coherent approach linking housing, health and care is also emphasised in the White Paper “Our Health, Our Care, Our Say”<sup>8</sup> and the cross Government statement “Putting People First”<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.9 Government polices continue to reinforce the role of home improvement agencies (as in Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods) and also rapid repairs and adaptations services.
- 2.10 Energy efficiency and especially fuel poverty (where a household has to spend 10% or more of its income on domestic fuel<sup>10</sup>) are growing Government priorities. The Government wants to eradicate fuel poverty by 2016 and realistically progressively harder targets for energy efficiency will be set as concern over climate change grows. Thermal comfort is a criterion in the Decent Homes Standard and, as nationally, ‘excess cold’ is the most common HHSRS hazard in Dover district.
- 2.11 The Audit Commission has released a report “Lofty Ambitions: The role of councils in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions”<sup>11</sup>. The document examines the role of local authorities in seeking to both improve domestic energy efficiency and drive down CO<sub>2</sub>

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<sup>6</sup> February 2008 (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Department of Health, Department for Work and Pensions)

<sup>7</sup> March 2008 (Office for Disability Issues)

<sup>8</sup> March 2006

<sup>9</sup> December 2007

<sup>10</sup> Fuel poverty statistics estimate the number of households that need to spend more than 10 per cent of their income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, as well as meeting their other fuel needs (lighting and appliances, cooking and water heating) Office of National Statistics.

<sup>11</sup> September 2009

emissions. It contends that spending has not always been well targeted or sustainable. It states in particular:

- funding to address domestic energy could be better targeted at areas or households most in need of support;
- spending on fuel poverty that does not also tackle CO2 emissions is not sustainable.

2.12 As well as dealing with its own stock, the report urges local authorities to:

- use planning powers to set standards for sustainable energy use;
- ensure building regulations are enforced;
- use the powers in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to improve energy efficiency.

2.13 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 all impose duties on local authorities to ensure fair treatment. This strategy has been prepared in accordance with these requirements, including the preparation of equality impact assessments.

### **Regional, Sub Regional and County Strategies**

2.14 Dover is one of 55 district authorities in the South East region (there are 7 county councils and 12 unitary authorities).

2.15 The region is very diverse and has been divided into nine sub-regions. Dover falls into the East Kent and Ashford sub-region along with Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Shepway, and parts of Swale and Ashford. The South East Plan recognises that this sub-region is a key international gateway to Europe. However, it is relatively remote from both London and the rest of the region and includes some of the poorer economic areas.

2.16 The South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) focuses very much on the provision of new affordable housing but also specifically targets making better use of the existing stock. Policies that are particularly relevant are:

- Producing empty homes strategies to bring properties back into use
- Adopting policies and programmes to improve or redevelop areas that are becoming outworn

2.17 The South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11 describes the task of ensuring that everyone in the region has access to a decent home at a price they can afford as 'an enormous challenge'. The main focus of the strategy is again on the provision of affordable housing but it also highlights the considerable problem with non decency in the private sector, especially in properties with vulnerable households.

2.18 The strategy supports strongly:

- moves to develop the equity release approach;
- energy efficiency measures

2.19 The Regional Housing Strategy recognises that absence of an effective heating system is the main reason for failure of the Decent Homes Standard in private sector homes in the region; improving energy efficiency in dwellings has a positive effect in terms of both non decency and fuel poverty.

2.20 Strategies at County level are highly relevant to this strategy, in particular Vision for Kent, the community strategy produced by the Kent Partnership. Shorter term priorities in the vision document include:

- increasing the proportion of homes, in both the public and private sectors, that meet or exceed the Decent Homes standard;
- creating incentives and enforcing responsibilities that drive homeowners and private landlords to repair and maintain their property;
- increasing the number of long-term empty properties that are returned to use as homes;
- improving energy efficiency and affordability in the home, minimising waste and the consumption of natural resources;
- working towards a situation where no vulnerable household is in temporary accommodation

2.21 The Kent Partnership is also responsible for the Kent Agreement 2 which contains the cross Kent performance indicators agreed with Government. Indicators particularly relevant to this strategy are NI 141 (number of vulnerable people achieving independent living) and NI 187 (fuel poverty - people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating)

2.22 The Kent Supporting People Strategy 2005 – 2010 is very relevant, not least because of the contribution made towards the cost of the In Touch Home Improvement Agency as is the county wide Affordable Warmth Strategy (due for updating) delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust.

2.23 The No Use Empty campaign is a collaboration between Kent County Council and all District and Unitary Council. Launched in November 2005, Dover was one of the four founding members. Using a range of methods primarily about giving advice and assisting with finance, but also about effective use of enforcement powers, the campaign has seen over 620 properties brought back into use in East Kent.



- 2.24 'Lighting the Way to Success' is the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 produced by the East Kent Local Strategic Partnership (Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet along with the County Council, Police and Fire Authorities and other partners). The Strategy highlights affordability issues, the high proportion of fuel poverty and the high proportion of properties failing the former housing fitness standard (with Dover having the highest rate in the South East). It sees the regeneration of acutely deprived neighbourhoods (especially in Dover town) including the upgrading of poor housing as a key priority.
- 2.25 The five East Kent authorities along with their home improvement agencies also work together as the East Kent Triangle. It is this body which was responsible for the bid to the Regional Housing Board which led to the substantial increase in capital funding to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

### **Local Strategies**

- 2.26 This strategy has to link effectively with strategies at local level. Key amongst these are:
- Dover Corporate Plan 2008 - 2020
  - Dover Core Strategy 2006 – 2026
  - Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan 2004
  - Dover Masterplan 2006
  - Dover Housing Strategy 2005 – 2009 (currently being revised)
  - Dover Housing Assistance Policy 2009
  - Dover Draft Empty Homes Strategy 2010-2015 (Subject to approval)
- 2.27 The Dover Corporate Plan sets out a number of challenging targets, with a particular emphasis on regeneration, spanning the period up to 2020. Specific objectives relevant to private sector housing are:
- by 2012, to have*
- started a major housing renewal for urban Dover
  - enough good quality housing to meet the ambitions of Dover residents, including the most vulnerable residents
- By 2015, to have*
- no long term empty dwellings within the district<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The usual definition of 'long term empty' is a property that has been vacant for 6 months or more. In practice, many properties empty for this length of time may still be undergoing renovation, improvement or sale and so as described in Part 5 we focus action on properties vacant for 12 months or more.

- 2.28 In its portrait of Dover as it now is, the Core Strategy Document again emphasises the sharp contrast between the generally prosperous South East region and the pockets of severe deprivation in parts of Dover district (in common with other parts of East Kent). The Core Strategy also highlights the fact that the Dover's population shows a much stronger than average trend of aging, with the proportion of people over 65 set to double over the life of the strategy with the proportions of children and people of working age set to shrink. This does have significant implications for future housing strategies (as well, of course, as for the sustainability of the economy and local communities).
- 2.29 Housing issues raised in the Document include:
- a weaker housing market than in Kent and the region;
  - very significant affordability problems;
  - lack of choice with significantly more terraced housing than the norm;
  - high levels of long term empty homes;
  - a significant amount of the housing stock is in poor condition.
- 2.30 The Core Strategy emphasises that the problems are of the greatest magnitude in Dover town and that this is where a high degree of changes is needed.
- 2.31 Building on the Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan, the Dover Masterplan 2006 sets out a challenging vision:
- 'By 2035 Dover will be one of the most prosperous towns on the South Coast characterised by a highly skilled and enterprising community that is proud of its town, its port and its heritage.'*
- 2.32 The Masterplan sets the scene for major regeneration activity, with housing a key element in this. The plan highlights two large residential communities in need of renewal – Tower Hamlets and St Radigunds. It also says that clear action should be taken to deal with empty homes.
- 2.33 The Housing Strategy has been in place since 2005 and is now being reviewed. It set out six strategic priorities which remain highly relevant to this strategy:
- meeting the need for affordable housing;
  - raising standards in the private sector because of urgent need;
  - supporting the increasing numbers of older people;
  - preventing homelessness (with lack of access to the privately rented sector a particular problem because of deposits and high rents);
  - supporting vulnerable people – many vulnerable households living in poor quality rented accommodation and many have difficulty maintaining their tenancies;
  - meeting Audit Commission recommendations for improvement in the quality of the housing service.

### **3.0 DOVER - THE LOCAL CONTEXT**

#### **Location, Population and General Characteristics**

- 3.1 Dover District lies at the eastern most point of the East Kent peninsula. It adjoins the districts of Thanet to the north, Canterbury to west and Shepway to the south west. Dover town is situated at the narrowest point of the English Channel, and is major focus for continental surface travel. Covering 315 sq kilometres (121 sq miles), our current population was estimated to be 106,900 in June 2008, an increase of 2.2% since the Census in 2001.
- 3.2 Dover District remains a mix of rural and urban areas (over 84% of the District remains rural). Dover and Deal are the two main urban population centres, with the market town of Sandwich and the many villages in rural hinterlands housing approximately one third of the population. Whilst containing areas of great natural beauty, our District also has the legacy of areas of derelict land resulting from earlier industrial and mining activity, in particular the former East Kent coalfield.
- 3.3 The South East region is generally seen as affluent. However, as acknowledged in regional, sub regional and local strategies, East Kent and Dover district in particular are to an extent isolated from and have weaker economies than the rest of Kent and the region. There are significant pockets of deprivation. Whilst Dover acts an international gateway with millions of domestic and commercial users each year, few of them actually visit the town.
- 3.4 The District is served by major road routes (A20/M20, A2/M2 and A256) although traffic congestion around Dover town is a major problem and the District has the only remaining single carriageway sections of the A2. There are good rail links, although the service to London remains slow, although this will of course change with the arrival of the High Speed Rail Link. Whilst there are reasonable bus services between population centres, there is heavy reliance on the car in rural areas.
- 3.5 Dover is close to Ashford and the Thames Gateway areas where major growth is planned; the centres of Dover and Deal also have to compete with Folkestone, Ashford, Westwood Cross and especially Canterbury. These centres tend to draw people from Dover and they have been improving at a faster rate than the two Dover towns.
- 3.6 In July 2008 Dover was successful in gaining Growth Point Status following a bid to the Community Infrastructure Fund with a number of partners including the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), Homes and Community Agency, Kent County Council, Dover Harbour Board and Dover Pride. This will help support an anticipated 10,100 new homes.

- 3.7 The economy in Dover District has improved from the difficult times in the 1980s caused by the closure of the coal field and the contraction in Port activities. The pharmaceutical, ferry and manufacturing industries have all grown (especially Pfizer) but the level of unemployment in Dover (currently 3.5%<sup>13</sup>) is equivalent to that in Kent although higher than the region figure of 3.1%.
- 3.8 In three wards the unemployment rates are particularly high; the rate in Castle is 8.3%, Tower Hamlets 7.4% and St Radigunds at 6.9%. Castle ranks 6<sup>th</sup> of 305 wards in Kent, Tower Hamlets 11<sup>th</sup> and St Radigunds 17<sup>th</sup>. The rate has shown generally signs of increasing, although at a lower rate than the other East Kent authorities and there were recent falls in the Castle and St Radigunds wards.
- 3.9 However, along with our neighbours in East Kent, the District performs worse than the rest of Kent and the region in terms of indicators such as business start ups, economic activity rates and especially skill levels.
- 3.10 The Government publishes Indices of Deprivation, built up from information about levels of income, employment, health, education, crime, barriers to housing, etc to indicate the relative extent of deprivation in different areas. These again show the sharp contrasts between different parts of our District.
- 3.11 Information is commonly shown by Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs - typical population 1,500). Of the 1,047 LSOAs in Kent and Medway, 14 fall within the top 20% nationally. These are concentrated in the St Radigunds, Tower Hamlets, Town and Pier and Castle wards in Dover. Some of the LSOAs also lie in parts of the Maxton, Elms Vale and Priory and the Buckland wards in Dover town, in parts of the Sholden and Middle Deal wards in Deal and in part of the largely rural Aylesham ward. The majority of the LSOAs are located in a small geographic area close to the centre of Dover town, another factor highlighting the need for an effective regeneration programme.
- 3.12 The Kent & Medway Public Health Observatory produced an inequalities profile for Dover district in 2008. This showed that life expectancy figures also varied significantly between wards (8.7 years difference between the highest and lowest). The average District life expectancy is 77.8 years, the live expectancy in the three worst wards was Tower Hamlets (74.1 years), St Radigunds (73.9 years) and Castle (73.5 years). This illustrates clearly the importance of a strategy which includes reducing health inequalities within its aims.
- 3.13 A major issue in the District, and for this strategy, is the age profile of the Dover population. The table<sup>14</sup> below shows the distribution by age band:

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<sup>13</sup> Kent County Council Monthly Unemployment Bulletin August 2009

<sup>14</sup> ONS population estimate June 2008

**Figure 1 – Age Profile & Profile**

Age Band	Dover (%)	England (%)
Pre-1919	37.6%	21.5%
1919-1944	17.1%	17.4%
1945-1964	19.4%	19.6%
1965-1980	14.7%	21.7%
Post 1980	11.2%	19.9%

3.14 The table shows clearly that the proportions of residents in the age bands over 60 years are higher than both the regional and national positions, with proportionately lower figures for working age adults and for children. Obviously this has major implications for the sustainability of the local economy in future years but also for this strategy because older residents are often less able to maintain their home and are much more likely to require assistance to maintain an independent lifestyle.

## Housing Market

### Tenure, Age and Build Type Profiles

3.15 There are currently an estimated 49,340 dwellings in Dover<sup>15</sup>. The table below shows the tenure profile contrasted with the national position:

**Figure 2 – Tenure Mix**

Tenure	Dover (%)	England (%)
Owner Occupied	70.5%	70.1%
Privately Rented	14.9%	12.3%
Local Authority	9.4%	9.0%
RSL	5.2%	8.6%

3.16 Owner occupation is at a very similar level to the national average, although the proportion of privately rented properties is over 20% higher than the national figure. The proportion of social housing is appreciably lower than nationally, which does have implications for Dover people seeking affordable housing.

3.17 The table below<sup>16</sup> shows the age profile is significantly different:

<sup>15</sup> HSSA 2008 and House Condition Survey 2008; English House Condition Survey 2007

<sup>16</sup> House Condition Survey 2008; English House Condition Survey 2007

**Figure 3 – Age Profile**

Age band	Dover (%)	South East (%)	England (%)
0 - 14 years	17.2	17.7	17.6
15 - 24 years	11.9	12.8	13.3
25 - 49 years	30.1	34.4	35.1
50 - 59 years	13.4	12.3	12.0
60 - 74 years	17.6	14.6	14.2
75 - 84 years	6.8	5.8	5.6
85 years and over	2.9	2.5	2.2

3.18 We have substantial numbers of private sector homes built before the First World War, nearly 75% more than the national average. The figures show that almost 55% of our private sector homes were built before the Second World War compared with 39% nationally. A consequence of an older housing stock is that many are likely to have architectural features of importance that need preserving. In the Dover District area there are around 2800 listed building most of which are residential and 56 conservation areas. More than 10% of the private housing stock is subject to these designations. This does have major implications for this strategy as older houses generally require more maintenance, are often harder to heat and improvements will be more challenging where the character of the building has to be protected.

3.19 Lastly, as would be expected from the age profile, the proportions of build types also vary significantly from the national position:

**Figure 4 – Build Type**

Build Type	Dover (%)	England (%)
Detached	23.8%	17.9%
Semi-detached	30.3%	27.5%
Terraced	36.7%	28.1%
Flat/maisonette	9.2%	17.0%
Bungalow	Included in the above	9.5%

3.20 The most striking feature about the private sector stock in Dover district is the high proportion of terraced homes, substantially higher than the national average and the low proportion of flats. These factors have implications for the housing market in terms of choice.

### **Empty Properties**

3.21 Short term empty properties are part of the normal housing market. However, long term empty properties are a wasted resource, have a negative impact on neighbouring properties and often act as a focus for anti social behaviour. Using June 2008 figures<sup>17</sup>, overall the proportion of empty properties in the district at 3.7%

<sup>17</sup> HSSA June 2008

is above the national average of 3.1% and the figure for the South East region of 2.5%. However, when private sector properties only are considered, the rate rises to 4% (compared with 2% in public sector properties only).

- 3.22 More significant is the rate of long term empty properties (empty for 6 months or more). In Dover district the overall rate in the private sector was 2.1% (870 properties).. This is significantly above the national average of 1.6% and is the second highest rate in Kent. These long term empty homes are a very significant wasted resource and are a major priority for the Council and for this strategy. We are about to finalise an Empty Homes Strategy to focus resources on this problem.

### **Housing Market Assessment**

- 3.23 The Core Strategy acknowledges that the housing market in Dover district is weaker than in Kent and the South East as a whole with average lower house prices and the lowest sales price per square metre in Kent. The average Dover house price in the second quarter of 2009 is £176,400 compared with the Kent average of £209,800, the South East region average of £240,600 and the national average of £224,000<sup>18</sup>. Of the thirteen councils, only Swale, Thanet and Medway have lower average prices.

- 3.24 The low average house prices reflect in particular the weaker economy. The East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (please see paragraph 2.21) identified a number of issues which affect the overall East Kent housing market:

- An increasingly aging population (homes need to be made attractive to those of working age whilst also meeting the needs of older residents);
- Increasing numbers of single person households;
- A weak, low wage local economy;
- A 'two tier' wage levels – many households on lower incomes than Kent and South East averages but with some high income households through access to well paid jobs and savings;
- The rural dimension – high house/land prices hand in hand with low wage local households.

- 3.25 Whilst the overall average price is low, there are areas within our District with very high house prices, with implications for affordability. Sandwich in particular experienced very high house price inflation during the recent house price boom.

- 3.26 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified four market areas covering most of the Dover District :

- Dover
- Deal
- Sandwich
- Rural

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<sup>18</sup> Land Registry Figures April – June 2009

- 3.27 The assessment showed that the Dover town has a poor market image as a place to live, although there were elevated prices in parts of the rural area, especially in the east. There are particular problems in the inner areas of concentrated terraced housing. Part of the plan to improve these areas in the Core Strategy is the allocation of four areas for new housing to encourage people to migrate into the area.
- 3.28 The housing market in Deal, a coastal urban area surrounded by rural areas, was more robust with higher house prices than Dover town but with the aging population and affordability both matter of concern. The Core Strategy does not envisage any major economic ambitions for Deal.
- 3.29 Sandwich has higher house prices, driven by a large local employer, but affordability is a particular problem with development constrained by flood risk, difficult access and the landscape.
- 3.30 In all three cases the Strategic Housing Assessment recommended high targets for contributions for planning gain (under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- 3.31 As in many areas, the growth of the privately rented sector has had a marked impact on the housing market. The Housing Strategy described the increase in the privately rented sector because of national interest in the buy to let market and the fact that this sector was further stimulated by the decline in the guest house trade.
- 3.32 Privately rented properties are concentrated in the urban centres of Dover and Deal, with high proportions of poorer quality rented accommodation especially in the more deprived areas of Dover. Higher levels of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs - normally properties where facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms are shared between different households within one house) were found in the Castle ward.

## **Housing Conditions in the Private Sector**

### **Dover House Condition Survey 2008**

- 3.33 Stock condition surveys are carried out to give an accurate picture of housing conditions in a district using a sample of properties chosen at random. The overall results are analysed to give a clear picture of housing issues – hazards, disrepair, compliance with Decent Homes Standard, etc, along with information on social issues. The Government carries out a national stock condition survey every year now with the English Housing Survey (EHCS).
- 3.34 A House Condition Survey covering all tenures was carried out by a specialist survey firm on behalf of the Council during 2008. House condition surveys will normally draw a sample of 1,000 dwellings; 1,016 dwellings were in fact inspected.



- 3.35 This was the first house condition survey carried out since 2001 and the first to look at the impact of the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The new survey could not give a direct comparison with the results from the 2001 survey because the housing fitness standard that applied in 2001 has now been replaced in 2006 by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which also affects assessment under the Decent Homes Standard.
- 3.36 As described already, there are significantly more older and more terraced properties in Dover district than nationally and this is reflected in the findings of both the 2001 House Condition Survey and the findings of the 2008 House Condition Survey.

### **Unfitness and The Housing Health and Safety Rating System**

- 3.37 The first criterion of the Decent Homes Standard is that a property should meet the minimum legal standard for housing. Up until April 2006, this was that a property should be fit for human habitation. A standard which dated back 80 years, it has now been replaced by the HHSRS.
- 3.38 The 2001 House Condition Survey did not measure conditions against the Decent Homes Standard as the standard was not formalised when the field work was done. However, it did measure unfitness and found that 13% of the private sector housing stock was unfit, three times higher than the national rate at the time of 4.2%<sup>19</sup>. There was a strong association with property age; 20% of pre-1919 properties were unfit. With property type, 15% of terraced properties were found to be unfit with the rate 36% in converted flats.
- 3.39 The replacement for the fitness standard, the HHSRS concentrates on assessing the potential hazards that a dwelling may present to potential occupiers and visitors of a property (i.e. not just actual occupiers at the time of the inspection). Details of how the system works are given at Appendix 2.
- 3.40 As with unfitness, a local authority has a *duty* to take statutory action to deal with a Category 1 hazard (i.e. it is mandatory). With Category 2 hazards, an authority has a discretionary *power* to statutory action.
- 3.41 The 2008 condition survey found the overall proportion of properties with category 1 hazards is 25.2% (10,765 homes) compared with a national average of 21.7%<sup>20</sup> (23.5% in the private sector only). Obviously this is a priority for future action.
- 3.42 Key findings from the 2008 house condition survey in respect of category 1 hazards are:

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<sup>19</sup> English House Condition Survey 2001

<sup>20</sup> English House Condition Survey 2007

- the main reasons for category 1 hazards were excess cold and falling on stairs etc;
- the rate in the privately rented sector at 40.4% was higher than for the owner occupied sector (22.0%) – the national figures are 30.5% and 22.2% respectively;
- the rate in properties built pre-1919 was 55.6% and in interwar properties 12.5% - the rate was 7% or less in all other property types (the national figures are 44.5% and 24.0% respectively); and
- the rate in terraced properties varied between 23.3% and 39.5% (nationally the rate in terraced properties varies between 23.3% and 28.0%)

### **The Decent Homes Standard**

3.43 The Decent Homes Standard is the main Government benchmark of housing condition. Paragraph 2.4 set the four criteria of the standard; the detail is set out at Appendix 1.

3.44 The survey found that 17,600 dwellings (41.2%) failed the Decent Homes Standard. This is appreciably higher than the national average of 35%<sup>21</sup> (36% in the private sector only) from the EHCS 2007.

3.45 The table at below shows the reasons for failure of the standard. Category 1 hazards are the main reason for failure; as already described, the main reason is the presence of a category 1 hazard. This is followed by properties that fail criterion (b) because of disrepair – at 20.8% this is almost three times greater than the national average. The other two indicators are significantly below national averages.

**Figure 5 – Reasons for Failure of the Decent Homes Standard**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Dwellings</b>	<b>Dover 2008 % Private Sector Stock</b>	<b>EHCS 2007 % Stock (All Tenures)</b>	<b>EHCS 2007 % Private Sector Stock Only</b>
Category 1 Hazard	10,765	<b>25.2%</b>	21.7%	23.5%
In need of repair	8,890	<b>20.8%</b>	7.1%	7.3%
Lacking adequate facilities	330	<b>0.8%</b>	3.2%	2.9%
Poor degree of thermal comfort	2,390	<b>5.6%</b>	15.4%	15.9%

3.46 Key findings by tenure, property age and build type were as follows:

- as nationally, the rate of non decency in the private rented sector at 65.7% is significantly higher than in the owner occupied sector at 36.0% (national figures 45.4% and 34.1%<sup>22</sup> respectively);

<sup>21</sup> English House Condition Survey 2007

<sup>22</sup> English House Condition Survey 2007

- The rate of non decency in pre-1919 properties was 73.1% in pre-1919 properties and 32.3% in interwar properties. Surprisingly a rate of 38.2% was found in properties built between 1981-1990, with the rates below 20% in all other age bands. The national figures are 57.9%, 38.3% and 24.3% respectively. The high proportion of non decent properties in the 1981-1990 age band is probably due to a combination of electric heating and inadequate insulation.
- The rate of non decency in terraced properties varied between 39.1% and 56.6%. Nationally figures in terraced properties vary between 38.2% and 39.2%.

3.47 The findings in respect of the non decency and category 1 hazards in particular in privately rented and in older, terraced properties are obviously very significant factors in the formulation of new strategy.

### **The PSA7 Target**

3.48 The Government set a very clear target for all homes in the social housing sector to be made decent by 2010. In the private sector, the targets related to the numbers of vulnerable households<sup>23</sup> in non decent homes. In Dover district, the survey estimated there to be 15,670 vulnerable households.

3.49 In April 2008, the Government removed the requirement for local authorities to meet the PSA7 target. However, it remains relevant to funding applications and we also feel that it is a very useful benchmark to gauge our performance.

3.50 The first PSA7 target was 65% to be achieved by 2007, followed by a target of 70% by 2010. The 2008 House Condition Survey gave the following results in respect of vulnerable households in non decent homes; the figures show the numbers of vulnerable heads by tenure, the proportions in decent homes and the number of properties occupied by vulnerable households that need to be made decent to meet the 70% target.

**Figure 6 – Vulnerable Households in Non Decent Homes**

<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Number Vulnerable Households</b>	<b>Number Vulnerable Households in Decent Homes</b>	<b>Percent Vulnerable Households in Decent Homes</b>	<b>Shortfall for 70% Target</b>
Owner occupied	11527	6868	59.6%	1,200
Privately rented	4146	1062	25.6%	1,840
<b>Total</b>	<b>15673</b>	<b>7930</b>	<b>50.6%</b>	<b>3,040</b>

3.51 The figures show very clearly that that a major priority for this Strategy has to be to increase the numbers of vulnerable households living in decent homes, especially in the private rented sector, where only 25.6% of vulnerable households live in decent

<sup>23</sup> Households in receipt of income or disability related benefits

homes. At 3,040, the shortfall is substantial, especially the 1,840 shortfall in the private rented sector and presents a challenging target.

3.52 The table also emphasises very clearly the message from the figures in respect of overall non decency and category 1 hazards that the private rented sector must also be a very clear priority. The figures for the shortfall in pre-1919 properties (2,710 of the 3,040 total shortfall) and for terraced properties (1,660 of the 3,040 total shortfall) also emphasise the earlier messages that older terraced homes must be a priority.

3.53 The cost of making homes decent does present a very big challenge – the survey estimated the cost of works just to put right failures of the Decent Homes Standard at just over £78 million. The cost just to make the PSA7 target shortfall is over £17 million. These potential costs reinforce the our view that we should increase measures to facilitate equity release and bolster enforcement.

### **Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty**

3.54 The house condition survey looked closely at energy efficiency issues and in particular at fuel poverty. Key findings were:

- The mean SAP rating<sup>24</sup> (an energy efficiency score running from 0 – 100) for Dover is 57 higher than the national figure of 50. (The Government target SAP rating is 65).
- The least energy efficient homes are older homes (pre-1919 homes have an average SAP of 50) and maisonettes. Privately rented homes are less energy efficient than owner occupied dwellings (54 compared with 58)
- The cost to rectify failures of the thermal comfort criterion of the Decent Homes Standard is over £13 million (average cost per dwelling £2,390).
- There are an estimated 2,910 households (7%) in fuel poverty (2006 national estimate 14%).
- Fuel poverty was highest with households in the private rented sector and in pre-1919 properties.

### **Retrofitting**

3.54 Despite the significant new housing planned for the district, the existing homes that were designed and built with much lower fuel efficiency measures in mind, will continue to form the greatest proportion of the housing stock in the district. Typically, an existing home gives off more than double the carbon emissions (and has twice the fuel costs) of a new house.

3.55 In order for the government to achieve its target of cutting carbon emissions in the UK by 80% by 2050 attention will have to be given to how these existing homes can be made more energy efficient.

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<sup>24</sup> (A SAP rating for a dwelling is a score from 0 - 100 derived from survey information on the heating system and controls, type of fuel, construction details, levels of insulation, etc; the higher the score the better)

3.56 Retrofitting existing housing to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and help tackle fuel poverty provides gives better energy and carbon savings per pound spent than any new build measure or renewable technology. Key retrofit measures we may want to consider are:

- controlling ventilation by draught proofing, blocking up unused chimneys, sealing leaky timber ground floors and introducing humidity controlled extractor fans where needed;
- insulating solid walls, replacing single glazed windows with new high performance double glazed windows, filling cavity walls, and insulating lofts and roofs;
- installing new highly efficient gas condensing boilers with thermostats and programmers and thermostatic radiator valves.

3.57 As part of any retrofitting approach we will need to consider more than the physical changes to an individual house including:

#### **The wider effects of each measure**

Retrofitting measures need to be considered as a package. This will achieve maximum energy savings but will also avoid adverse effects such as increasing dampness and mould by excessively reducing ventilation or creating cold bridges (areas that are especially cold, as partial insulation of some areas can result in others becoming colder than before).

#### **The bigger picture**

Experience suggests that the greatest efficiencies can be made by taking a wider approach to refurbishment with a focus on the desired overall outcome. Some of the worst housing in energy terms is also occupied by the poorest people, both low income renters and homeowners. Carbon reduction may be the priority but retrofitting can also have a positive impact on individual and community well-being and water use.

#### **Linkeage to an area-wide strategy**

It may be more economically viable to undertake retrofitting on a large scale. Studies suggest that greater financial savings (and equivalent carbon savings) can be achieved by retrofitting a 'cluster' of homes.

#### **An approach tailored to different housing types**

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to retrofitting existing homes. The large variety of different house types means that different approaches may be necessary in terms of the planning consent that will be required.

#### **A whole-house approach**

This can result in cost savings as trades can work together to ensure works are undertaken in the most logical order. Using multi-skilled professionals can also create cost savings, for example one tradesperson may be able to install both wall and loft insulation.

**Households Where There is a Person With A Disability**

The house condition survey found that 22% of households (9,230) felt that there was at least one household member who had a disability. This does indicate that the current high demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (please see paragraph 4.36) will not reduce.

## **4.0 WHAT WE DO NOW**

### **Inspection Of The Housing Service**

- 4.1 Changing times and challenges mean that we have adapted our services to deliver more within existing resources. The private sector services we currently offer cover informing, advice & specialist support, inspection and enforcement and financial assistance.
- 4.2 The Housing Inspectorate of the Audit Commission carried out an inspection of our strategic housing service in April 2008. This covered the work of the Private Sector Housing Team as well as the Housing Needs and Strategy Teams. Overall, their report concluded that the service was fair, but with uncertain prospects for improvement
- 4.3 With regard to the private sector housing service, the Inspectorate acknowledged the success of the programmes to offer financial assistance, the handyperson service and aspects of the enforcement work. However, the Inspectorate did state that:
- Enforcement activity was limited compared to the demands upon the service
  - Empty homes are not being tackled effectively
  - Vulnerable people have to wait a long time for disabled adaptations to be fitted.

The action and plan recommended by the audit commission has been completed and substantial improvements made in all these areas.

### **Offering Information, Advice and Specialist Support**

- 4.4 The overriding aim of our Private Sector Housing Team is to secure the best possible standards in private sector housing. The Team's core function is to ensure that statutory standards are met using enforcement powers when necessary. However, its work goes beyond that, advising and intervening to help tenants, owner occupiers and landlords with a wide range of housing issues.

#### *Engaging with Landlords*

- 4.5 As in many parts of the country, the privately rented sector makes a very valuable contribution to the supply of affordable housing. At 14.9% of the total stock, the districts privately rented sector is larger than the 14.6% of the Council stock and RSL stock combined. We think a well managed, well maintained private rented sector can play a very valuable role in Dover in helping:
- to make more properties available to vulnerable households;
  - help vulnerable households to find suitable accommodation;
  - to reduce homelessness.
- 4.6 In recent years, Officers in both the Private Sector Housing Team and the Housing Needs Team have worked to develop a positive working relationship with landlords

who want to deliver good quality housing. A Landlords Forum is run jointly with Shepway District Council and there is an annual Landlords Forum with the other East Kent authorities. The Forum allows a positive exchange of information on housing issues and standards.

- 4.7 Deposits required by landlords are often a major obstacle to potential tenants. The Deposit Bond Scheme run by the Housing Needs Team underwrites the risk of rent default and/or damage to the property. The scheme makes a significant contribution to matching homeless households or those threatened with homelessness with suitable, affordable housing, as acknowledged by the Audit Commission report.
- 4.8 Accreditation schemes are increasingly used by local authorities. Here, advice and assistance is given to both landlords and tenants to promote satisfactory management standards. Dover is now part of the Kent Landlord Accreditation Scheme, KLAS. Landlords participating in the scheme:
- attend a one day development course to obtain or reinforce the knowledge/skills important in ensuring their business meets necessary standards;
  - agree to follow a code of conduct and
  - demonstrate they are a 'fit and proper person' to act as a residential landlord.

*Home Improvement Agency/Handyperson*

- 4.9 The drive to encourage equity release is linked with moves to promote independent living and a coherent approach linking housing, health and care. It is clear that home improvement agencies must play a key part in this. For some years now, the administration of most financial assistance has been assisted by the In Touch Home Improvement Agency, part of the Hyde Housing Association. The service is jointly funded by the County Council, the Occupational Therapy Service and the Council.
- 4.10 In addition to the home improvement agency service, In Touch also provide the Handyperson Service. This is now funded jointly by The County Council, the East Kent PCT and the Council. This offers direct assistance with minor, low cost jobs for householders who are over pension age or who are disabled. Most older people want to remain in their own home but as health and mobility decline many need occasional help with minor jobs such as changing tap washers, putting up curtain rails, etc. The householder is charged the cost of materials and a low labour charge of £5.00 per hour if not in receipt of benefit. There is no labour charge if a person is in receipt of benefit. The service is proving very popular.
- 4.11 The service has recently been expanded to 2 handypersons each with a fully equipped van after success in applying for additional funding offered by the Government. The funding for the additional post, however, is not permanent and we will need to consider other possible options in the event that this is not renewed.



- 4.12 The Agency also operates the Homesafe Handyperson service offering a conventional Handyperson service to vulnerable households who have been a victim of crime or potential target of crime (including domestic abuse where there are appropriate referrals from external organisations). A Handyperson would assess security and fit a variety of security and safety products including window locks, door locks, spy holes, door chains, smoke alarms and fire proof letter boxes.
- 4.13 *Energy Efficiency:* The Council takes positive action to promote home energy efficiency and has a specialist Climate Change Officer. Domestic energy efficiency especially fuel poverty is a growing Government concern, particularly in the context of global concern over climate change and we intend to drive further improvements forward. The success of action so far is shown in the fact that the average SAP rating in Dover district is 57 compared with the national average of 50. Dover would be expected to have a lower than average score because of the high numbers of older properties with solid walls. The Housing Inspectorate report noted that we were performing well in this area.
- 4.14 Nonetheless, we still have to acknowledge that there is still a substantial amount of work to do to improve energy efficiency in our private sector stock – and also that the recent House Condition Survey estimated that there are almost 3,000 households in fuel poverty.
- 4.15 We have close working partnerships with other Kent local authorities and Energy Saving Trust
- 4.16 We are currently looking at proposals for the Community Energy Savings Programme where funding is likely to be available for local areas which are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country. Parts of the St Radigunds ward fall within this category.
- 4.17 Our work goes beyond just informing and advising; we give both grants and loans for energy efficiency works.
- 4.18 Improving energy efficiency is vital for health reasons; there are very clear links between cold homes and ill health, especially heart attacks, strokes and respiratory problems. However, policies at national, regional and local level are increasingly directed at moves to help reduce the impact of climate change and the Council believes strongly that it should give a lead in this area, and a formal Carbon Reduction Plan has been prepared.

## **Inspection and Enforcement**

### *General Approach*

- 4.19 Enforcement is a core function of the Private Sector Housing Team. Under the Housing Acts and related environmental health and building legislation, local councils have both legal powers and duties to deal with unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private sector.
- 4.20 Statutory notices can be served on both owner occupiers and landlords to require work to be carried out or in extreme cases for properties to be closed or demolished. In practice, nationally the great majority of notices are served on landlords to require repairs or improvements to be carried out for the benefit of tenants.
- 4.21 As outlined in Part 3, the main enforcement tool now is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Subject to certain mandatory requirements (for example dealing with Category 1 hazards) local authorities do have wide discretion in the way they use these powers. Appendix 2 sets out details of how the HHSRS operates and sets out a framework to be incorporated in our enforcement policy.
- 4.22 The approach to enforcement can be reactive (i.e. responding to complaints made) or proactive (inspections on a planned, regular basis). The proactive approach is recognised as being more efficient and effective and authorities generally seek now to make a significant proportion of inspections proactive. Because of previously limited staffing resources, the bulk of inspections in the district have been reactive, although a proactive approach has been taken to mandatory licensing.
- 4.23 It is usual to adopt an informal approach with landlords before statutory notices are served, with contact through telephone and letters and this approach is encouraged by the Government through the national Enforcement Concordat. Our approach has been mainly informal, as in most cases property owners tend to carry out work after an informal approach.
- 4.24 In 2008/09, 226 complaints about housing conditions were made and it was necessary to serve Housing Act notices in 26 cases. (Since 2006, there have generally been around 210 – 230 complaints per year excluding empty properties).
- 4.25 We do not currently charge for statutory notices as allowed by the Housing Act 2004.
- 4.26 The prime responsibility for dealing with complaints of illegal eviction and harassment currently rests with the Housing Needs Team.
- 4.27 We recognised in 2007 that staffing levels were not adequate for enforcement and an additional specialist officer was appointed in April 2008. From the table below you can see the effect has been to increase the number of enforcement notices served. This increased enforcement activity increased the number of homes made decent from 17 in 2007/08 to 70 in the following year 2008/09.

Year	Housing Act Notices	Other	Total
2007 -8	3	23	26
2008-9	26	62	88
2009 (9 months only)	31	41	72

*Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)*

- 4.28 Across the country, conditions in houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)<sup>25</sup> tend to be less satisfactory than in homes occupied by single households, especially in terms of fire safety. In such properties, residents commonly share facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms, although some converted flats<sup>26</sup> now come within the definition. The total number of HMOs in the District is estimated at around 200, with the majority converted flats rather than properties with shared facilities. Many of the properties were formerly guest houses serving the holiday trade.
- 4.29 At around 0.5% of private sector properties, the proportion of HMOs is less than the national average but this is still a key staff responsibility. Over past years, the Council has inspected many of the HMOs, focusing in particular on fire safety issues and the majority now comply with necessary standards. The limited numbers of complaints now received from HMO residents appears to reflect this.
- 4.30 There are significantly greater risks associated with houses in multiple occupation and additional powers and duties exist for HMOs. These include mandatory licensing provisions for higher risk HMOs (where there are three or more storeys, five residents in at least two households).
- 4.31 Prior to mandatory licensing, we operated a registration scheme for higher risk properties and we have generally good information on such properties. We have currently licensed 32 higher risk HMOs. The Housing Inspectorate report acknowledges our understanding of the HMO position in the District.

*Empty Homes*

- 4.32 At an estimated 2.1%, the proportion of long term empty properties in the District is a significant concern. It is significantly above the national average of 1.6% and the estimated 870 properties represent a substantial wasted resource. They are also a potential source of nuisance and anti social behaviour. Our focus on tackling such properties was an area criticised by the Housing Inspectorate.

<sup>25</sup> Houses containing bed sits, or non self contained flats or flats described below in footnote 26.

<sup>26</sup> Generally converted flats where the conversion was carried before the 1991 Building Regulations and the conversion work does not meet the standard required in those Regulations.

- 4.33 Whilst we have taken informal and formal action to bring long term empty properties back into use (including the offering of financial incentives) and have played a very active role in the county wide 'No Use Empty' campaign, we recognise that this area needs greater priority and we set out later in this section our proposals for doing so, including the introduction of a formal Empty Homes Strategy.

### **Financial Assistance**

- 4.34 For many years, financial assistance offered by local authorities to home owners to repair, improve or adapt properties took the form of grants. The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 gave local authorities much greater freedom to tailor a framework for offering financial assistance taking into account the specific needs and resources of their area. In addition, the Government has emphasised strongly its view that the prime responsibility for the repair and/or improvement of a home should rest with the owner. In guidance, the Government continues to make it clear that it wants to see equity release schemes promoted.
- 4.35 Since 2004, the majority of financial assistance offered by Dover has been by way of loans. In 2006, we were successful in obtaining from the Regional Housing Board 3.5 million for 2006/2008. A successful bid has provided a further 1 million for subsequent years. This allowed us to increase substantially the assistance offered.

#### *Mandatory Assistance*

- 4.36 The majority of adaptation works to a property where there is a person with disabilities remain mandatory. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) account for a substantial capital spend each year. The number of grants was typically around 50 to 60 each year between 2004 – 2008 with total expenditure around £420k; in 2008/09 there were 86 grants with a spend of £600k and we anticipate that in 2009/10 the number of grants will rise to over 90 with an estimated spend of £680k. We do not currently impose any charge on a property where a mandatory DFG is given.
- 4.37 In recent years delays were experienced by many DFG applicants mainly due to lack of grant funding. We have taken steps to address this both with our own procedures and with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency and there is currently no waiting list.

#### *Discretionary Financial Assistance*

- 4.38 In addition to mandatory DFGs we offer a range of discretionary loans and grants. Where loans are offered, these are interest free. The assistance falls into four broad groups:
- discretionary assistance for households where there is a person with disabilities;
  - decent homes assistance;

- energy efficiency assistance; and
- empty property assistance

4.39 There are two types of discretionary assistance for a person with disabilities.

4.40 Disabled Home Loan Assistance: A person receiving a mandatory DFG can receive an interest free loan of up to £6,000 to carry out essential ancillary works for example electrical works. The loan is repayable on sale of the property.

4.41 Disabled Relocation Loan: On occasions a property may be unsuitable for adaptation and a move to an alternative property may be much more cost effective. Where the applicant would otherwise be eligible for a DFG, a loan of up to £10,000 may be offered to cover legal and moving costs. The loan can also include any agreed figure for additional purchase cost and is repayable on sale of the property.

4.42 There is now just one form of Decent Homes Assistance. This is not restricted by geographical location but we do target information and publicity campaigns on the inner areas of Dover town where housing condition problems are concentrated. The Housing Inspectorate report acknowledged that we had focussed effectively on distributing this form of assistance.

Decent Homes Loan: Properties have to fail the Decent Homes Standard. Owner occupiers in receipt of means tested or disabled benefit can apply for a loan of up to £30,000 repayable on sale. Landlords can apply for a loan of up to £15,000 repayable after 10 years with accredited landlords and after 3 years with non accredited landlords.

4.43 There are now two main forms of energy efficiency assistance:

Heating and Insulation Grant: Properties have to fail the thermal comfort criterion of the Decent Homes Standard. This is a non repayable grant available to certain owner occupiers and tenants (predominantly householders over 60 years or with dependent children or pregnant) in receipt of specified means tested benefits. The maximum grant is £4,000 (£8,000 in hard to heat rural homes). In rural locations, works can include the provision of renewable technologies such as solar heating. The grant can be given in association with other forms of assistance. The scheme is managed for the Council by Creative Environmental Networks (CEN), part of the Energy Saving Trust.

Heating and Insulation Loan: Again properties have to fail the thermal comfort criterion of the Decent Homes Standard. This is a loan available to owner occupiers in receipt of less than £30,000 gross income and to landlords who agree to let to tenants in receipt of specified benefits for heating and insulation works. The maximum loan is £5,000 (£8,000 in hard to heat rural properties). In rural locations, works can include the provision of renewable technologies such as solar heating and again the scheme is managed by CEN. The loan is repayable by owner occupiers on

sale within 10 years, after 10 years by accredited landlords and after 3 years with non accredited landlords.

4.44 Currently there is only one form of empty property assistance:

4.45 Empty Property Assistance: This is a grant to pay the interest incurred on a Kent County Council No Use Empty Loan. (These loans are made available to properties owners to bring long term empty properties back into use. They are repayable on completion of the works.)

4.46 The table below shows the broad pattern of expenditure on financial assistance over the past 4 years and anticipated expenditure over the remainder of this financial year.

**Figure 7 – Financial Assistance Expenditure**

Financial Year	2006/07 (£k)	2007/08 (£k)	2008/09 (£k)	2009/10 (£k)
Mandatory DFGs	382	439	600	680
Discretionary Disabled Assistance	0	24	6.6	15
Decent Homes Assistance	110	374	1245	1670
Energy Efficiency Assistance	180	224	126	700
Empty Property Assistance	64	0	27	30

4.47 The table shows clearly the increasing spend pattern on mandatory DFGs and the very substantial expenditure on Decent Homes Assistance after the successful bid for additional funding. The Decent Homes Assistance has proved very successful in making homes decent – 89 properties in the first six months of this financial year.

4.48 As described at paragraph 3.54, the 2008 House Condition Survey did show that 22% of households felt there was at least one member with a disability and realistically demand for mandatory DFGs will not reduce, particularly as the proportion of older households increases.

4.49 Whilst the spend on Empty Property Assistance appears low, this is the catalyst that makes the No Use Empty loans work effectively. Now that the downturn in the property market appears to be easing, the numbers of properties brought into use with this assistance is increasing sharply – 12 properties have been brought back into use in the first six months of this year using this route (and a further 12 through advice alone).

- 4.50 Almost all loans and DFG grant applicants are assisted through the In Touch Home Improvement Agency, although applicants are not required to use the agency. The Council still inspects, approves all grants and loans and authorises payments. The agency currently deals with around 240 live cases at any one time (roughly half and half DFGs and Decent Homes loans). In Touch charges a fee rate of 10%, for which a non repayable grant is given.
- 4.51 With the sudden increase in workload after the additional decent homes funding was obtained, problems with backlogs and other issues were experienced. The Agency and the Council have worked together to resolve these backlogs and there are no longer waiting lists. Applications are processed immediately and once verified normally wait no longer than 5 months for the work to be completed depending on the scale of the job.
- 4.52 Neither the Council or the agency offer independent financial advice when discussing loans; residents are always advised to seek their own independent financial advice.

### **Diversity and Inclusivity**

- 4.53 The Council is committed to ensuring that there is equal access to all services by all residents of the District. This Strategy concerns the delivery of services and allocation of resources to many vulnerable groups including low income households, households with older residents, residents with disabilities and residents from minority communities. The Strategy has been developed to ensure that limited resources are allocated as fairly as possible and delivery will be in accordance with the principles of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 4.54 We already have in place procedures to assess customer satisfaction and diversity in respect of financial assistance and complaint investigation. We also record customer information upon receipt of a request to determine if we are reaching all diverse groups.
- 4.55 Neighbourhood meetings are attended by officers of the Private Sector team such as the Folkestone Road group which includes local residents and representative from a non British ethnic group.
- 4.56 It is believed that some of the worst rented accommodation is occupied by non British ethnic groups in the town centre of Dover. Unfortunately we rarely receive enquiries from them. We work with the Community Liaison Officer to help identify these residents and a more pro-active approach in the roads believed to house these groups should help us target them for help in the future.

The requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 including the preparation of Equality impact assessments have been met in the preparation of this Strategy

#### Consultation

- 4.57 We have consulted widely and taken into account views received when preparing this new strategy. Initial consultation was with a group of invited stakeholders. Those who attended included representatives of local landlords, letting agents, The National Landlords Association, RSLs, Municipal Charities of Dover, the Dover Society and In Touch. Votes were taken on a series of structured questions giving options for future action in respect of housing assistance, enforcement action, empty homes, engaging with landlords, energy efficiency assistance and disability adaptations.
- 4.58 A draft strategy was circulated to a wide stakeholders group and was also made available for comment on the Council's website. Again, views received were taken into account in drafting the final version.
- 4.59 A summary of the views received during consultation is given at Appendix 3; they cover a range of issues we should adopt we offer advice and financial assistance and our approach to enforcement.



## THE FUTURE

### 5.0 Future Priorities

5.1 To achieve our previously stated objectives and in response to the findings from the Private Sector Stock Condition survey and consultation feedback, we have identified the following priorities for action over the next five years:

- Improve our response to meet statutory responsibilities.
- Reduce the number of long term empty properties
- Increase the number of decent homes for vulnerable households.
- Develop a neighbourhood renewal policy to improve areas containing poor housing

Improve our effectiveness at meeting our Statutory Responsibilities

5.2 It is clear that priorities from national, regional and local plans drive this Strategy, along of course with the consultation outcomes. However, whilst seeking to meet the strategic priorities within resources which will always be limited, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we have to meet a range of statutory obligations: category 1 hazards, mandatory licensing, and responding to complaints which will take a substantial volume of our staff time.

5.3 The House Condition Survey showed that 25.2% of properties (an estimated 10,765 homes) have category 1 hazards. The House Condition Survey figures show that the proportions of these hazards are high in privately rented homes, in pre-1919 properties and in terraced properties.

5.4 Effective enforcement is crucial as 21.6% of privately rented properties contain a category 1 hazard. Advice, specialist support and offering financial assistance all play important roles, especially as the majority of category 1 hazards are excess cold where financial assistance is often the key to removing the hazard especially for the 2000 homes in the owner occupier sector.

5.5 Whilst we feel that previous work has ensured that we have maintained effective control over standards in houses in multiple occupation, and that we have dealt effectively with mandatory licensing, the numbers in Dover district mean that this will always be a significant part of our work. We intend to maintain the standards that now prevail in this sector.

5.6 Our Service Plans already set a number of specific targets for the Private Sector Housing Team. These cover areas such as homes made decent through financial assistance and enforcement, category 1 hazards dealt with (and timescales), empty homes brought back into use by direct local authority action, and HMO licensing. We have reinforced these targets (especially in respect of empty homes) as part of this Strategy.

### Reduce the Number of Long Term Empty Homes

- 5.7 Our statutory powers also extend to dealing with long term empty homes and we acknowledge that this is a major priority for Dover. Our actions have increased the numbers of long term empty properties bought back into use but the overall numbers continue to rise and we have higher percentage of long term empty homes than the rest of England.
- 5.8 Our empty property strategy for 2010-15 sets out our priorities and actions to deal with empty properties which includes more resources and a focus of action on the worst properties.

### Increase the number of Decent Homes for Vulnerable Households

- 5.9 The House Condition Survey showed that only 50.6% of vulnerable households live in decent homes, well below the 70% PSA7 target for 2010. In the privately rented sector, the proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes is only 25.6%.
- 5.10 At the moment, we need to make 3,040 properties occupied by vulnerable households decent to meet the 70% target. Of this shortfall, 1,840 properties are in the privately rented sector and 1,200 in the owner occupied sector. Even allowing for the numbers of properties that will have been made decent since the House Condition Survey was carried out last year and those that will be made decent before the new Strategy takes effect, to do this over the five year life of this Strategy we will need to make 400 such properties decent each year.
- 5.11 Reducing the number of vulnerable households in non decent homes requires a fully comprehensive approach. Even acknowledging that effective enforcement will be a key factor because of the concentration of vulnerable households in non decent privately rented homes, a mix of advice, financial assistance and informal and formal enforcement to tackle category 1 hazards, disrepair, lack of modern facilities and inadequate thermal comfort will be required. The overall target therefore informs and drives all aspects of the work of our Private Sector Housing Team.

### Develop a neighbourhood renewal policy to improve areas containing poor housing

- 5.12 The house condition surveys especially the 2001 survey indicated that poor housing was concentrated in particular wards in Dover urban areas. The health inequalities of deprived areas can be illustrated by the Dover Health Profile 2009 produced by the Department of Health which states the life expectancy for women living in the most deprived areas is nine years lower for those in the least deprived area of Dover.
- 5.13 The Council has already identified areas such as St Radigunds will require regeneration as being the most deprived ward in Dover. Local community concerns with Folkestone Road area and the condition of properties particularly those rented

are regularly voiced to the Council. Both these areas have a high percentage of rented accommodation and older housing.

- 5.14 It is recognised that not all homes can be improved economically to meet current and future standards. Improvements could also include clearance and redevelopment. This would require considerable resources.
- 5.15 The need to carry out area renewal is considered a priority to tackle the poor conditions in Dover. Although it is recognised that currently there is insufficient resources to carry out this work we need to explore ways of funding this work and take advantage of possible funding. We also need to see how improvements to private sector housing can be undertaken to support and compliment other regeneration projects in the area.

We Will Address These Priorities By

Offering Information, Advice and Specialist Support

- 5.16 We feel that in general terms our teams offer very valuable information, advice and specialist support to private sector residents but we need both to take account of change and also to look to improve where this is possible.
- 5.17 With energy efficiency, we will continue to increase public access to good information and in particular to target energy efficiency information on fuel poverty households. We will continue to promote access to grants such as Warm Front and our own assistance packages. In particular, we are now working with estate agents to link with the Home Information Packs (HIPs) produced with new sales and lettings.
- 5.18 In line with the Audit Commission “Lofty Ambitions” report, we will seek to ensure that advice is targeted in particular at those in greatest need.
- 5.19 The Handyperson service has proved popular and successful in giving specialist support to vulnerable households. The addition of the second Handyperson has been of great value. We wish to see this service maintained and reinforced and, given the uncertainties over future funding, we intend to work with our partners involved with this project at the charging regime. Other local authorities charge rates which, whilst still well below commercial rates (especially in terms of no minimum callout fee), make reliance on public funding much less.
- 5.20 In Touch is currently trialling ways of extending the Handyperson approach to gardening and decorating through social enterprise schemes. If these prove successful and can be funded at low cost in Dover, we will work with the agency to promote the service. We will also explore ways of giving householders advice on repairs and home maintenance.

- 5.21 The Deposit Bond Scheme is proving very successful in allowing vulnerable households access to suitable affordable housing. Many local authorities link bond schemes, which do benefit landlords, with accreditation. We see the advantage in this especially where the accreditation involves property standards<sup>27</sup>. Equally we do not want to discourage responsible landlords who may not wish to become accredited. As a first step, we shall introduce a requirement that landlords should be accredited or meet accreditation standards. We may move this on to require properties to reach set standards.
- 5.22 Continue to promote the Kent Landlord Accreditation Scheme and landlords training schemes to encourage best practice. Explore ways of encouraging landlords to become accredited by linking to other initiatives such as the bond guarantee scheme.

**Information, Advice and Specialist Support - we will:**

- Increase public access to energy efficiency information targeting households in greatest need especially those in fuel poverty.
- With our partners, review the charging for the Handyperson service to bolster its funding.
- Support the low cost gardening and decoration services to vulnerable households through the Handyperson service.
- Explore ways to give householders advice on repairs and maintenance
- Link the Bond Guarantee Scheme to accreditation standards.

Inspection and Enforcement

- 5.23 We are always seeking improvement to improve housing standards and feel that some positive changes can be made. In line with the Enforcement Concordat, informal action is the most appropriate approach in the great majority of cases where residents are concerned about unsatisfactory housing. We also believe strongly in engaging positively with those landlords who recognise and observe the considerable responsibilities involved in letting out residential property.
- 5.24 We also recognise that we have a duty to deal with unsatisfactory housing and in particular to take action with category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The importance of this has been heightened by the figures from the House Condition Survey in respect of non decency and category 1 hazards in the private rented sector.
- 5.25 We shall now be adopting a more fast track approach to housing enforcement, moving promptly to take formal action using the Housing Act 2004 powers where it is clear that this is warranted – a policy of being fair but firm. We will review our service standards to reflect this and will monitor enforcement work to ensure the tighter timescale are adhered to.

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<sup>27</sup> A practice recommended in the May 2001 DETR Good Practice Guide on developing voluntary accreditation schemes

- 5.26 We shall at the same time introduce charging for statutory notices. Investigating housing complaints does take time and resources and if property owners do not respond to informal action we feel it is appropriate that we should recover the reasonable costs incurred as allowed by the Housing Act 2004. Details of the circumstances in which we will charge are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.27 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System does allow a great deal of discretion. We will now revise our Enforcement Policy to clarify the guidelines to be used by our Officers when exercising powers under the HHSRS. The guidelines are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.28 The majority of Officer time is spent in reactive work (responding to complaints) rather than proactive work (planned inspections). There are areas in Dover town centre (in particular parts around Folkestone Road and parts of London Rd) where there are concentrations of poor housing. We feel that planned inspections would be appropriate in these areas. We intend to have Officer time dedicated to carrying out inspections on a planned basis in areas where unsatisfactory housing is concentrated. This will be linked with targeting advice on energy efficiency and on financial assistance.
- 5.29 The move to a proactive approach in the areas where unsatisfactory housing is concentrated will link with the broader regeneration proposals as set out in the Dover Corporate Plan and the Dover Master plan. If the proactive inspections show that housing conditions warrant some form of area based intervention, detailed area assessments may be undertaken to determine whether we should consider any Renewal Area declarations. We recognise that to go down this route will involve securing extra capital resources and will also require additional staffing to be successful.
- 5.30 We feel that great progress has been made in recent years in dealing with HMOs. Regular inspections will continue to build on this and an accurate database of all known HMO's produced.
- 5.31 We have produced a new Empty Homes Strategy for 2010-15. By implementing the strategy we expect to increase our achievements in reducing the number of long term empty properties
- 5.32 The Private Sector Officers already work closely with the Officers of the Housing Needs Team when dealing with homeless or other vulnerable households. This can involve dealing with cases of illegal eviction or harassment by landlords. One change we will make is for closer working in such cases. Where prosecution is warranted, in some cases the Private Sector Housing Team Officers will take the lead.

**Enforcement - we will:**

- Adopt a more formal approach to enforcement – fair but firm.
- Introduce changing for statutory notices.
- Dedicate the time of Officers to proactive planned inspection work focused on areas of unsatisfactory housing.
- Take steps to ensure that prosecution is used where warranted in cases of alleged illegal eviction and harassment.
- Carry out proactive work in areas of regeneration.
- Ensure sufficient resources are devoted to HMOs to maintain current standards.
- Implement new Empty Property Strategy.

Offering Financial Assistance

- 5.33 Our Housing Assistance Policy has been regularly revised and we feel that in general terms the framework for discretionary financial assistance gives a very good balance between the needs of the District and the resources available. Very substantial progress has been made both with making homes decent and with energy efficiency improvements since the additional Regional Housing Board capital funding which started in 2006/07.
- 5.34 The eligibility criteria targets vulnerable households and, whilst we no longer target specific geographical areas with ring fenced allocations, in practice the majority of financial assistance is given in areas of poorer housing because of information and advice campaigns. This will be reinforced through the designation of an Officer to carry out planned inspections in areas of unsatisfactory housing We will also seek additional funding streams to carry out any area based intervention.
- 5.35 One area which the present Housing Assistance Policy does not cover is any form of replacement for the former Home Repairs Assistance. This was a flexible grant aimed at vulnerable older householders who needed small scale urgent works – a broken boiler, leaking roof, dangerous electrics, etc. Most local authorities retain assistance of this type in some form or other. The full Decent Homes Assistance involves a time consuming procedure to put a full charge on the property to secure the loan.
- 5.36 Consultation indicates that we should look at revising the Housing Assistance Policy to include for a Minor Works Loan available to low income households with a maximum limit of £4,000 for these type of works. The loan could be offered quickly as it would be secured with a Local Land Charge only.

- 5.37 Whilst our Housing Assistance Policy has worked very well since 2006/07 in increasing the number of decent homes and improving energy efficiency, we recognise that it is heavily reliant on the additional Regional Housing Board funding . This appears to be secured for 2010/11 but it is realistic to suppose that any future Government will seek to make significant reductions in public sector spending. It is also realistic to suppose that future cuts will have a significant impact on additional funding of this type.
- 5.38 Our loans are consistent with the Government policy to promote equity release as in effect the money lent is recycled when the property changes hands. However, in practice it is often many years before the money is available to lend again. Any significant reduction in the Regional Housing Board funding would have a major impact. Because of this, we think it is prudent to start exploring other forms of equity release that make available funds from private sector lending funds.
- 5.39 Whilst the Heating and Insulation Grants and Loans come from our capital programme, much energy efficiency assistance comes from other sources such as Warm Front or from partnerships with other organisations. We shall look thoroughly at opportunities to provide assistance to areas of high deprivation in the new Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP). This is totally consistent with the recent Audit Commission “Lofty Ambitions” report which urges local authorities to focus energy efficiency assistance on the most deprived areas.

**Financial Assistance - we will:**

- Continue to target areas of unsatisfactory housing and link this with the work done on planned enforcement inspections.
- Seek additional funding stream to enable area renewal to be carried out.
- Consider the introduction of a Minor Works Loan at the next review of the Housing Assistance Policy.
- Examine thoroughly the opportunities to provide assistance to households in areas of deprivation through the Community Energy Savings Programme.
- Start exploring now alternative ways to facilitate equity release that draw on funds from private sector sources.

**Resourcing The Priorities**

- 5.40 Clearly our future priorities have to be based on a realistic assessment of the likely resources that will be available to us. The total estimated cost of bringing homes up to decent homes standard is £66m which is clearly far more than can met through finance by Local and Central Government alone.

- 5.41 In 2008 – 2009 we spent £2,005,000 on mandatory and discretionary financial assistance. This was made of £1,245,000 specifically targeted at assisting property owners to meet the Decent Homes Standard, and £30,000 from the Council's Capital Programme. The £600,000 spent on mandatory DFGs was funded 60% by Specified Capital Grant from the Government and 40% from the Council's Capital Programme. Provision of £87,000 is also included in our Capital Programme to fund the compulsory purchase and resale, if necessary, of long term empty homes. We will also have £150,000 from the Performance Reward Grant.
- 5.42 We shall benefit in future years as the Decent Homes loans made since 2005 are redeemed; however, as these become repayable on sale of the property it is unlikely that significant sums will be available for relending for some years.
- 5.43 We currently have the benefit of empty property loans through the Kent County Council No Use Empty campaign . During 2008/09 and 2009/10 this amounts to a current annual value of approximately £600k. Unless the scheme is extended this assistance will finish in 2013.
- 5.44 The KCC through the No Use Empty Campaign also offer a consultant dedicated to empty property work and capital to undertake the purchase of empty properties.
- 5.45 Whilst Regional Housing Board funding for our loan programme for 2010/11 appears to be in place, we have been informed this will be reduced. This trend may well continue in a climate where any future Government may be seeking to achieve significant reductions in public spending. This could obviously have a profound effect on the delivery of this Strategy and we describe at paragraph one the approach we will explore to minimise the risk of this.
- 5.46 There are currently 3 full time equivalent members of staff working offering advice and financial assistance which includes two temporary staff posts (one post until March 2010 and the other until March 2011) and 3.5 full time equivalent members of staff engaged in enforcement. Using the performance reward grant we intend to strengthen the staffing resource to deal with long term empty homes by an additional part time post for up to two years.
- 5.47 The majority of the changes can be accommodated within existing staff resources. Additional staffing will be required if area renewal proposals are developed and implemented.

### **Implementation and Review**

- 5.48 The following pages set out the Action Plan the Council will follow to implement the changes described in this Private Sector Housing Strategy.



- 5.49 The Council is committed to improving private sector housing standards. We will review progress against the targets set out in the Action Plan on a quarterly basis. There will be a formal annual review as part of the Corporate Planning process.
- 5.50 We already have in place procedures to assess customer satisfaction after completion of financial assistance and complaint investigation. We will monitor the responses from this as part of our review process.

## ACTION PLAN

Ref	Specific Objective	Priority	Links to Other Strategies / Legislation	Work to be Done	Resources Required	Target Date	Indicator(s) of Outcome Achieved/Performance Measure	Lead Officer
<b>1. INFORMING, ADVICE AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT</b>								
PSHS 1.1	Increase public access to energy efficiency by signposting householders to information about financial help.	High	Home Energy Conservation Act 1995; Decent Homes Standard; Audit Commission: Lofty Ambitions; Regional Housing Strategy; Lighting the Way to Success; NI 187	Increase publicity campaigns using leaflets, newspaper advertisements and internet presence targeted at households most in need. Work with benefits section to target publicity	Provided through existing budget for leaflets and advertisements. Time input from Climate Change Officer	1 April 2011	Ensure sufficient promotion of Warmfront to provide for 300 heating and insulation measures.	Climate Change Officer
PSHS 1.2	Review operation of Handyperson service.	Medium	Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods; Independent Living Strategy; Regional Housing Strategy	Review existing charging regimes, with partners review alternative charging regimes, test customer reaction.	Officer time	1 December 2010	Revised charging regime introduced.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.3	Improve ways to give householders advice on repairs and maintenance	Low	Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods	Contact other local authorities offering and/or publishing such advice to research delivery mechanisms.	Officer time	1 December 2011	New advice service developed.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 1.4	Link the Rent Deposit Scheme to accreditation standards	Medium	Decent homes standard; DETR: Good Practice Guide on Voluntary Accreditation	Develop framework for assessing compliance, consult with local landlords and landlord representative organisations.	Officer time	1 April 2011	Bond Scheme amended to include requirement for landlords to meet accreditation criterion	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Needs Manager
<b>2. INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT</b>								
PSHS 2.1	Adopt a more fast track approach to enforcement	High	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Publicise new enforcement policy, review existing service standards relating to enforcement action, monitor performance against revised standards	Officer time	1 October 2010	Publicity measures undertaken, service standards revised, monitoring arrangements in place.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.2	Introduce charging for statutory notices	High	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy	Develop new charging criteria, revise literature and statutory notices, establish charging & recovery procedures, publicise changed policy.	Officer time	1 October 2010	New charging regime in place and publicised, recovery procedures in place.	Private Sector Housing Manager

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PSHS 2.3	Identify and target resources at areas of worst housing using proactive inspections	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	,Devise programme of planned inspections focusing on areas of unsatisfactory housing	Officer time	1 December 2010	Planned inspections programme in place.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.4	Take more formal action of illegal eviction and harassment.	Medium	Protection from Eviction Act 1977; Protection from Harassment Act 1997	Review working arrangements between Officers of Private Sector Housing Team and Housing Standards Team	Officer time	1 November 2010	Effective arrangements in place to ensure that prosecution initiated where warranted with illegal eviction and harassment	Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Standards Manager
PSHS 2.5	Link proactive work to development of area regeneration proposals	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Dover Corporate Plan, Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan; Dover Masterplan	Ensure programme of planned inspections as set in Objective 7 above is in place. Establish procedures to feedback information from planned inspections to identify neighbourhoods where area intervention warranted	Officer time	1 December 2010	Arrangements for both planned inspections and information feedback procedures in place	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 2.6	Ensure HMOs meet current standards	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Review existing HMO records and compile up to date database. Programme inspections based on risk assessment.	Officer time	1 August 2011	Updated database in construction and pro active inspections are carried out.	Private Sector Housing Manager
<b>3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>								
PSHS 3.1	Continue to target financial assistance to areas with high levels of unsatisfactory housing.	Medium	Regulatory Reform Order 2002; Housing Act 2004; Decent Homes Standard; Regional Housing Strategy	Monitor awareness campaigns and take up of financial assistance; link monitoring information with information from planned inspections and identify neighbourhoods where area intervention warranted	Officer time; significant additional capital resources if potential area intervention identified	1 April 2011	Increased number of loan applications in targeted areas.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.2	Evaluate the introduction of Minor Works Loans at next review of Housing Assistance Policy	Low	Regulatory Reform Order 2002; Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods; Independent Living Strategy; Regional Housing Strategy; Decent Homes Standard	Review take up of existing financial assistance and resource; determine whether provision for Minor Works Loan can be made	Officer time	1 April 2011	Decision taken whether to implement.	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 3.3	Investigate opportunities to provide assistance to households areas of deprivation through CESP	Medium	Home Energy Conservation Act 1995; Decent Homes Standard; Audit Commission: Lofty Ambitions; Regional Housing Strategy; Lighting the Way to Success; Decent Homes Standard	Consider funding opportunities in CESP, develop a bid carry out research for application, and devise assistance programmes	Officer time	1 October 2010	Funding bids made and assistance programmes in place	Climate Change Officer

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PSHS 3.4	Explore alternative ways to facilitate equity release drawing on private sector funds	Medium	Regulatory Reform Order 2002; regional Housing Strategy	Research and evaluate opportunities for assisting property owners to release equity from their property to carry out works without reliance on public sector funding	Officer time	1 December 2012	Research done, evaluation of alternative opportunities in place and recommendation for future action made	Private Sector Housing Manager
<b>4. Enforcement</b>								
PSHS 4.1	Increase staff resources devoted to tackling long term empty homes	High	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy; Dover Draft Empty Homes Strategy	Establish funding available for additional staff (Performance Reward Grant), recruit additional staff resource	Officer time and Performance Rewards Grant funds.	1 August 2010	Additional staff resource in place	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 4.2	16 Explore the possibility of additional resources to carry out area renewal.	Medium	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy;	Research availability of funding	Officer time additional staff to implement	1 July 2011	Additional funding in place	Private Sector Housing Manager
PSHS 4.3	17. Introduce and follow measures in Empty Homes Strategy	High	Housing Act 2004; Regional Housing Strategy; Dover Corporate Plan	Complete development and approval of Empty Homes Strategy; review all procedures for delivery of information and specialist support, financial assistance and enforcement	Officer time and Performance Rewards Grant funds.	1 August 2010	Strategy approved and implementation procedures in place	Private Sector Housing Manager

## **APPENDIX 1: THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Government has introduced the Decent Homes Standard in order to link increased funding for housing with clear improvements in standards. The first guidance on the Decent Homes Standard was issued in July 2001, with revised guidance in February 2004 and June 2006.
- 1.2 The Decent Homes Standard was originally applied only to homes owned by local authorities and registered social landlords. However, the standard was then applied by the Government to vulnerable households in the private sector by Target 7 of the Public Services Agreement. Although now formally dropped as a target by the government, it remains a relevant benchmark.
- 1.3 “Vulnerable” groups are considered by the Government to be those who may suffer health problems as a result of living on poor housing conditions which they do not have the resources to remedy themselves. Examples include those over 60, people with long term illness or disability or families with young children. In addition they are in receipt of income or disability related benefits.
- 1.4 Measurement of progress against the target is achieved through the annual English Housing Survey (formerly the English House Condition Survey). The EHS measures both property condition and the social circumstances of the household. To measure progress against the decent homes target in the private sector, the Government target refers to analysis of EHCS results in two consecutive years (to give robust figures).
- 1.5 The target applicable to private sector homes is:-
- To secure a year on year increase in the proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes;
  - Proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to be more than 65% in 2006-07;
  - Proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to be more than 70% in 2010-11;
  - Proportion of vulnerable households in decent homes to be more than 75% in 2020-21

### **2.0 What is the Decent Homes Standard?**

- 2.1 The most recent definition of the Decent Homes Standard was given in guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in June 2006. The guidance is based on four main principles:-
- a) It meets the current minimum standard for housing;
  - b) It is in a reasonable state of repair;
  - c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services;
  - d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- 2.2 The standard is a *minimum* standard. The Government expects both social landlords and local authorities responsible for securing standards in the private sector to aim for the best standards attainable. The meaning of the individual criteria are explained in more detail below:-

a) *It Meets The Current Statutory Minimum Standard For Housing*

- 2.3 Previously the minimum standard for housing was the “fitness standard” set by the Housing Act 1985. The Act listed nine factors to take into account when a local Council is deciding whether a home is “reasonably suitable for occupation” and so “fit for human habitation”. (The factors included freedom from damp, structural stability, lighting, ventilation and amenities.)
- 2.4 The standard, which dates back 80 years and was last revised in 1989, is described in detail at Appendix E
- 2.5 The fitness standard has now been replaced by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, prescribed method of assessment which applied risk assessments to hazards to health and safety found in the home. The system is described in detail at Appendix C.

b) *It Is In A Reasonable State Of Repair*

- 2.6 A home is in a reasonable state of repair unless:
- One or more key building components are old **and** because of their condition need replacing or major repair; **or**
  - Two or more other building components are old **and** because of their condition need replacing or major repair.

**What are ‘key’ and ‘other’ building components?**

- 2.7 Building components are the
- Structural parts of a dwelling (e.g. wall structure, roof structure),
  - Other external elements (e.g. roof covering, chimneys) and
  - Internal services and amenities (e.g. kitchens, heating systems).
- 2.8 **Key building components** are those which, if in poor condition, could have an immediate impact on building integrity and cause further deterioration in other components. They are the external components plus internal components that have potential safety implications and include external walls, roof structure and covering, chimneys, windows/doors, chimneys, fixed heating appliances and electrics.
- 2.9 If any of these components are old and because of their condition need replacing, or require immediate major repair, then the dwelling is not in a reasonable state of repair and remedial action is required.
- 2.10 **Other building components** are those that have a less immediate impact on the integrity of the dwelling. The standard takes into account their combined effect - a dwelling is not in a reasonable state of repair if 2 or more are old and need replacing or require immediate major repair.

**What is old and in poor condition?**

- 2.11 A building component is treated as 'old' if it is older than its expected or standard life. The Government lists the lifetimes that may typically be expected for individual building components e.g. 50 years for a roof structure.

2.12 Components are in poor condition if they need major work, either full replacement or major repair. Again the Government sets out definitions for different components. For example, with a wall structure this would mean replacing 10% or more or repairing 30% or more, and with a wall finish replacing or repointing more than 50%.

2.13 One or more key components, or two or more other components, must be both old and in poor condition to render the dwelling non-decent on grounds of disrepair. Components that are old but in good condition or in poor condition but not old would not, in themselves, cause the dwelling to fail the standard e.g. a roof structure that was less than 50 years old but which had failed because of a fault.

c) *It Has Reasonably Modern Facilities And Services*

2.14 A dwelling is considered non decent under this heading if it lacks three or more of the following facilities:

- A kitchen which is 20 years old or less
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout
- A bathroom which is 30 years old or less
- A bathroom and WC located in an appropriate place
- Adequate noise insulation
- Adequate size and layout of common entrance areas for blocks of flats

2.15 These standards have been measured in the English House Condition Survey (EHCS) for many years. Examples in practice would be:-

- A kitchen with adequate space and layout would be too small to contain all the required items (sink, cupboards cooker space, worktops etc) appropriate to the size of the dwelling.
- A main bathroom or WC located in a bedroom or accessed through a bedroom (unless the bedroom is not used or the dwelling is for a single person).
- A dwelling would also fail if the main WC is outside or located on a different floor to the nearest wash hand basin - or if a WC without a wash hand basin opens onto the food preparation area.

d) *It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort*

2.16 The revised definition requires a dwelling to have both **efficient heating** and **effective insulation**.

2.17 Efficient heating is defined as any gas or oil programmable central heating or electric storage heaters or programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating. Heating sources which provide less energy efficient options fail the decent home standard.

2.18 Because of the differences in efficiency between gas/oil heating systems and the other types of system, the level of insulation considered appropriate also differs:

- For dwellings with **gas/oil programmable heating**, at least 50mm loft insulation (if there is loft space) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively)

- For dwellings with the less efficient **electric storage heaters/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating**, at least 200mm of loft insulation (if there is a loft) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively). Loft insulation thickness of 50mm is an absolute minimum which will trigger action.



## **APPENDIX 2: THE HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY RATING SYSTEM**

- 1.1 Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 replaced the housing fitness standard set out in the Housing Act 1985. The fitness standard is now to be replaced with an evidence-based risk assessment process, carried out using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Local authorities now base enforcement decisions in respect of residential premises on the basis of assessments under HHSRS.
- 1.2 Action by authorities will be based on a three-stage consideration:
- (a) the hazard rating determined under HHSRS;
  - (b) whether the authority has a duty or power to act, determined by the presence of a hazard above or below a threshold prescribed by Regulations (Category 1 and Category 2 hazards); and
  - (c) the authority's judgement as to the most appropriate course of action to deal with the hazard.
- 1.3 The Act contains new enforcement options which are available to local authorities. The choice of the most appropriate course of action is for the authority to decide, having regard to statutory enforcement guidance.

### **2.0 The Assessment System**

- 2.1 The purpose of the HHSRS assessment is not to set a standard but to generate objective information in order to determine and inform enforcement decisions. Technical guidance is given by DCLG in the February 2006 document "Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Operating Guidance".
- 2.2 HHSRS assesses twenty nine categories of housing hazard, including many factors which were not covered or covered inadequately by the housing fitness standard. It provides a rating for each hazard. It does *not* provide a single rating for the dwelling as a whole or, in the case of multiply occupied dwellings, for the building as a whole.
- 2.3 The HHSRS scoring system combines the probability that a harmful occurrence (e.g. an accident or illness) will occur as a consequence of a deficiency (i.e. a fault in a dwelling (whether due to disrepair or a design fault). If a harmful occurrence is very likely to occur and the outcome is likely to be extreme or severe (e.g. death or a major injury) then the score will be very high.
- 2.4 The hazard rating is expressed through a numerical score which falls within one of ten bands. Scores in Bands A to C (score 1,000 or above) are Category 1 hazards. Scores in Bands D to J (score below 1,000) are Category 2 hazards. The 29 hazard types are as follows:

#### **A. Physiological Requirements**

- Damp and mould growth etc
- Excessive cold
- Excessive heat
- Asbestos (and MMF)
- Biocides
- CO & Fuel combustion products
- Lead
- Radiation
- Uncombusted fuel gas

- Volatile organic compounds

B. Psychological Requirements

- Crowding and space
- Entry by intruders
- Lighting
- Noise

C. Protection Against Infection

- Domestic hygiene, pests & refuse
- Food safety
- Personal hygiene sanitation & drainage
- Water supply

D. Protection Against Accidents

- Falls associated with baths etc
- Falls on the level
- Falls associated with stairs and steps
- Falls between levels (e.g. from windows),
- Electrical hazards
- Fire
- Hot surfaces and materials
- Collision and entrapment
- Explosions
- Poor ergonomics
- Structural collapse and falling elements

2.5 The HHSRS assessment is based on the risk to the *potential occupant who is most vulnerable to that hazard*. For example, stairs constitute a greater risk to the elderly, so for assessing hazards relating to stairs persons aged 60 years or over are the most vulnerable group. In contrast, the most vulnerable group for falling between levels are children under 5 years. The very young as well as the elderly are susceptible to low temperatures. A dwelling that is safe for those most vulnerable to a particular hazard is safe for all.

### **3.0 The Enforcement Framework**

3.1 Local authorities have a duty to act when Category 1 type hazards are found. They have a discretionary power to act in respect of a Category 2 hazard. The courses of action available to authorities where they have either a duty or a power to act are to:

- Serve an improvement notice requiring remedial works;
- Make a prohibition order, which closes the whole or part of a dwelling or restricts the number or class of permitted occupants;
- Suspend Improvement or Prohibition notices.
- Serve a Hazard Awareness Notice
- Take Emergency Remedial Action\*
- Serve an Emergency Prohibition Order\*
- Make a demolition order\*
- Declare a clearance area\*

\* Only in respect of Category 1 hazards

3.2 While the HHSRS hazard rating is based on the most vulnerable potential occupant, authorities will be able to take account of the circumstances of the actual occupant in deciding the most appropriate course of action. Where an authority takes action and the property owner does not comply, the Act retains the powers available to authorities to act in default (i.e. carry out the work themselves and recover the cost from the owner of the property) and/or to prosecute. It also enables them to charge and recover charges for enforcement action.

#### **4.0 Use of Discretionary Power: Decision Rules**

4.1 *The Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Enforcement Guidance*, statutory guidance made under section 9 of the Housing Act 2004 gives advice on how local housing authorities should use their discretionary powers.

4.2 An authority must take appropriate action in respect of a Category 1 hazard and may do so in respect of a Category 2 hazard. In deciding what is the most appropriate course of action, the statutory guidance states that they should have regard to a number of factors. It is important to note that in both cases an authority is obliged to give a formal statement of reasons for the action it intends to take.

4.3 It is also important to stress that for the purposes of assessing the hazard, it is assumed that the dwelling is occupied by the most vulnerable household (irrespective of what household is actually in occupation or indeed if it is empty). However, for the purposes of deciding the most appropriate course of action, regard is had to the actual household in occupation.

4.4 An authority has to take account of factors such as:

- Extent, severity and location of hazard
- Proportionality – cost and practicability of remedial works
- Multiple hazards
- The extent of control an occupier has over works to the dwelling
- Vulnerability of current occupiers
- Likelihood of occupancy changing
- Social exclusion
- The views of the current occupiers

4.5 Having regard to the statutory guidance and to the provisions of the Enforcement Concordat which Dover District Council has adopted, in addition to the Council's duty to take action where a Category 1 hazard exists, the Council will generally exercise its discretion to take the most appropriate course of action where a Category 2 hazard exists in the following situations:

#### **The Most Appropriate Course of Action – Category 2 Hazards**

##### **A. Band D Hazards**

There will be a general presumption that where a Band D hazard exists, Officers will consider action under the Housing Act 2004 unless that would not be the most appropriate course of action

B. Multiple Hazards

Where a number of hazards at Band D or below appear, when looked at together, to create a more serious situation, or where a property appears to be in a dilapidated condition, the Private Sector Housing Manager may authorise the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

C. Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances where A and B above are not applicable, the Private Sector Housing Manager may authorise the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

**Level To Which Hazards Are To Be Improved**

The Housing Act 2004 requires only that the works specified when taking the most appropriate course reduce a Category 1 hazard to Category 2 hazard. For example Band C and Band A hazards need only be reduced to Band E. The Council will generally seek to specify works which, whilst not necessarily achieving the ideal, which achieve a significant reduction in the hazard level and in particular will be to a standard that should ensure that no further intervention should be required for a minimum period of twelve months.

**Tenure**

In considering the most appropriate course of action, the Council will have regard to the extent of control that an occupier has over works required to the dwelling. In normal circumstances, in most cases taking the most appropriate course of action against a private landlord (including a Housing Associations) and will involve requiring works to be carried out. With owner occupiers, in most cases they will not be required to carry out works to their own home and the requirement to take the most appropriate course of action will be satisfied by the service of an Hazard Awareness Notice.

However, the Council may in certain circumstances require works to be carried out, or serve a Prohibition Order, or use Emergency Remedial Action or serve an Emergency Prohibition Order, in respect of an owner occupied dwelling. This is likely to be where there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the occupiers themselves or to others outside the household, or where the condition of the dwelling is such that it may adversely affect the health and safety of others outside the household. This may be because of a serious, dangerous deficiency at the property. Another example is a requirement to carry out fire precaution works to a flat on a long leasehold in a block in multiple occupation.

**Enforcement Concordat**

The Council has adopted the Enforcement Concordat and observes its principles. With specific regard to Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004, the principles of the Enforcement Concordat mean that the Council will take an informal approach to the Act. However, this will not be appropriate where:

- (a) there is a risk to health and safety from a hazard of a nature which requires prompt formal action, or
- (b) there is evidence of previous non compliance with statutory provisions made under the Housing Acts or other housing related legislation

### **Charging for Notices**

In accordance with Sections 49 and 50 of the Housing Act 2004, the Council reserves the right to charge and recover the reasonable costs incurred in taking the most appropriate course of action.

The Council will charge where:

- (a) A formal notice is required to remove a serious threat to health and safety unless the threat arose because of circumstances outside the control of the person receiving the notice, order or action, and/or
- (b) There is evidence of previous non compliance with statutory provisions made under the Housing Acts or other housing related legislation, and/or
- (c) No adequate action has been taken in response to informal requests from the Council to take action or do works.

### **APPENDIX 3: CONSULTATION**

At the consultation meeting held on the 12 October 2009, the following stakeholders attended:

P G Sherratt	– The Dover Society
Glen Virtue	– Private Landlord
D Matika	– Southern Housing Group
Mr Bob Humphreys	– Bank House Property
L J Brooman	– Municipal Charities of Dover
Marion Money	– N L A
Simon Crowley	– Tersons
Julie Curtin	– Cherry Tree Property Services
Donna Crozier	– In Touch
Karen Leslie	– In Touch

The following a presentation, delegates were asked to vote on 14 specific decision points and the following options were preferred – that the Council should:

1. Assist vulnerable homeowners where major repairs are required with mixture of grants and loans.
2. Focus offers of affordable loans on combination of areas with poorest quality housing and older/vulnerable people.
3. Offer an interest free or low interest loan for small works (up to £4k).
4. Focus assistance with minor works on urgent repairs.
5. Provide advice on repairs and home maintenance to home owners to help them maintain their home.
6. With Category 2 hazards Council should serve notices where score is close to 1,000 or otherwise serious.
7. Encourage owners to return long term empty homes back into use but use EDMO if not successful.
8. Give long term empty homes high priority.
9. Charge for service of statutory notices.
10. Offer advice and help to landlords and tenants.
11. Assist people in fuel poverty, but not on benefits.
12. Offer assistance discretionary assistance for DFG works by grant repayable when property is sold.
13. Place a charge when mandatory DFG given (equal split on whether when home is extended or work other than stairlift).
14. Not to offer assistance to cost of renewable technologies with energy efficiency grants (but fair support of idea for yes where no access to mains gas).

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
All <sup>1</sup>	Walmer Parish Council [walmerparish@btconnect.com]	<b>1. Objection</b>	(a) No need for these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	Members would like to make the following representations in relation to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015: (i) Members would like to query the following issues:-  (a) the necessity for production of these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy and these are key underpinning strategies which provide a more detailed analysis of issues and set out specific actions to address them.
Private Sector Housing Strategy	KCC Brian.Horton@kent.gov.uk	2.Observation	Needs to make specific reference to 'Retrofit', and identify potential methods of funding.	The (Private Sector Housing) Strategy has a number of references to energy use and fuel poverty, but does not make any explicit references to 'Retrofit'. I would suggest that specific reference to 'Retrofit' and some thought to potential methods of funding would be relevant to this Strategy.	Retrofitting is the current terminology being used in relation to private sector stock improvements which seek to make homes more energy efficient. Reference to retrofitting has been included at paragraph 3.55 of the Strategy. <b>Accepted and Strategy</b>

<sup>1</sup> Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
					<b>amended</b>
Private Sector Housing Strategy.	KCC carolyn.mckenzie@kent.gov.uk	3.Observation	Needs to make specific reference to 'Retrofit', and identify potential methods of funding.	Could I just reiterate Brian's point. Retrofit is a key issue for Kent, and Dover are doing some good work.	As above
Private Sector Housing Strategy.	CAB Deal <a href="mailto:districtmanager@dealcab.net">districtmanager@dealcab.net</a> Jan Stewart	4.Observation  5 Observation  6 Observation  7 Observation	CAB national body to provide information to the Government about the condition of housing in England.  CAB local office to provide information to DDC about the condition of housing in the district  Several comments about the poor condition of housing in the district  Strong emphasis on Enforcement - several comments relate to ensuring that landlords comply with the rules, etc	- see Summary (left) - Evidence of our clients needs to feed into the system on a regular basis not all tenants will inform the council or the landlord but they do tell CAB.  - CAB Clients living in substandard accommodation - People living with water pouring into the property is common still. - Damp conditions still a major problem  - How do you enforce the rules and ensure that landlords comply. - Focussing your efforts on category 1 hazards, etc is great but you need a carrot and a big stick approach. - What sanctions can you put in place? - Landlords who ignore the council and other bodies are not really targeted in any major way, they get away with sub standard	The strategy acknowledges a need to develop a fast track approach to enforcement and to target resources at the worst housing. Part of this process is to develop an Enforcement Policy and is included as an action within the Strategy action plan. In view of CABs comments we will look to involve them in the development of this policy and work with them



Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		8 Observation	Strong emphasis on the amount of work still to be done with the limited resources available	<p>housing because they are fully aware that no can really do much about them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Great if you can deliver the best possible standards in the private housing sector but who will police this.</li> <li>- Code of conduct with penalties is essential again something we could feed into and assist with.</li> <li>- Enforcement exists but is not followed up efficiently always.</li> <li>- Landlords keeping deposits because they blame the tenants for the state of the property is common.</li> <li>- our clients are scared of landlords</li> <li>- Landlords are not following procedure</li> </ul> <p>- still a high mountain to climb with limited resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there actually enough staff and money to deliver the strategy as written?</li> <li>- What level will the financial help be for landlords?</li> </ul>	<p>to target our resources at the worst landlords. <b>No amendment required</b></p> <p>Enforcement has increased in recent years with some recent prosecutions.</p> <p>The resource implications of delivering the Strategy are considered in the document and resources identified in relation to the specific actions in the action plan. <b>No amendment required</b></p>
		9 Support	New PSHS welcomed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Key objectives are paramount but delivering them is difficult.</li> <li>- we would be very happy to participate further in this with you</li> </ul>	<p>We will be happy to work with the CAB and other bodies in delivering the actions within the Strategy.</p>
		10 Support	In addition to Statutory bodies, DDC to work with CAB, Shelter and SHACK		

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		11 Support	DDC has worked hard to achieve success		
		12 Observation	An accreditation scheme (is) essential.		A scheme is already operational but will be developed further. This is referred to in the Strategy. <b>No amendment required</b>
		13 Support	Education for landlords as part of this is essential and CAB would be happy to help with this.		
		14 Observation	Ensuring landlords can see they will gain in the long run is essential		This will be dealt with as part of the promotion of the scheme. <b>No amendment required</b>
		15 Observation	Who assesses the homes as decent?		The Council's responsibility for decent homes assessment is set out in the Strategy. <b>No amendment required</b>
		16 Observation	(CAB) clients see living on the streets as the only alternative (to sub standard accommodation and landlords they are afraid of).		We have no evidence to support this observation. The aim of the Strategy is to improve housing conditions in the private sector. <b>No amendment required</b>

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
Langdon Parish Council <a href="mailto:Hyde167@btinternet.com">Hyde167@btinternet.com</a> Jannine Hyde		17 Support	Strategies address issues of housing stock (and future needs in the town area).	Most of the strategies address issues of housing stock and future needs in the town area.	Our Housing Assistance policy already provides higher assistance in rural areas for homes off the gas supply to provide insulation and efficient heating.
		18 Observation	(More) people living longer and on their own will put pressure on need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors	The changing patterns of people living longer and on their own (divorce or choosing not to have long relationships) will put pressure on the need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors	We acknowledge in the Strategy that some of the most energy efficient homes are in our rural areas. Services are equally available in both the rural and urban areas. <b>No amendment required</b>
		19 Observation	Some housing stock in rural locations is sub-standard and should be targeted for upgrades or improvements... Often the older villagers live in these houses and so may suffer from complaints related to the poor housing stock	Some housing stock in rural locations is sub-standard and should be targeted for upgrades or improvements. Since the quantity of new builds in rural areas tends to be less than in towns, the existing housing stock tends to be old and so reflects building practices which now fall short of current energy-efficient standards. Poor insulation, lack of cavity walls, inefficient method of heating and lack of mains gas services are not uncommon. Often the older villagers live in these houses and so may suffer from complaints related to the poor housing stock	As above

Strategy/ Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
	DDC Forward Planning		Strategy needs to accurately reflect & cross reference with adopted Core Strategy	<p>Amend Core Strategy housing figure to 10,100 (page 4, para 6)</p> <p>Amend Core Strategy date to 2006 (not 2009) and delete text in brackets (page 13, para 2.26)</p> <p>Page 15, para 3.6 delete wording “predominantly in the Whitfield area”.</p>	<p><b>Plan amended</b></p> <p><b>Plan amended</b></p> <p><b>Plan amended</b></p>

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

KEY DECISION

**BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK**

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2015****Recommendation**

*That the Council approves the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015, attached at Annex A.*

Contact Officer: Paul Whitfield, extension 2258.

**Reasons why a decision is required**

1. The Plan is one of a number of new plans and strategies that underpin the new Housing Strategy for 2010-2015. It has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been subject to wider public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact.

**Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option**

2.
  - (1) To approve the proposed Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.
  - (2) To make amendments to the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.
  - (3) To reject the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015.

**Information to be considered in taking the decision**

3. The Council has ambitious plans for housing growth and therefore has both the potential and need to deliver more affordable homes.
4. The need to provide more affordable homes in the district is clearly evidenced in the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which identified an existing need to provide an additional 5,968 affordable homes together with a requirement for the provision of a further 578 homes per annum to meet newly arising need.
5. The need to provide affordable housing as evidenced by the SHMA is reflected in the Council's approved Local Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Document 2009.
6. The Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 Plan sets out how the Council, through its enabling and planning roles, will try to deliver high quality affordable housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community, across the whole of the district. The plan sets a target for the delivery of new homes within a context of economic uncertainty and considers the resources that will be required to deliver the target. The Plan also recognises the need to make best use of the existing housing stock.
7. An action plan identifying specific actions that will help deliver the Plan's key objectives is attached to the Plan.

8. The Plan is a key supporting document to the higher level Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

#### Background Papers

East Kent Strategic Housing Market 2009

#### Resource Implications

The Plan identifies the likely level grant funding that will be required from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver the targets within the Plan. It also identifies how developer payments 'in lieu' of the provision of affordable housing on-site might be used.

#### Consultation Statement

There has been a significant amount of public consultation in relation to both the SHMA and LDF Core Strategy.

Additional consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including Registered Social Landlords, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, land agents, house builders and developers and feedback has already been used to help shape the Plan.

The Plan has been subject to wider consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact. Details of the consultation feedback and consideration of the matters raised is set out in a table attached at Appendix B. Where amendments have been made to the Plan in response to the comments received this is highlighted in the table.

#### Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

The Corporate Plan includes objectives to provide enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households and to provide the right numbers and choice of housing to support economic growth as well as meeting the needs of the community.

The SHMA clearly demonstrates that many people are unable to afford market housing and therefore the Plan will help the Council achieve its stated objectives.

#### Customer Access Review

Primary research into households housing needs and aspirations was undertaken by ECOTEC which collected a wide range of information including ethnicity, long term illness and disability. This information together with local needs evidence which is being used to develop a new Kent-wide Supporting People Strategy has provided supporting evidence for the development of the Plan.

A CAR screening form in respect of the Plan has been completed.

**Attachments**

Annex A: Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Annex B: Analysis of consultation feedback

CHRISTINE WATERMAN

Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Housing Initiatives Manager, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2258.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010 – 2015

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our Corporate vision for Dover District is a *“future of strong economic growth within safe and sustainable communities”*. There is recognition that *“the provision of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community”* will play a key role in achieving this.
- 1.2 The South East Plan has set a target for the overall delivery of 10,100 new homes within Dover District by 2026. In our Local Development Framework Core Strategy we have adopted this target but have also set a higher growth target of 14,000 new homes.
- 1.3 Our planning policy will seek that 30% of the new homes within developments of 15 homes or more should be affordable in order to meet the housing needs of people who can't afford to buy a home in the market and to ensure a balanced housing market and the development of mixed, inclusive communities. Consequently, there is likely to be the potential to deliver a significant number of new affordable homes over the Core Strategy period, provided that we can secure the financial resources that will be required.
- 1.4 The main recommendations within the Plan are:
- That in the current uncertain economic climate, we set a target for the delivery of 650 affordable homes over the next five years, which will be reviewed annually to take account of changing conditions.
  - That we make better use of the existing housing stock through measures identified in the Plan and in our Private Sector Housing and Empty Homes strategies.

#### 2. Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 Our overall aim is to work towards ensuring that all households in the district have access to good quality homes, which meet their needs and are affordable.
- 2.2 Our objectives are therefore to:
1. Work effectively with partners to increase the supply of affordable homes across the district in support of the Council's wider regeneration and economic development objectives.
  2. Ensure that affordable housing positively contributes to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities.
  3. Deliver a range of affordable homes that will meet the needs of all sections of the community.
  4. Ensure that new homes are designed to be as affordable as possible.
  5. Make best use of the existing housing stock.

#### 3. The Need for Affordable Housing

- 3.1 The East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 (SHMA) identified 21 local housing market areas within the East Kent sub region and ranked all three of the urban LHMA's within Dover District (Dover, Deal & Sandwich) within the top 6 areas of local housing need.
- 3.2 The SHMA calculated that in order to meet the backlog of housing need and newly arising need over the government's recommended timescale (5 years) we would have to deliver 1,489 new affordable homes per year.



- 3.3 We know that even in a more stable economic climate this would be very difficult to achieve but the figure highlights the scale of the problem and provides the evidence which supports the Council's planning policies in respect of affordable housing and the need for the necessary financial resources to deliver a significant increase in delivery.
- 3.4 Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It therefore meets a wide range of needs from those households who are especially vulnerable and need to be supported in their home, through to households who want to get their foot on the home ownership ladder and key public sector workers such as nurses and policemen who initially, may only be able to buy an equity share in a property.
- 3.5 In addition to the issue of the number of affordable homes that the District needs, the Plan also sets out how we will deliver affordable homes of the right size and type and ensure that they are of a high quality and sustainable.

#### **4. Meeting the Need**

4.1 We will meet the need for affordable housing in two main ways:

- Enabling the building of new affordable homes
- Making better use of the existing housing stock

##### ***Enabling the Building of New Homes***

4.2 Our role in relation to the delivery of affordable housing is primarily an enabling one. Through the use of planning powers and effective partnerships with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the Homes & Communities Agency we will ensure that the right type of homes are provided to create mixed and sustainable new communities. We will also work with our partners to ensure new homes are of a high quality and through good design will remain affordable.

##### ***Rural Homes***

4.3 Whilst much of the planned housing growth will be within the urban areas we recognise that many households are affected by the shortage of affordable housing in the district's rural area. We are also aware that affordable homes can benefit rural communities by helping to sustain village amenities. We will therefore work with our partners to develop a manageable programme for the delivery of affordable rural homes.

4.4 We appreciate that general conditions in the housing market continue to be challenging and therefore recognise that we need to be flexible and innovative in our approach to delivering the affordable housing needed and accessing any new resources that may become available.

##### ***New Homes Target***

4.5 Housing market uncertainty means that it is impossible to forecast, with any degree of precision, the number of new affordable homes that will be delivered over the life of the Plan. However, there are schemes which have been progressed to a stage where we are reasonably confident they will be delivered. On the basis of these known schemes, we have set ourselves a target to deliver 250 affordable homes over the next two years with an aspiration for the delivery of a further 400 over the remaining three years of the Plan. This will be a significant increase on the 239 affordable homes that were delivered between 2004 – 2009.

##### ***Grant Funding***

4.6 The relatively low sales values in parts of the district, particularly in Dover town and Deal, means that many potential housing schemes are only marginally viable and that without grant

funding for the affordable homes they may either not be deliverable or will only be delivered with a reduced amount of affordable housing. We anticipate that over the longer term as market conditions improve and regeneration schemes progress, values will improve and the requirement for grant funding will reduce. In the meantime, it is likely that most affordable housing coming forward over the life of this plan will require grant funding.

- 4.7 We have estimated the grant requirement in order to achieve our first two year's target to be approximately £16m and given clearly evidenced need for more affordable housing in the district combined with our commitment to housing growth and planned regeneration we believe we can make a strong case to the Homes & Communities Agency for the funding required.
- 4.8 We recognise that many households aspire to home ownership and while problems in the housing market have adversely affected the provision of Homebuy (shared ownership) products we will work with partners to raise awareness of the products as the market recovers.
- 4.9 The marginal economic viability of many development opportunities within the district means that public subsidy in the form of grant from the Homes & Communities Agency will be required for most of the affordable housing delivered over the life of this Plan. We have estimated the grant requirement in order to achieve our first two year's target to be approximately £16m.

#### ***Making Best Use of the Existing Stock***

- 4.10 As well as delivering more new affordable homes we believe there is scope to deliver some of the affordable housing needed by making better use of the existing stock of private sector and affordable homes. We will explore such areas as private sector leasing, utilising long term empty homes, improving access to private rented housing and reducing under occupation in the affordable housing sector so as to 'free up' family homes. These are covered in more detail in our recent private Sector Housing and Empty Homes strategies.

### **5. Action Plan**

- 5.1 An Action Plan is attached to the Delivery Plan and progress against the various targets will be monitored will be regularly monitored by the Affordable Housing Working Group and Strategic Housing Executive. The Plan will be subject to an annual review and targets adjusted to reflect new opportunities and the availability of resources.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN 2010-2015**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council's vision for Dover District is a *“future of strong economic growth within safe and sustainable communities”*. There is a recognition that *“the provision of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community”* will play a key role in achieving this.
- 1.2 The Council's intention to secure housing growth in order to support its economic development and regeneration aspirations for the District are backed by planning designations such as International Gateway, Regional Hub and Growth Point. We recognise that the delivery of the right type and number of affordable homes will be essential to ensuring balanced and sustainable new communities.

### **2. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

- 2.1 The preparation of this Plan coincides with the finalisation of our Local Development Framework Core Strategy document which sets out the Council's vision for change and how it will seek to shape the district as a place to work, relax and visit. It will determine the future pattern of development in the district and the way in which the social, economic and environmental needs of the area can be delivered in the most sustainable way. The Core Strategy adopts a high growth approach to the provision of new housing generally and recognises the importance of addressing the need for affordable housing. This Plan therefore seeks to translate the higher level objectives within the Core Strategy, into specific affordable housing delivery actions and targets
- 2.2 The Core Strategy provides the basis for achieving a step change in the delivery of affordable housing to enable us to address the significant need for affordable homes identified by the East Kent Housing Market Assessment. However, the Plan has been developed at a time when economic conditions and the future availability of financial resources to support delivery is very uncertain. Consequently, while we know that we will be unable to meet the level of need that has been identified, we believe that by building effective partnerships, taking a creative and innovative approach and continually scanning the horizon for new opportunities, we will be in a stronger position to try and meet the need for affordable housing.
- 2.3 The Plan considers:
- Why affordable housing is needed
  - The number and type of affordable homes required.
  - The Council's role in enabling the delivery of affordable housing.
  - Our partnership approach to delivering affordable housing.
  - The resources available to support delivery.
- 2.4 The Plan will provide a reference document for 'The Single Conversation' which is the new process by which the Homes & Communities Agency will engage with local authorities in a designated area and develop a coordinated approach to investment planning resulting in a Local Investment Plan.
- 2.4 The Plan will also inform RSLs and developers of our approach to affordable housing delivery so they are fully aware of the Council's expectations in relation to affordable housing when planning new housing schemes.

### 3. AIMS and OBJECTIVES

#### Aim

- 3.1 To ensure that as many households as possible who are unable to afford market housing can access good quality, affordable homes.

#### Objectives

- 3.2
1. Work effectively with partners to increase the supply of affordable homes across the district in support of the Council's wider regeneration and economic development objectives.
  2. Ensure that affordable housing positively contributes to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities.
  3. Deliver a range of affordable homes that will meet the needs of all sections of the community.
  4. Ensure that new homes are designed to be as affordable as possible.
  5. Make best use of the existing housing stock.
- 3.3 We will achieve these objectives through our Strategic Planning, Strategic Housing and Landlord roles.
- 3.4 An action plan linked to these objectives is attached to the Plan.

### 4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

#### National

- 4.1 The Government believes everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, which they can afford, within a sustainable mixed community. This means providing a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of the whole community in terms of tenures and price ranges. This should include affordable housing, both social rented and intermediate<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.2 The Government's 2007 Housing Green Paper, '*Homes for the future, more affordable, more sustainable*' called on all Local Authorities to play a stronger role in addressing the housing needs of all residents. It encouraged authorities to develop their strategic housing role by using the full range of housing and land use planning powers to ensure the delivery of new and affordable housing whilst making the best use of existing stock.
- 4.3 Planning Policy Statement 3, published by the Government in 2006, sets out the Government's national policies with regard to planning and the planning policy framework for delivering its housing objectives. It requires Regional Spatial Strategies "*to set out the regional approach to addressing affordable housing needs, including the affordable housing target for the region and each housing market area*".
- 4.4 It also requires that Local Planning Authorities should:
- Aim to set an overall target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided based on an assessment of the likely economic viability of land development and likely levels of finance available for affordable housing.
  - Set separate targets for social-rented and intermediate affordable housing.
  - Specify the size and type of affordable housing to be provided.
  - Set out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required.
  - Set out the approach to seeking developer contributions.

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<sup>1</sup> Communities & Local Government: Delivering Affordable Housing (November 2006)

## Regional & Sub Regional

- 4.5 In terms of overall housing growth, the South East Plan sets a target for the provision of 654,000 new homes across the region between 2006-2026 with 56,700 homes to be delivered in the East Kent and Ashford sub region.
- 4.6 The Plan target for Dover District is 10,100 new homes by 2026 an average of 505 homes per annum. The annual average is not a target but is used as a benchmark for monitoring progress towards the overall Plan target.
- 4.7 Policy H3 of the Plan states that *“a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing in the region will be delivered”*.
- 4.8 The importance of affordable housing delivery is also recognised in the South East Regional Housing Strategy which recognises the need to increase the supply of affordable housing across the region *“because prices and private sector rents are out of reach of people on low and even average incomes and homelessness remains a significant issue”*<sup>2</sup>
- 4.9 The Strategy states that the most acute need is for social rented housing where supply has declined in recent years and that the delivery of new affordable, particularly affordable rented, homes is of over-riding importance.
- 4.10 The Kent Partnership’s Community Strategy document ‘The Vision for Kent’ (2006), states that *“Kent will be a county...where housing needs are met and decent, high quality homes, help create attractive safe and friendly communities”*.
- 4.11 The emerging East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to ensure that the sub region will be *“home to stronger and healthier communities enjoying high quality housing and an enviable quality of life”*. In achieving this, the Strategy recognises the need for *“a balanced housing supply which serves the needs of current and potential residents”*.
- 4.12 The Strategy also recognises that housing affordability is a key issue in terms of access to appropriate housing and fuel poverty.

## Local

- 4.13 The Council’s commitment to providing high quality, sustainable homes can be shown by its successful bid for Growth Point status. Linked to this are ambitious plans to regenerate key parts of Dover town and to create additional employment opportunities. The provision of new housing, including affordable housing, will be essential to help meet the needs of an expanding labour force and will therefore play a key role in helping the Council achieve its economic development objectives.
- 4.14 The Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy, which sets out a 30 year vision, strategy and action plan for the regeneration of Dover, highlights the role that new housing provision can play in helping to *“shift, diversify and balance the character of the town and attract new investment”*. The Strategy recognises that *“new house building in Dover has been limited to small scale developments at prices well below national average”* and that *“Despite the relatively low prices, low levels of earnings in the local economy mean there is insufficient affordable housing in the town”*. It also highlights the negative impact that the lack of good quality housing in the town has had on inward investment.
- 4.15 The Council’s Local Development Framework Core Strategy is a key corporate document which seeks to influence the processes that shape how the district will look and function and the characteristics that make one place distinct from another. The delivery of affordable housing will therefore take place within the policy context set out in the Strategy and support its overall aim and objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> South East Regional Housing Strategy 2006

## **5. THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- 5.1 A definition of affordable housing is provided in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The Council's strategy for delivering new homes and affordable homes has to be underpinned by a robust analysis of local housing markets and the need for different types of affordable housing to ensure these markets are balanced.

### **Number of Affordable Homes Needed**

- 5.3 The East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 (SHMA) carried out by ECOTEC, an independent consultant, provides a key evidence base on which our housing related strategies and plans are based.
- 5.4 The SHMA has identified a need to provide 1,489 new affordable homes per annum in order to meet the backlog of need for affordable housing and newly arising need over a five year period. This is the approach recommended in CLG Guidance but we know that it will be impossible to achieve this level of delivery within this time period.
- 5.5 A summary of the SHMA needs analysis together with some key findings from this and other data sources regarding the affordability of housing in the District and the need for affordable homes are set out in Appendix B.

### **Types of Affordable Housing Needed**

- 5.6 Decisions on the affordable housing to be provided on individual sites will take account of the recommendations in the SHMA report and the approach to unit types and tenure set out in Appendix C of this Plan. However, while this will provide overall direction we will need to allow some flexibility and to consider specific aspects of the site including its location, suitability for certain households, access to transport, schools and other amenities when determining the type of housing to be provided. Through our regular monitoring processes and Plan reviews we will ensure that the overall delivery of affordable house types is consistent with the SHMA report recommendations.
- 5.7 Affordable housing includes various intermediate housing products such as shared ownership, also referred to as HomeBuy. Generally, the SHMA found very low awareness of these intermediate housing products within Dover District with only 1.3% of respondents to the survey having considered them and with no social tenants having considered them at all. Having said this regular monitoring statistics provided by the HomeBuy zone agent (Moat Housing Group) shows that what demand there is, still significantly exceeds supply. Appendix D shows the breakdown of intermediate housing applicants across the County, by local authority area, and while this table is just a snapshot of demand at a particular moment in time, the data is updated on a regular basis and will be used to inform our guidance regarding the type of affordable units to be provided. We also intend to work closely with Moat to develop a better understanding of the intermediate market, identify which parts of the district are in greatest demand for shared ownership and together with our other RSL partners responsibly promote HomeBuy and other intermediate tenures so as to provide choice and meet aspirations.

### **Equality & Diversity**

- 5.8 We will try to make sure that housing is accessible for people with physical disabilities by enabling the development of specialist, wheelchair accessible affordable housing. We will also ensure that homes can be readily adapted to meet changing needs as people grow older, by requiring homes to be built to Lifetime Homes standards wherever this is practically possible.

- 5.9 The SHMA report includes an analysis of the housing requirements of specific groups and this together with the priorities identified in the emerging new Supporting People Strategy, as well as specific local research, will inform our approach to the provision of supported housing to meet the needs of vulnerable households. Two of our immediate priorities in this regard will be the delivery of new supported housing schemes for young homeless people and people with a combined alcohol and substance misuse problem. These are also clear priorities within the emerging new Supporting People Strategy.
- 5.10 We are aware that there is a strong demographic trend nationally, which is also reflected locally, in respect of increasing numbers of older person households (over 65) and of particular significance is the increasing number of frail older people. In response to this we have also developed a Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.
- 5.11 With regard to the provision of new affordable housing to meet the needs of older people, we will continue to work in partnership with Kent County Council to deliver a second 40 unit 'extra care' scheme through the PFI initiative and will explore further opportunities for the delivery of a further 100 units of extra care housing. In addition, while we recognise that most older people would prefer to remain in their own homes for as long as possible we also believe that this choice is sometimes influenced by a lack of attractive alternatives. Consequently, on suitable sites, such as the proposed town centre regeneration project, we will explore the possibility of providing housing for older people that will meet their aspirations in terms of the design of individual homes and the surrounding environment and infrastructure. We will also explore the potential that shared ownership housing may have in meeting the housing needs of older people. Additional information regarding our approach to meeting the housing needs of older people is set out in our Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.
- 5.12 The delivery of an increased proportion of larger, family homes referred to in Appendix C, will help the Council to tackle the problem of overcrowding an issue that was highlighted in the CLG action plan on this topic in 2007<sup>3</sup>. We are aware that overcrowding is a problem that can disproportionately affect black and ethnic minority households.

### **Where Affordable Housing Is Needed**

- 5.13 As well as assessing the need for affordable housing across the District as a whole, the SHMA identified 4 distinctive local housing market areas (LHMAs) and included an analysis of the need for affordable housing in each area. Of the 21 LHMAs identified by the SHMA within the sub region, the three urban areas within Dover district (Dover town, Deal and Sandwich) were all ranked within the top six areas in terms of the assessed need for affordable housing. The rural part of the district was ranked 11<sup>th</sup>.
- 5.14 While Deal was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, in broad numerical terms the SHMA has found that the greatest annual unmet need for affordable housing is in Dover town, followed by Deal, East Kent Rural South (the rural area within Dover District) and Sandwich.
- 5.15 Annex four of the SHMA report sets out the annual unmet need in each LHMA and a breakdown of the type of affordable homes required. In conjunction with other housing needs data this will enable us to give guidance to developers and RSLs regarding the appropriate mix of affordable house types and tenures to be provided within the LHMAs. The findings will also be reflected in the LDF Site Allocations Document.

### **Rural Housing**

- 5.16 Dover District covers a large rural area which includes a wide range of settlements. It is important that, while we recognise the housing problems affecting the urban areas and Dover town in particular, we also understand and respond to the need for affordable housing in many of our rural settlements.

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<sup>3</sup> Tackling overcrowding in England: An action plan. CLG Dec 2007.

- 5.17 The Regional Housing Strategy (2006) states that the *'lack of affordable housing in rural communities is believed to be the most important issue threatening the viability of rural communities'*.
- 5.18 In 2007 the HCA published its latest Rural Housing Strategy which highlighted the high level of need for affordable housing in many local authority areas and recognised the vital contribution that small, sensitively designed schemes can make to the sustainability of rural communities. This is reflected in the fact that the delivery of affordable rural homes is one of the three geographic priorities identified in the HCA's South East Investment Statement (2008-11). Despite this funding priority it seems likely that there will be shortfall of rural schemes coming forward to enable the HCA to meet its target.
- 5.19 The SHMA identified a significant level of need for affordable housing in the rural part of the district and the report highlighted the lack of suitable development sites, high land costs and land values and environmental considerations as being key factors impacting on the supply and demand for affordable homes. The report also highlighted the impact that the lack of affordable housing can have on the viability of local amenities such as shops, schools and transport networks. As well as on individual households who are forced to move out of villages to find suitable housing elsewhere.
- 5.20 Over the years the Council has enabled the delivery of a number of high quality affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites<sup>4</sup> and has specific planning policy and guidance to support this approach<sup>5</sup>.
- 5.21 We will work closely with Parish Council's and Action with Communities in Rural Kent to enable the identification of suitable sites, assist the Rural Housing Enabler in relation to village needs surveys and provide support to RSLs involved in rural housing development. We understand the need for a properly coordinated and managed approach to rural housing especially where potential schemes are being led by a private developer.
- 5.22 We will also investigate the development of Community Land Trusts as a vehicle that can deliver affordable housing so that it remains a community asset in perpetuity.
- 5.23 Opportunities for the development of rural affordable housing are generally limited and while the affordable homes provided should reflect the need identified through village surveys we will look to see how homes can be designed to offer flexibility in order to meet changing needs. This will be achieved by providing Lifetime Homes, but we will also encourage the provision of homes with easily convertible roof spaces to meet the needs of growing families.
- 5.24 Where there are no suitable sites within a village, but an urgent need for affordable housing has been identified, we will investigate the possibility of enabling an RSL partner to purchase existing, satisfactory properties. These are likely to be former Council homes and the Council may be able to assist with funding through it's 'off site contributions' pot referred to in paragraph 11.2.

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<sup>4</sup> Sites that are granted a planning consent as an exception to normal planning policy subject to a requirement that the homes are affordable.

<sup>5</sup> Policy DM 6 of the LDF Core Strategy Document 2009 & Affordable Housing Rural Exception Schemes Supplementary Planning Guidance



## 6. PAST PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 Historic provision of affordable housing in the district has been significantly below the level that will be required in the future by the Council's plans for overall housing growth.
- 6.2 The numbers of new affordable homes delivered in the district over the previous five years is shown below.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Social rented	14	35	15	37	82	183
Intermediate rent	0	0	0	6	15	21
Shared ownership (RSL)	12	29	0	23	9	73
Shared ownership (non RSL)	-	-	0	3	4	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>284</b>

While these new affordable homes were being delivered the following homes were lost from the affordable housing stock as a result of Council house sales.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Right to Buy sales	27	27	22	5	8	89

Source: CLG live tables on affordable housing supply

- 6.3 The net increase in the total number of affordable homes (including intermediate tenures) over this 5 year period has therefore been 195 homes.
- 6.4 110 new affordable homes were delivered in 2009/2010 which was a significant increase on previous years despite difficult market conditions and just short of our Local Area Agreement target of 120 homes.

## 7. HOW WE WILL DELIVER THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIRED

- 7.1 The Council's role in relation to affordable housing is delivered through its responsibilities for:

- Planning
- Strategic housing and enabling
- Council housing

The Council also relies on key partners to help it meet housing need, in particular the Homes & Communities Agency and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

- 7.2 The main sources of supply of affordable homes will be:

- New affordable homes built as part of a larger development under a S.106 planning agreement or developed directly by RSLs on land they control
- The existing housing stock.

### The Council's Enabling Role

- 7.3 While the Council is the largest provider of affordable housing in the District with a stock of just under 4,600 homes it hasn't built any new affordable homes for many years and this role has been taken over by Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations).

- 7.4 The Council's role has therefore become one of enabler rather than developer and central to this role is partnership working. Successful implementation of this Plan will be dependent on effective co-ordination and co-operation within the Council and across a number of statutory, non statutory and voluntary organisations.
- 7.5 We already have a protocol for working relationships between Housing and Planning but we will monitor the effectiveness of this and ensure that we have a 'joined up' approach across all parts of the Council involved with affordable housing. As part of this we will look at examples of best practice elsewhere<sup>6</sup>.

### **Partnership Working**

- 7.6 In 2006 Dover District Council together with Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council selected a small number of RSL development partners with whom the local authorities would develop stronger working relationships in respect of development and management services and who would be promoted to developers for S.106 development opportunities.
- 7.7 The four preferred RSL partners selected were:
- Amicus Horizon Group
  - Southern Housing Group
  - Orbit Group
  - Town & Country Housing Group
- 7.8 Currently only three of the partners are actively developing general needs affordable housing in the District and this combined with a general scaling back of RSL development programmes raises concern about the capacity of our partners to deliver the amount of affordable housing needed.
- 7.9 We are also aware of the Government's concern that it does not want local authorities to adopt restrictive practices which could preclude innovation and competition between affordable housing providers.<sup>7</sup>
- 7.10 However, we also recognise that Dover town has a poor market image and that there is a need to deliver high quality new homes to counteract this. It is therefore essential that the quality of affordable homes is also of a high standard and it is important that we work with RSL partners who have a clear understanding of the Council's corporate objectives and a long term commitment to the district not only in respect of providing new homes, but also the quality of their post development management services. We will therefore seek to increase RSL development capacity within the district while having a robust process in place to ensure RSLs deliver high quality management services. In identifying potential new partners we will seek to ensure that we there is the range of expertise to help deliver the wide range of different schemes required.
- 7.11 To address the competition issue, we will, for large strategic developments, consider inviting RSLs, or RSL consortia, to submit competitive proposals for their selection as the preferred RSL partner(s). Proposals would be assessed against a range of criteria including grant requirement, design standards and achieving sustainable communities. This would help build a strategic partnership approach to delivery and establish a long-term commitment from the RSL partner(s) and HCA. This approach may also be applied to major regeneration projects where a close partnership working and engagement with the community is necessary e.g. Coombe Valley in Dover town.

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<sup>6</sup> The I&DeA publication New Housing Provision and the Strategic Housing Role 2009 provides examples of good practice.

<sup>7</sup> Communities & Local Government: "Delivering Affordable Housing – Annex to PPS3 Housing" (2006)

- 7.12 These strategic developments should provide RSL partners with an attractive business development opportunity and in return we will expect RSLs to demonstrate a willingness to help deliver more challenging, higher risk schemes.
- 7.13 We are aware of effective partnerships operating elsewhere which have enabled the delivery of an increased number of affordable rural homes. For example, the Rural Housing Partnership operating in Oxfordshire, is significantly out performing other County areas in the South East. This partnership comprises four district authorities and selected RSL, developer and consultant partners who have an expertise in relation to affordable housing. This is an approach we will explore with our East Kent local authority partners.

### **Other Partners**

- 7.14 In addition to the preferred RSL development partners we work with a range of other organisations to enable the delivery of affordable housing. These include:

**English Rural Housing Association:** An RSL partner specialising in the provision of affordable homes in rural communities.

**Action with Communities in Rural Kent:** An independent voluntary organisation that works with rural community organisations on a range of projects, including village housing need assessments.

**Moat:** An RSL that operates the HomeBuy Zone Agency.

**Brownfield Land Assembly Company:** Supported by the Regional Housing Board and funded by the HCA, BLAC are a not for profit organisation which invests in small brownfield sites in urban areas which would not otherwise come forward for redevelopment due to uncertainty of the cost of remediation. The sites are remediated, planning consent obtained and then sold to an RSL partner. Receipts are recycled into further site purchases. BLAC are often able to purchase and bring forward sites which would be seen as high risk by other developers and RSLs.

- 7.15 Private developers are also able to secure public subsidy so that they can provide new affordable housing directly themselves. Once built, the developer normally transfers homes to an RSL. Where this approach is proposed we will work closely with the developer to ensure that the right type of homes are provided and influence the choice of RSL management partner.

### **Local Authority Partners**

- 7.16 The Council recognises the benefits of working with neighbouring authorities to address common issues, share good practice and make best use of resources. We therefore regularly participate in a number of cross authority forums and working groups. Those with a specific affordable housing focus include:
- Kent Housing Officers Group and the Strategy & Enabling Sub Group
  - East Kent Triangle RSL Forum

### **Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG)**

- 7.17 This is the partnership body set up by the Council to address affordable housing issues and monitor the delivery of affordable housing. The Group is Chaired by the Council's portfolio holder for Strategic Housing and attended by other Council members, officers, HCA and RSL representatives and representatives from those organisations referred to at 7.14.
- 7.18 In addition to its monitoring role the AHWG will encourage the sharing of good practice and develop local standards to be achieved in relation to development and management services.
- 7.19 We recognise the need to have good market intelligence to help deliver and the Plan and respond to changing circumstances. We will therefore look at how the AHWG can help provide

this and we will look at expanding representation on the Group to include developers and land agents.

## **8. DELIVERING NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES**

- 8.1 While this Plan sets out our approach to the delivery of affordable housing over the next five years we recognise the longer term context within which the provision of affordable housing in the district should be considered.
- 8.2 As mentioned above, the South East Plan includes a target for the delivery of an additional 10,100 homes in Dover District over the period 2006- 2026. The Plan recommends that 30% of these new homes should be affordable and therefore suggests that we should be aiming to deliver in the region of 150 homes new affordable homes per annum.
- 8.3 The Council's aim is to secure a higher level of housing growth than set out in the South East Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Document includes a commitment to a high growth strategy which would see the provision of 14,000 new homes with a minimum of 10,100 being delivered by 2026. This will provide the opportunity to deliver a significant amount of new affordable housing in the future and help reduce the backlog of need. While most of this additional housing will be delivered beyond the life of this Plan it is important to highlight the opportunities that will exist in the future to address the need for affordable housing.
- 8.4 The Core Strategy Document forecasts a progressive build-up of housing development which would reach maximum delivery during the period 2016-2021 and starting to tail off during 2021-2026. The projected housing delivery set out in the Strategy indicates that there is potential for the delivery of 3,027 new homes over the period 2010/11-2014/15. This indicates that there is the potential for the planning system to deliver 908 affordable homes over this same period (181 per annum). However, not all of these will be above the planning threshold which triggers the requirement for affordable housing.

### **Delivery via S.106 Sites**

- 8.5 Over recent years, sites where there is a planning requirement to provide affordable housing, have become the most important supply stream of affordable homes for most local authorities.
- 8.6 Policy DM 5 of the Council's Core Strategy states that...

*"The Council will seek applications for residential developments of 15 or more dwellings to provide 30% of the total homes proposed as affordable homes, in home types that will address prioritized need, and for developments between 5 and 14 homes to make a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing. Affordable housing should be provided on the application site except in relation to developments of 5 to 14 dwellings which may provide either on-site affordable housing or a broadly equivalent financial contribution, or a combination of both. The exact amount of affordable housing, or financial contribution, to be delivered from any specific scheme will be determined by economic viability having regard to individual site and market conditions".*

More detailed guidance on how this policy will be implemented is provided in the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

- 8.7 There are four strategic development sites identified in the Core Strategy that are of a scale and significance that they are key to delivering the South East Plan target. They will also be key to the delivery of additional affordable homes in the District over a period which extends beyond the life of this Plan. These sites together with the potential number of affordable homes they could deliver based on Policy DM5 are shown below.

Site	Total New Homes	Affordable %	Potential No. Affordable Homes	Timescale
Dover Waterfront	300	30%	90	2011-2016
Mid Town	100	30%	30	2011-2016
Connaught Barracks	500	30%	150	2011-2016
Whitfield Expansion	5,750	30%	1,725	2016-2026

- 8.8 While the Council can enable and facilitate these larger developments, it requires developers to deliver them and consequently, economic considerations will influence the development timescale. Current market uncertainties therefore make it difficult to forecast precisely when the affordable homes will be delivered. Due to their scale the sites will also be developed in phases over a number of years and it is likely that the first affordable homes won't be delivered until towards the end of this Plan. These key sites will require significant infrastructure investment and potential 'up front' HCA investment in the affordable housing element may help address some of the financial issues. Other funding to help unlock sites may be available through programmes such as the Community Infrastructure Fund and consequently we recognise the importance of developing a strategic partnership approach to delivery and being 'joined up' corporately.
- 8.9 The graph in Appendix E shows the total potential affordable housing delivery via S.106 sites, assuming 30% provision, for the period up to 2016 and how it relates to the projected average delivery based on the South East Plan. It also shows previous performance and clearly illustrates the step change in delivery that is required to meet identified need but also the potential that we have over the period to 2026 for increased delivery. However, what is also evident is that even if we deliver the maximum number of affordable homes on S.106 sites we will still fall short of the number of homes that the SHMA has identified.
- 8.10 In recognition of the substantial need for affordable housing and to equitably apply the requirement for affordable housing, the LDF Core Strategy Document includes a requirement for residential development below the 15 unit threshold to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing. The intention is to pool these contributions and, in partnership with RSLs, fund other affordable housing schemes in the district.

### **Economic Viability**

- 8.11 This Plan has been developed at a time when, although there is some evidence that the housing market has stabilised, conditions are still difficult and the future uncertain. Because S.106 sites are private developer led, the delivery of affordable homes through this route depends heavily on the buoyancy of the housing market. Nevertheless, it is important that our plans not only take account of current conditions but will place us in a strong position to benefit from the recovery.
- 8.12 Consultation with local developer, land agent and RSL stakeholders has highlighted the economic viability of residential development being a key issue in many parts of the district. Brownfield sites where there are higher development costs related to site clearance, remediation of contaminated land and flood mitigation are particularly marginal in terms of viability due to relatively low sale values. They advise that for many of these sites it can be difficult to generate a land value in excess of the site's existing use value. A requirement to provide a proportion of affordable homes will also impact on viability depending on whether or not the affordable homes are subsidised with grant funding.
- 8.13 Reference has already been made in paragraph 8.4 to the fact that in order to deliver affordable housing some form of subsidy is needed. The Council recognises that public subsidy in the form of Social Housing Grant is limited and that on "suitable" sites it should be possible to deliver affordable housing without grant and still achieve a realistic land value.

*Developers should therefore “take affordable (housing) provision and other known requirements and constraints into account when negotiating the purchase of land”.*<sup>8</sup>

- 8.14 However, it is also recognised that there will be sites where property prices, land values and development costs will be such that grant funding will be essential to achieve an economically viable development which will deliver the percentage of affordable housing required.
- 8.15 The economic viability of providing affordable housing on a range of different sites within the District has been the subject of analysis by consultants CBRE. The study found that currently the relatively low sales values in Dover town and Deal means that social housing grant will be necessary in order to achieve a realistic land value and ensure viability of the development. The analysis of local housing markets in the SHMA suggests that approximately 67% of the unmet need for affordable housing is in Deal (28%) and Dover town (39%).
- 8.16 Consultation feedback has reinforced the findings of the CBRE study with developers, in particular, highlighting the fact that low relatively sales values means that the economic viability of many sites in the District is marginal. Consequently, they are of the view that, given current market conditions, providing 30% affordable housing on such sites, without social housing grant, would make them financially unviable.
- 8.17 While the preferred affordable housing tenure mix is set out in paragraph 3.4 the Council recognises that current housing market difficulties have resulted in a substantial reduction in the provision of shared ownership homes and that while other intermediate tenures are being provided, the higher level of grant funding for rented homes may mean that some schemes are only viable where the percentage of homes for rent is increased. While current conditions may require a degree of flexibility to prevent schemes stalling we will be very mindful of the need to ensure that new communities are balanced and sustainable.
- 8.18 Although economic viability may be a justifiable reason for developers seeking a reduction in S.106 contributions (especially affordable housing), on some sites, it will be necessary to robustly test the financial assumptions behind any developer request to reduce the proportion of affordable housing. It will also be necessary to develop mechanisms for calculating the financial contribution to be made for affordable housing on sites below the 15 unit threshold and determine a process by which any requests to reduce contributions on viability grounds should be tested. While this policy could be extremely beneficial in terms of providing additional resources to deliver more affordable housing and support other corporate objectives, there are also significant implications in respect of the staff and financial resources that may be required to implement it.

### **Direct Provision by RSLs**

- 8.19 The acquisition and direct development of sites is regarded by some RSLs as preferable to the acquisition of homes via developer led S.106 sites. This is because they control the development timescale and the design and quality of the homes.
- 8.20 RSLs normally find it difficult to compete with private developers for land in a buoyant market. The current market may appear to offer opportunities but the reality is that they have also been affected by the ‘Credit Crunch’ through more expensive borrowing and a dramatic fall in shared ownership sales.
- 8.21 Relatively low house values also impact on the rents RSLs are able to charge for new affordable homes and, while this helps make them affordable, it affects the amount that RSLs can borrow against the future rental income stream and therefore the financial viability of RSL led development. This, combined with shared ownership issues referred to above, means that, without some form of subsidy, RSLs are continuing to find it difficult to generate land values that enable them to secure sites.

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<sup>8</sup> Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2007 (Paragraph 5.32)

## **Ensuring New Homes Are Well Designed and Contribute to Safe, Sustainable Mixed Communities**

- 8.21 Through our enabling role we will ensure that new affordable housing is of a high quality, built in places where people want to live, effectively managed and consequently contributes to the development of cohesive and sustainable communities.
- 8.22 Through close partnership working with RSL partners, the use of letting plans and encouraging their active participation in community consultation and development we will help build balanced communities that will remain attractive places to live in years to come.
- 8.23 Where affordable housing is delivered as part of a larger housing development we will ensure that new affordable housing includes an appropriate mix of tenures and is evenly distributed across sites with a view to making it indistinguishable from market housing (tenure blind). We will therefore encourage developers to work with RSLs on the design of schemes at an early stage. Our proposed approach to RSL partner selection for larger S.106 schemes, as set out in 7.11, will help achieve this.
- 8.24 We expect our partner RSLs to share good practice, learn from, and build upon the high quality of design achieved on other affordable schemes in the district and assist in delivering new exemplar schemes.
- 8.25 We will expect all new affordable housing to meet the requirements of the HCA's Design & Quality Standards (2007) and meet the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes in order to qualify for HCA grant funding (Code Level 3 until 2011). However we will work with RSL partners to try and achieve higher Code Levels where it is economically viable. Our aim will be to deliver our first Code level 5 scheme within the first 3 years of the Plan.
- 8.26 We will also expect RSLs to design schemes with a view to achieving at least 16 out of the 20 'Building for Life'<sup>9</sup> criteria which exceeds the current minimum standard of 14.
- 8.27 The Council will aim to ensure that affordable housing schemes provide a safe and secure environment for households by encouraging RSL partners to work towards achieving 'Secure by Design' accreditation.
- 8.28 We will only work with RSL partners who can demonstrate that they provide high quality housing management services, have effective procedures for tackling anti social behaviour and can make a positive contribution to the development of sustainable communities.
- 8.29 We will also seek to ensure long term affordability of homes by working with RSL partners and developers to design schemes that minimise household running costs, tackle fuel poverty and minimise service charges.
- 8.30 We will develop monitoring arrangements with our RSL partners to ensure that the affordable homes being delivered meet the standards required. This will help us learn from mistakes, refine our guidance and identify and share good practice.

## **9. DELIVERY TARGET FOR NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- 9.1 The Kent Partnership (the county-wide local strategic partnership for Kent) has developed a target for the delivery of new affordable homes and this is set out in Kent Agreement 2 (2008-11). This is a cumulative target based on individual local authority targets for this period. Dover's target for this period is 120 new affordable homes per annum and reflects the target within the 2005-2009 Housing Strategy.

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<sup>9</sup> A scheme promoted by CABE and Home Builders Federation which sets out 20 design criteria and a process for assessing schemes against the criteria.

- 9.2 We have only narrowly missed our KA2 target for 2009/10 but we think there is likely to be a shortfall for 2010/11 of about 70 units. The position appears more positive from 2011/12 onwards but forecasting with any certainty is extremely difficult given current market conditions.
- 9.3 We know it isn't realistic to expect that we can deliver the number of affordable homes required to meet the total need identified by the SHMA, both in terms of the projected development opportunities and the resources likely to be available. However, we also recognise the need to improve our performance and, subject to the necessary resources being available, we will be aiming to deliver at least an additional 250 affordable homes over the first two years of the Plan. The schemes we are forecasting for delivery over this period together with the indicative grant funding requirement are shown below. Forecasting future affordable housing development is not straightforward especially given uncertainties within the housing market and future funding. Therefore, while we are optimistic that these schemes can be delivered within the timescale, this can't be guaranteed and consequently the target will need to be regularly reviewed. Inevitably, some schemes may, for various reasons drop out of the programme, but there is also the likelihood that new schemes will come forward. In addition to these specific schemes we anticipate that there may be a number of HomeBuy purchases.

<b>2010/2011</b>			
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>No. Affordable Homes</b>	<b>Grant Requirement</b>
Magnus House	Deal	14	£880,000
College Road	Deal	16	£1,040,000
Northwall Road	Deal	4	£260,000
Eastry Hospital	Rural	12	£800,000
		<b>46</b>	<b>£2,980,000</b>

<b>2011/2012</b>			
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>No. Affordable Homes</b>	<b>Grant Requirement</b>
Astor Avenue	Dover	59	£ 2,204,608
Anselm Road	Dover	8	£600,000
Westmount School	Dover	25	£1,625,000
Extra Care (PFI)	Dover	40	£0*
Maison Dieu Road	Dover	40	£3,600,000
Aylesham (Phase 1)	Rural	38	£2,640,000
Goodnestone	Rural	8	£500,000
		<b>218</b>	<b>£11,169,608</b>

- 9.4 Our longer term target will be to deliver a further 400 affordable homes over the remaining three years of the Plan and this should include the early phases of some of the strategic developments identified at 8.7. Clearly this will be subject to developers bringing forward identified sites and again, the necessary resources to deliver the affordable homes. The resource implication of these targets is considered in paragraph 11.7. Beyond the life of this Plan and up to 2026 we believe that there will be the potential to increase average annual delivery to around 150 new affordable homes per annum. This is based on estimated delivery via S.106 sites and doesn't include additional sources of supply.
- 9.5 Because it is not possible to forecast housing delivery with any certainty we will as mentioned previously, regularly review the targets, not only to identify potential slippage, but also to identify new opportunities for increasing delivery.

\* The extra care scheme will be funded from PFI credits through the Excellent Homes for All PFI programme and therefore there will be no requirement for social housing grant.



## 10. MAKING BEST USE OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

- 10.1 In addition to building new affordable homes we recognise the need to look at how we can make better use of the existing private sector and social housing stock within the district

### Private Sector Stock

- 10.2 Our Private Sector Housing Strategy identifies the need to tackle the problem of long term empty homes (empty 6 months or more) as one of its priorities for action. A Private Sector House Condition Survey carried out in the District in 2008 found the rate of long term empty properties in the private sector was 2.1% (870 properties). This is significantly higher than the national rate of 1.6% and is the second highest in Kent. These homes represent a wasted resource.
- 10.3 While our primary focus will be to bring long term empty homes back into use there may be scope to make some available as affordable homes and specific actions related to this are set out in our Empty Homes Strategy.
- 10.4 We also recognise that the private rented housing stock in the district (14.9% of the total housing stock) can make a valuable contribution to the supply of affordable homes and often helps to meet the needs of homeless single people whom the Council does not have a legal duty to house.
- 10.5 Consultation feedback has highlighted a ready supply of private rented housing in Dover town at present, although access can be restricted to certain groups of people. We currently assist people in housing need access private rented housing through schemes such as the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and Private Sector Leasing Scheme and we will continue to explore other ways in which private sector housing can help meet housing need while working to improve standards in this sector.

### Social Housing Stock

- 10.6 The Council and a number of RSL currently own and manage a range of affordable housing across the district. The existing stock of social rented homes broken down by number of bedrooms is shown in the table below:

	Bedsit	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 or more	Total
Dover DC	140	946	1937	1497	72	2	0	4594
RSLs	17	293	651	509	26	0	1	1497
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>2588</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6091</b>

- 10.7 From this stock there is a regular supply of Council and RSL homes that become vacant and available for re let. The number homes re let in the period 2004/05 to 2008/09 is shown below.

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Council	366	244	285	218	140
RSL	183	256	227	215	206
<b>Total</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>346</b>

Source: CORE Lettings Data

- 10.8 This shows that over the past five years there has been a steady reduction in the number of Council homes becoming available for re let.
- 10.9 A recent Housing Quality Network briefing "What does excellence look like? Allocations and lettings" highlights the approach taken by organisations to address under-occupation as a key area that will be assessed as part of any Audit Commission inspection. This has been followed

by a report published by the South East England Partnership Board<sup>10</sup> which restates the need for more family sized (3 & 4 bedroom homes) and recommends that local authorities should be looking at the needs of under occupying older households with a view to making best use of the available stock. As part of the forthcoming review of our Allocations Policy we will look at examples of best practice in relation to reducing under occupation.

- 10.10 In addition, our Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015 considers how we can provide attractive housing options for older people which will enable us not only to meet their housing needs but also potentially 'free up' family housing.
- 10.11 We will be working with the other East Kent authorities to develop a better understanding of the issue and explore potential actions to reduce under occupation.
- 10.12 There may also be opportunities to 'free up' social housing and meet tenant's aspirations through the provision of affordable home ownership options.

## 11. RESOURCES

A range of resources will be required to deliver the Plan objectives, both financial and staff.

### **Grant Funding (National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP))**

The NAHP is the main source of capital funding to support the delivery of affordable homes. Funding is provided by Government and the programme is managed by the HCA through their various regional teams. The investment priorities for the region are set out in their South East Investment Statement 2008-11.

- 11.3 The geographic investment priorities in the Statement are:
- Rural affordable housing
  - Growth Areas
  - Growth Points
- 11.4 The thematic priorities are:
- Supported housing
  - Larger homes
  - Meeting the needs of BME communities
  - Design & quality
  - Affordability of low cost home ownership
- 11.5 At this point in time it is extremely difficult to predict what funding may be available via the HCA in the future and as previously mentioned, we will need to regularly review the Plan in the light of funding availability and changes to HCA strategic priorities. However, many of the HCA's current priorities are reflected in this Plan and this should help ensure we maximise the potential for bids being approved.
- 11.6 The HCA has an expectation that bids for grant funding will be subject to economic viability testing and that the need for grant funding can be clearly demonstrated. The district wide viability assessments carried by CBRE indicate that the vast majority of sites coming forward in Dover and Deal are likely to require grant funding to achieve viability. These are the same areas where there is greatest unmet need. The schemes identified to help us achieve our delivery target of 250 new affordable homes over the next 2 years will, on the basis of the CBRE analysis, all require grant funding. We also anticipate that many of the schemes likely to

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<sup>10</sup> Releasing Larger Social Rented Homes in the South East; meeting the needs of older people and families (2009): Regional Housing Forum

come forward over the life of the Plan and help deliver the 650 new homes target, will also require grant.

- 11.7 However, as previously referred to, our longer term aim is to improve the housing market image in these areas and this combined with a general housing market recovery, the impact of key regeneration schemes and the high speed rail link should have an impact on house values and help to deliver affordable housing with reduced grant. The Communities and Local Government document '*Delivering Affordable Housing*' (2006) recognised that where housing commands much higher prices there is greater scope for securing affordable housing through developer contributions or "planning obligations".
- 11.8 Our minimum estimated grant funding requirement to meet our 2 year target is approximately £16m with an estimated further £23m required to deliver the target for the remaining 3 years. This has been calculated using regional average grant per unit figures for rented and shared ownership units but given market conditions, higher than average levels of grant may be required to achieve financial viability on some sites over the short term. However, we recognise the uncertainty regarding future grant funding and as explained above, our medium to long term aim will be to balance our local housing markets so that as general market conditions and sales values improve, these factors combined with a more stable shared ownership market, should improve the value for grant position.
- 11.9 We believe that we will be able to make a strong case to the Homes & Communities Agency, through the Single Conversation, for the required level of investment. We can clearly demonstrate the significant level of need for affordable housing that exists and that we have well advanced plans to deliver housing growth including affordable homes. We can also demonstrate that currently the majority of affordable housing development opportunities are currently unviable without grant funding.
- 11.10 We recognise that the future availability of grant funding is uncertain and therefore, given our longer term aim set out above, we will ensure that affordable housing which forms part of a development with a regeneration or economic development focus, is identified as high priority for grant funding.

### **Planning Policy – Financial Contributions from Developers**

- 11.11 From time to time the Council may receive commuted sums for the off-site provision of affordable housing especially as we will be seeking contributions on sites below the 15 unit threshold.
- 11.12 We will explore various schemes through which this money can be spent including:
- The funding of known affordable housing schemes where HCA funding is not available.
  - The joint funding of schemes where this will help to lever in the required investment to deliver affordable housing
  - The acquisition of land for the development of affordable housing
  - The acquisition of existing satisfactory dwellings (ESDs) targeted at specific property types or areas e.g. villages where there are no opportunities for new development, areas of poor quality housing or with a high proportion of empty properties where the acquisition and improvement of homes may help lever in private investment and create a more balanced market

### **Land**

- 11.13 The Council owns land which may be suitable for residential development and the provision of affordable housing. We will carry out a site identification exercise to identify all HRA owned sites and assess their development suitability.

- 11.14 The Council can make this land available for less than market value to facilitate the provision of affordable housing. This would enable the Council to demonstrate a level of strategic commitment to a high priority scheme thereby increasing its priority for HCA funding. However, such an approach would have to be weighed up against the impact the reduced capital receipt may have on other aspects of the Council's business.
- 11.15 Another approach might be to sell sites at market value but conditional on a higher percentage of affordable housing being provided. Again this is likely to reduce the value of the land and careful consideration would have to be given to achieving an appropriate balance of tenures.
- 11.16 Some land (small sites in low value areas) may have not be attractive to private developers and may only have a relatively low value. They may however, be of interest to an RSL partner although the scale of the development may present viability issues. Following completion of the site identification and assessment process referred to above we will consider whether or not there is scope to package these sites in such a way that would make them attractive to an RSL partner.
- 11.17 An alternative option is to explore opportunities such as the Local Authority New Build programme by which the Council could develop such sites directly, with an RSL acting as its development agent. Although the Council wouldn't receive a capital receipt it would benefit from the long-term rental income stream.
- 11.18 In addition to vacant sites the Council will look at potential opportunities to re develop existing housing where it is possible to increase the housing density and where this will result in the provision of higher quality homes of the right type and a more balanced community.

### **Private Finance Initiative**

- 11.19 The Council is one of 10 district authorities involved in a partnership with Kent County Council to build affordable homes via a Private Sector Finance Initiative project know as 'Better Homes Active Lives'. Housing 21 has been commissioned by the partnership to provide across the County 275 extra care apartments for older people, 58 supported flats for people with a learning disability and seven for people with mental health problems. The project has already delivered 40 affordable extra care flats and 7 flats for people with a learning disability in Dover. The next phase of the project will deliver a further 40 extra care flats. We will continue to work with partners on PFI initiatives where they can help meet housing needs and demonstrate value for money.

## **12. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

- 12.1 An Action Plan linked to this document is attached and progress against the actions will be monitored on a regular basis with monitoring reports submitted to quarterly meetings of the Affordable Housing Working Group.
- 12.2 An annual review of the Plan and Action Plan will also be carried out, including a review of the affordable housing targets referred to at 9.3 and 9.4.
- 12.3 Progress on schemes will also be monitored through individual bi monthly meetings with RSL partners.

## Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

### Action Plan

Action	Outcome	Target	By When	Resources Required	Lead
<b>1. Objective: Work with Partners to Increase the supply of affordable homes</b>					
1.1 Enable the delivery of new affordable housing	Meeting housing need, reduced housing waiting list and homelessness	250 new affordable homes delivered 650 new affordable homes	March 2012 March 2015	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.2 Coordinated corporate approach to negotiation of affordable housing provision on S.106 sites	Developers aware of Council policy on affordable housing and therefore less scope for disputes	30% affordable housing achieved unless proven economic viability reasons for reduced %	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Officer time Consultancy costs re viability assessment	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.3 Increase the number of RSL development partners	Increased affordable housing development capacity, competition and ability to share risk	Develop new process for RSL partner accreditation. At least 2 additional RSL partners active in the district	December 2010	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.4 Produce a portfolio of HRA owned land with development potential	Additional potential affordable housing land identified	Portfolio produced and development potential and financial implications assessed	July 2010	Officer time	Senior Valuer/ Housing Initiatives Manager
1.5 Explore initiatives that will enable the delivery of new rural affordable homes	Affordable housing need in rural communities addressed	Consider the possible development of an East Kent rural affordable housing partnership.  Investigate potential development of the Community Land Trust model	April 2012  April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.6 Work with the Rural Housing Enabler to promote affordable rural housing and develop managed programme	Rural housing opportunities identified and brought forward	Programme for 2 village needs surveys per annum	Effective from January 2011 and then every year	Officer time/RHE financial contribution	Housing Initiatives Manager/ RHE
1.7 Develop a planned approach to the delivery of affordable rural housing	Affordable housing need in rural communities addressed	2 new rural schemes per annum	April 2011 and then every year	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager

Action	Outcome	Target	By When	Resources Required	Lead
1.8 Utilise 'off site' developer financial contributions	Increased provision of affordable homes	Possible schemes identified, appraised and reported to AHWG	October 2010	Officer/RSL time HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/Development Control Manager
1.9 Actively monitor the progress of schemes and facilitate their development	Closer partnership working and greater certainty of delivery	Bi monthly 1-2-1 meetings with all RSL partners and quarterly meetings of the AHWG	July 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
1.10 Update the evidence bases which support the delivery of affordable housing	Types and tenure of homes delivered which meet local need. Strengthened position in terms of S.106 negotiations and funding bids	SHMA updated  Analysis of the demand for intermediate housing within the district	April 2014	Cost shared across EK LAs. Estimated cost £15,000	Housing Initiatives Manager/Forward Planning Manager
			August 2010		Housing Initiatives Manager/Moat Housing Group
<b>2. Objective: Ensure that affordable housing positively contributes to attractive, secure and sustainable mixed communities</b>					
2.1 Affordable housing is well integrated within a mixed community	Social inclusion and sustainable communities	Develop a process for the selection of partner RSLs for strategic sites	December 2010	Officer/HCA time	Housing Initiatives Manager
2.2 All new schemes to contribute to achieving a balanced community	Overall provision of new homes will accurately reflect the type, size and tenure specified in the Plan	Regular monitoring report prepared and reported to AHWG	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager
2.3 New affordable homes and neighbourhoods to be well designed	Improved social well being, quality of life and sustainable communities	All new affordable homes to achieve 16 out of 20 'Building for Life' score	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Officer/RSL time	RSL partners
2.4 Enable the development of safe & secure neighbourhoods	Reduced crime and fear of crime	All new schemes to achieve 'secure by design' accreditation	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	RSL	RSL partners
2.5 Assess levels of customer satisfaction with new affordable housing	Better understanding of occupiers needs, best practice shared and improved design	Customer satisfaction monitoring process developed and reported to AHWG	April 2011	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
<b>3. Objective: Deliver a range of affordable homes that will meet the needs of all sections of the community</b>					
3.1 Ensure all new affordable homes are designed to be flexible to the changing needs of occupiers	Reduced need for transfers and reduced DFG/adaptation costs	• All new affordable homes to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard where	Effective from July 2010 and		RSL partners

Action	Outcome	Target	By When	Resources Required	Lead
		practically achievable	then every year		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where practical and financially viable, new affordable rural homes to include convertible roof spaces</li> </ul>	Effective from July 2011 and then every year		
3.2 Enable the development of new housing that meets the needs of physically disabled people	Reduced waiting times for transfers to suitable accommodation and reduced DFG costs	Deliver 4 wheelchair standard units per annum	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	HCA grant funding	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
3.3 Enable new supported housing provision that will meet the needs of other vulnerable groups	More balanced and socially inclusive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a dual diagnosis scheme for people with a mental health/substance misuse problem</li> <li>Deliver 2 schemes for people with mental health needs</li> <li>Deliver 2 schemes to meet the needs of young homeless people</li> <li>Deliver 40 unit extra care scheme</li> </ul>	<p>April 2011</p> <p>April 2011 &amp; April 2015</p> <p>December 2011</p> <p>April 2012</p>	<p>HCA grant funding</p> <p>HCA , KCC and Supporting People funding</p> <p>HCA and Supporting People funding</p> <p>PFI</p>	<p>Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners</p> <p>KCC/Housing Initiatives Manager</p>
<b>4. Objective: Ensure that homes are designed to be as affordable as possible</b>					
4.1 Ensure new homes are cheap to run with low carbon emissions	Homes that will remain affordable for people on low incomes	Where financially viable new affordable housing schemes to achieve Code Level 4.	Effective from July 2010 and then every year		RSL partners
4.2 Minimise service charges by influencing the design of schemes	Homes that will remain affordable for people on low incomes	No unreasonably high service charges	Effective from July 2010	Officer/RSL time	Housing Initiatives Manager/RSL partners
<b>5. Objective: Make best use of the existing housing stock</b>					
5.1 Revised allocations policy giving additional priority to under occupying households.	Increased number of family homes becoming available for re letting. Reduced housing waiting list and overcrowding	Revised allocations policy in place			Housing Initiatives Manager/Housing Needs Manager
5.2 Increase housing options for older people	Affordable family homes released	In partnership with KCC, deliver PFI Extra care	April 2012	PFI funding	Housing Initiatives Manager

Action	Outcome	Target	By When	Resources Required	Lead
		scheme. At least 50% of homes in any new older persons schemes to be 2 bedroom.	Effective from July 2010		
5.3 Increase the options and pathways available for people with a housing need to access the private rented sector	Reduced housing waiting list and homelessness	Identify best practice and develop potential schemes	April 2012	Officer time	Housing Initiatives Manager/Housing Needs Manager



## WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable Housing is defined in the Government's Planning Policy 3 (PPS3): Housing document as follows:

'Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision'.

Affordable housing is essentially housing for people who can't afford to buy or rent a home in the local market. Therefore an affordable home is one where the cost has been reduced below market rates.

Affordable housing includes social rented housing and intermediate affordable housing.

PPS3 defines these in the following way:

### **Social rented housing is:**

'Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. The proposals set out in the Three Year Review of Rent Restructuring (July 2004) were implemented as policy in April 2006. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant'.

### **Intermediate affordable housing is:**

'Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above. These can include shared equity products (eg HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent'.

The definition does not exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered for planning purposes, as affordable housing.

The Council's affordable Housing Supplementary Document (2007) also provides a definition of affordable housing within the context of Dover district.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND HOUSING NEED

### AFFORDABILITY

#### Market House Prices & Rent Levels

House prices in England have increased significantly over recent years and this has been mirrored in East Kent and Dover District. The mean house price increases in the District over this period are shown in the table below.

	2001	2007	% Increase
<b>Detached</b>	165,878	316,072	91%
<b>Flat</b>	60,694	129,249	113%
<b>Semi</b>	92,351	190,713	107%
<b>Terraced</b>	73,489	162,925	122%
<b>Average</b>	97,010	194,936	101%

Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009

As house prices have increased so have weekly rents in the private sector. The following table shows minimum, maximum and average weekly rents charged for different sized homes in Dover District in 2008.

	Ave	Min	Max
1 bed	£85	£65	£125
2 bed	£115	£85	£165
3 bed	£140	£120	£205
4 bed	-	£155	-
5 bed	£230	£195	£300

Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009

#### Market Housing Affordability

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report 2009 highlights the problem of housing affordability generally within the East Kent Sub-region.

The mean, median, lower and upper quartile household incomes in Dover District in 2007 were:

Mean: £32,049

Median: £27,445

Lower Quartile: £17,181

Upper Quartile: £41,676

The Government's SHMA guidance recommends that for a market home to be affordable, it should cost no more than 3.5 times the gross household income. The SHMA found that in Dover a home in the lower quartile price range cost over seven times a lower quartile income.

As regards private renting, a household is considered to be able to afford a market rented home where the rent payable doesn't exceed 25% of their gross household income.

The SHMA found that this was an unaffordable option for those households with lower quartile incomes but was affordable for households with higher incomes.

## THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) defines housing need as *'the quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance'*. Further to this PPS3 Annex B states that... *'Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market'*.

It is expected that affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices; and
- Include provision for the home to be retained for future eligible households: or if these restrictions are lifted for any subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

The assessment of housing need is a key component of the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The study followed Government guidance in respect of the methodology used to calculate the need for affordable housing over the period 2006-2010.

The formula used was:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Reduction of Gross Backlog Need} \\ & \text{Plus} \\ & \text{Gross Annual Newly Arising Need} \\ & \text{Minus} \\ & \text{Gross Supply of Affordable Housing} \\ & \text{Equals} \\ & \text{Net Annual Housing Need} \end{aligned}$$

Households are considered to be able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5x the gross household income for a single earner or 2.9x the gross household income for dual-income households. With regard to private renting, a household can be considered able to afford a private sector market rent where the rent payable is up to 25% of their gross household income. Consequently, it is the relationship between local house prices and incomes which is the key determinant to whether or not a household is in housing need.

The SHMA uses market entry level prices for different dwelling types and number of bedrooms related to household requirements as the basis for the calculation. For example single person households were matched with one bedroom flats, couples without children with two bedroom flats etc.

The market entry prices for dwellings in Dover District in 2007 are shown in the table below.

Dwelling Type	Entry Price £
Market Sale	
1 bed flat	£91,000
2 bed flat	£115,000
2 bed house	£124,000
3 bed house	£125,000
Market Rent (p.m.)	
1 bed flat	£256
2 bed flat	£348
2 bed house	£475
3 bed house	£480

### Backlog Need

This comprises existing households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing (current need) and can't afford to meet their need in the market (including homeless, concealed and overcrowded households and those living in deficient accommodation) less those households in social housing who will have their needs met through transfers within the social stock.

The backlog calculation for Dover District is shown in the tables below:

### Current Need

		No. Households
	Homeless households	105
A	Overcrowded households	407
A	Concealed households	201
A	Unfit dwellings (private)	5260
A	Other groups	27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6000</b>

### Backlog Need

		No. Households
A	Total current housing need	6,000
B	Of which current occupiers of social housing	32
C	<b>Backlog need (A-B)</b>	<b>5,968</b>

### Newly Arising Need

This was calculated by modelling demographic data to produce projections for gross new household formation each year. This exercise calculated that the gross new household formation in Dover District during the period 2006-2010 would be 795.

The study then matched these newly forming household projections with income data obtained from the Survey of English Housing to arrive at an approximation of the income profile of newly forming households.

By matching the income levels of newly forming households with market entry prices for the appropriate dwelling type and using the affordability criteria referred to above, the study calculated the number of households who can't afford to access market housing.

The table below shows the projection of newly forming households during the period 2006-2010 by household type and the number requiring affordable housing.

HH Type		No. Households
Single Person	Newly forming HH	201
	% who can't buy	88%
	% who can't rent	53%
	Can't buy but can rent	70
Couples No children	Can't buy or rent	107
	Newly forming HH	141
	% who can't buy	76%
	% who can't rent	14%
Couples No children	Can't buy but can rent	87
	Can't buy or rent	20
	Newly forming HH	316
	% who can't buy	95%
Single Parent	% who can't rent	67%
	Can't buy but can rent	88
	Can't buy or rent	212
	Newly forming HH	137
<b>All households</b>	% who can't buy	100%
	% who can't rent	100%
	Can't buy but can rent	0
	Can't buy or rent	137
	<b>Newly forming HH</b>	<b>795</b>
	<b>% who can't buy</b>	<b>91%</b>
	<b>% who can't rent</b>	<b>60%</b>
	<b>Can't buy but can rent</b>	<b>246</b>
	<b>Can't buy or rent</b>	<b>475</b>

The calculation also needs to include existing households who fall into need. The approach used in the study was to identify those households that had moved from the private sector into the social sector. The report acknowledges that this may not capture the real level of need as some households leaving the private may not have been able to secure a social rented home.

The overall calculation of newly arising household need per annum in Dover District is shown in the table below:

		No. Households
D	Gross new HH formation per annum 2006-2010	795
E	% of newly forming HH unable to afford market housing	60%
F	Newly forming HH unable to afford market housing	475
G	Existing households falling into need	103
H	<b>Total newly arising need (F+G)</b>	<b>578</b>

### Annual Supply of Affordable Housing

The average supply of social sector re lets in Dover District was calculated to be 283 per annum. This is based on Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix and CoRE data returns.

### Total Annual Housing Need

Using all the above information it is possible to calculate the net annual housing need for the District. The calculation is shown below:

		<b>No. Households</b>
C	Backlog Need	5,968
J	Annual quota of backlog reduction over 5 years (C÷5)	1,194
H	Total newly arising need	578
I	Annual supply of social sector re-lets	283
K	<b>Net annual housing need (J+H+I)</b>	<b>1,489</b>

The annual housing need identified by the study is considerably higher than that calculated by previous housing need studies (322 households per annum). The study’s authors believe that this can be mainly attributed to the low provision of affordable housing, a lack of social sector re-lets and a consequent increase in backlog need. Over the ten years from 1998 to 2008 a total of 670 new affordable homes were provided in the District and between 2005/06 and 2007/08 affordable housing only accounted for approximately 9.3% of the 1,103 net additional dwellings with the result that the backlog need for affordable homes has continued to grow.

**Potential Future Supply of Affordable Housing**

The South East Plan sets targets for housing development over 20 years. It recommends that for the East Kent sub-region, 30% of newly developed homes should be affordable and gives an option for reducing the backlog of housing need over ten years rather than five.

The SHMA calculates the number of new affordable homes that could be delivered through new developments and the shortfall against the net annual housing need figure shown above. The calculation is shown below:

2006-2026 SE Plan Total New Homes	No. affordable based on 30%	No. affordable per annum	No. affordable needed as per Housing Need Calculation (5 year)	Annual difference (5 year)	No. affordable needed as per Housing Need Calculation (10 year)	Annual difference (10 year)
10,100	3,030	152	1,489	1,337	781	629

What is clear is that a 30% provision of affordable housing on new developments will still leave a significant backlog of unmet need whether the 5 year or the 10 year option is adopted.

Due to the considerable backlog of need the report recommends adoption of the five year approach which is recommended in the CLG Guidance but it also accepts that the scale of the backlog is such that it would be unrealistic to expect that it could be met even over a ten year period.

The study recognises that any increase in the affordable housing percentage to try and address the backlog would have to be carefully considered with regard to development economics and ensuring the creation of balanced communities.

## TYPE, SIZE & TENURE OF AFFODABLE HOMES NEEDED

### Size

As well as identifying the total amount of affordable housing required to meet backlog and newly arising need, the SHMA looked at the type of homes required for different household sizes. This took account of the supply of social sector lettings for different sizes of home and found that just over 50% of total need is for larger family homes (3 and 4 bedroom houses). This is partly due to the fact the re-let rate for larger family houses is much lower than for smaller flats. The consequence is that larger families are generally waiting longer for their needs to be met.

Because the provision of new affordable homes can't realistically address the level of need identified by the Assessment there is a need to recognise that proportionately there will be fewer larger family homes becoming available for let and that this should be addressed when determining the mix of affordable house types to be provided on future developments.

This is supported by an analysis of CORE lettings statistics for the three years 2006/07 – 2008/09 which shows that the number of larger, 3 and 4 bedroom family homes re let each year, typically averages at just over 20% of the total.

The Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2007) states that the Council will seek to negotiate with developers a range of unit types to be provided on S.106 sites including, where the site is suitable, larger family units. This is underpinned by the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy which sets out the following proportions of affordable homes to be sought on new developments:

Home Type	Social Rented	Intermediate
One and two bed flats	25%	5%
Two bed houses	10%	35%
Three bed houses	55%	60%
Four bed houses	10%	-

The increased emphasis to be given to the provision of larger family homes also accords with priorities identified in the Regional Housing Strategy as well as the Homes & Community Agency investment priorities. Consequently affordable housing schemes which reflect the recommended unit size percentages should be given more favourable consideration with regard to bids for National Affordable Housing Programme grant funding.

### Tenure

As described in Appendix A, affordable housing can take the form of rented homes and intermediate homes.

Intermediate homes generally require less financial subsidy to deliver, provide choice and help people achieve home ownership aspirations. They also help to achieve a better balance of households within new communities.

Communities and Local Government Department guidance states that *"A household can be considered able to afford intermediate housing when rental payments (on the landlords share) and mortgage payments (on the part they own) do not exceed 25% of gross household income"*

Consequently, homes that do not meet the definition, even if offered at less than market price, should be considered 'low cost market housing' and outside the definition of affordable housing.

The SHMA found that Dover has the most affordable intermediate market in the sub-region and that a large proportion of couples with no children could afford a 1 or 2 bedroom shared ownership flat. However, the study shows that a significant proportion of single people and families can't afford shared ownership.

The SHMA report recommends that the target tenure split for affordable housing should be 70% social rented and 30% intermediate housing and recommends the following proportion of dwelling types for intermediate housing.

1 bedroom	5%
2 bedroom	35%
3 bedroom	60%

The tenure split accords with that recommended in the South East Plan.

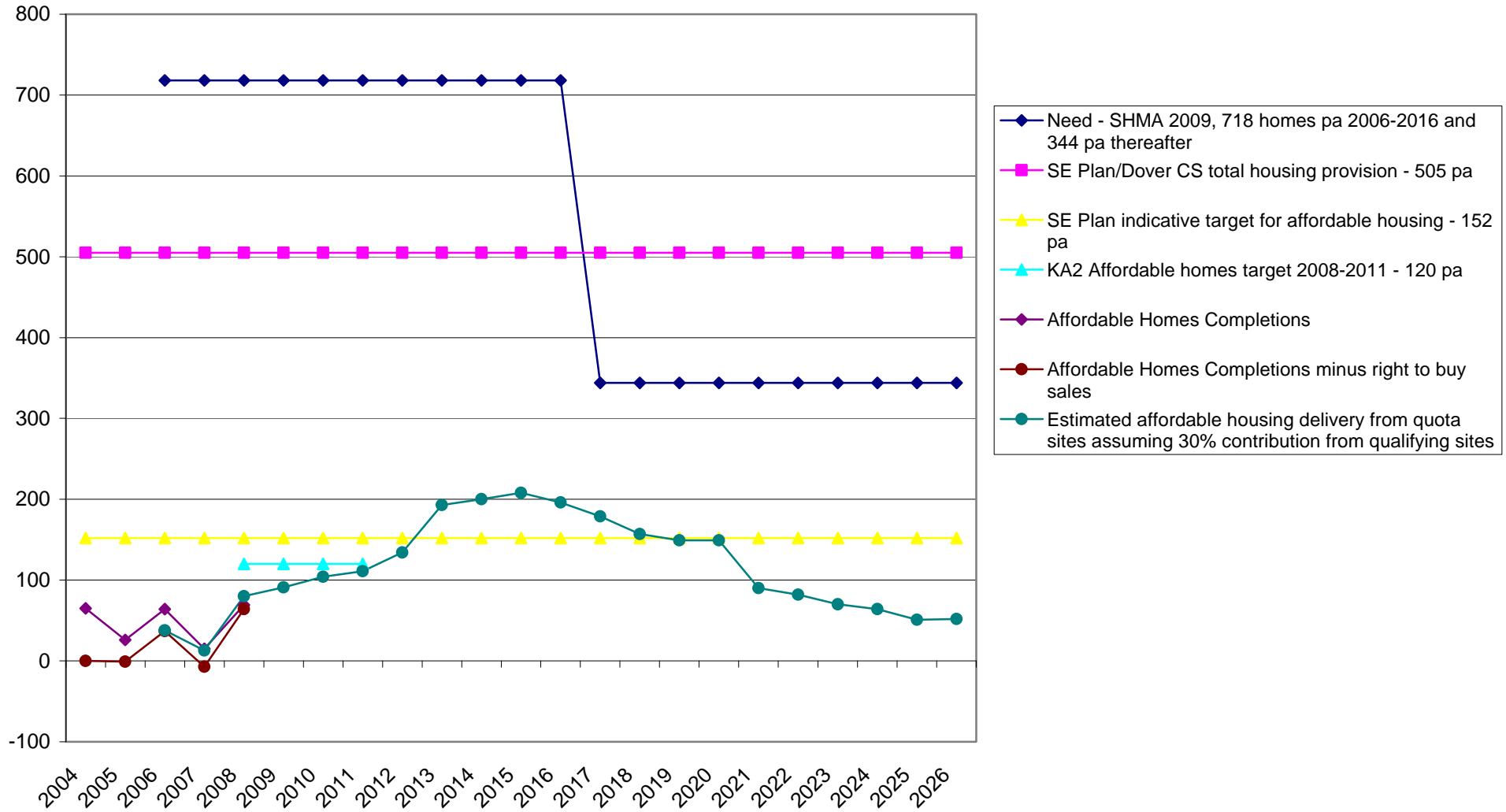


## Breakdown of applicants who have indicated an interest in Intermediate Housing in Kent as at October 2009

Interested in Local Authority	No. of apps eligible			No. key workers	No. social tenants	Minimum number of bedrooms required...					Financial and other details				Number of apps requiring a wheelchair adapted property
	No. active apps	Buy and rent	Rental only			1bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Av single income	Av joint income	No. apps with a deposit	Av deposit	
Ashford	382	302	80	92	30	230	99	48	4	1	£22,211	£31,838	322	£8,637	1
Canterbury	373	275	98	140	18	250	84	37	2	0	£22,864	£32,333	291	£8,447	1
Dartford	636	497	139	40	20	393	172	65	5	1	£25,289	£35,848	520	£9,387	2
<b>Dover</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£20,570</b>	<b>£30,209</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>£9,303</b>	<b>1</b>
Gravesham	326	238	88	85	26	198	95	29	3	5	£24,296	£34,529	259	£9,745	0
Maidstone	757	597	160	23	72	486	188	75	7	1	£23,444	£33,938	646	£9,288	3
Medway	853	638	215	209	74	479	227	140	7	0	£23,114	£33,544	425	£13,165	1
Sevenoaks	368	306	62	72	8	207	94	64	3	0	£23,290	£36,498	322	£12,883	1
Shepway	129	102	27	39	5	74	35	18	1	1	£21,995	£30,547	107	£7,977	0
Swale	330	254	76	84	31	195	80	54	1	0	£22,086	£31,553	263	£10,139	0
Thanet	190	168	22	61	11	120	43	25	2	0	£22,513	£29,884	172	£7,684	1
Tonbridge and Malling	505	407	98	89	54	310	136	52	6	1	£23,134	£35,156	438	£12,868	2
Tunbridge Wells	292	251	41	53	33	181	67	43	1	0	£23,813	£35,996	265	£12,523	2

Source: Moat LA Demand Statistics October 2009

## APPENDIX E





Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
(ADHP)		3.Observation	(c) the viability of the timeframe for delivery of the new homes against the backdrop of the current uncertain financial climate.	(c) the viability of the timeframe for delivery of the new homes against the backdrop of the current uncertain financial climate.	<b>amendment required</b>  The relationship between the delivery of affordable housing, and housing growth generally, is acknowledged. The fact that this is largely driven by market conditions is also accepted. The relatively modest delivery target for new affordable homes is however based on schemes that are already in the pipeline and which therefore offer a higher degree of certainty. <b>No amendment required</b>
(ADHP)		4.Observation	(ii) greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, which would 'free up' family homes	(ii) Members consider that greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, the occupancy of which would naturally lead to family homes becoming available.	The need to provide housing which meets the needs of older people is covered by the OPHS and is acknowledged in the draft Housing Strategy 2010-2015. Extra care provision is specially referred to and the action plan within the OPHS includes a set of actions related to new homes provision and

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
					addressing under occupation of family housing. <b>No amendment required</b>
(AHDP)	Penny.Southern@kent.gov.uk	5.Observation	Needs reference to people with a learning disability or to the 'Valuing People Now' strategy...  ...and the Action Plan	It does have an equality and diversity section which aims to help make housing accessible to certain groups focusing in particular on people with physical disabilities, dual diagnosis, and young people. However, I couldn't find any particular reference to people with a learning disability or to the 'Valuing People Now' strategy which aims to help people with learning disabilities have more choice about where they live and whom they live with. Plus the Action Plan which was formally adopted in 2009 at the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB) and the Kent Partnership Board. and nothing about carrying out housing needs survey with every known person with a learning disability in the district so that the outcome of this can feed into future plans for housing provision and inform a Kent wide picture of need. Are you planning to get this in such a strategy? I hope so	The specific affordable housing needs of people with learning disabilities living in the district has not been identified at the moment and therefore it wasn't considered appropriate to include any actions within the AHDP. However, reference to Valuing People is included in the in the consultation draft Housing Strategy 2010-2015 together with the County wide analysis of possible gaps in provision. A specific action to implement the Kent Housing Action Plan for people with a learning disability is included in the action plan. This will provide more information about specific needs within the District. <b>No amendment required</b>
(AHDP)		6.Observation	Needs to refer to work to understand the housing needs of people with a learning disability in the District/ County.		
(AHDP)	CAB Deal <a href="#">districtma</a>	7 observation	Meeting the need for affordable housing means	Meeting the need for affordable housing means a re think in the planning strategy for	The need for affordable housing has been given

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
	<a href="mailto:nager@dealcab.ca">nager@dealcab.ca</a> <a href="http://bnet.org.uk">bnet.org.uk</a> Jan Stewart	8 observation	a re think in the planning strategy for the district.  Ensure that developments planned do not by pass the need to include affordable housing by only building small developments under 15 homes.	the district as well.  Ensure that developments planned do not by pass the need to include affordable housing by only building small developments under 15 homes.	detailed consideration as part of the development of the LDF Core Strategy. <b>No amendment required</b>  This issue is addressed by Policy DM5 of the Core Strategy which refers to affordable housing contributions to be made in respect of developments under 15 homes and is also referred to in the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan. <b>No amendment required</b>
AHDP	Langdon Parish Council <a href="mailto:Hyde167@btinternet.com">Hyde167@btinternet.com</a> Jannine Hyde	9 Support  10 Observation	Strategies address issues of housing stock and future needs in the town area.  (More) people living longer and on their own will put pressure on need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors, and choice of smaller housing units at affordable price	Most of the strategies address issues of housing stock and future needs in the town area.  The changing patterns of people living longer and on their own (divorce or choosing not to have long relationships) will put pressure on the need for a wider range of housing in both to buy and rented sectors. Choice of smaller housing units, one or two bedroom, which are at an affordable price.	Acknowledged  The need to provide choice and a range of house types is accepted but increased emphasis needs to be given to the provision of family housing for the reasons explained in the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment and

Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		11 observation	In the rural areas, to maintain a viable village community...the need for affordable rural housing remains as strong as ever to encourage young people to live and raise families in the villages	In the rural areas, to maintain a viable village community, there is a requirement to permit controlled building development. There is a critical minimum population size which can sustain and ensure that local amenities remain viable in a rural location. Otherwise the community becomes "old" and develops a commuter/dormitory aspect. In particular, the need for affordable rural housing remains as strong as ever to encourage young people to live and raise families in the villages	set out in the Core Strategy. <b>No amendment required</b>  The Core Strategy's Settlement Hierarchy (policy CP1) has identified settlements where development should be focused and indicates the appropriate scale and type of development. The need for affordable housing provision in the rural area is accepted and any affordable housing provided through the Council's Rural Exception Site policy will be expected to reflect the housing need identified by a local housing need assessment. <b>No amendment required</b>
		12 Observation	Where older people are unable to live totally independently but wish to remain in their village, there could be more	Where older people are unable to live totally independently but wish to remain in their village, there could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need	Where a local housing need assessment identifies a need for housing for older people as part of an affordable

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
			small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need.		housing development we will aim to meet this need through the provision of appropriately designed housing. <b>No amendment required</b>
All  AHDP	Southern Housing Group Annabel McKie [Annabel.Mckie@s hgroup.org.uk]	13 Support  14 Support  15 Support	We support your stated aims and objectives  We think you have correctly identified the key issues and broadly agree with your priorities  Rural housing schemes are essential for meeting housing need in the District. We support the programme type approach for the delivery of affordable rural homes.	Thank you for consulting us about the proposed housing strategies including the draft affordable housing delivery plan.  We support your stated aims and objectives, and we also consider that it is particularly valuable to have the three documents produced in parallel, so that links between the strategies can be picked up.	



Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		16 Observation	We agree that grant is going to be necessary if new affordable homes are going to be delivered. However, there are unlikely to be any S106 schemes in the District which are viable without grant input until market conditions change significantly.		The need for grant funding and issues relating to economic viability is covered in the Plan. <b>No amendment required</b>
		17 Observation	We believe the amount of grant necessary to achieve delivery has been underestimated		The grant calculation is based on regional averages but the comment is accepted as some schemes may require a higher than average level of grant. The plan has been amended at paragraph 11.8 to show that the total grant calculation is based on the minimum we believe will be required to deliver the Plan target. <b>Plan has been amended</b>
		18 Support	We welcome the flexible approach that the Council are proposing regarding the use of the SHMA		

Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		20 Observation	<p>recommendations on mix and tenure. We agree that the desired profile of dwelling types should be an accumulation across a number of sites.</p> <p>Given the reduced financial capacity of many RSLs, it is probably unlikely that a step up in the rate of delivery can be achieved in the short term.</p>		<p>The Plan delivery target is based on schemes that are in the pipeline and that we are reasonably confident can be delivered while accepting there cannot be absolute certainty. <b>No amendment required</b></p>
		21 Observation	<p>The delivery plan should describe a mechanism whereby when developers are considering site purchase they approach the Council for definitive guidance on the required dwelling type profile, and also grant level assumptions.</p>		<p>There is an existing Affordable Housing Protocol which sets out how affordable housing enquiries should be dealt with and which addresses this point. The Strategic Housing web site is being updated and developers will be clearly signposted to this and other guidance on affordable housing. <b>No amendment required</b></p>

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		22 Support	We are pleased to see the references to the importance of providing wheelchair housing and lifetime homes. This needs to link to negotiations with developers over the unit types required under Section 106 quotas		The Plan includes a specific action related to the delivery of 4 wheelchair standard units per annum. This will be dealt with through site specific negotiations with developers. <b>No amendment required</b>
		23 Observation	We think the funding of infrastructure is going to be critical to the supply of land. The means of funding this is therefore very important. The Section 106 model is unlikely to be adequate for this purpose, and high infrastructure costs could of course influence the scope for affordable housing quotas on sites.		The importance of infrastructure investment is referred to in the Plan. The future of S.106 agreements as a mechanism for securing developer contributions is not known at present. <b>No amendment required</b>
		24 Observation	Reduced S.106 contributions particularly where schemes are comprised of only affordable housing	We agree that low sales values in the District mean that economic viability of many sites in the District is marginal. As the levying of other Section 106 contributions on all affordable housing is an additional viability problem, we would welcome anything the Council can do to achieve reduced developer contribution requirements	Affordable housing schemes can generate a demand for other local authority services and it is appropriate to consider the financial contribution that should reasonably be sought to help pay for

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		25 Observation	Greater emphasis on the need for wheelchair standard homes, including a target for delivery of new homes and action point(s) to achieve this. (Subject of course to the level of need identified.)	on all-affordable schemes. This is also relevant to enabling local needs rural housing schemes to be delivered. We consider that there is sufficient grounds for exempting affordable homes from contributions since the occupants will already be living in the District and they do not represent a net increase in households	this. However, this will also need to take account of scheme viability on a site by site basis and will form part of the normal planning negotiations. <b>No amendment required</b>  As above. <b>No amendment required</b>
AHDP	Forward Planning	26 Observation	Clearer identification of options for the use of developer financial contributions in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision		The range of potential options to be explored is more clearly stated at paragraph 11.10. <b>Plan amended</b>
		27 Observation	Plan needs to reflect that LDF Core Strategy has been formally approved and adopted	Delete words "Submission Document" and include all text relating to Core Strategy Policy DM5  Delete the word "emerging" (Appendix C, para 4)	Core Strategy has been approved and adopted. <b>Plan amended</b>  <b>Plan amended</b>

Strategy/ Item	Respon- dent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
				Table at para 8.7 should be amended to show total new homes at Dover Waterfront as 300 and potential number of new homes as 90	<b>Plan amended</b>

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

KEY DECISION

**BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK**

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**HOUSING STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE 2010-2015****RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Council approves the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015, attached at Annex A.*

Contact Officer: Paul Whitfield, extension 2258.

Reasons why a decision is required

1. The Strategy is one of a number of new plans and strategies that underpin the new Housing Strategy for 2010-2015. It has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been subject to wider public consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact.

Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

2.
  - (1) To approve the proposed Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.
  - (2) To make amendments to the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.
  - (3) To reject the Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015.

Information to be considered in taking the decision

3. The projected older population of Dover district is larger than the national and county averages. By 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. This highlights the need to tackle the housing needs of older people now and in the future.
4. Older people are part of a larger group of vulnerable households and a recent survey of private sector housing conditions found that more than half of these households are living in homes that fail the decent homes standard. This is primarily due to homes being cold and the risk of falling within the home.
5. Given this context, the Housing for Older People Strategy 2010-2015 sets out how the Council will meet the housing needs of older people in the future through the provision of new homes which provide choice and meet aspirations, improving the condition of existing homes and by providing comprehensive information and a range of support services that will enable older people to live independently for as long as possible.
6. An action plan identifying specific actions that will help deliver key objectives is attached to the Strategy.
7. The Strategy is a key supporting document to the higher level Housing Strategy 2010-2015.

## Background Papers

None

## Resource Implications

The action plan attached to the Strategy identifies the resources that will be required to deliver the specific actions.

## Consultation Statement

The Strategy has been informed by local, regional and national consultation. In May 2008 a consultation event was held in the district which was attended by members of Dover's Senior Citizens Forum and key agencies working with older people.

Specific consultation with older people was also undertaken as part of the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 and a South East Regional Forum on Ageing event in May 2009. Further consultation has taken place in relation to the emerging new Supporting People Strategy for Kent.

The Plan has been subject to wider consultation in accordance with the requirements of the Dover District Compact. Details of the consultation feedback and consideration of the matters raised is set out in a table attached at Appendix B. Where amendments have been made to the Plan in response to the comments received this is highlighted in the table.

## Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

The Corporate Plan includes objectives to provide enough good quality housing to meet our residents' ambitions, including our community's most vulnerable households and to provide the right numbers and choice of housing to support economic growth as well as meeting the needs of the community.

It is clear that older people form a significant part of our community and that as life expectancy increases we will need to meet the needs of an increasing number of frail and vulnerable households.

## Customer Access Review

The Strategy has not identified any specific issues that need to be addressed with regard to ethnic elders. A CAR screening form in respect of the Strategy has been completed.

## Attachments

Annex A: Housing for Older People Strategy 2010-2015  
Annex B: Analysis of consultation feedback

CHRISTINE WATERMAN

Head of Housing, Culture and Community Safety

**Dover District Council**

**Housing Strategy for Older People 2010-2015**



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## **Executive summary**

Our vision for older people in the Dover district is that:

***Older people live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well being***

### **Context**

This strategy has been prepared in the context that:

- There is a significant older population living in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and the villages of the district of Dover; a higher proportion than national and regional averages, and this proportion of the population will increase significantly over the next fifteen years
- There is substantial investment from the region into housing growth in Dover district; we need to know what housing is needed by our older population so we can deliver what people need and want
- The Local Development Framework is progressing, the Core Strategy has been adopted and work has commenced on the Site Allocations Document. We need to ensure that the right policies are in place to support the delivery of homes and neighbourhoods that support independence for older people
- The population country-wide is ageing and the government has developed two major strategies to ensure that central and local government and other agencies are ready for and responding to these changes.

### **Priority areas**

The **priority areas** we have identified in the course of drawing up this strategy are:

1. That new homes and neighbourhoods meet the current and future needs of Dover district's population and support independence
2. That there is help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living
3. That there is ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

#### ***1. Needs and issues for older people and the implications for housing activity***

We have used the available evidence, including feedback from older people themselves, to identify the specific needs and issues for our older people. These are summarised below.

The projected older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. This highlights the need to tackle the housing needs of older people now and in the future. There are significant variations in the proportions of older people across the district, but evidence from adult social care indicates that levels

of dependency do not match the distribution: we need to understand this further in order to effectively target services

Older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay in their current home for the rest of their life. To enable this, older people see the following as crucial:

- Neighbourhoods that are easy to get around and provide a full range of facilities
- Accessible and reliable information and advice that enables a choice of housing options and ways to meet needs
- Prompt practical help, including help with adaptations and repairs
- Ways of meeting people and socialising - contact with the outside world

Where older people choose to move, or may have to move to meet their changing needs, they want homes that are acceptable to them, including:

- at least two bedrooms
- accessible standards, with no steps or stairs
- well designed and accessible bathrooms and kitchens
- a small garden

Currently, 48% all single person households in Dover district are aged over 65 years and this will increase over time, so it is particularly important that new smaller homes should meet lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors. People currently living in social rented housing are somewhat more prepared than owner occupiers to consider a move, and these would release family-sized homes, but they will only move to the right home and only if this is made easy for them to cope with, both practically and financially.

There is already unmet demand for affordable rented homes amongst older people; mostly for non-sheltered units of two or more bedrooms. The projected demand by 2026 represents 78% of all additional affordable homes expected to be built across the district. There is no indication that there is a need for any additional sheltered housing units: good quality retirement housing that includes provision for assistive technology and is well sited for local social and other facilities would, with visiting support, better meet the needs of most older people.

To meet the needs of the most dependant older people there is a need for almost 190 additional units of extra care housing: half of these would be for people with existing high dependency levels and half for people who are likely to require substantial care in future but whose presence on schemes now will provide a more mixed and lively community.

22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and this proportion is likely to be much higher in social housing. These numbers will increase as the population ages, indicating increasing demands for adaptations. Falls are the leading cause of injury and death amongst the over-75s; adaptations and falls prevention advice and practical measures would significantly reduce disabilities arising from falls.

Over 8,000 retired households live in homes that are more difficult to keep warm, and over 1,100 live in homes that are very cold and expensive to heat. This places occupiers at severe risk of ill health. People who are 85 or over are more likely than the average to live in private rented properties. 40% all private rented homes fail the decent homes standard so there is a need to ensure that all agencies visiting older people at home are aware of and refer issues to the private sector housing team.

Although relatively well off now, the number of older people on lower incomes will increase over time and this has implications for the ability of people to meet their own housing needs

## ***2. How we are responding to these issues***

We have identified what is currently being delivered against the needs and issues we have identified and have identified activities that are being developed or need to be addressed in order to fill the gaps and improve outcomes for older people. These activities are grouped under the three priority areas we have identified through our review of the evidence.

### *New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover district's population and support independence*

There is an unmet need for around 1,500 and, by 2026, around 2,370 general needs units of housing at affordable rent that provides one or, preferably, two bedrooms built to lifetime home standards. The majority of these should be ground floor properties including bungalows and in locations that older people want. This supply would help to meet needs amongst families who are overcrowded now or are planning to have children in the future. However, a well-designed under-occupier scheme is also needed if this is to be achieved.

There is a need for around 180 units of extra care, beyond the 40 already delivered but including the scheme now being planned

While there has been an overall reduction in the stock of sheltered housing in the district, evidence suggests that demand for many of the traditional sheltered housing schemes is relatively low and that this type of provision may no longer meet the aspirations of many older people. It is the location, design and quality of housing which seems to be of greatest importance when older people are considering moving. We will however, keep monitoring the needs and supply balance of sheltered housing so that we identify significant unmet need and progress this through the additional homes programme.

New market housing in places that older people want to live should include a proportion of homes that meet the aspirations of older people, including lifetime homes standards. Whilst these may not all be purchased by older people, they would also meet the needs of other households.

Master planning and site briefs for regeneration areas and new developments should include requirements that will help the neighbourhood to be sustainable for lifelong living. These will also support stronger safer communities.

All planned work in the public realm of any area should include consideration of how it can be delivered in a way that improves the area for local people. These could include such measures as dropped kerbs, improved pavements, access to shops, protected pedestrian ways and enhanced community facilities.

*Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living*

We are already working to improve affordable warmth across the private sector in the district, but we are also acting to further target our efforts on areas with higher levels of issues around thermal comfort and those most in need of help with affordable warmth

We are currently meeting the demand for adaptations and are providing a swift and timely service. Given the increases in older people and therefore people with disabilities, we will continue to monitor demand for adaptations so that unmet need is quickly highlighted and tackled

We intend to review our grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for older people on low incomes and we will also explore best practice in helping people to repair and maintain their home.

We will work across the Council and with partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and to make referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance. We are also working with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency to see how the Handyperson service can be further expanded and its funding secured into the future.

*Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.*

We will work with the Supporting People programme and the INVOKE project to ensure that housing- and health-related support is available to older people in their own homes so that those who would benefit from advice and support get access to this.

We will work with other agencies to help older people to maximise their incomes so they are able to afford the costs of running their homes and of living life to the full. We will also explore how reliable and responsible equity release schemes can help people to afford the costs of repairs and maintenance

We will work with older people to assess the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service (a new government funded advice service offering one stop advice and information) for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district.

An action plan for the short to medium term to start to deliver these activities is included towards the end of the full document.

## 1. Introduction

### ***Why have a housing strategy for older people in the Dover district?***

The context within which this strategy has been written is:

- The significant older population living in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and the villages of the district of Dover; a higher proportion than national and regional averages
- Investment from the region into housing growth in the district
- The process of the Local Development Framework and the requirement to establish what older people in the district want from their future housing
- The government's national strategies; 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - a national strategy for housing in an ageing society'<sup>1</sup>; published in February 2008 and 'Building a Society for all Ages'<sup>2</sup>, published in July 2009.

Demographic changes, general advances in health care, increasing wealth and other improvements in people's quality of life mean that people in the UK are living longer. In 2008<sup>3</sup>, 18.3% of the national population was aged 65 and over. In our district, this figure was 22.8% and by 2026, it is expected that those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%. As a consequence, increasing numbers of people need a home environment that enables them to remain independent. Just as importantly, people's aspirations as they grow older are also increasing.

Life expectancy has increased dramatically over the last fifty years - one in four children born now will live to be 100. More than half of us can expect to spend at least 20 years in retirement: an expectation that our grandparents certainly didn't have.

We must not forget the population of people well into their retirement who need help now. The reality is that older people often live in the worst housing conditions - nationally over 2.1 million older households live in non-decent or hazardous housing.

In older age a wide range of housing choices are needed including appropriate mainstream housing as well as more specialist provision, such as retirement housing or more specialist accommodation that enables the most frail older people to be supported. More people also need support to remain in their own home, with facilities that meet their physical and welfare needs and their aspirations for an enjoyable and fulfilled old age. Plans for housing made today will set the scene for housing until at least 2026.

These and other drivers mean that we need to consider and plan how we will:

- respond to the current housing needs of older people and
- ensure we are prepared for the needs that are likely to arise in the future.

This strategy therefore sets out a vision that:

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<sup>1</sup> Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - a national strategy for an ageing population; CLG Feb 08

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingasocietyforallages.aspx>, DWP July 09

<sup>3</sup> Source – 2008 mid year population estimates ONS

*Older people live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well being*

This document aims to:

- identify the issues for our older people
- raise the profile of older people's housing issues within the broader context of East Kent's sustainable community strategy and Dover District Council's housing strategy
- establish how housing and housing-related activity needs to be directed

To focus our attention on the areas that are most pressing and will make the most difference to older people, the strategy identifies three priorities for housing and housing-related activity. These are:

1. New homes and neighbourhoods meet the current and future needs of Dover district's population and support independence
2. Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living
3. Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

An action plan for the short to medium term to start to deliver these is included towards the end of the document.

### ***How the strategy has been developed***

We have developed this strategy by first considering the evidence of need and the issues that are arising for older people. Having identified the main issues, we have then looked at how these are being responded to; in terms of both housing supply and services to meet housing-related needs. This has enabled us to establish the priority areas on which we need to focus to improve the housing contribution to the health and well being of older people and in particular enabling older people to live as independently as possible.

We have taken into account:

- national and local strategies and policies
- needs data and information – this includes demographic and public health information, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment<sup>4</sup>, Supporting People data, information on housing needs including from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for East Kent<sup>5</sup> and regional documents, and information on the condition of privately owned homes<sup>6</sup> in Dover district
- supply information – this was drawn from Dover District Council, registered social landlords and private housing companies working in the Dover district and Supporting People
- the views of older people – these were drawn from a local consultation event held in May 2008, a regional consultation event held in March 2009 and a regional study published in May 2009, together with a wealth of recent national studies on older people's views and aspirations

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Adults in Kent, March 08

<sup>5</sup> Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the East Kent Sub-region, July 09

<sup>6</sup> Dover DC Private sector stock condition survey, Dec 09



- what works well elsewhere; seeking to learn from others to improve the local response.

A wider consultation is required, which may prompt amendments, before the strategy can be finally approved and this will be completed over the next three months, with the strategy then being adopted to the suite of documents that provide specific focus for Dover District Council's housing strategy.

### ***Who are 'older people'?***

In line with the government's national strategies, the older people we refer to in this strategy are in general those over the age of fifty; an age when most of us start to consider our options for where we will live and what we will do as we age and move into retirement. Most people over fifty can expect to work at least until 65 years old and most increasingly believe that they will need to work for longer. However for most at fifty, families have grown up and moved away from home, there is more available income with which to make choices so that (short term) loans for housing improvement seem manageable and less restricting. At that age, we recognise that we will grow older and perhaps less able and that over time we may have less freedom to do as we want with our lives: the decisions we make now are important to our future ability to enjoy life and living.

## **2. The national and local context**

There is an increasing challenge to local authorities and providers from the changing views and opinions of older people themselves. Older people are not a homogeneous group in terms of their housing circumstances. The range of ages encompassed by the term 'older people' means that we are considering two or more generations and there will be different needs and aspirations for and views about housing requirements both between and within age groups. This market fragmentation will intensify in coming years and housing providers will need to be clear who they are targeting. People across all tenures seeking housing for their later years are becoming more discerning and demanding in terms of what they find acceptable or desirable. There needs to be a range of options available across these age and, more significantly, dependency groups.

The following key national facts<sup>7</sup> explore some of the main issues for older people and housing:

- 90% of older people live in 'ordinary' housing, with only 5% living in sheltered or other supported housing and a further 5% in residential provision
- The level of home ownership amongst older people has been growing. 70% of all older people now own their own homes (74% of 65-74 years olds dropping to 57% of over 75's)
- Those who bought their council home under the "right to buy" in the 1980s were mostly aged between 45 and 64 years – the 65 and 75 year olds now
- The numbers of older people owning their own house is set to grow - in 2001 nearly 82% of people aged 55-59 owned their own home
- Six in ten people aged over 65 own their homes outright: this equity could be released to fund home improvements
- 22% of 65-74 years olds live in social rented housing but this increases to 33% of the over 75s

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<sup>7</sup> A Sure Start to Later Life, Ending Inequalities for Older People; Social Exclusion Unit Jan 06

- In overall terms, older homeowners live in the poorest standard housing stock in the country. This reflects the high number of older people living in unimproved pre-1918 properties, and the number of older home owners who have low incomes
- One in ten older people have problems with their accommodation, such as damp, infestation (e.g. insects/mice/rats) or being too dark
- There is a national trend towards single person households and almost half of these are older people
- Older people spend between 70-90% of their time in their home.
- Research into the costs and benefits of adaptations concluded that they represent good value for money. One study<sup>8</sup> found that it cost an average of £4.74 per week to reduce the burden of care on a family member or to provide an alternative to residential care.

### ***National strategic context***

The government's strategic direction for housing for older people revolves around two main objectives:

- To support older people to make active and informed choices by providing:
  - access to appropriate housing and services and
  - advice on suitable services and options.
- To ensure older people are able to secure and sustain their independence in a home that is appropriate to their needs.

These objectives fit with broader policy developments for older people that cross all public services and shift from focusing on those who have most care and health needs towards promoting choice, well-being and improved quality of life for all. The main policy drivers are:

#### *Rooting out age discrimination in service provision:*

To ensure that older people play an active role within society, contributing to the communities in which they live. In practice, this starts with an assurance that older people are treated equally and fairly in the services that they receive.

#### *Flexible service provision directed to the needs of the individual*

With services moving away from providing historic housing models and forms of care and support and instead offering services that are tailored to the individual person and their unique requirements

#### *Increased prevention with services delivered closer to home*

Delivering a wider scope of low level services at an earlier stage and preventing crises and rapid deterioration through early recognition and targeted interventions

#### *Choice and control about where, how and by whom support and care is delivered*

Supporting older people to make choices through impartial advice and information. A specific initiative to give people control of individualised care and support budgets to buy the services that they believe will make the most difference to their lives.

#### *Improving the quality of new and existing housing*

Housing is recognised as central to retention of independence and health for all of us but especially older people. The needs of older people must be addressed in Local

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<sup>8</sup> Money Well Spent: The effectiveness and value of housing adaptations; F Heywood 2001

Development Frameworks and Core Strategies. There is a specific requirement for all new affordable homes to be built to lifetime standards by 2011 and an intention to introduce this standard to all new market housing by 2013. In addition, investment to improve the quality of existing homes through insulation and heating improvements, adaptations and handyperson services.

Two national strategies focus on delivering these policies for older people and these are described below.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods<sup>9</sup>

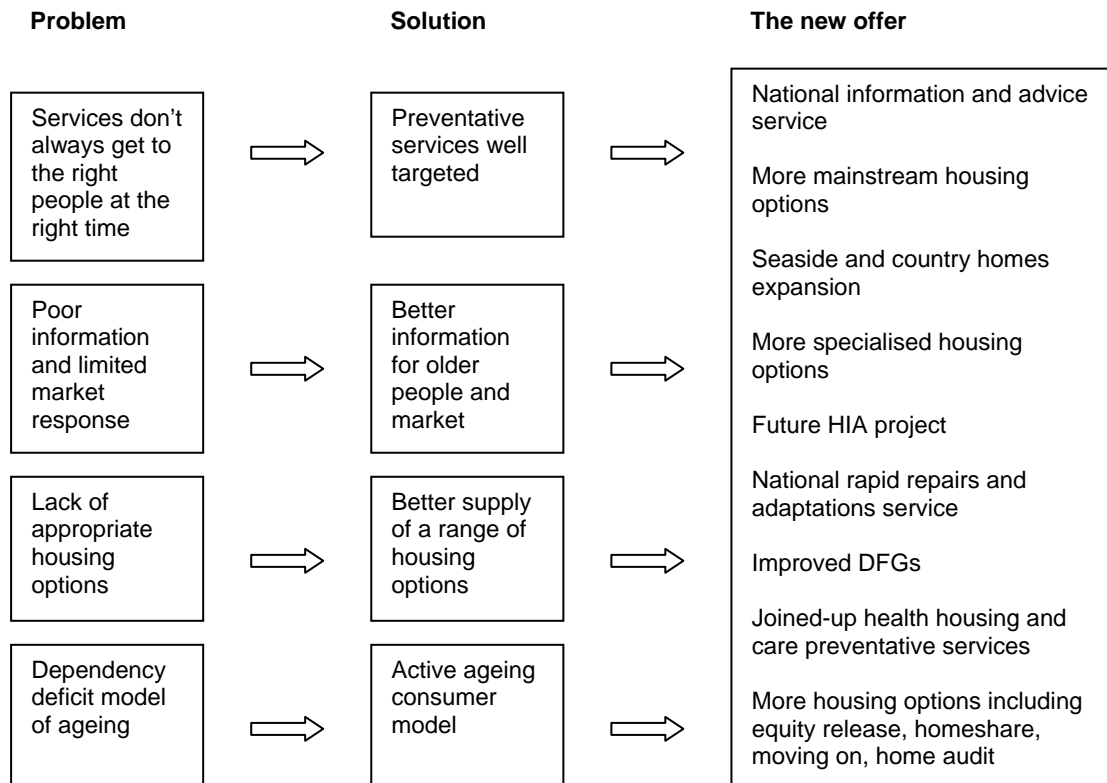
This is the government’s strategy for older people’s housing, published in February 2008 by Communities and Local Government (CLG). The strategy is based on two drivers:

- Economic sustainability – Housing must maximise public and private resources and empower older people to remain economically active.
- Social sustainability – Housing must promote equality, social connection and inclusion, and the health and well-being of older people.

The objectives are:

- To plan at all levels so that older people can live independently with and without support within their own communities
- To ensure earlier interventions and better advice and information is provided so that appropriate choices can be made by an ageing population
- To ensure the right range of choices and opportunities in housing are available for older people.

The strategy diagnoses the problems and proposes solutions together with a new offer for meeting the housing needs of older people:



<sup>9</sup> Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - a national strategy for an ageing population; CLG Feb 08

Based on our consideration of the needs and issues identified for our district, the problems and solutions have local resonance.

The government has since introduced funding to explore services that deliver rapid repairs and adaptations and increased handyperson services and has increased funding for disabled facility grants for adaptations in privately owned homes. Changes have also been made to the regulations governing disabled facility grants to reduce administration (particularly financial assessment) and increase funding flexibility to enable more creative solutions to problems.

In relation to new homes, the strategy commits that all new affordable homes are to be built to lifetime homes standards by 2011 and that the government will seek through encouragement, and if necessary regulation to achieve the same standards in market housing by 2013.

### *Building a Society for All Ages*<sup>10</sup>

This follows on from the government's 2005 strategy for an ageing society, 'Opportunity Age – meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century' and was published by the Department for Work and Pensions in July 2009. It presents the government's vision for a society where people should no longer be defined by their age but where their skills and experiences are harnessed for the benefit of Britain as a whole. Six themes develop the overall strategic direction of older people as key players within mainstream society, the expectation of longer, healthier and more independent living and extended economic activity:

1. Having the later life you want
2. Older people at the heart of families
3. Engaging with work and the economy
4. Improving financial support
5. Better public services for later life
6. Building communities for all ages

'Building communities for all ages' reiterates the Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' priorities including for lifetime homes standards in new housing and also highlights that the following have been or are being progressed:

- additional funding of £33million for handyperson schemes from 2009 to 2011
- continued exploration of assisted living through technology (telecare and telehealth)
- 'FirstStop'<sup>11</sup>; a free, independent information and advice service for older people delivered by the third sector to help people decide between the various options and services available to help them with regards to housing, care, finance and rights. This is provided via a website and through a telephone helpline
- Practical guidance is currently being developed to help local authorities to deliver lifetime neighbourhood standards
- support to reduce fear of crime through home security advice including through a further £15million in 2009/2010 for the 'Securing Homes: Action Against Burglary' initiative.

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<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingasocietyforallages.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> See: [www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk)

### Don't stop me now<sup>12</sup>

This report was published by the Audit Commission in 2008 and aims to help local authorities to respond to challenges and opportunities and ensure that approaches and services are in place that will ensure a successful environment for people to thrive as they age. In general it supports delivery of the national strategic direction for an ageing population. It focuses on:

- engaging older people in planning and improving services and understanding what they want and need
- age-proofing mainstream services to eliminate age discrimination, and
- building services that support independence.

### **Regional and Sub-Regional strategic context**

#### South East Plan and Housing Strategy

The context for housing development in Dover district is set by the South East Regional Spatial Strategy<sup>13</sup> (or South East Plan), the final version of which was published in May 2009 and by the Regional Housing Strategy<sup>14</sup> which was published in 2006. Both of these highlight the need to consider the needs of older people, particularly in the context of the higher proportion in the region, in planning new homes and neighbourhoods and in finding options for housing that older people will want to choose. Desirable housing alternatives for older people are important because these will enable:

- Freeing-up of family homes to help larger households
- Healthy living environments for older people that promote good health and well being
- Continuing independent living in a home of choice

#### South East Health Strategy

The South East Health Strategy supports the need for good housing options and highlights that existing housing in poor condition adversely impacts on the health of older people. Fuel poverty is specifically linked with ill health. There is a need to link better between assessments under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and access to health and social care services. Wider use of assistive technology (such as telecare and telehealth), adaptations and enabling warmth, safety and security inside and outside homes would support older people in their homes. Income maximisation including through good access to welfare benefits also strengthens older people's ability to live well.

#### Sustainable Community Strategies

Kent Partnership's sustainable community strategy the 'Vision for Kent' states that Kent will be a county where 'Housing needs are met and decent, high quality homes help create attractive, safe and friendly communities' and housing is a key contributor to the theme of 'healthy living'.

The new East Kent sustainable community strategy, under the aegis of the East Kent Local Strategic Partnership, highlights the need to improve the poorest housing conditions, particularly in Dover, and to tackle fuel poverty.

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<sup>12</sup> Don't stop me now – preparing for an ageing population: Audit Commission July 08

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning/815640/>

<sup>14</sup> South East Regional housing strategy from 2006

### Active Lives 2007 to 2016

Kent's adult social care strategy makes a range of commitments that support our housing strategy for older people including:

- Supporting easier access to better advice and information and services that enable home improvement
- Enabling choice and control including through developing shared assessments, working across agencies to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of older people and enabling access to housing-related support across the range of tenures
- Supporting people to live in their own home by working in partnership to develop a range of housing solutions and increasing access to adaptations

### Supporting People strategy

The Supporting People (SP) strategy for Kent is being reviewed so is in draft at the time of writing. The key implications for our older people are:

- There is a need to redistribute support provision across the county. Dover district, with the fourth highest numbers of people aged 65 and over, has the third fewest units of supported accommodation. The intention is to shift funding to reflect the needs in each area and under this proposal there would be support available for more of the older people in our area
- There is a need to move support away from being restricted solely to those in sheltered accommodation and towards a more 'floating' service that enables people to get support wherever they live
- Home Improvement Agencies and Handyperson services need a review to ensure that they are providing consistent and effective services in all areas
- There is a need for peer support to be developed to minimise isolation of older people in the community
- All support providers need to develop links with community-based day services to help reduce isolation

### **Local strategic context**

Dover District Council is committed to enabling a wide range of good quality and accessible housing that meets the needs of the whole community. The council successfully bid for growth point status in the South East Plan and as a result can expect to deliver 10,100 homes by 2026, of which 30% should be affordable homes. This provides opportunities to rebalance housing across the area, including new affordable housing that provides desirable homes for older people. How these opportunities can be maximised is being developed in the draft affordable housing plan.

The council's corporate plan<sup>15</sup> commits to achieving enough good quality homes to meet residents' ambitions, including the most vulnerable households. With the Dover district attracting substantial resources for regeneration, there are opportunities to improve existing housing and neighbourhoods as well as building new homes.

The planning framework for our area is well progressed and includes a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for affordable housing that recognises the need for one and two bedroom homes to meet the needs of smaller households, including older people. It seeks to balance provision of sheltered, or other supported housing, in accordance with recognised need. The Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015 requires that homes are built to lifetime homes standards where this is practically achievable, in accordance with government policy, and identifies a need for wheelchair standard units to be provided across the district.

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<sup>15</sup> Corporate Plan 2008-2020, Dover DC

The draft Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015 draws together the issues for privately owned housing across the Dover District Council area and sets out six objectives that are key to enabling older people to live independently in good quality homes and which provide good strategic fit with the wider strategies discussed above. The objectives that are particularly relevant to this strategy are to:

- take whatever action is appropriate and necessary to ensure that properties are free of serious hazards and meet statutory standards;
- provide services which assist older residents and residents with disabilities to maintain independent living in warm, safe and comfortable homes;
- improve energy efficiency in homes and reduce fuel poverty;
- provide financial assistance in the areas of greatest need to help provide decent, safe, secure homes;
- give effective advice and information to residents with housing problems

This strategy also adopts the former public service agreement (PSA) 7 target to achieve improvements in private sector housing conditions for vulnerable people, so that

- by October 2010, 70% of all vulnerable people will live in a decent home and
- by October 2021, 75% of all vulnerable people will live in a decent home

‘Vulnerable’ in this context refers to people reliant on means tested benefits but this encompasses a large number of older people and therefore is very relevant to this strategy. The strategy also looks to develop additional assistance for older (and other vulnerable) people in relation to repairing and adapting homes.

### ***In summary***

The wider strategic and policy context aligns well and supports a local housing approach that delivers choice and control for older people in the context of eliminating age discrimination and enabling older people to play a full and active part in society supported by:

- Accessible advice and information
- New homes built to lifetime standards
- Development of specialist housing for some older people in the form of ‘extra care’ schemes and exploration of other retirement housing options
- New developments to lifetime neighbourhood standards and the same standards being delivered wherever possible in existing neighbourhoods, for example where highway changes or replacements are required, or in major works for communal entrances (which also support delivery of Disability Discrimination Act commitments)
- Assistance for older people to make use of their own resources, including the equity in their homes, to be ready for their later years
- Helping older people to stay in their own homes through assistance with repairs, adaptations, safety and security measures
- Providing housing-related support across tenure including technological support through enhanced community alarms

As importantly, this strategic alignment means that the priorities we have identified for our area are shared by our key partners so that we can expect that our work will be supported and contributed to by them. This is vital if we are to make a significant difference for older people in our area.

### 3. The needs of and issues for older people in Dover District Council

#### *Demography*

##### Age profile and predicted change

Almost 38% of Dover district's total population is currently over 50 years old and 27.4% are over 60 years old<sup>16</sup>. This is substantially above the average for Kent and East Kent where 23.5% and 26.6% respectively are over 60.

In our area, by 2016:

- The population of over 55s will have increased by almost 17% against an overall population increase of only 0.75%.
- The majority growth will be in the 65 to 74 year old age band which will have increased by almost 38% - an addition of 4,000 people in this age group.
- Over 75 year olds will increase by around 16% or a total of 1,500 people
- Over 85's will also increase by 16%; around 500 people
- Generally the working age population (and children), including the 55 to 64 age band, will have declined significantly.

By 2026, those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those aged over 85 by 54%.

This picture does not take into account the anticipated growth in Dover district's population from inward migration as part of the South East Plan and Dover District Council's local planning intentions, which should work to rebalance the population. However, it does focus attention on the ageing population in Dover district compared to other areas and the need to consider housing requirements in the longer term.

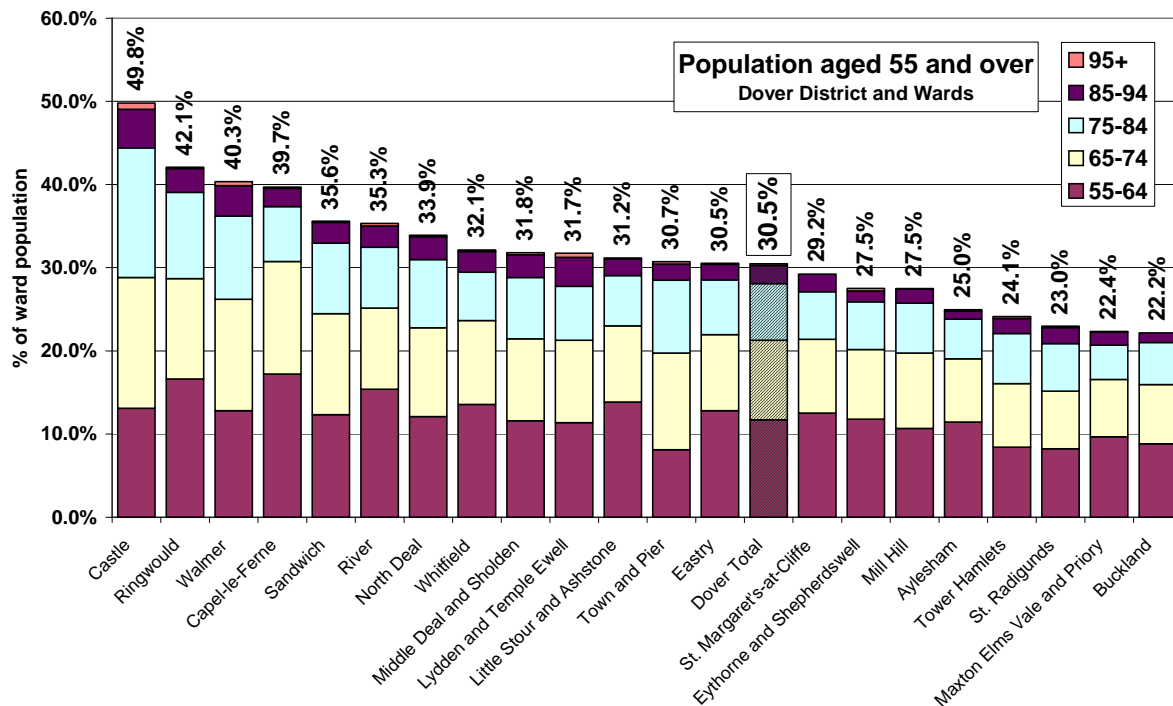
The distribution of older people varies across the district; chart 1 shows the proportion and age split by ward for over-55 year olds.

#### **Chart 1: distribution of people over 55 years across Dover DC wards**

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<sup>16</sup> Source: ONS mid year estimates 2008





### Ethnicity

Around 94% of our population is White British or Irish and these groups are more predominant amongst the older population. The most significant minority ethnic group is 'other White' (2.3%); with all other minority ethnic groups each equal to or less than half a percentage point.

### Income

Although our economy has struggled in the last ten years or so, in fact the current older population is relatively well off: only 12.2% over 60 year olds live in income deprived households which is well below the national average and just below the national median. This does not mean there is no cause for concern; rather it reflects the previous local experience which was a relatively high wage rate from mining and port activity; both now declined. This picture is therefore likely to change over time. The indications are<sup>17</sup> that the proportion of people across Kent who are over age 65 and rely on manual and other lower paid work will increase by 16% by 2021 (on 2001 base). This means that incomes on the whole will be lower, given the pattern of employment in the area, and the older population is likely to be disproportionately affected. This has implications for the ability of future older people to meet their own housing needs as well as for general health (which has strong links with income).

Around 5,000 older households living in private sector housing are in receipt of pension credits<sup>18</sup>, so are on a low income, and a fifth of these live in the private rented sector.

### Health, care and well being

Life expectancy for men in the district is only just above the lowest national quartile, reflecting the past employment in the area which has shortened life expectancy for men compared to many other areas and despite relative wealth. For women, however, life expectancy is slightly above the national average. Those in the most deprived wards are likely to live 6.5 years less than those in the least deprived wards. The implications

<sup>17</sup> Joint Strategic needs Assessment for Kent, 2008

<sup>18</sup> Source: private sector stock condition survey

are that higher than average numbers of older women can expect to live alone as they grow old, this could disproportionately affect women with lower incomes. Currently, 48% all single person households in the district are aged over 65 years; highlighting that new homes designed for single person households should particularly be designed to lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors.

Isolation is recognised to be a high risk factor in mental and physical health and other well being issues in older populations because single people are less likely to make efforts around preparing meals, have less social contacts, suffer higher rates of depressive illnesses and are more likely to suffer ill effects from relatively minor accidents in the home. Work in East Kent has shown that, after dementia, the most significant mental illness affecting older people is depression. The causes of this are often very complex but it is a reasonable contention that inadequate income and therefore an inability to participate in mainstream living is a significant contributor.

People in our area are more likely to have long term limiting illnesses; slightly worse than areas with comparative deprivation indicators. However, the rates of illnesses that particularly affect older people indicate that older people here are relatively healthy compared to similar areas, with the exception of respiratory illnesses which are relatively higher. Good housing conditions including warm homes are particularly important in maintaining health in people with these problems.

For people aged over 75 falls are the leading cause of injury and death. Long term illnesses and events such as falls often prompt the need for adaptations to homes to enable older people to stay independent. Minor adaptations (up to a cost of £1,000) are supplied by adult social care but larger adaptations across tenure are primarily the responsibility of the housing authority. The private sector stock condition survey identified that 22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and as the proportion of older people increases, the demand for adaptations will grow.

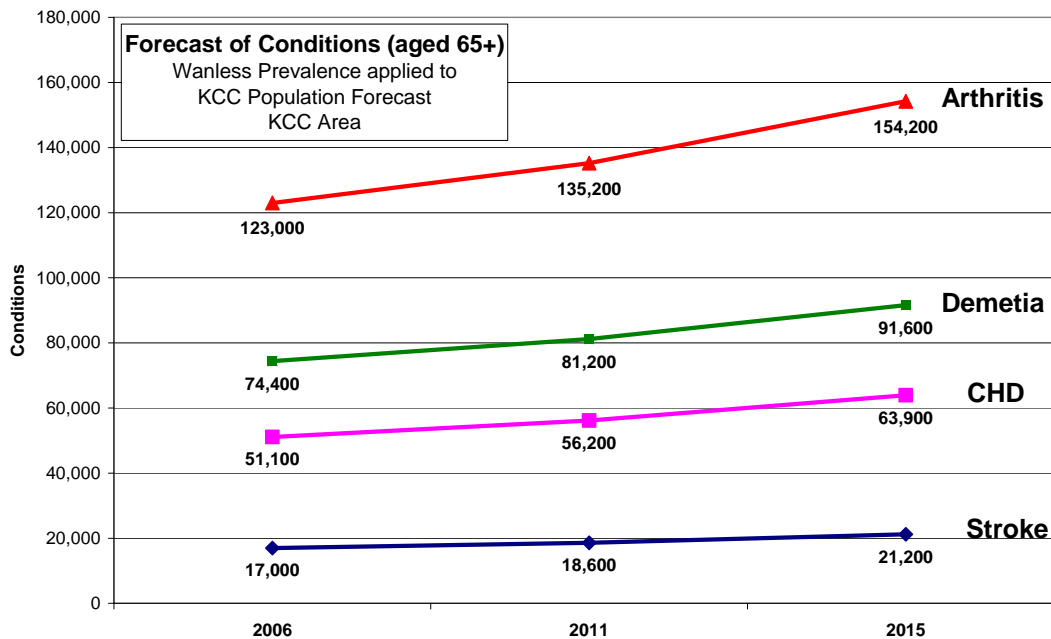
Dementia will be an increasing issue as the older population grows. Specialist housing solutions such as extra care housing need to include the right facilities and services (including telecare functionality, colour coding and layouts that are straightforward so easy to navigate) to ensure that people with confusion are able to be supported and cared for in a homely setting that is familiar to them. Telecare is an important and developing resource that also enables people to stay in their familiar home with distant monitoring for the risks associated with short term memory loss and confusion, such as main door and gas alerts. This enables people to live much longer and more safely in a home that they recognise and averts the increased confusion that often results from having to move to get the right care. The council and its developer partners need to ensure that, especially, specialist housing design reflects good practice around supporting independence for people with confusion and that the partnership as a whole is responding to the needs of people with dementia living in their own homes.

Chart 2 shows how the numbers of people with conditions mainly affecting older age groups are likely to change across Kent. Dementia is a particular issue for future older people and specialist housing solutions will be needed as this develops.

## **Chart 2: increasing prevalence of conditions mainly affecting older people<sup>19</sup>**

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<sup>19</sup> Kent Public Health Annual report 2008

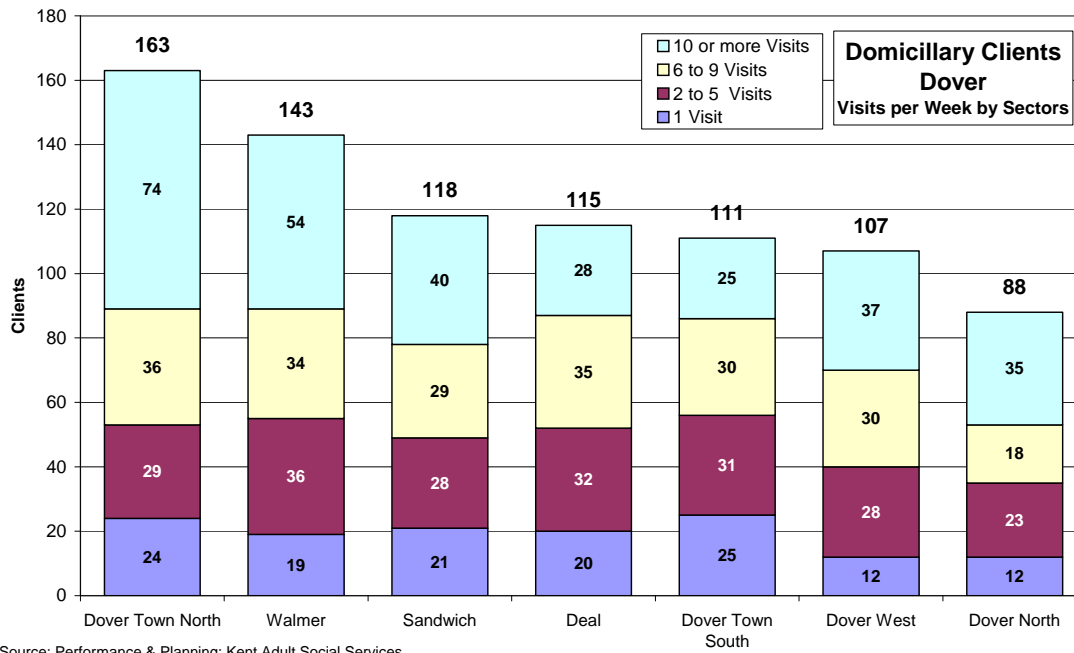


Unscheduled admissions to hospital are a valuable indicator of both the health status of older people, and of the quality of the health and social care they receive. The average for East Kent PCT is much the same as for Kent as a whole but the Dover district rate falls well below both. However, considering causes that are more common for older people, admissions for stroke and diabetes are amongst the lowest in the county whereas heart failure admissions are only just below the county average and admissions for chronic obstructive airways disease are around the county average.

Domiciliary care is provided in people's own homes and can include help with any personal care tasks such as washing, dressing, help into and out of bed, meals and so on. Multiple visits imply that people need a great deal of personal care, being unable to manage personal care tasks for themselves, and ten or more visits a week is classified as 'intensive'. Chart 3 shows the distribution of domiciliary care inputs across Dover District Council (with wards grouped into sub areas).

**Chart 3: Domiciliary care inputs across Dover DC area<sup>20</sup>**

<sup>20</sup> Source: KCC Adult Social Services



Dover Town North area, which includes the wards of Buckland, St. Radigunds and Tower Hamlets, has the second lowest proportion of older people in the council area but both the highest number of domiciliary care clients and the highest number of intensive inputs. Dover North and West, encompassing Aylesham, Eastry, Ringwold, St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Capel-le-Ferne, Eythorne and Shepherdswell, Lydden and Temple Ewell, River, Town and Pier have the highest populations of older people and the lowest inputs of domiciliary care.

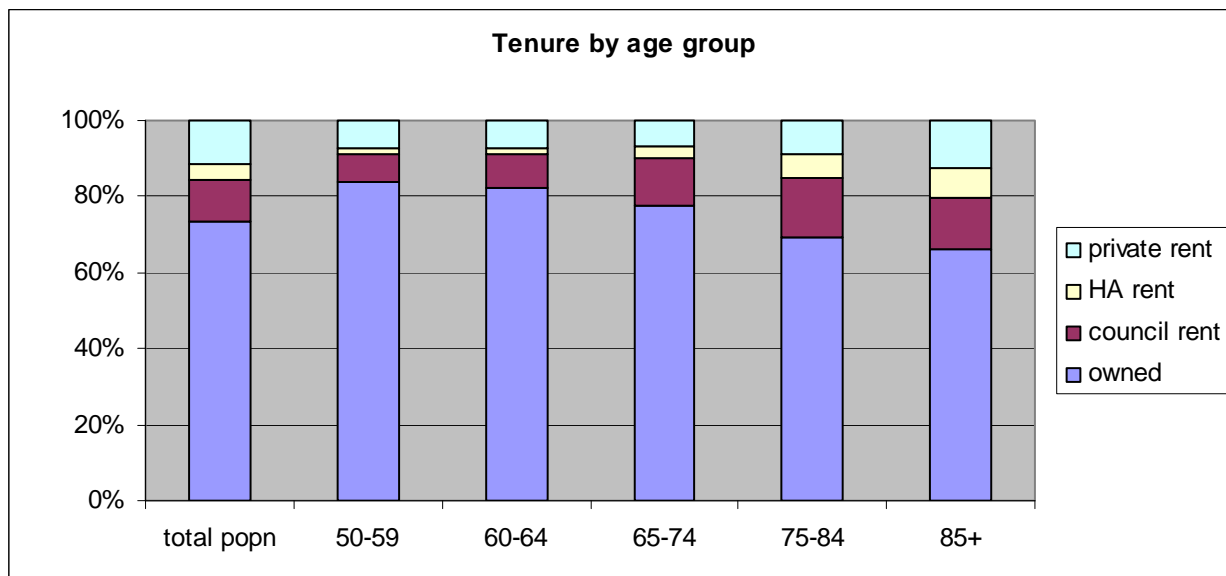
## Housing issues

### Tenure

Dover district reflects national tenure trends in that people over the age of 50 are more likely to own their own home - and more own their own home outright. However, people over 75 years are much more likely to live in council and housing association rented homes than the average across all ages. Dover district (in particular Dover town) has a substantial private rented sector compared to national averages but amongst older people only the 85+ age group are more likely than the average to live in this tenure.

Chart 4: Tenure of older people compared to the total population in Dover DC<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Source: Census 2001



### Housing demand

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), finalised in July 2009, identified need for housing across all tenures and carried out some specific work on housing need and demand amongst older people. A housing aspirations survey was completed with a total of 603 people, of whom 264 were over 55 years old. The results confirm findings in similar surveys of housing aspirations amongst older people.

All participants were asked whether they are likely to move within the next three years. Around 90% of those over 65 identified that they would probably or definitely not want to move. A higher proportion of the 55 to 64 age group said that they would probably or definitely want to move – about 18%; with another 8% saying they didn't know.

The study also asked about what type of housing older people would prefer. Overwhelmingly older people said that they want to stay in their own homes; preferably in the homes they occupy now. Where a move becomes necessary the preference is for two bedroom accommodation or larger, and more preferred bungalows or houses with a small garden, with few wanting a flat. The views and preferences of older people are discussed in more detail later in this section.

### Demand for affordable housing

The SHMA assessed housing need into the future, based on 2006 data for existing housing need for people over 65 years old. In 2006, there was an identified unmet need of 1,535 homes and this is projected to increase by 54% to 2,371 by 2026. These figures exclude people who are housed appropriately or have sufficient resources to meet their own housing needs in the open market. This figure represents almost a quarter of all housing growth in this area and over 78% of all affordable homes and is clearly unrealistic. It is clear though that a significant proportion of all new affordable homes should be designed to meet the needs (including quality living standards such as good storage space and two bedrooms) of older people and confirms that Lifetime homes standards would provide this flexibility.

### Demand for sheltered housing

This section considers 'classic' sheltered housing; i.e. schemes which are designed with flats off an internal corridor, which also have communal lounges, laundries and may have other communal facilities such as guest rooms. The main source for

understanding demand for sheltered homes is the council's housing waiting list. With the choice-based lettings scheme that has operated since November 2008, we can gain a much better understanding of the real demand for sheltered housing, as expressed by the number of bids for certain schemes and we have used this information to consider the demand for sheltered housing. Only three schemes attracted more than single figures of bids at any stage during the last year. The three that are more popular are schemes that are relatively well-located and offer attractive homes. We need to bear in mind that single people and couples are only considered for one bedroom homes unless there is a need for a second bedroom, for example if a couple need separate bedrooms or there is a carer staying overnight on a regular basis. This does mean that we are considering demand for what is available rather than people's preferences, which may be different to what they are allowed to have. The over-riding message is that older people only want sheltered housing if the home offers good space standards in a location that enables people to be part of their local community and enjoy facilities.

We have also learned from our recent experience of closing schemes as this tells us where older people wanted to move to, and what sort of accommodation they wanted. The majority of the 90 people who moved from sheltered housing schemes wanted to live in towns or local centres of population. The design of their new home and its proximity to local facilities was far more important to them than moving into another sheltered housing scheme. Many did still want to receive support but this can be provided in their own home.

All housing associations providing housing in the Dover district were approached about demand for older persons' housing in their stock. All seek nominations from Dover District Council's housing list for at least 50% of re-let homes and although some hold their own lists, they identify that most people are on both theirs, and the council's housing lists. All reported higher levels of demand for bungalows, where they have this type of stock and half reported some lack of demand for sheltered units, at least from time to time. However, none of the respondents identified chronic problems letting any particular scheme.

Based on our findings, we do not consider that additional sheltered housing is required at present. It would be better to focus on good quality, well located 'retirement' housing which provides 2 bedrooms, good storage space and lifetime standards.

### Home ownership

The table below compares average house prices for 2008 across Dover district, East Kent Triangle and all Kent<sup>22</sup>.

<b>Average house prices</b>	Dover DC	East Kent	Kent (all)
Detached	324,879	312,686	398,419
Semi	189,013	196,592	220,662
Terrace	159,454	174,858	184,070
Flat/ Maisonette	122,201	138,626	156,362
Average (all)	196,142	202,781	234,136

Except for detached houses, the purchase price for homes in Dover district falls below the average even for neighbouring areas. Older home owners who want to downsize to a flat, for example, will release sufficient equity to be able to afford the costs of moving.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Land Registry of England and Wales

The purchase prices of retirement housing compare reasonably favourably although the purchase price range is very wide. With recent market challenges, there is little 2009 data but prices in 2008 ranged from £90,000 for a shared ownership flat managed by a housing association to £250,000 outright purchase for a two bedroom flat in a privately managed scheme. Most purchase prices fell between £100,000 and £130,000, usually for a one bedroom outright purchase flat. Private management agencies are reluctant to identify problems with demand but most flats were on the market for some months and problems selling leasehold flats have been widely reported nationally.

While purchase prices compare reasonably well with general house prices, the key to affordability of retirement properties is the service charge. The retirement housing for sale identified in Dover district usually included communal facilities and a scheme manager and service charges cover at least all external property-related repairs plus communal and window cleaning, grounds maintenance and staffing. Prices range from around £1,300 to £2,000 per year although there are outliers at both ends of the range. This means that older people need either good levels of pension income or to release sufficient equity in order to afford ongoing costs of these properties. Those selling large family homes should have little difficulty in affording purchase price and service charges for the majority of homes available on the market.

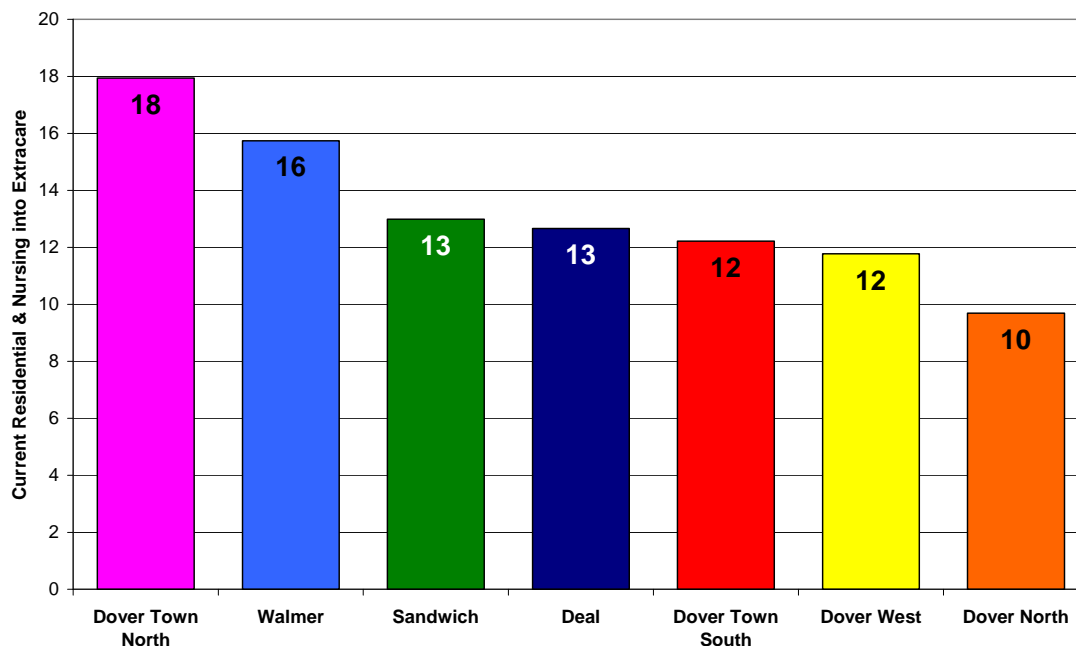
Affordable homes for purchase that are suitable for older people are available through the 'HomeBuy' scheme, for which Moat Housing Association holds the list. At present there is little demand from older people and this will reflect the difficult market conditions.

#### Extra care housing

This type of specialist housing has been developed to meet the needs of older people who have both a housing need, and a need for care provision. This type of development is mainly aimed at reducing the number of older people who have to be admitted to residential and nursing care. Schemes include a range of additional facilities to enable care to be provided on site and these have been very successful on the whole in meeting the needs of more dependant older people.

Kent adult care services have assessed the need for extra care housing using the methodology developed by the Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV) – the specialist unit sponsored by the government to develop good practice in housing for older people. The chart below shows unmet need for 94 units. This is at 2008 figures as the 40 units provided by our first extra care scheme then being developed, and now opened, have been netted off.

#### **Chart 5: Need for extra care housing in areas of Dover DC**



It should be emphasised that extra care schemes are successful in providing quality of living where they build a community of older people; offering a quality living experience as well as essential care and support. Housing only those with substantial care needs means that this sense of community is far less likely to develop: a mix of people is needed including a good proportion with lower dependency levels who are more able to build and participate in the community. The total demand for extra care units should therefore be increased to represent this mix of dependency levels: good practice indicates that the scheme should provide a 50:50 mix of highly dependent and less dependant customers (although most of the latter will be expected to need higher levels of care as they age). This implies a total need for extra care units of just short of 190 units.

### Decent homes

The 2009 private sector stock condition survey for Dover district highlights that 36.7% all those living in private sector housing are vulnerable households. The term 'vulnerable' is defined as those who are in receipt of means-tested benefits across all ages. Of households who are vulnerable, almost half live in homes that fail the decency standard and a quarter live in homes with a Category 1 hazard, which are those likely to place the occupier at high risk.

Almost 40% of vulnerable people living in non-decent homes live in the private rented sector, which raises concerns about the higher than average population of over-85 year olds in this sector.

The vast majority of Category 1 hazards are excessive cold, with danger of falls being the second most prevalent. More than 1,100 people over retirement age live in homes with a SAP rating of under 35, which indicates very poor insulation and heating, and a further 7,000 older people live in homes with SAP ratings of 54 or less, which is below the average for the area. Almost 3,000 households are identified as being in fuel poverty (which is defined by the requirement to spend 10% or more of the household income on domestic fuel) and of these, almost half are vulnerable households. Half of all vulnerable households in fuel poverty live in pre-1919 homes and over 38% live in the private rented sector.



The survey identified a total of 7,344 homes that are occupied by people who are retired and which fail the decent homes standard. Almost 60% of all vulnerable people living in homes that fail the decent homes standard live in properties built before 1919, the majority of which are terraced properties, although it is not currently clear what proportion of these are people over retirement age. Flatted homes are also more likely to fail the decent homes standard, for the most part because they are fitted with electrical heating which is more expensive to run and less effective. Over half the occupants of flats are vulnerable people.

Around 21% of privately owned homes require major repairs or replacement of components and over 44% of these are occupied by vulnerable people who by definition are unlikely to be able to afford to have repairs completed.

Older people who are on low incomes are least likely to be able to afford to upgrade or update their own homes and, whilst some issues may be less pressing, excessive cold and major repairs and replacements can place people at risk of serious ill health including through accidents in home.

### ***What older people say about their needs and aspirations***

We have used a range of sources to develop our understanding of the views of older people. We invited all members of Dover's Senior Citizens' Forum and some of the key agencies working with older people to a consultation event in May 2008. There was a relatively small attendance of around 25 people (mostly older people) but a lively discussion across a wide range of topics. The full report of the event is at [Annex 1](#).

The consultant appointed to complete the Strategic housing Market Assessment, ECOTEC, also undertook some consultation with older people in Dover district and their views are included in the SHMA report.

There has been local<sup>23</sup> and regional<sup>24</sup> work to understanding the motivations and obstacles for older social housing tenants, who could by moving release a family home.

Kent Supporting People programme has been undertaking consultation with service users to inform its strategic review. By definition all those involved already receive support services, and for older people this is usually in sheltered housing.

A range of regional statutory and voluntary groups came together to establish the South East Regional Forum on Ageing (SERFA)<sup>25</sup> and held a large consultation event in March 2009. The South East England Partnership Board subsequently published a study on the needs and aspirations of older people<sup>26</sup> in May 2009 to inform housing development for older people across the region.

There is a substantial body of research on older people's views from across the country and regionally. In addition to a range of studies commissioned by local authorities and specialist agencies to inform policy and service development, the government commissioned studies on the views, needs and aspirations of older people in developing, and since publication of Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods. HOPDEV has also carried out studies into older people's views about their needs and aspirations and also their experiences in specialist housing.

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<sup>23</sup> Housing Needs and Aspirations of Long Standing Council Tenants, Canterbury City Council March 09

<sup>24</sup> Releasing Larger Social Rented Homes in the South East: Regional Housing Forum 2009

<sup>25</sup> See: <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gose/publicHealth/improvement/701129/790925/>

<sup>26</sup> The Housing Needs and Aspirations of Older People: SE partnership Board, May 09

## Findings

In February 2008, Baroness Andrews introduced 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' by describing what older people had told the government:

*'We want:*

- To stay in our homes as long as possible, but to do this we need support - a reliable repairs and adaptations service, that bit of help around the home*
- Access to independent information and advice about our housing options*
- Safe, accessible homes that are low-maintenance and affordable to heat*
- Good space standards - so we can have family to visit, or a carer, and storage space is important too. And we need our homes to be adaptable, if we need to install a stair-lift, or a walk-in shower*
- Neighbourhoods that are safe, with good access and transport links to the places we need to go to, and the places we would like to go to*

*Most of all, we want to be listened to - involved in the design and delivery of everything in our homes and neighbourhoods that will affect us.'*

These messages reflect findings in national and local consultation with older people and are consistent with the views expressed at the consultation event in Dover.

*Overwhelmingly older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay there for the rest of their life.*

A minority of people anticipate having to move into residential care (although many fear this) and expect to be able to access support and care that helps them to stay in their own home. Very few people over retirement age expect to move as they get older, although some think that they may be forced to move if they become disabled. If people have not moved away from their family home by early retirement, the proportion who would move without being forced to do so is only about 10%.

People living in social rented housing are more likely to be prepared to move but only to a home that meets their needs and aspirations (see next point), and only if the move itself is relatively easy to cope with. They cite practical help to pack and unpack and arrange the move including utilities and reconnection of cookers etc. and financial assistance with the costs of moving (carpeting and curtains and the costs of removal firms) which are often seen as unaffordable.

*To be attractive to older people, alternative homes must provide the right space and facilities*

Overwhelmingly, people want homes with a minimum of two bedrooms, with good design that makes maintenance of and movement around it easy, and facilities (such as bathrooms and kitchens) that are attractive and easy to use. Most people want their own small garden or, as a minimum, easy access to a communal garden. Few express a particular interest in sheltered or extra care housing (few know what this is), although some are attracted by the idea of a 'retirement village'. For home owners, retirement housing for example in specially designed flatted blocks has some attractions but, again, only if forced to move. There is a suspicion that specialist housing schemes for older people are likely to be populated by very old and frail people who will not be able to socialise, so any potential social advantage of moving into these is mitigated by this perception.

*Neighbourhoods need to be easy to get around and provide a full range of facilities*

People cite poor pavements, lack of road crossings and inconsiderate parking as major obstacles to being able to get out and about in their locality. Most value their car and

anticipate (or experience) that having to rely on public transport to get to the shops and social activities causes significant problems. This is because public transport is seen as unreliable and inaccessible, and services are sparse in more rural areas. The optimum is to live in a neighbourhood that provides a range of shops, particularly food shops, and community facilities for socialising.

*Accessible and reliable information and advice that enables a choice of housing options and ways to meet needs is vital*

Older people want to know what is available and then make their own choices about what will best meet their requirements. They express resentment that they are sometimes not treated as responsible adults and are told what is best for them. However, in order to be able to make good choices, they want to know what all the options are without trekking from one advice source to another: joined-up advice and information is crucial in enabling choices to be made to best meet needs.

Older people are less likely to have access to the internet and, even where they do, place a high value on being able to talk to someone face to face. People with limited mobility want this to come to their homes rather than have to travel to a centre. There is suspicion about financial advice being offered in the market place; most do not trust this and refer to the well publicised instances of poor money advice and dire consequences. People do trust well known voluntary agencies such as the CAB and Age Concern, and they also trust local councils to do 'what is right'.

*To be able to stay in their own homes, people want prompt practical help*

People cite adaptations as the most likely help needed in their homes and see these as crucial to maintaining independence and a good quality of life. Some are also concerned about major repairs – both the cost and the practicality of getting work done. Mistrust of builders and other contractors means that having to commission any work on the home is fraught with doubt and difficulty so people want to be able to use contractors that have been assessed as trustworthy and reasonable in price. While some people are happy to assess and commission what is needed, the majority would value advice on the work required and practical help to arrange it. Some are concerned that they would not be able to afford major work but few trust the equity release schemes they know about: a council-backed scheme would be far more acceptable.

Small repairs and work around the home (for example putting up curtain rails, replacing fittings) are more often a source of concern: it is expensive and difficult to get someone in to do small jobs and again there are concerns about reliability. Most older people are used to doing work like this themselves and find it hard to see their home deteriorate without being able to address this.

*Isolation is a major threat and concern*

People fear becoming isolated in their own home and unable to see friends and neighbours. Daily contact with 'the outside world' is highly valued, particularly by people who live alone, and this also provides a sense of safety and belonging. The best way to achieve this is to be able to get out and about but older people who are unable to do this want to have contact with other people, even if only phone calls.

**Summary of findings on needs and issues**

- The older population of Dover district is larger than the housing market and county averages. By 2026, those aged 65-84 will increase by 55.7% and those

- Proportions of older people vary across the district by over 100% but intensive domiciliary care inputs indicate that levels of dependency do not match the distribution: this needs to be further investigated in order to effectively target services
- Although relatively well off now, the number of older people on lower incomes will increase over time and this has implications for the ability of people to meet their own housing needs
- Currently, 48% all single person households in the Dover district are aged over 65 years and this will increase over time, so it is particularly important that new smaller homes should meet lifetime standards including lift access to upper floors
- A higher than average proportion of our older population is likely to live alone, with implications of isolation and mental ill health. It is important that this is considered when making decisions about local community facilities and support services
- Rates of respiratory illnesses are relatively high; these are particularly linked to cold and damp conditions, so improving these issues will particularly contribute to better health amongst older people
- 22% all households in private housing include someone with a disability and this proportion is likely to be much higher in social housing. These numbers will increase as the population ages, indicating increasing demands for adaptations
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and death amongst the over-75s; adaptations and falls prevention advice and practical measures significantly reduce disabilities arising from falls.
- Increasing rates of dementia need to be considered when designing supported housing and services for older people
- Over 8,000 retired households live in homes that are more difficult to keep warm, and over 1,100 live in homes that are very cold and expensive to heat. This places occupiers at severe risk of ill health
- People who are 85 or over are more likely than the average to live in private rented properties. 40% all private rented homes fail the decent homes standard so this highlights the need to ensure that all agencies visiting older people at home are aware of and refer issues to the private sector housing team.
- There is unmet demand for affordable rented homes amongst older people; mostly for retirement (but not sheltered) units of two or more bedrooms. The projected demand by 2026 represents 78% of all additional affordable homes expected to be built in this area.
- There is no apparent unmet need for market retirement housing, although this may change over time as the housing market recovers and the older population grows.
- There is a need for almost 190 additional units of extra care housing: half for people with high dependency levels and half to provide a more mixed and lively community.
- Older people want, and expect, to stay in their own homes and most expect to stay in their current home for the rest of their life. To enable this, older people see the following as crucial:
  - Neighbourhoods that are easy to get around and provide a full range of facilities
  - Accessible and reliable information and advice that enables a choice of housing options and ways to meet needs
  - Prompt practical help, including help with adaptations and repairs
  - Ways of meeting people and socialising - contact with the outside world

- Where older people choose to move, or may have to move to meet their changing needs, they want homes that are acceptable to them, including:
  - at least two bedrooms
  - accessible standards, with no steps or stairs
  - well designed and accessible bathrooms and kitchens
  - a small garden
- People living in social rented housing are somewhat more prepared to consider a move but only to the right home and only if this is made easy for them to cope with, both practically and financially.

#### **4. Meeting needs and demands**

This section considers the findings on needs and issues from section 3, and looks at how and whether these are currently being met.

##### ***New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover district's population and support independence***

Although older people for the most part do not want to move, there is already unmet demand for, particularly, affordable rented housing and this will grow by around 54% by 2026. To assess the extent to which demand is being met, we considered the supply of affordable rented homes, both specialist (sheltered and extra care) and non-specialist housing. Non-specialist housing is usually termed general needs housing but here we are considering only the supply of homes that would be more suitable for older people, given the higher rates of mobility issues and smaller household sizes.

We also considered the requirements around neighbourhood design and facilities that will support older people to remain independent.

##### *Specialist housing for older people*

###### Sheltered housing

As part of the review underpinning this strategy, all social landlords with homes in Dover district were contacted about the supply of properties in the area that are either sheltered housing or designated for older people. Information was also sourced from the Elderly Accommodation Council.

In summary, our area has around 320 sheltered homes for affordable rent from housing associations and other affordable providers, usually charitable trusts. The majority of these are confirmed as meeting the decent homes standard. Some schemes do have bedsits and these are more difficult to let. In addition, Dover District Council has 266 sheltered flats across the district and all these meet the decent homes standard, giving a total 586 affordable rented sheltered units across the district. 577<sup>27</sup> of these have support provided through contracts with Supporting People and the remainder are almhouse-type accommodation with limited support on site.

Although we could not establish the full turnover of sheltered housing, data from some housing provider and national data<sup>28</sup> indicates that around 12% of sheltered units are available for letting each year, indicating a supply of about 70 sheltered units per annum. Housing providers fed back that they commonly experience making an offer of sheltered (and other) housing to be told that the older person doesn't want to move at this time. This confirms that older people may register in case they need to move but

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<sup>27</sup> Supporting People Needs Analysis November 2008

<sup>28</sup> Source: sheltered housing benchmarking club, HQN

will only do so if the time and the property are right for them. Experience of bidding and decanting people from sheltered housing indicates that there is no pent-up demand for sheltered housing except where it provides a good quality home in a location of choice; both of which could be met by well-designed retirement housing in the right place (such as in Dover town, or other town centres).

*There is no apparent need for additional 'traditional' sheltered housing schemes: needs and aspirations would be better met with retirement housing providing good space and lifetime standards in the right locations.*

#### Extra care housing

Dover District Council with Kent County Council has one extra care scheme of forty units for older people that opened this autumn. Another scheme of the same size is planned for start on site next year so together these would provide around 80 units leaving a shortfall of around 54 units on the basis of the 2008 needs assessment. However, we know that such schemes are only able to develop a good community if occupants are not all very dependant on care and limited in mobility. The mix of occupiers found in studies, most recently one published in November this year by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>29</sup>, to be more successful is 50% highly dependant people with 25% each of moderate to low dependency. The unmet need of 54 is based on high dependency and therefore an additional 50 or so units would allow the optimum mix across all schemes. Turnover rates in extra care are much higher than in sheltered housing (up to 40% has been reported) so a total supply of 220 units would provide a supply of perhaps 50 or 60 units per annum. Given the increasing ageing population and the issues around dementia, this supply level would go a long way to meeting future levels need.

*There is a need for around 180 units of extra care, beyond the 40 already delivered but including the scheme now being planned*

#### General needs housing for older people

##### Affordable rented homes

Over 1,300 properties are designated for allocation to older people across Dover district; these tend to be bungalows or flatted blocks originally built for older people. These may have no particular merit in terms of special design features or good location but bungalows are particularly popular with older people and many of the flats built for older people have good space standards. However, most flats do not have lifts to upper floors and most flats and bungalows provide only one bedroom. As a result the upper floor flats in particular are far less popular with older people.

Providing desirable affordable rented homes for older people would help to release family homes for households including children. This would also contribute to meeting the demand for larger family homes for affordable rent since most older people on the waiting list will be under-occupying their home (although this has not been properly assessed). However, to achieve this there also needs to be an under-occupier scheme that provides practical help and assistance and covers the costs of moving.

*There is an unmet need for around 1,500 and, by 2026, around 2,370 general needs housing at affordable rent that provides one or, preferably, two bedrooms built to lifetime home standards. The majority of these should be ground floor properties including*

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<sup>29</sup> The development of social well-being in new extra care housing schemes: JRF Nov 09

*bungalows or flats with lift access and communal gardens and in locations that older people want. This supply would help to meet needs amongst families who are overcrowded now or are planning to have children in the future. However, a well-designed under-occupier scheme is also needed if this is to be achieved.*

### Market homes

Around 10% of older people indicate that they may want to move to a more suitable home. In most cases, this would release a family home onto the open market which would help to rebalance the market across the district. There is no current indication that there is a lack of supply of either retirement or general housing to meet the demand but we can anticipate that demand will grow. We can also anticipate that attractive, well designed homes in the right location and of the right size will in fact attract people who are in their fifties and sixties to move so providing a good balance of housing in market developments would have the desired effect. However, one bedroom homes, or with small space standards, step access or above the ground floor with no lift will not achieve this.

*New market housing in places that older people want to live should include a proportion of homes that meet the aspirations of older people, including lifetime homes standards. Whilst these may not all be purchased by older people, they would also meet the needs of other households.*

### Neighbourhoods

Older people identify that, for the most part, they want to stay in their current locality even if they move. A minority of people attending the consultation event in May 2008 living outside town centres (but not those in villages) said they would consider moving to an area that provides better facilities, including shops and social facilities.

Our regeneration and development sites provide real opportunities to ensure that neighbourhoods are designed to provide what older people (and younger people) want and, more importantly, need. Master planning and site briefs should therefore include consideration of the extent to which these needs can be met, with a mix of commercial and community facilities being designed into the plan.

For existing neighbourhoods, the government is preparing a good practice note that will help local authorities to think through how areas can be brought closer to lifetime standards through small changes and taking opportunities as they arise. The important message is that any work in any area provides opportunities to upgrade or improve mobility standards and improve the life of local people.

*Master planning and site briefs for regeneration areas and new developments should include requirements that will help the neighbourhood to be sustainable for lifelong living. These will also support stronger safer communities.*

*All planned work in the public realm of any area should include consideration of how it can be delivered in a way that improves the area for local people. These could include such measures as dropped kerbs, improved pavements, access to shops, protected pedestrian ways and enhanced community facilities.*

## ***Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living***

Our needs and issues review highlighted five areas that are particularly relevant to older people.

### *Affordable warmth*

All social housing should meet the decency standard, including affordable warmth, by the end of 2010. The main issues are in the private sector where home owners and, particularly, private tenants are at risk of ill health because of cold living conditions and are more likely to be in fuel poverty because of the costs of keeping their home warm. Amongst attendees at the consultation event in Dover there was a high level of recognition of help to insulate homes and many owner occupiers had taken advantage of this already.

The Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership (KEEP), which includes Dover District Council, includes a Home Energy Visitors Scheme which has led to 194 households receiving a wide variety of energy efficiency measures with referrals onto Warm Front and Coldbuster grants. We also give both grants and loans for energy efficiency works for homes that fail the decency standards on grounds of thermal comfort. Grants are available to householders over 60 years old and who are in receipt of means tested benefits. Loans are available to households on low incomes and to landlords who agree to let their homes to tenants who are on means-tested benefits. The loan for home owners is repayable on sale of the property within ten years.

We are currently looking at proposals for the Community Energy Savings Programme where funding through the Community Energy Savings programme is likely to be available for local areas which are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country; part of the St Radigunds ward comes into this category. We are also working to identify areas with high heat loss using thermal imaging so we can better target assistance with home insulation. We promote the Kent Action to Save Heat (KASH) scheme. This provides a one stop referral system irrespective of a household's means.

*While we are already working to improve affordable warmth across the private sector in the district, we are taking action to further target our efforts on areas with higher levels of issues around thermal comfort.*

### *Adaptations*

Dover District Council has a mandatory duty to provide Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) to people living in the private sector and this includes housing association tenants. Council tenants' needs for adaptations are paid for by the council's Housing Revenue Account (the rent account) and are outside the DFG system.

Between 2004 and 2008 we made around 50 to 60 grants per year to a value of around £420,000 and there was a substantial backlog, which was highlighted at the consultation event in Dover. However, we have worked with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency and have done much to address these delays and the under-funding that exacerbated them. In 2008/09 we processed 86 grants, spending £600,000 and in 2009/10 will make over 90 grants with an estimated spend of £680,000. As a result of increased expenditure and process efficiencies, there is no current waiting list for DFGs in our area.

To help with other necessary costs that fall outside a qualifying adaptation we can offer a loan of up to £6,000 which is only repayable on sale of the property. Where the home



is unadaptable, or uneconomic to adapt, we can also make a loan of up to £10,000 towards the costs of moving, including purchasing a new home that meets needs, and this again is only repayable on sale of the property.

For council tenants, adaptations must be paid for from Housing Revenue Account (and housing capital) resources and the lack of resources has meant that adaptations are taking many months (currently around fifteen months) from someone identifying a need for an adaptation to the time it is provided. This is a matter of serious concern to tenants and the council alike and although work has been done to try to meet needs, for example by offering rehousing to a more suitably designed home, there are concerns that older people are living in homes that do not support their independence. As we highlighted at the start of this strategy, adaptations can save many thousands of pounds in care and other costs over the years following a home being made suitable for independence. It also helps to relieve pressures on carers who may end up with health problems of their own from trying to help the person with a disability with personal care tasks.

We are therefore committed to working further, with adult social care and the PCT, to address the backlog and place council tenants on an equal footing with people living in the private sector.

*We have done much to address the need for adaptations in private sector housing and related assistance and there is no current waiting list. We will continue to monitor demand for private sector adaptations so that unmet need is quickly highlighted and tackled.*

*However, council tenants can expect to wait well over a year for an adaptation and we recognise that this is unacceptable, both for them and their carers and in terms of the costs to the public purse. We will tackle this situation by undertaking a full and fundamental review of the process of providing adaptations in council homes, including identifying what resources are needed to keep pace with demand and looking for ways to fill this gap.*

### Repairs

Older people told us that they are concerned about having to afford and arrange for larger repairs and would appreciate help with smaller repairs. The main concerns are around the identifying reliable tradespeople who will provide a fair service and the difficulty of getting small repairs completed, especially where people were used to doing these for themselves but can no longer manage.

We work with the In Touch Home Improvement Agency (part of Hyde Housing Association) which is jointly funded by Supporting People, the Occupational Therapy service, the Primary Care Trust and Dover District Council to help people, mainly older home owners, with repair work. The In Touch service is available to any older person, although it had a lower profile amongst attendees at the consultation event. The agency can advise on work, liaise with contractors (including specifying what needs to be done and administering quotes) and will help people to monitor and approve the work.

We currently provide financial assistance to people who are on means-tested benefits such as pension credit through a Decent Homes loan. We target information and publicity campaigns on the inner areas of Dover town where housing condition problems are concentrated, but this is available to any home that fails the decent homes standard.

Owner occupiers have to be in receipt of means-tested benefits and we offer loans of up to £30,000 which are only repayable on sale of the property. For private rented homes, landlords can apply for a loan of up to £15,000 which is repayable after 10 years for accredited landlords and after 3 years for non accredited landlords.

This offers a good quality of help for more fundamental problems but the present Housing Assistance Policy does not cover grants for vulnerable older householders who need repair work such as a broken boiler, leaking roof and dangerous electrics. Even where the home would fail the decent homes standard as a result of the repair needed, it is a time consuming and administratively intensive procedure to put a full charge on the property to secure the loan. We are considering how the Housing Assistance Policy can be revised to include a Minor Works loan of up to £4,000 for these types of works which would be available to low income households.

We provide help with small works in partnership with In Touch through the Handyperson service. This offers direct assistance with minor, low cost jobs for householders who are over pension age or who are disabled. The householder is charged the cost of materials and a low labour charge of £5 per hour (free where people are in receipt of a means tested benefit). The service has recently been doubled to two handypersons using additional funding from the Government. The funding for the additional post, however, is not long term and we will need to consider other possible options, such as a different (but still affordable) charging regime, in the event that this is not renewed.

In Touch is currently trialling ways of extending the Handyperson approach to gardening and decorating through social enterprise schemes. If these prove successful and can be funded at low cost, we will work with the agency to promote the service. We will also explore ways of giving householders advice on repairs and home maintenance.

Home improvement agencies and handyperson services across Kent are shortly to have a full strategic review led by the main funder, Supporting People, to identify what should be delivered, best practice and potentially make changes to contracts. We will work in partnership as part of this review to ensure that the needs and interests of older people in our area are represented and acknowledged and the district continues to have an excellent service.

*We are reviewing our grants and loans policy to improve accessibility to funding for low income older people.*

*We are working with In Touch to look at how the Handyperson service can be further expanded*

*We will explore ways to offer repairs and maintenance advice to householders*

### Safety and security in the home

Homes that offer good safety standards, for example eliminating trip hazards, will support healthy living into old age. People who are more vulnerable may also benefit from community alarms and the more specialist technology now available, including telecare and telehealth. Older people are also generally concerned about being vulnerable to crime, although they are less likely to be the victims of crime than younger people.

In Touch operates the Homesafe Handyperson service offering a service to vulnerable households who have been a victim of crime or are a potential target for crime. This

includes assessment of the security of the home and fitting a variety of security and safety products including window locks, door locks, spy holes, door chains, smoke alarms and fire proof letter boxes.

Visitors to the homes of older people are increasingly aware of the issues of falls and accidents in the home and the Primary Care Trust has run some falls prevention awareness training for some specialist agencies. The Handyperson service can carry out the, usually minor, works needed to make trip and other hazards safe. Housing-related support in people's own homes also improves falls prevention and health promotion, especially as older people living alone are more likely to suffer from accidents, mental health issues (particularly depressive illness) and poor physical health - often prompted by poor nutrition and failure to adhere to prescribed medication. Well trained support staff can apply a risk-based approach to identifying and addressing such issues. This is addressed more fully under the next section on advice and information.

We could improve the long term health of older people by working with our partners to make sure that everyone who is likely to visit older people in their own homes, across all tenures, is aware of falls prevention and has received the training to identify and address potential hazards.

Telecare provides support to people in their own homes with the help of community alarm and response services. Trained operators are alerted within seconds of an accident or emergency and are able to respond in the best way. It has already brought reassurance to hundreds of users who wish to be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible and who now have help available at a touch of a button, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is particularly helpful for people with dementia; allowing remote monitoring of the extra risks when someone is confused or forgetful. The Telecare project in Kent aims to improve people's quality of life by helping vulnerable people manage the risks of living in their own homes.

TeleHealth is aimed at people with long term chronic conditions, specifically chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic heart disease and type 2 diabetes. It is currently being piloted in Kent with 250 people using tried and tested equipment designed for this purpose which has an emphasis on ease of use. This enables people to measure their vital signs in their own home and send these through their home telephone to a community-based clinician who then monitors them much more frequently. This reduces hospital admissions and health crises and helps people to better understand and manage their condition and its impact on their daily lives.

*We will work across council staff and with partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and to make referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance.*

***Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.***

Older people have confirmed that they need to be able to get comprehensive information and advice, as and when it is needed, and in a place they can easily get to (which may mean their own home). They also need to be able to trust the advice they get, especially financial advice, and for many this means they want the council or a respected voluntary agency to deliver this.

### Housing and health related support services

Housing related support is currently available mainly to older people living in sheltered housing, where the sheltered housing worker works with the person to identify what their needs are and to support these to be met, including working with other agencies to arrange practical help and care, for example. There is no support service specifically for other older people in the Dover district, although more general support services will accept older people who are referred to them. However, few referrals are made for older people, possibly because those who may identify a support need are less aware of the service that could be provided or believe that existing services are for younger people.

The Supporting People (SP) programme, which funds these services, has identified that not all those living in sheltered housing need this support or need it on an ongoing basis. The revised SP strategy identifies a need to shift support from being tied to sheltered housing and offer it to older people living in their own home across any tenure. Although this will take time to achieve, and there are some funding constraints, this would substantially improve the provision of advice and information where people need support.

*We will continue to work with the Supporting People programme to ensure that older people who would benefit from advice and support get access to this.*

INVOKE (Independence through the Voluntary Action of Kent's Elders) is an East Kent multi-agency partnership project led by Kent County Council that supports the residents of Dover district to live independently in their communities. The project is funded through the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPs) and consists of three elements:

- Community Matron Support Workers who are accessible through the Community Matron Service and work with people who have long term conditions.
- Community Information and Liaison Assistants have produced an information directory of services available in Dover district<sup>30</sup>. The service also offers activities that support independence and health.
- The Care Navigator Service visits people in their own home, exploring the range of solutions that will help to resolve needs.

*This service had very low recognition at the consultation day and we will therefore work with the INVOKE project to improve its profile amongst council staff and partner agencies to ensure best use is made of these services.*

### Income maximisation and affording work in the home

There are concerns that older people's income will reduce over time as people reliant on manual and other lower paid work reach retirement age. We know that there are around 5,000 people in private housing who rely on pension credits; we are less clear about the numbers in social housing but we would expect a higher proportion in this tenure. Income is important to being able to afford the things people want to do and it also makes a big difference to health and well being through healthy eating, good levels of warmth and being able to afford to keep the home in a good condition. Deteriorating homes are a cause of isolation and depression because people with few resources to keep them looking good become ashamed of their home and reluctant to let anyone into it.

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<sup>30</sup> See: [www.shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/adult-Social-Services/invoke/dover-directory.pdf](http://www.shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/adult-Social-Services/invoke/dover-directory.pdf)

A number of people raised the issue of being able to trust equity release schemes; most home owners knew that they have substantial equity locked into their home but were concerned about the reliability and safety of schemes to release it.

The Pensions service is very active in reaching out to older people to help them to claim means-tested and disability-related benefits. However, they cannot reach every older person and need to be directed to those most in need of advice. Specialist council and other agency staff are trained in benefit maximisation and budget management, and the CAB also offers debt advice, but again older people need to know where to go or be referred for the service.

We will work across the council and with partner agencies to identify older people who would benefit from income maximisation work to help older people to afford things that are important to them.

In terms of equity release, Dover District Council has a partnership with the Home Improvement Trust, which runs HouseProud (a not for profit advisory and intermediary service ensuring that a product is suitable for the needs of the individual older person) but this is virtually unknown to the older people to whom we spoke. Searches on Dover District Council's or Kent County Council's websites for 'equity release', 'home improvement trust' or 'houseproud' produce no relevant hits (except for advertisements carried on Dover's website which didn't include one for this service). Effectively this is a council-backed service that should therefore be trustworthy and meet the needs of those people who would otherwise be very cautious about making the most of the equity in their home.

We have already identified the need to review our grants and loans policy which will then help to meet the needs of older people on low incomes.

*We will publicise the HouseProud service through In Touch and other agencies that come into contact with older people who may need to invest in their home.*

#### Getting the help older people need, when they need it

Whilst we know that there is a host of advice and information available for older people, what people said is that they want this to be available in a joined-up and easily accessible way, and it needs to be timely. Most people (at any age) do not remember things that aren't relevant to their lives; so leaflets and magazine articles are binned unless they immediately strike a chord. We can improve the way that older people are directed to information and advice by exploring a single access route; working with partner agencies to use a directory to help with signposting. In relation to this we need to test out whether the government sponsored advice website and telephone helpline for older people 'FirstStop', which only recently launched, will provide what older people want. If this works well and provides sufficiently locally-tailored advice, we will develop our relationship with the providers, Counsel and Care, Elderly Accommodation Counsel, Age Concern and Help the Aged and NHFA (a funding advice agency) so that information is kept up to date and relevant to older people living in our area. We will also work with our partners to promote the service across the district.

*We will work with older people to explore the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district area.*

## **5. Delivering our strategic priorities**

We have identified three priorities for development that will help us to deliver our vision for older people in Dover district, both now and in the future. Our vision is that:

*Older people across the Dover district live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well being*

Our priorities are:

1. New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover district's population and support independence
2. Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living
3. Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.

We now need to work to deliver these and to this end an action plan has been drafted that we will discuss with partner agencies to ensure that they can commit to the actions within it. The action plan looks forward for the first three years, as some activities and outcomes will require a longer timescale. All the activities require close working with older people themselves in order to ensure that we respond to changing needs and views of older people. The action plan should be considered to include this level of consultation in each activity.

Action plan for the Strategy for Older People in Dover District Council area

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
<b>Priority 1: New homes and neighbourhoods that meet the current and future needs of Dover dictrict's population and support independence</b>						
HSOP 1.1	New affordable homes include properties that older people want to occupy	All social rented and intermediate tenure new homes are built to Lifetime standards to specifically meet the needs of older people on our waiting list	See Affordable Housing Delivery Plan	Housing Initiatives Manager	Registered social landlords (RSLs) developers, funders (including the Homes and Communities Agency)	HCA grant funding
HSOP 1.2	An effective under-occupier scheme supports older people to move from family sized homes	An effective under-occupier scheme	Explore good practice elsewhere and assess this in the context of Dover dictrict– by Dec 2010. Draft out and consult older people to see whether it would be effective – by Mar 2011. If approved, run as a well-advertised pilot from June 2011. Assess and adjust and roll out final scheme by Oct 2012	Housing Needs Manager as Dover district rep. with E. Kent group developing joint scheme	Other local authorities, VCS	Unclear at present – will need to be reviewed as the scheme is designed
HSOP 1.3	New market housing includes a proportion of homes that are attractive for older people and meet their needs	The inclusion of 2 bedroom, ground floor, one level homes with small gardens are to be	Effective from July 2010 and then every year	Housing Initiatives Manager/Forward Planning Manager	Developers, funders	None

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
		considered for inclusion within suitable new developments.				
HSOP 1.4	Deliver sufficient new extra care units to meet needs and enable a sustainable community within schemes	180 units of extra care across Dover district	40 units by October 2011	Housing Initiatives Manager	Adult social care services, Primary Care Trust, Supporting People, RSLs, developers, funding agencies	Private Finance Initiative / HCA funding
HSOP 1.5	All regeneration areas should consider how a lifetime neighbourhood can be achieved as part of master planning and delivery plans	Lifetime neighbourhoods in all regeneration areas	Linked to regeneration delivery plans	Housing Initiatives Manager/Regeneration Manager	Regeneration partners, wider communities	None outside regeneration funding
HSOP 1.6	Planned work across existing neighbourhoods are completed in such a way as to deliver lifetime neighbourhood elements	Lifetime neighbourhoods achieved across the district	Principles of Lifetime Neighbourhoods to be considered as part of every new housing scheme	Housing Initiatives Manager/Regeneration and Transport managers	Utility companies, commercial companies, highways and highways agency, wider communities	None outside mainstream funding
<b>Priority 2: Help to establish and maintain a warm, safe and secure home that enables independent living</b>						
HSOP 2.1	Further target affordable warmth resources to reach those most at risk of cold homes and in fuel poverty	Homes occupied by older people achieve good levels of affordable warmth	Thorough and targeted publicity towards areas with high levels of energy loss and towards older people – by April 2011	Climate change officer	Warm Front	Identified in Private Sector housing action plan



Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
HSOP 2.2	Carry out a fundamental review of adaptations for council tenants to remove the long waiting time and meet needs as they arise	Prompt adaptations that enable people to remain independent	With social care and health partners, process map adaptations provision in council homes, looking for ways to reduce demand, improve delivery and assess ongoing resource requirement – by July 2011: resulting from this, amend the process to provide optimum deliver – by April 2012: work with partners to identify sufficient resources to remove the backlog and keep pace with demand – by April 2012	Private Sector Housing Manager	Adults social care; PCT; customers (not just older people); In Touch and other relevant VCS	Likely to be substantial capital resources to remove the backlog – to be assessed and reported
HSOP 2.3	Monitor needs for adaptations and delivery times in private sector housing to ensure that needs for adaptations continue to be met	Prompt adaptations that enable people to remain independent	Quarterly monitoring	Private Sector Manager	Occupational Therapy and related VCS agencies	None
HSOP 2.4	Review grants and loans policy to improve	Loans scheme provides funding for	January 2011	Private Sector Manager	None	None for review, may be call on resources

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
	accessibility to funding for low income older people	minor works in older people's homes				for loans
HSOP 2.5	Identify how the Handyperson service can be expanded and secured in the longer term	Long term secured funding for a wide variety of small works via the Handyperson scheme	Review of the Handyperson scheme and its funding by April 2011. Confirmation of new scheme arrangements by June 2011	Private Sector Manager	In Touch, Supporting People, PCT, Adult social care	None for review, may be call on resources dependant on outcome of review
HSOP 2.6	Work to expand the availability of advice on repairs and maintenance	Older people have routes to improve the maintenance of their home	Identify good practice elsewhere to look for ideas and opportunities – December 2011	Private Sector Manager	Other local authorities, advice agencies	None for review, may be call on resources depending on findings
HSOP 2.7	Work across staff and partners to raise awareness of the issues of safety and security in the home and encourage referrals to agencies that can provide advice and practical assistance.	Older people are not placed at additional risk because of insecure or unsafe homes	Engage PCT and SP providers in this project - by December 2010 Develop and implement a multi agency training programme from April 2011	Tenancy Services Manager	PCT, SP, adult social care, VCS agencies,	None for engagement; may be some funding required to enable training to be delivered
HSOP 2.8	Explore joint working with the NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT on initiatives to enable older people to live independently and reduce the incidence of falls	Engage with PCT in a joined up strategic approach to develop initiatives that enable older people to live independently & safely	August 2010	Private Sector Manager/Housing Initiatives Manager	PCT	None for engagement

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
<b>Priority 3: Ready access to reliable and comprehensive information and advice to help older people to make choices about how to meet their housing requirements.</b>						
HSOP 3.1	Explore in partnership with Supporting People the possible extension of housing related support to older people living outside sheltered housing	Increased access to housing support across all housing sectors	April 2011	Supporting People with Tenancy Services Manager	SP Commissioning Body, VCS, support providers,	None for option appraisal
HSOP 3.2	Work with the INVOKE project to improve its profile amongst council staff and partner agencies to ensure best use is made of these services.	There is high recognition, and best use is made of the INVOKE project across council staff, partner agencies and older people	Engage INVOKE in the activity – by August 2010. Agree what needs to be done to achieve the outcome – by December 2010. Delivery of agreed actions – from January 2011	Tenancy Services Manager	INVOKE, VCS partner agencies	None anticipated
HSOP 3.3	Ensure that older people and wider agencies are aware of reliable and responsible equity release schemes such as the HouseProud scheme	Older people have confidence in taking forward equity release to meet their requirements for maintaining and improving their home	Complete research into and evaluation of HouseProud and other schemes by October 2010. Council backing of HouseProud confirmed or other option agreed, by April 2011. Publicity to ensure that all agencies and older people have the relevant information completed by April	Private Sector Manager	Equity release schemes, VCS,	None anticipated until later stages of the project

Ref	Activity to deliver this priority	Outcome required	Three year targets and times	Lead agency / person	Other external agencies involved	Additional resources required
			2012			
HSOP 3.4	Work with older people to explore the relevance and usefulness of the FirstStop advice service for local people and provided it meets older people's requirements will develop and publicise this service across the Dover district.	Older people receive comprehensive information and advice as and when they need it and with least inconvenience to them	Establish with older people how the FirstStop service can best be tested – by December 2010 Carry out testing to decide whether the service meets the needs of older people in Dover district, and evaluate – by June 2011. Agree way forward – by July 2012	Tenancy Services Manager	VCS, older people (specifically as delivery partners), FirstStop	Resources to pay for expenses of older people engaged on the project

## **Annex 1. Report of a consultation event with older people and stakeholders Ageing Well in Dover, Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008**

This was a half day event with invitations issued to members of Dover's Senior Citizens' Forum and to a range of stakeholders (largely voluntary agencies from the district). Around 25 people attended in total and after short 'thought-prompting' presentations, the following topics were discussed within small groups.

### **Hot topics**

What makes you hot under the collar?

- What are the main issues for you?
- What makes it a pleasure or a pain to live:
  - In your home?
  - In your neighbourhood?
- What ideas do you have to improve things?

### **Our homes**

- What are the main issues:
  - Now?
  - In the future as you get older?
- How do you expect to deal with those issues?
- What help, advice or assistance would make a difference to how you deal with things?
- Any ideas to improve how people manage in their home?

### **Our neighbourhoods**

- What are the main issues – now and as we get older?
- What makes a neighbourhood 'liveable'?
  - Good for older people to live in
  - Practical to live in
- What do we want to see changed for the better?
- Any practical suggestions?

### **New homes and 'specialist' housing**

- What would motivate you to move?
  - A positive choice or only if you had to?
- What sort of home would you want?
  - New home design – messages for planners?
  - Specialist housing – of interest to you?
- What sort of area would you look for?
  - New or more settled communities
  - Rural or town
  - Lively or quiet
  - Mixed generations or all older people

Facilitators took notes and these have been brought together into the following record of the discussions on the day.

### **A. Housing and Neighbourhoods - hot topics**

Money and finances

1. Council tax bears no relationship to services in any particular village
2. Local income tax would be better way of paying for local services

3. Pensions are really important - should be getting advice out to 30-40 year olds!

#### Getting around

4. Transport is a really hot topic!
5. Lack of buses; no point in having a free bus pass if there are no buses to catch! For example, people drive from Shepherdswell to Lyden to catch the bus because the service from Shepherdswell is so poor (2 buses a day).
6. Free bus passes are really helpful but you can't use them on trains
7. No direct public transport to the hospital
8. No public transport in rural areas generally and particularly on Sundays
9. Road network - it's hard to get from north to south
10. Poor access to shops, particularly steps – both local and national retailers are aware of their obligations, and some have made provision for better access at the rear of their properties. But some, e.g. Dolland & Aitchison, show a shocking disregard for the law! Apparently, Gwyn Prosser Labour MP for Dover & Deal has campaigned on the issue.

#### Leisure

11. Quite well provided in local rural community
  - Twinning association
  - WI
  - Quiz nights in community hall
12. Rural communities are relatively well off for pastimes that the community organises itself
13. Luncheon clubs - Age Concern bus people in. The socialising (reducing isolation) is more of an issue than the food (i.e. the lunch) itself.
14. Older people tend to more reserved
15. Church-based communities can provide greater social capital

#### Community and neighbourhoods

16. Communities suffering from loss of post offices etc.
17. Need caring neighbourhoods and neighbours
18. Concerns about decanting people into areas where they don't know the neighbours;
19. Post office closures are a real problem
20. Villages have a stronger local identity
21. It's good to have a post office and decent local shop - do main shop at Tesco's but they've withdrawn the free bus they used to run.
22. Out of town shopping just isn't convenient
23. Dover DC is a good council
24. Isolation is a really big issue - many people don't know their neighbours any more. Turnover of neighbours because of short term lets makes it even more difficult
25. There is little help to overcome isolation. Vicars used to visit people at home but can't now they cover more than one parish and as communities grow

#### Security and crime

26. Vandalism is a real problem - plagued by hordes of youths and feel threatened. If we stand up to them, we get persecuted even more.
27. Systematic theft of lead flashings.
28. Community Wardens have been really good.
29. Local policing issues - PCSOs are '9 to 5'

30. Need to feel secure - not just locks on a door - neighbourhoods need to be safe
31. Perception is the main issue with crime
32. Town in the evenings - over-reliance on CCTV cameras instead of much-needed police presence
33. Poor street lighting is problematic
34. Older people are frightened of groups of younger people

#### Our homes

35. Home owners get no help with repairs (or do they?) although handyvans are very good
36. Length of wait for adaptations
37. People want to stay in their own place - their own home!
38. It's ridiculous to split up couples when they have to go into care homes
39. It's very difficult to find good residential care when it's needed. There is a lack of good information
40. Need a selection of different accommodation within a reasonable area
41. Security is an issue once you move away from your own home
42. Limited numbers of smaller homes in villages and all new homes seem to be going into urban areas. People don't want to leave their village as they grow older but nowhere to move to when home or garden gets too much

#### Health

43. They are talking about closing down A&E in Dover - but we need a hospital in Dover. It's a long way to Ashford or Canterbury and there are big transport issues too.
44. Need a major hospital in Dover or Folkestone
45. Parking problems at the hospitals.
46. Access to services - transport issues and exorbitant parking fees for people attending hospital
47. Local GP has a new health centre (White Cliffs) and provides van transport - really good
48. Older people now are so much younger than the previous generation - 70 is young now!
49. Well man/woman clinics are important

#### Advice and assistance

50. Concerns about communicating with the disabled and elderly, particularly those that are in rural areas or that don't get out much (either by choice or infirmity);
51. Withdrawal of service provided by Careline – some customers thought the service was being withdrawn altogether.
52. Concerns about national organisations such as Bluebird (a domiciliary care company) 'mis-selling' (e.g. scaring the customer into buying) products that customers don't need
53. Over-reliance on the internet to get advice to people - it's expensive to buy a computer and pay for broadband
54. People avoid social services - bad image (old 'workhouse' hangover - might get put in a home)
55. People are not well aware of the equipment and adaptations for disabilities that can help them stay in their home
56. Like the idea of CILAs [Community Information and Liaison Assistant - part of the INVOKE project]

Suggestions (note, where relevant some of these have been copied into topic headings lower down)

### Travel

- *Introduce concessionary (i.e. nominal) fare for local travel on train*
- *Post van could maybe double up as public transport*
- *Be able to use free bus passes before 9.30*
- *Need more spaces at hospitals - Ashford (William Harvey) or Canterbury*
- *Free passports for older people*
- *Dial-a-ride is better*

### Community and Neighbourhoods

- *Need to do more for younger people to distract them from vandalism (though we note that sometimes older people object to plans to help younger people)*
- *Need more social life - clubs, events, fun days*

### Our homes

- *More information about help with home repairs for owner occupiers*
- *Need to put out more information about equipment and adaptations/modifications to cope with ageing and disabilities*
- *Need more supported and sheltered housing so that people can grow old in communities that they know and feel comfortable in.*
- *Stop people expanding smaller homes in villages into family-sized homes so there is somewhere to move to as you get older but want to retain your community*

### Advice and assistance

- *Need a range of information - not just the internet e.g.:*
  - *via notices in community and Parish halls*
  - *parish and community magazines - the one thing people are likely to look through because it's local*
  - *villages have a local correspondent for the Dover Express - should try to make use of them*
  - *Simpler leaflets - most are too detailed. Just want a simple message*
  - *Information people in community halls to give better access to advice and information*
  - *Decent access to advice over the phone*
- *Needs to be more regulation against mis-selling; especially to older, more vulnerable people*
- *Social services need to update their image!*
- *Needs to be help with financial issues, e.g. equity release schemes*
- *Advertise help with insulation and heating more widely - especially as bills rise*

## **B. Our Homes**

### Money issues

1. People above poverty line but not wealthy often need financial help as they don't have enough money to meet all the demands of home maintenance/garden etc.
2. As a pensioner may end up with enough money for 'needs', but insufficient for 'wants'
3. Difficult to release equity in home - too many bad stories about untrustworthy schemes.
4. Equity release is easier to organise if you are well and able - more difficult if you are more vulnerable or don't have access to internet etc.



## Inside

5. DFGs – waiting times are too long; alternative is to use SAAFA and they offer help throughout the process. Particular concerns about bathrooms, stair lifts (because people don't stay long)
6. People know about adaptations but it can be a real hassle to get them sorted out
7. Lots of Victorian terraced housing with steep stairs and stair lifts are expensive (though point made that climbing stairs also keeps you fit!)
8. Need to have walk in showers rather than baths
9. Cleaning, painting and window cleaning are all issues that people can find difficult or impossible - and hard to find help with
10. Changing net curtains is a big issue for older generation of older people - face presented to outside world
11. Simple things like being able to re-set own fuse trip switches - impossible if above head height or awkward places (often are) - designers don't think about things like that
12. Careline services currently 'free' to Council tenants – big debate about whether this is in fact the case (wider community believe that they are) and whether they should be, e.g., non-Council tenants have to pay.
13. Handyvan/handyman schemes are good (including security issues)
14. Can secure homes from the inside but that makes emergency access difficult - but a constant worry about burglary
15. People don't realise how decayed their home is getting unless they have visitors who can point it out to them. If you have few visitors, there's nobody to prompt you on things
16. Insulation issues - not everyone realises how effectively insulation can cut down bills

## Outside

17. Maintenance of large gardens - contractors can be expensive and provide poor service
18. Letting the garden go often isn't an option for people who are proud - rather let the inside go than their 'public face'
19. Difficult to get reliable and affordable help with gardens
20. Volunteer Bureau does gardening help
21. Help the Aged Handyvan is excellent but most handyvan services are for inside jobs

## Advice and assistance

22. CAB is fabulous - really helpful!
23. INVOKE project is brilliant [but needs guarantee that it will continue]
24. Coastal guide was good but quickly became out of date and only partial guide.
25. Information - need to know where to go for help, e.g. DISC, CROP CARENAVIGATOR;
26. Deal Centre for the Retired is a good model
27. Age Concern does lots of really good things but not everybody knows about the variety of services and interests
28. Some people feel left out in the internet age - it isn't only email addresses but access to phone numbers too.
29. Difficult to know which broadband scheme is the best - confusing deals, how do you know you're not being ripped off?

30. Example of Smarden (Ashford area) - village 'workforce' voluntary group. Tends to be younger old people only; not younger people from the community
31. Need decent advice on equity release - can use money to pay for adaptations, maintenance and upgrading etc. but only if can rely on the product

## Suggestions

### Outside

- *DDC to set up and run an approved gardening scheme comprised of approved contractors;*
- *Garden maintenance is a big growth area - to keep lawn cut and plants under control - Economic Development should be interested as a new business idea*
- *Encourage people to plan ahead and develop low maintenance gardens.*

### Inside

- *Encourage people to invest when they can afford it - to think ahead if they want to stay put*
- *Show how people can release equity from their homes to get essential and desirable work - plenty of choice on the market*
- *More information about help with home repairs for owner occupiers*
- *Need to put out more information about equipment and adaptations/modifications to cope with ageing and disabilities, insulation and heating grants and assistance*

### Advice and assistance

- *Update coastal guide*
- *Make better use of GP surgeries [although there are so many leaflets it's hard to find what you want without guidance]*
- *Need more help to fill in the confusing forms of the different agencies (particularly Housing Benefit)*
- *Free broadband for everyone!*
- *If anything goes wrong, have one number to call for advice who deal with your problem; available in emergencies. In East Kent, that's what INVOKE can do*
- *Reliable equity release scheme - people trust councils, for example*
- *Take a community development approach to involving people in social activities to decrease isolation - no good just telling people what's going on, need volunteers to talk to people, find out what they like and arrange for someone to go with them at least the first time - feel welcome and not intimidated!*

### *A future vision?*

- *everybody gets the chance to have an assessment at 50+ and upon request via a central agency that acts as a one stop shop for all the different agencies;*
- *update the Coastal guide;*
- *introduce a token system;*
- *Make better use of European funding to introduce/ make improvements to intelligent housing via pressure mats, services delivered via TV etc.*

## **C. Our neighbourhoods**

1. Ideal neighbourhoods:

- i. Should be able to walk to local food shop (e.g. Co-op), Post office, leisure facilities (e.g. village hall)
- ii. Flatter areas - not too hilly!
- iii. Decent pavements
- iv. A bus service
- v. Green, pleasant environment with no graffiti!
- vi. A safe environment
- vii. Good street lighting
- viii. Somewhere to meet friends or new people
- ix. A local food shop (but note that price can be an issue - pay for convenience) - including able to get stamps, weigh parcels (now there are no post offices)
- x. A farmer's market or similar - somewhere for local people to gather and meet
- xi. Good neighbours
- xii. Mixed communities and generations comprised of young and old to share experiences etc. (however, need to manage communication and expectation)
- xiii. Mixed tenures - too much private housing is leading to 'class' estates
- xiv. Access to health care - e.g. a visiting health clinic in smaller villages - doing check-ups, chiropody.

#### Security, fear of crime

- 2. I wouldn't go out at night unless I was being picked up and 'escorted'
- 3. At bingo club, the numbers drop in the winter because of the dark nights.
- 4. PCSO and Community Wardens are great - and means there's someone to contact
- 5. Neighbourhood Watch can be good
- 6. Buckland - good results with PCSOs but people have to understand what they can do, e.g. they go and see people
- 7. PCSOs have a 'public relations' job - perhaps like community support but not policing
- 8. Police aren't always responsive - on other hand, some areas have bigger problems than others
- 9. Anti-social behaviour problems destroy communities and neighbourhoods
- 10. Private landlords are often poor at sorting out tenants who cause neighbour nuisance - just want the money not the hassle
- 11. Trouble in the streets and noisy groups enhances fear of crime

#### Getting around

- 12. Lack of pavements can be dangerous
- 13. Car drivers parking up kerbs and on pavements and wheelchairs can't get through.
- 14. Cyclists treat pavement like 'their' road
- 15. Traffic is a big worry - busy roads and difficult to cross
- 16. We think that more people would use buses now that's there's the free pass

#### Public areas

- 17. Impact of superstores has led to closure of local stores; not everyone can get to the superstores
- 18. Litter on Sundays from takeaway food places (and the food is terrible!)
- 19. Perception of an area is the most important thing - things that bring the area down are litter, dereliction, dumped goods, - all show lack of respect for an area and encourage others to behave the same way

## Community issues

20. Need to arrest decline of volunteers – increasing number of 50+ still at work, can't get there or have moved to Spain! CRB assessments have important role but too complicated and too slow
21. Buckland Community Centre is wonderful for community cohesion - daily events.
22. Lunch clubs can be clique-y - fear of sitting in someone's chair!
23. Need more 'joiners in' - community champions - is there a class issue? The same people always get involved.... Can't force people though.
24. 'Community Days' might prompt voluntary work but champions from the community are needed. Also need a community building - a hub like a school, church, community centre to make it happen
25. Why don't some people come to community events? Inward-looking people. Perhaps too scared to come along for first time though?
26. It's important to get community events - organised by volunteers, which should be the parish council's role.
27. Difficult to know whether growing areas mean good or bad for older people - can be fewer people you know and more problems but also often means more community facilities.
28. Need to learn to live with younger people - things like graffiti walls and youth groups to get people away from nuisance. Older people often have good ideas for diverting young people.

## Suggestions

- *Learn lessons from France – slower pace of life; Nationalistic, community based economy and family orientated;*
- *Need to do more for younger people to distract them from vandalism (though we note that sometimes older people object to plans to help younger people)*
- *Should tap into older people's ideas (through community meetings or whatever) to bring areas up, divert youth problems etc. Use talents of older generations more.*
- *Use sporting activities to encourage interaction between young and old e.g. snooker*
- *Improve CRB checks - more simple, quicker, to improve flow of volunteers.*
- *Need more schemes where voluntary drivers will pick you up if you phone*
- *Need more social life - clubs, events, fun days*
- *Fund community groups to provide local people/volunteers to provide local services e.g., horticultural societies to upkeep local villages*
- *Encourage post office to diversify activities e.g. dry cleaning, etc to keep them open*
- *Need more affordable housing to allow young people to live where they grew up;*
- *More or bigger litter bins*
- *Why can't GP surgeries pool their resources and pay for 75+ check-ups for the village at one 'sitting', flu jabs etc. on a more local basis? Means people won't have to travel to surgery and more likely to keep their health under review too.*

## **D. Moving home and design of new homes**

1. Generally, older people don't want to move, but may be forced to, due to physical, financial or health reasons;
2. It is best to move when you're 50 or so - gives you time to settle into community and feel established

3. However, few people predict the need to move - like most people's attitudes about distasteful things, it will never happen (till it does - and then it's too late!)
4. Not always a good idea to move closer to sons and daughters who may not have time.
5. Retirement apartments in Shepherdswell? Yes please!
6. Sheltered housing is good if you already live locally but it isn't so good for people who have to move some distance to it - need to keep sense of family and friends and community, especially when younger people move away
7. If you have to move, it can be good to move somewhere with people of around the same age as more likely to have common interests and way of life
8. Older people don't want to lose their support network; but staying in a village, which may be preference, becomes difficult when you can no longer drive
9. Nice homes in a nice neighbourhood partly makes up for having to move away from a village to get access to amenities
10. Affordable housing seems to be bought by affluent people e.g. part ownership housing that can't be sold is being put onto the market for 100% sale.
11. Equity locked into homes - issue for downsizing to release some equity. Shared ownership is a useful model if you can afford the rent
12. For affordable homes for local people - suggestion that the Jersey model be adopted to be run by Parish Councils: top 10% can buy in, but rest have to qualify by working and living in area over time, etc
13. Need more supported and sheltered housing so that people can grow old in communities that they know and feel comfortable in.
14. Stop people expanding smaller homes in villages into family-sized homes so there is somewhere to move to as you get older but want to retain your community
15. Design issues:
  - a. *Lifetime homes standards - all new homes need to be that basic standard so that people have full choice of where to live (not just a token gesture in a few new homes)*
  - b. *Certainly need two bedrooms - absolute minimum especially now families don't live near.*
  - c. *Two bed bungalows are the most popular choice and more availability may persuade more people to move and release large family homes*
  - d. *If building flats, having a communal garden is important plus security of the block and preferably a community space. No more than three stories with two lifts, not just one.*
  - e. *Electrical fuse boards should be easy to reach*
  - f. *Big, deep drawers in new kitchens instead of lots of cupboard space makes storage easier to reach and less likely to fall trying to get to things*
16. Important themes:
  - a. *Social networks*
  - b. *Mixed generations*
  - c. *Specialist housing would be attractive if it was in the right place (good local amenities, close to where we lived before) - with support and a handyperson available*
  - d. *Need financial advice about selling or renting options. Worried about money running out if renting.*
  - e. *Unfair to have to sell home to pay for care, if needed.*

- f. *Want absolute choice of area, design, when to move and what to move to - choices shouldn't be limited because someone is pigeon-holed as 'old'*
- g. *Choice is the most important thing!*

### Individual stories from attendees

We planned ahead and moved 20/25 years ago! If we were forced to move again, we'd want to be in a town where all facilities are close to hand, no need to drive/catch bus, etc. Ideal place, if we could afford it, would be in an adapted bungalow in Canterbury or a ground floor flat.

We moved in our fifties into a bungalow in the same village where we had our social connections and daughter and grandson. We know that we won't be able to manage the garden eventually. The village has doctors (who also run a mini-bus) and a decent shop. We've also got a mobile library - but it's not there long enough!

I'd want to move somewhere flat, near to doctors and would therefore want to move into town because of facilities. Eventually I'll have to move because I live on a steep hill.

I'd want to be in a town with lots going on that is walkable to. Perhaps abroad! Or Canterbury (it's a small city and you can walk around easily)

I would hate to move, but will have to eventually as I live on a steep hill with steep steps. I'd like to live in River because of my social networks, shops, Post office, good transport into town - but I couldn't afford it! Anyway - somewhere on the flat and in a bungalow.

I've lived in my house 50 years and don't want to move but I don't need 3 bedrooms and I've got steep stairs. Otherwise it's good - on the flat, good neighbours - I like everything about it

I wouldn't want to move unless I had to for accessibility reasons. I'd want easy access to facilities.

We've just invested a lot of money (through equity release) in our home to make sure it is fit for the next 30 years. If I had to move I'd want to stay in a village - I don't want to move to a town. I'd want complete choice of how, when, where, what to move to - and its design if a new build place. We have just spent quite a bit on having our home upgraded so we don't have to spend lots of money on it over the next 30 years as we get older.

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
All <sup>1</sup>	Walmer Parish Council [walmerparish@btconnect.com]	1. <b>Objection</b>	(a) No need for these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	Members would like to make the following representations in relation to the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015: (i) Members would like to query the following issues:-  (a) the necessity for production of these strategy documents when such issues have already been addressed in the Local Development Framework.	The Local Government Act 2003 requires local authorities to prepare a Housing Strategy and these are key underpinning strategies which provide a more detailed analysis of issues and set out specific actions to address them. <b>No amendment required</b>
Refers to AHDP but impacts on OPHS		2. Observation	(ii) greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, which would 'free up' family homes	(ii) Members consider that greater provision should be made for the production of suitable retirement accommodation, such as bungalows and warden-assisted units, the occupancy of which would naturally lead to family homes becoming available.	Both the Older persons Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing Delivery Plan recognise the need to provide a range of housing that will meet the needs and aspirations of older people. Extra care provision is specially

<sup>1</sup> Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2015; the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2010-2015

Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
					referred to and the action plan within the OPHS includes a set of actions related to new homes provision and the added benefit of releasing family homes. The need for 'traditional' sheltered housing has been assessed and is not considered to be an appropriate model for future provision. <b>No amendment required</b>
OPHS	ADB	3.Observation	Clarify terminology ⇨	'Dover' v 'Dover District' Population	
	Langdon Parish Council <a href="mailto:Hyde167@btinternet.com">Hyde167@btinternet.com</a> Jannine Hyde	4.Observation	Needs to be an improvement in out-reach services to support the growing older population	People are living longer and often like to stay in their rural location where their family and friend surround them. Unfortunately many small rural communities have few local health and welfare care facilities. Attending a health centre or hospital often involves difficult and infrequent travel services which older people find stressful. If the strategy is to encourage older people to remain in their own homes and live relatively independent lives then there will need to be an improvement in out-reach services to support the growing older population. This should include flexible travel services. Where older people are unable to live totally independently but wish to remain in their village,	We acknowledge and appreciate this issue, but as this strategy is focused on housing, this needs to be picked up in health and care strategies around our ageing population, and in any transport plans. <b>No amendment required</b>



Strategy/Item	Respondent	Response Type	Summary	Representation	Consideration
		5.Observation	There could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need	There could be more small-scale sheltered housing developments to meet the need	The need to consider the provision of specially designed housing to meet the needs of older people on appropriate sites is accepted but as stated above 'traditional' sheltered housing is not considered to be an appropriate model for future provision. <b>No amendment required</b>
	Councillor	6.Observation	More detail regarding the issue of dementia	There is a need for a more detailed reference to the issue of dementia and how this problem needs to be addressed now and in the future	The significance of this issue is accepted and the Strategy has been amended accordingly. <b>Strategy amended.</b>
	DDC Forward Planning	7.Observation	The Strategy needs to reflect that LDF Core Strategy has been formally approved and adopted	Additional wording required to Executive Summary "Context" section. Add "the Core Strategy has been adopted and work has commenced on the Site Allocations Document".	<b>Plan amended</b>
		8.Observation	Incorrect terminology	Amend reference to "SPD draft affordable housing plan" (page 15)	<b>Plan amended</b>

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND ICT

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 24 MARCH 2010  
EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION – POLICY STATEMENT ON WRITE-OFFS**

**Recommendation**

- (a) *That Governance Committee approves the revised Policy Statement on Write Offs attached as Annex 1 to this report.*
- (b) *That Council approves the change to the Constitution of Appendix 8 of the Financial Procedure Rules.*

Contact Officer: Mike Davis, ext. 2107

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to a minor change in the constitution that will improve aged debt management and reporting as recommended in the report at agenda item 5 of your agenda.

**Background**

2. The current policy statement on write-offs (found in Appendix 8 to the Finance Procedure Rules within "Part 4 – Rules of Procedure" of the constitution) provides the Section 151 Officer (s151) with the authority to write off debts.
3. However, it does not provide the s151 with the authority to delegate write offs to other officers. As a consequence all debt write offs, however trivial, should be written off formally by the s151 officer in order to comply with the constitution.
4. This arrangement is inefficient and time consuming. The s151 officer's signature on write offs does not add real value and generally the s151 is not in a position to make enquiries about individual debts or any attempts to recover them.
5. In order to develop the management of debt and debt reporting it is proposed that the constitution is amended to the text shown at Annex 1 to this report.
6. This will enable the s151 to delegate individual write-offs and to take a wider view of debt management and debt reporting. It is required in order to implement the changes proposed in the report at Agenda Item 5 and therefore the two items should be considered together.
7. (Members should note that the arrangements with respect to the write-off of goods, materials, vehicles and stock remain unchanged.)

**Resource Implications**

No additional resources are required.

### **Communication Statement**

This is an internal procedural issue that creates effective governance of debt write-off. The policy and associated practices have been discussed with Finance, heads of service and managers. When adopted, all affected staff will be briefed by the Corporate Income Team and service delivery issues will be addressed in the services communication plans for 2010/11.

### **Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks**

Effective debt management will ensure that public satisfaction increases and the Council maximises its service income to support delivery.

### **Customer Access Review**

Delivery of the policy is in line with the Corporate Income Policy, which has been subject to an equality impact assessment screening. Delivery of procedural changes will be covered by the equality assessment for the Business and Community Transformation Division's service delivery processes.

### **Attachments**

Annex 1 – Proposed Revised Policy Statement on Write-Offs

MIKE DAVIS

Head of Finance and ICT

**Dover District Council Constitution**

**Part 4 – Rules of Procedure (Financial Procedure Rules)**

**APPENDIX 8**

**PROPOSED REVISED POLICY STATEMENT ON WRITE OFFS**

**Part 1 – Debts**

1. Under arrangements controlled by him or her, the Section 151 Officer and any officer nominated by him or her, shall have the authority to write off any debt or other sum owing to the Council which is deemed irrecoverable or uneconomic to pursue.
2. The Section 151 Officer shall make the appropriate entries in the accounting records in respect of write-offs in accordance with proper accounting practice.

**Part 2 – Goods, Materials, Vehicles and Stocks**

3. Under arrangements controlled by him, the Section 151 Officer and any officers nominated by him, shall have the authority to write off the following:
  - (a) damaged or stolen goods.
  - (b) surplus goods and materials in accordance with the Stocks and Stores Policy.
  - (c) goods, vehicles or materials that are considered to have no material value due to deterioration or obsolescence.
4. Heads of Service shall forward details of any item under 1(a)-(c) above that they consider should be written off within their Division to the Section 151 Officer for his approval together with:
  - (a) details of the item to be written off.
  - (b) the circumstances necessitating the write-off.
  - (c) the reasons why they consider that that no proceeds on sale would accrue to the Council.
5. Where any items to be written off do constitute part of a stock account, the procedures for recording the write off within the Council's accounts and the method of disposing of the goods shall be approved by the Section 151 Officer. Subject to a financial limit to be agreed with the Section 151 Officer, approval need not be sought on every occasion where goods, vehicles and stocks are to be written off, provided agreed procedures are complied with. The Section 151 officer shall then make the appropriate entries in the accounting records in accordance with proper accounting practice.

Section 151 Officer

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND ICT

RESPONSIBILITY – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE RESOURCES &amp; PERFORMANCE

NON-KEY DECISION

**BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK**

CABINET – 10 MAY 2010

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2009/2010 - 2012/13****Recommendation**

<p><i>That Members approve the following changes to the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for the period 2009/10 to 2012/13:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>An increase in the operational borrowing limit to £15m.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>An increase in the authorised borrowing limit to £20m.</i></p>
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- (a) *An increase in the operational borrowing limit to £15m.*
- (b) *An increase in the authorised borrowing limit to £20m.*

Contact Officer: Helen Lamb, extension 2063.

**Purpose of the Report**

- To seek Council approval for increases in the prudential borrowing limits, for short term borrowing as part of cashflow management, at an expected cost of no more than £3k per annum.

**Background**

- The Local Government Act 2003 introduced capital accounting regulations. These require Councils to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code when setting their budgets. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) approved by Council 3rd March 2010 includes Prudential Indicators which set limits on the Council's borrowing.
- In particular, the Council sets:
  - The "operational limit" which is at a level to allow normal cash-flow activity to take place throughout the year and short term borrowing to be carried out to smooth fluctuations as required; and
  - The authorised borrowing limit is proposed to be set at a higher level to allow additional short term borrowing if exceptional circumstances occur.

**Reasons why a decision is required**

- In the period since the approval of the MTFP additional temporary short-term borrowing has been required due to a reduction in cash flow for the authority. This has resulted in a technical breach of the existing indicators, which was reported to the Investment Advisory Group as a matter of course. It is normal practice within

#### Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option

5. To approve the increase in the Prudential Indicator borrowing limits as set out in the recommendation above. This is the preferred option.
6. To not approve the revised borrowing limits. This would result in difficulties in managing the day-to-day cash flow activities of the Council, especially when exceptional circumstances occur. This option is not recommended.

#### Information to be considered in taking the decision

7. The Local Government Act 2003 imposes various obligations upon the Council, including a duty to determine an affordable borrowing limit. Regulations have been issued through powers contained within this Act – The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These regulations direct that local authorities have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities ("The Code").
8. The CIPFA Prudential Code provides a framework for local authority capital finance to ensure that:
  - Capital expenditure plans are affordable
  - All external borrowing and other long term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels
  - Treasury management decisions (i.e. those decisions relating to borrowing and investment) are taken in accordance with professional good practice.
9. To meet these objectives Councils must set prudential indicators before the beginning of the financial year. In addition the Council's Chief Finance Officer (in Dover's case the Head of Finance & ICT) is required to establish procedures for monitoring performance against prudential indicators.
10. The Code sets out a clear governance procedure for the setting and revising of prudential indicators. They will be approved by the same body that takes decisions for the budget i.e. Council. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring that all matters to be taken into account in setting prudential indicators are reported to Council and also for establishing procedures to monitor performance.
11. It has been the practice at Dover to set the limits relatively low in order to assure Members that reports will be triggered if they are breached, no matter how short the period.
12. Council approved the Prudential Indicators for the MTFP as part of the budget process. The lower operational borrowing limit was set at £7.5m for 2009/10 and £12m for 2010/11 onwards. The higher authorised external debt limit was set at £12m for all years.

13. The cash flow during March 2010 has been adversely affected due to the impact of direct debit collection of Council Tax over the 10-month period, payments of NDR refunds following revaluations, payments to the major preceptors and year-end payments to suppliers. Temporary borrowing of up to £12m has been required to maintain the cash flow position in addition to the existing £7m long-term borrowing; this has resulted in a breach of £7m over the authorised limit. The temporary borrowing will reduce once Council Tax & NDR receipts start to be received in the new financial year as well as receipts of other sources of income.
14. The Prudential Indicators will continue to be monitored throughout the year and any issues reported to all Members through the monthly budget monitoring report and included in the quarterly Treasury Management updates reported to Governance. Further information on the indicators can be found in the annexes to the MTFP.

#### Background Papers

- Budget for 2010/11 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2010/11 – 2012/13
- CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities
- Local Government Act 2003
- The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003.
- CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice

#### Resource Implications

There will be an additional charge by way of interest payable on temporary borrowing for the interim period. Some short-term borrowing charges are expected in any financial year as part of the normal cash flow management process. The period of borrowing is short and so the additional borrowing over the current prudential indicator level is estimated to cost the authority less than £3,000.

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
Increased interest payable on borrowing	Up to £3,000	N/A

#### Comments from Finance

No further comments to add.

#### Communication Statement

Consultation arrangements are included within the MTFP.

#### Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks

The Budget and MTFP are produced in conjunction with the Corporate Plan and therefore reflect the financial implications of Corporate objectives. The MTFP also contains a comprehensive risk analysis, and this feeds into the Corporate risk register which is included within the quarterly performance report to Members

### **Customer Access Review**

The MTFP covers the financial aspects of all the Council's services. CARs are undertaken at service level and so no specific CARs have been carried out in relation to this report.

### **Comments from Equalities Officer**

There are no Equality implications in this report

### **Attachments**

None.

MIKE DAVIS

Head of Finance & ICT

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Helen Lamb, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2063.



## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**ADOPTION OF A PETITION SCHEME****Recommendation**

*That it be recommended to Council:*

- (a) *That the Petition Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 of this report be approved and adopted.*
- (b) *That the Constitutional amendments set out in Appendix 2 of this report be approved and incorporated into the Council's Constitution.*

Contact Officer: Rebecca Brough, extension 2304.

**Reasons why a decision is required**

1. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the Act') introduced a series of measures aimed at strengthening local democracy and rebuilding public trust in their local representatives and institutions.
2. The Act was implemented via The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (Commencement No.3) Order 2010. The majority of the provisions will be brought into force on 15 June 2010 with the provisions for electronic provisions being brought into force on 15 December 2010. The Council is required to have adopted a petition scheme by no later than 15 June 2010.

**Options available to the Council with assessment of preferred option**

3. The Council has the following options available to it. The recommended option is Option A.
4. **Option A: To approve the attached Petition Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and the consequential Constitutional amendments as set out in Appendix 2.** This is the preferred option as it delivers a robust petition scheme based upon the model scheme and best practice. The trigger levels for calling an officer to account and debating a matter at full council have been based upon those set out in the statutory guidance and a judgement as to what would constitute an achievable level.
5. **Option B: To amend the attached Petition Scheme.** This is not recommended as the Petition Scheme has been drafted based on the model scheme as set out in the statutory guidance. The Council does have the option to change vary the number of signatures required to trigger calling an officer to account (which must be set at between 0 and 5,345) and the number of signatures required to trigger a debate at full council (between 0 and 5,345). It should be emphasised that any target set must be realistically achievable or the council risks direct intervention from the Secretary of State.

6. **Option C: To reject the Petition Scheme.** The council is required under the commencement order to have adopted a Petition Scheme by 15 June 2010. If the Council rejects the attached petition scheme it would be necessary to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council to consider a revised scheme. This is not a recommended option.

Information to be considered in taking the decision

(a) The Current Scheme

7. Since May 2007 the Council has seen an increase in the number of petitions received and the way they have been used, although overall the total number of petitions remain modest.
8. To be considered a petition it must have a minimum of 20 signatures from 'citizens' of the district. In practical terms this meant that as long as 20 signatures with addresses in the district were provided it was automatically accepted, as there was no method available to verify the details provided. Furthermore, the definition of 'citizen' is itself open to some interpretation.
9. Under the Constitution the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee receives all petitions on behalf of the Council. The committee then considers the petition, including allowing the Petition Organiser up to 10 minutes to address the committee in support of the petition, and takes one of 5 options in response – (a) take no further action; (b) forward the petition to another committee or officer; (c) forward the petition to an external organisation for consideration; (d) invite the petitioner to provide further information in support of the petition; or (e) take any other appropriate course of action.
10. The table below sets out a summary of the petitions received since 2007, the outcome achieved and how the outcome potentially translates to the new scheme.

<b>Petition Number &amp; Date</b>	<b>Petitioner and Petition Request</b>	<b>Petition Outcome</b>	<b>Equivalent outcome category under new Act</b>
POS001 SEP08	Clear Up Deal Campaign  Improved street cleansing in Deal	Head of Property, Leisure & Waste Management produced to reports for overview and scrutiny on contractor's performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering a petition at a meeting of the authority.</li> <li>• Written response (in form of a committee report).</li> </ul>
POS002 NOV08	Balmoral Surgery  Improved transport links from town centre to surgery	Overview and Scrutiny Committee acted to introduce parties together to start a dialogue. Councillor Mills attended a meeting of the patient user group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider petition at a meeting of the authority.</li> <li>• Taking action requested in petition.</li> </ul>

<b>Petition Number &amp; Date</b>	<b>Petitioner and Petition Request</b>	<b>Petition Outcome</b>	<b>Equivalent outcome category under new Act</b>
POS003 JUL09	Dover Cultural Centre  To support their tender for the purchase of a council asset.	The committee considered request when it scrutinised the cabinet decision and made recommendations based on the evidence before it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider petition at a meeting of the authority.</li> </ul>
POS004 NOV09	Kaleidoscope Child Care  To support their tender for the purchase of a council asset.	The committee considered request when it scrutinised the cabinet decision and made recommendations based on the evidence before it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider petition at a meeting of the authority.</li> </ul>
POS005 DEC09	Ms L Warren & Ms S Hughes  Petition to improve evening safety for shoppers and shop workers along Deal High Street.	Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Manager addressed the committee on the issues raised by the petition.  Petition Organisers declined the opportunity to speak to the committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider petition at a meeting of the authority.</li> </ul>

11. In terms of outcomes, the strong point of the process has been allowing members of the public to directly engage with their elected representatives to ensure their view was considered as part of the decision-making process through the overview and scrutiny function. However, the scheme has probably been under utilised due to a lack of publicity and in some cases, the effectiveness of the petition has been hampered by a lack of a clear objective as there was no dialogue during the creation of a petition with the Democratic Support team.

(b) The New Petition Scheme

12. The Department for Communities and Local Government on 30 March 2010 issued statutory guidance on the duty to respond to petitions that included a model scheme that local authorities were free to adopt in full or adapt to local circumstances. The Petition Scheme for Dover District Council is set out in Appendix 1 of this report is an adapted version of the model scheme incorporating some elements of pre-existing local practice.
13. The guidance provides that a petition should, for the purposes of this scheme, be considered to be “anything which identified itself as a petition, or which a reasonable person would regard as a petition”.
14. The starting point from which any petition scheme must begin is that the Council will respond to all petitions it receives and a presumption to be inclusive rather than exclusive when setting thresholds to trigger provisions of the scheme.

15. Although not a statutory requirement, it is to be considered good practice that a committee of elected Members formally consider petitions wherever possible so as to preserve the democratic link between the electorate and their elected representatives.
16. It is proposed that petitions be initially submitted to the Democratic Services Manager who would undertake the initial screening of a petition to ensure that it was valid under the scheme and not vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate. The Democratic Services Manager would then refer a valid petition to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee unless it was inappropriate to do so (for example, if the petition was calling for a council debate and had the required number of signatures). The relevant overview and scrutiny committee would then give consideration to the most appropriate measure to be taken in response to the petition. This preserves the existing role of scrutiny committees in receiving petitions sent to the council.
17. The key statutory requirements of the petition scheme are:

**(a) Anyone who lives, works or studies in the local authority area, including under 18's, can sign or organise a petition and trigger a response.**

The Constitution currently defines the requirements for a petitioner as a 'citizen' of the district. The new definition of live, work or studies is welcomed as it offers the opportunity for everyone in the district to engage in the democratic process. In particular, for young people aged less than 18 years of age signing a petition could represent their first direct interaction with the democratic process and encourage them to become active voters and candidates in the future. A democratically engaged populace can also contribute to increased social cohesion and pride in the district.

**(b) A facility for making electronic petitions must be provided by the local authority by 15 December 2010.**

The issues concerning 'E-Petitions' are set out in more detail elsewhere in this report. The Council has seven months in which to develop / procure and implement a means by which E-Petitions can be accepted.

**(c) Petitions must be acknowledged within a time period specified by the local authority.**

All petitions received by the council will be acknowledged within the time period specified in the Petition Scheme. For the purposes of the scheme the recommended time period contained within the statutory guidance has been used.

**(d) Petitions with a specified level of support can trigger a debate of full council.**

The guidance states this must not be greater than 5% of the total population of the district, as defined by the Office of National Statistics. However, the statutory guidance places strong emphasis on the threshold set being achievable and the Secretary of State has the right to change local authority petitions schemes that set an unachievable threshold. The scheme is required to express the threshold as a number of signatures.

The recommended level of 1.5% of the districts total population (1,600 signatures) is based on the statutory guidance that suggests a figure of 1,500 signatures.

The level set will be reviewed after one year if petitions have been consistently unable to meet the threshold, in line with the statutory guidance.

**(e) Petitions with a requisite level of support can require a senior local government officer to give evidence to a meeting of an overview and scrutiny committee.**

The guidance requires that statutory and non-statutory chief officers (within the definition of Section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) be included in the petition schemes list of officers that can be called to account. An exclusion from this exists under this section to exclude any officer who reports directly to the Head of Paid Service whose duties are secretarial, clerical or otherwise of a support service nature.

However, if an authority wishes other senior officers may be included in the list of officers that can be called to account then the name and job title of the officers concerned must be specified in the scheme.

The senior officer being called to account is required to attend a meeting of one of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees, in this case the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee. The committee will question the officer on behalf of the petitioner(s).

In acknowledgement of the fact that senior officers are often exercising functions for the purpose of achieving objectives set by the Executive or full Council, an overview and scrutiny committee can also ask a Portfolio Holder to give evidence through its existing powers under the Local Government Act 2000. In all cases, key questions will be set by the committee and provided to the officer being called to account in advance of the meeting.

The scheme is required to express the threshold as a number of signatures. The level set will be reviewed after one year if petitions have been consistently unable to meet the threshold, in line with the statutory guidance. The recommended level of approximately 0.75% (800 signatures) of the districts total population is based on that suggested in the statutory guidance of 750 signatures.

**(f) Petition Organisers have a right to prompt a review by one of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees if they feel the response they received to their petition to be inadequate.**

It should be emphasised that the right of review applies to the process followed and not the outcome of a petition being considered. The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee will exercise this function in keeping with its existing role in petitions.

18. The petition scheme has some exclusions relating to planning matters, licensing matters and those matters relating to other enactments where statutory rights of appeal, review or petition exist. In practical terms, this would cover matters such as mayoral referendums, council tax banding, legal proceedings and most electoral

19. A record of rejected petitions will be reported to the members of the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee for information. In cases where a petition has been rejected a full explanation as to the reasons for it will be provided to the Petition Organiser.
20. The relevant overview and scrutiny committee (depending on remit) will initially consider all petitions with the exception of any petition has enough signatures to call a full council debate. The overview and scrutiny committee will determine a course of action as per paragraph 6.1 of the Petition Scheme.

### **Actions In Response To A Petition**

21. The guidance sets out a range of statutory options and non-statutory options that can be taken in response to a petition. The statutory options are as follows:
  - Giving effect to the request in the petition;
  - Considering the petition at a meeting of the authority;
  - Holding an inquiry (such as a scrutiny review);
  - Holding a public meeting;
  - Commissioning research;
  - Giving a written response to the petition organiser setting out the authority's views about the request in the petition; and
  - Refer the petition to an overview and scrutiny committee of the council;
22. The above responses do not preclude the authority from taking a decision to take no further action in respect of a petition it receives.
23. In respect of holding an inquiry or commissioning research, in most cases this would be organised via existing scrutiny resources and methods (i.e. a Chief Officer report to the committee or research from the Democratic Support Officer). This does not preclude an overview and scrutiny committee from submitting a proposal to the Cabinet on a case-by-case basis requesting that additional funding be made available for these purposes.
24. The non-statutory options suggested in the model petition scheme are as follows:
  - Holding a consultation; and
  - Calling a referendum.
25. It is not proposed that the non-statutory options be included as actions in the petition scheme. In the case of holding a consultation this is because it would be more likely the consequence of commissioning research or holding an inquiry (such as a scrutiny review) proposing an outcome that would need to be consulted upon rather than an initial response to a petition. This again does not preclude an overview and scrutiny committee from submitting a proposal to Cabinet on a case-by-case basis requesting that a consultation exercise be undertaken.
26. The option of calling a referendum is not proposed in the scheme because of the complexity and cost involved. In addition, there is no power for the Council to hold a referendum of its own volition under the Local Government Act 1972 or the Local Government Act 2000. There is a provision under Sections 34 to 36 of the Local

## **E-Petitions**

27. The Council is required to provide a facility for e-petitions by 15 December 2010. The Department of Communities and Local Government promise further guidance on e-petitions, including a set of recommended data standards. The Council's petition scheme contains provision for e-petitions based on the statutory guidance published to date.
28. The e-petition facility will allow members of the public to register with the Council in order for to create a new petition or sign an existing petition, similar to the system in operation for the Downing Street petition website. However, all e-petitions will be subject to the same qualification requirements as normal paper petitions and any new petitions will have to be approved by the Democratic Services Manager or a member of the Democratic Support team before they are published on the website in order to prevent libellous, vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate petitions appearing.
29. Any petition published on the Council's website must also be compliant with the requirements of Section 33 of the Equality Act 2006 concerning equalities and anti-discrimination legislation.
30. An officer group is currently exploring the options for e-petition software providers and external funding and has already met with several software providers to view their systems. As part of this work the opportunities for joint procurement or in-house development with other Kent authorities will be explored, although this may be limited due to the mix of different software systems in use with at each authority.
31. There are some council's that are operating e-petition schemes already, although the majority of local authorities like Dover have only made provision for paper petitions to date. Some good examples of such schemes can be found at Brighton and Hove City Council, Birmingham City Council, Bristol City Council and London Borough of Lambeth amongst others.

## **Constitutional Changes**

32. The required changes to the Council's Constitution to implement the Petition Scheme are set out in detail in Appendix 2. In drafting these proposals the presumption has been that in addition to its statutory role in respect of petitions the overview and scrutiny function will continue to act as the first point of contact with the democratic process for all petitions with the exception of those calling for a full council debate.

## Background Papers

- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (Commencement Order No. 3) Order 2010

- Listening to communities: Statutory guidance on the duty to respond to petitions

### **Resource Implications**

There is currently no budgetary provision for the purchase of an E-Petition system and additional funding will be required if external funding cannot be secured. The figure specified is an estimate based on discussions with software suppliers.

Requirement from Current Budget	Requirement for Additional Budget	
	Current Year	Full Year
Procurement of E-Petition Software	£5,000	

### **Consultation Statement**

In preparing this report Corporate Management Team has been consulted in respect of the provision for calling officers to account. In drafting the Petition Scheme consideration has been given to statutory guidance.

### **Impact on Corporate Objectives and Corporate Risks**

The Petitions Scheme supports the World Class Communities theme of the Corporate Plan and supports the localism agenda. In particular it gives young people a chance to participate directly in the decision-making framework rather than through a representative body or figure and promotes the democratic process as a whole.

The Petition Scheme is a statutory requirement and by not having an adopted scheme by 15 June 2010 the Council runs the risk of being in breach of legislative requirements.

### **Customer Access Review**

The Petitions Scheme has undergone a Customer Access Review screening.

### **Comments from Equalities Officer**

Consultation with representative groups needs to continue to make sure everyone has equal access to the system, also to ensure that locality or socio-economic factors are considered.

### **Attachments**

- Annex 1 – The Petition Scheme
- Annex 2 – Constitutional Amendments

DAVID RANDALL

Head of Governance

The officer to whom reference should be made concerning inspection of the background papers is the Democratic Support Officer, Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, Kent CT16 3PJ. Telephone: (01304) 821199, Extension 2304.





# PETITIONS SCHEME

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## 1. APPLICATION OF PETITION SCHEME

- 1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('The Act') the Council adopted the 'Petitions Scheme' at its meeting held on 19 May 2010 and the scheme will come into force with effect from 15 June 2010.
- 1.2 The requirement for the Council to provide a mechanism by which to accept electronic petitions ('E-Petitions') will come into force from 15 December 2010.
- 1.3 Copies of the Petition Scheme are available on the council's website at [www.dover.gov.uk](http://www.dover.gov.uk) or on request from the Democratic Support Team, Dover District Council, Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Kent CT16 3PJ.

## 2. HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY?

- 2.1 As a Council, Dover District Council tries to identify and solve problems at an early stage. The Council is committed to receiving feedback as this helps us to develop and review services. We recognise that there are a number of ways in which you can have your say including:
  - Contacting your local district councillor;
  - Asking a question at a meeting of the full Council;
  - Attending one and speaking at one of the Council's Neighbourhood Forums;
  - Suggesting a topic for consideration at one of the Council's Neighbourhood Forums or Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
  - Registering to speak at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Planning Committee meeting;
  - Making a complaint through the Council's complaints system; or
  - Creating or signing a petition.

## 3. PETITIONS

- 3.1 Dover District Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let it know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the council will receive an acknowledgement from the council within 10 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what the council plans to do with the petition.
- 3.2 The council will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

3.3 Petitions can be submitted under this scheme to Dover District Council by one of three methods.

(a) Paper petitions should be sent to:

Democratic Services Manager  
Dover District Council  
White Cliffs Business Park  
Whitfield  
Kent CT16 3PJ

(b) E-Petitions may be created, signed and submitted online through the council's website. For further details please see the section on E-Petitions in this scheme.

(c) Paper petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Council. These meetings take place approximately every 8 weeks and the dates and times can be found in the adopted programme of meetings for the municipal year. This information is available from the council's website.

If you would like to present your petition to the council, or would like your district councillor or someone else to present it on your behalf, please contact a member of the Democratic Support Team on 01304 872304 at least 10 working days before the meeting and they will talk you through the process.

3.4 If your petition has received **1,600** signatures<sup>1</sup> it will also be scheduled for a council debate. In such a case the Council will let you know at which meeting your petition will be debated.

#### 4. WHO CAN SIGN A PETITION?

3.1 Any person who lives, works or studies in the Dover District Council area, including those less than 18 years of age, can organise a petition or be a petition signatory.

#### 5. WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING A PETITION?

5.1 All petitions submitted to the council **MUST** include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take; and
- The name, postal address and signature of any person supporting the petition. For e-petitions there is a requirement to supply a valid e-mail address.

5.2 Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including a postal address, for the designated 'Petition Organiser'. The Petition Organiser is the person the council will contact to explain how it will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will **NOT** be placed on the website. If the petition does not identify a Petition Organiser, the council will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the Petition Organiser.

5.3 Petitions that are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will **NOT** be accepted. The Council will make a judgement on whether a petition is

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<sup>1</sup> Which is approximately 1.5% of the districts total population as measured by the Registrar General's population estimate for England and Wales.

vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate when considering the circumstances of the individual case. For example, the type of petition may be considered inappropriate include those relating to matters which are part of on-going legal proceedings or which target individual members of a community.

- 5.4 In the period immediately before an election or referendum the Council may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case the Council will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale that will apply. If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, the council will write to you to explain the reasons.

## **6. WHAT WILL THE COUNCIL DO WHEN IT RECEIVES MY PETITION?**

- 6.1 An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what the Council plans to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. It will also be published on the Council's website.

- 6.2 If the council can do what your petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that it has taken the action requested and the petition will be closed. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a council debate, or a senior officer giving evidence, then the acknowledgement will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, the council will tell you the steps that it plans to take.

- 6.3 If a petition applies to any of the following matters other procedures will apply and it will not be considered under this petition scheme:

(a) Any matter relating to a planning decision (including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy);

(b) Any matter relating to a licensing decision;

(c) Any other matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has the right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any other enactment. This includes:

- Statutory petitions (such as requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor); or
- Matters where there is already an existing right of appeal (such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates).

- 6.4 If a statutory petition fails to meet the requirements of the enactment in question it can be addressed through the Council's petition scheme in exactly the same manner as any other non-statutory petition.

- 6.5 A matter under 5.3(a) - (c) can be the subject of a petition if it consists of an allegation that a function for which the authority is responsible has not been discharged at all or that its discharge has failed or is failing on a systematic basis.

- 6.6 The Council will not take action on any petition that it considers is vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reasons for this in its acknowledgement of the petition.

- 6.7 To ensure that people know what the Council is doing in response to the petitions it receives the details of all petitions submitted to it will be published on the Council's website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (all personal details will be removed). When you sign an e-petition you can elect to receive this information by e-mail. The Council will not send you anything that is not relevant to the E-Petition you have signed, unless you choose to receive other e-mails from us.

## 7. HOW WILL THE COUNCIL RESPOND TO PETITIONS?

- 7.1 The Council's response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

- (a) Taking the action requested in the petition;
- (b) Consider the petition at a council meeting;
- (c) Holding an inquiry into the matter;
- (d) Undertaking research into the matter;
- (e) Holding a public meeting into the matter;
- (f) Holding a meeting with petitioners;
- (g) Refer the petition to an overview and scrutiny committee\* or another committee of the Council for consideration;
- (h) Providing a written response to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views about the request in the petition; and/or
- (i) Take any other action that it considers appropriate including taking no further action.

\* Overview and Scrutiny Committee are committees of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the council – in other words, the overview and scrutiny committee has the power to hold the council's decision makers to account.

- 7.2 In addition to these steps, the council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on issues highlighted in a petition. The table below gives some examples:

<b>Petition Subject</b>	<b>Appropriate Steps</b>
Alcohol related crime and disorder	If your petition is about crime and disorder linked to alcohol consumption, the council will, among other measures consider the caser for placing restrictions on public drinking in the area by establishing a designated public place or, as a last resort, imposing an alcohol disorder zone. When an alcohol disorder zone is established the licensed premises in the area where alcohol related trouble is being caused are required to contribute to the costs of extra policing in that area. The council's response to your petition will set out the steps we intend to take and the reasons for taking this approach.
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	As the elected representatives of your local area, as social landlord and licensing authority, the council plays a significant role to play in tackling anti-social behaviour. The council, in conjunction with our partners in the local crime and disorder partnership have set out minimum services standards for responding to issues of anti-social

Petition Subject	Appropriate Steps
	<p>behaviour.</p> <p>When responding to petitions on ASB, we will consider in consultation with our local partners, all the options available to us including the wide range of powers and mechanisms we have to intervene as part of our role as social landlord and licensing authority. For example, we will work with the neighbourhood policing team in the affected area to identify what action might be taken including what role CCTV might play, consider with the community and neighbourhood partners on issues of ASB in the area in question and, where appropriate, we will alert the crime and disorder reduction partnership and the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee to the issues highlighted in the petition.</p>
Under-performing health services	<p>We will work with local health partners to consider the matter raised in the petition including, where appropriate, exploring what role the Local Involvement Network (LINK) might have in reviewing and feeding back on the issue (the LINK is run by local individuals and community groups and independently supported – their role to find out what people want in terms of local health services, monitor those services and to use their powers to hold them to account). The health overview and scrutiny committee will also be alerted to the petition and where the matter is sufficiently or potentially serious, the issue will be referred to them to consider for review.</p>

7.3 If your petition is about something over which the council has no direct control (for example another public body, local railway or a Kent County Council function) it will aim to make representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The council works with a large number of local partners and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for is in conflict with council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you. You can find more information on the services for which the council is responsible on its website.

7.4 If your petition is about something that a different council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. It might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other council, but could involve other steps. In any event we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

## 8. FULL COUNCIL DEBATES

8.1 If a petition contains more than 1,600 signatures the full council will debate it unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting that all councillors can attend. The council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting.

8.2 The Petition Organiser will be given 10 minutes to present the petition at the meeting. Councillors will then discuss the petition for a maximum of 20 minutes. The council

- (a) Taking the action requested in the petition;
  - (b) Not to take the action the petition requests for reasons put forward in the debate; and/or
  - (c) To commission further investigation into the matter or refer to another committee.
- 8.3 Where the issue is one on which the council executive are required to make the final decision, the council will decide on whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- 8.4 The Petition Organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the council's website.

## 9. OFFICER EVIDENCE

- 9.1 Your petition may ask for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting of the council about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job. For example, your petition may ask a senior council officer to explain progress on an issue, or to explain the advice given to elected members to enable them to make a particular decision.
- 9.2 If your petition contains at least **800 signatures**<sup>2</sup>, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of either the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee or the Scrutiny (Community and Regeneration) Committee. A list of the senior staff that can be called to give evidence can be found below:

### Statutory Chief Officers

Nadeem Aziz	Chief Executive	(Head of Paid Service)
David Randall	Monitoring Officer	(Head of Governance)
Michael Davis	Section 151 Officer	(Head of Finance & ICT)

### Non-Statutory Chief Officers

David Willis	Head of Business & Community Transformation
Michael Dawson	Head of Development & Public Protection
Christine Waterman	Head of Housing, Culture & Community Safety
Roger Walton	Head of Property, Leisure & Waste Management
Tim Ingleton	Head of Regeneration

- 9.3 You should be aware that the relevant overview and scrutiny committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs.
- 9.4 A senior officer cannot be called to account for a petition relating to their personal circumstances, character or for reasons that are deemed to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate by the local authority.
- 9.5 The members of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee will ask the questions at this meeting, but you will be able to suggest questions to the Chairman of the committee by contacting the officer listed below up to three clear working days before the meeting. The relevant overview and scrutiny committee will set its key questions

<sup>2</sup> Which is approximately 0.75% of the districts total population as measured by the Registrar General's population estimate for England and Wales.

in writing at least three clear working days prior to the meeting at which the relevant senior officer will give evidence.

Democratic Services Manager  
Dover District Council  
White Cliffs Business Park  
Whitfield  
Kent CT16 3PJ

Telephone: 01304 872304  
E-Mail: [scrutiny@dover.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@dover.gov.uk)

## **10. E-PETITIONS**

- 10.1 The council welcomes E-Petitions which are created and submitted through our website. E-Petitions must follow the same guidelines as paper petitions. The Petition Organiser will need to provide us with their name, postal address and e-mail address. You will also need to decide how long you would like your petition to be open for signatures. Most petitions run for six months, but you can choose a shorter or longer timeframe, up to a maximum of 12 months.
- 10.2 When you create an E-Petition, it may take up to five working days before it is published online. This is because the council has to check the content of your petition is suitable before it is made available for signature.
- 10.3 If we feel that we cannot publish your petition for some reason, we will contact you within this time to explain. You will be able to change and resubmit your petition if you wish. If you do not do this within 10 working days, a summary of the petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'reject petitions' section of the website.
- 10.4 When an E-Petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the Democratic Support Team to process. In the same way as a paper petition, you will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. If you would like to present your e-petition to a meeting of the council, please contact the Democratic Support Team within 10 working days of receipt of the acknowledgement.
- 10.5 A petition acknowledgement and response will be e-mailed to everyone who has signed the E-Petition and elected to receive this information. The acknowledgement and response will also be published on this website.

## **11. HOW DO I SIGN AN E-PETITION?**

- 11.1 You can see all the E-Petitions currently available for signature on the council's website.
- 11.2 When you sign an E-Petition you will be asked to provide your name, your postcode and a valid e-mail address. When you have submitted this information you will be sent an e-mail to the e-mail address you have provided. This e-mail will include a link that you must click on in order to confirm the e-mail address is valid. Once this step is complete your 'signature' will be added to the petition. People visiting the E-Petition will be able to see your name in the list of those who have signed it but your contact details will not be visible.

## **12. WHAT CAN I DO IF I FEEL MY PETITION HAS NOT BEEN DEALT WITH PROPERLY?**

- 12.1 If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that the council's Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee review the steps that the council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone, and can improve the prospects for a review if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the council's response is not considered to be adequate.
- 12.2 The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee will endeavor to consider your request at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will take place at the following meeting. Should the committee determine the council has not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include:
- Instigating an investigation;
  - Making recommendations to the Cabinet; or
  - Arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the full council.
- 12.3 Once the appeal has been considered the petition organizer will be informed of the results within 5 working days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.



## Schedule of Constitutional Changes

### Petitions Scheme

#### Part 4 Rules of Procedure (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules)

Page Ref.	Paragraph Number	Existing Paragraph	Revised Paragraph
224	22	<p><b>22. Public Petitions</b></p> <p>(a) All petitions which members of the public wish to present to the Council shall be submitted to the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee in accordance with the following rules:-</p> <p>(i) Any petition must be presented by a member of the public in person to the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee.</p> <p>(ii) The petition must bear the signatures of at least 20 citizens of the District. A single list of names of 20 or more citizens or letters submitted on similar headed paper by 20 or more citizens addressing a common theme shall constitute a petition. In addition to a signature, the petitioners must also state their name, address and the date on which they signed the petition.</p> <p>(iii) One of the persons who have validly signed the petition must be designated as the 'petition organiser'. The petition organiser is the designated person with whom the Council will deal in relation to the petition.</p>	<p><b>22. PUBLIC PETITIONS</b></p> <p>(a) All petitions which members of the public wish present to the Council shall be submitted to the <del>Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee in accordance with the following rules:-</del> <b>in accordance with the provisions of the Petition Scheme as set out in full in Appendix 4 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.</b></p> <p>(b) <b>Unless the petition concerns the calling of a debate at full Council and has enough signatures to do so, it will be initially considered at a meeting of the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee.</b></p> <p>(c) <b>The Petition Organiser will have 10 minutes to present the petition to either the full Council or the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee, dependent on the nature of petition. Councillors will then discuss the petition for a maximum of 20 minutes. They will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting.</b></p>

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		<p>(iv) Should a petition be received from 20 or more citizens it shall be reported to the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee for information).</p> <p>(v) The petition must be addressed to Dover District Council and relate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to a matter(s) in respect of which the Council exercises functions; and</li> <li>• to a matter(s) which affects the inhabitants of the whole or a part of the District</li> </ul> <p>and request the authority to either take, or cease to take, an action as described in the petition.</p> <p>Petitions relating to highways are a function of KCC and outside the scope of the scheme. Petitions relating to planning and licensing will be submitted and considered through existing decision making procedures and are also outside the scope of the scheme.</p> <p>(vi) The petition must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relate to court or legal proceedings.</li> <li>• disclose confidential or exempt information.</li> <li>• be defamatory, frivolous or offensive.</li> <li>• be about the same subject as an active petition or have substantially similar effect to a petition that has been made to the Council within the period of six months ending with the date on which the</li> </ul>	<p>Examples of how the Council may choose to respond to a petition are set out in the Petition Scheme.</p> <p>(c) All petitions submitted to the Council in paper format must be addressed for the attention of the Democratic Services Manager.</p> <p>(d) From 15 December 2010 the Council will offer the facility for electronic petitions (known as 'e-petitions') to be submitted. Full details as to how an electronic petition can be submitted will be available from the Council's website (<a href="http://www.dover.gov.uk">www.dover.gov.uk</a>) and are also set out in the Petition Scheme.</p>

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		<p>petition was considered by the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee.</p> <p>(vii) A person wishing to present a petition to the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee must submit it in writing to the Democratic Services Manager explaining details of the petition.</p> <p>(viii) The petition organiser will receive a written acknowledgement of a valid petition (referred to as an 'active petition' once accepted) within 20 clear days of its receipt. The acknowledgement will provide such information as the Council considers appropriate in respect of what the authority has done or proposes to do in response to the petition.</p> <p>(ix) If a petition is deemed inadmissible, the petition organiser will be informed of the reasons for that decision.</p> <p>(x) The petition organiser will be allowed to speak for 10 minutes at the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee in support of an active petition.</p> <p>(b) After presentation of an active petition, the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee may select one or more of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the petition and agree to take no further action.</li> </ul>	

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119	NEW 72. Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the petition and forward it to another Committee of the Council or person within the Council for consideration.</li> <li>• Consider the petition and forward it to another body or organisation outside the Council for consideration and response.</li> <li>• Invite the petition organisers to provide additional information to assist it in reaching a decision on the action to be taken in relation to the petition.</li> <li>• Request a report or research in relation to the petition.</li> <li>• Take any other action that it considers appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>(c) The Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee shall after considering an active petition at a scheduled meeting notify the petition organiser in writing of the steps the authority has taken or proposes to take in response to the petition and of the authority's reasons for doing so.</p> <p>N/A</p>	To receive and process petitions on behalf of the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme.
227	NEW	Addition to Key Questions Protocol	<p>No. 5</p> <p>Holding an officer to account in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme</p> <p>A Key Questions meeting will normally be held prior to the</p>

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439	NEW	Addition to the list of proper officer functions	<p>main meeting unless the relevant Chairman and Controlling Group Spokesperson agree that it is unnecessary.</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules</p> <p>224 22 To receive and process petitions on behalf of the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Petition Scheme.</p> <p>Proper Officer – Democratic Services Manager</p> <p>Deputy – Senior Democratic Support Officer</p>

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL – 19 MAY 2010

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC****Recommendation**

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that the items to be considered involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act set out below:

<u>Item Report</u>	<u>Paragraph Exempt</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Dover Town Investment Zone	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person
Tenders for the Construction of the Deal Indoor Tennis Centre	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person
Harbour Revision Order	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person