

Public Document Pack



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5 June 2017

Dear Councillor

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a meeting of the **SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE** will be held in the HMS Brave Room at these Offices on Tuesday 13 June 2017 at 6.00 pm when the following business will be transacted.

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Rebecca Brough on (01304) 872304 or by e-mail at rebeccabrough@dover.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicky", written over a white background.

Chief Executive

Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee Membership:

K Mills (Chairman)
M I Cosin (Vice-Chairman)
T A Bond
R J Frost
B J Glayzer
J M Heron
M J Holloway
S C Manion
M Rose
D A Sargent

AGENDA

1 **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To note appointments of Substitute Members.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** (Page 5)

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.

4 **MINUTES**

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 May 2017 (to follow).

5 **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Please note that in accordance with the agreed Protocol for Public Speaking at Overview and Scrutiny, the right to speak only applies to agenda items 11 and 12.

The right of the public to speak does not apply to the following agenda items: Apologies, Appointment of Substitute Members, Declarations of Interest, Minutes, the Forward Plan, the Scrutiny Work Programme, any agenda item that is not accompanied by a written report and items that are exempt business.

Members of the public wishing to speak must register to do so by no later than 2.00 pm on the second working day before the meeting.

6 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE**

The following decisions were taken by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 12 June 2017 in respect of recommendations from the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee:

- Performance Report - Fourth Quarter 2016/17
- Adoption of Waterloo Crescent, Dover Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- Extensions to the Nelson Street, Deal Conservation Area
- Appropriation of Land for Play Areas
- St Radigund's Play Area Project

7 **ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE**

There are no items for consideration.

8 **ITEMS CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY OR PLACED ON THE AGENDA BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, ANY INDIVIDUAL NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OR PUBLIC PETITION**

- (a) Items placed on the agenda by a Member of the Committee or any individual Non-Executive Member

Any individual Councillor may request that a matter is placed on the agenda of one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees by providing Democratic Support with notice of the matter prior to the agenda being published.

There are no items for consideration.

(b) Items the subject of Call-In

Executive Decisions may be called-in by the Chairman or Spokesperson of the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee or any three non-executive members.

There are no items for consideration.

(c) Public Petition

(i) More Parking Spaces at Aycliffe

An e-petition on the Council's website with 42 validated signatures was received from Mr G Dodd.

The petition states as follows:

"We the undersigned petition the council to provide more parking spaces at Aycliffe. This can be done by widening of roads where there are banks etc. A Survey and public consultation will be needed.

Parking at Aycliffe is now at a premium. Where people park it makes it difficult for emergency vehicles to get pass. Therefore widening of roads would provide more parking spaces and better access for emergency services."

In accordance with the Council's adopted Petition Scheme, the Committee will determine the action(s) to be taken in relation to the petition, which include:

- (a) To recommend to the relevant decision maker that they take the action requested in the petition;
- (b) To hold an inquiry into the matter, including meeting with any parties the committee is of the view would be appropriate to consult;
- (c) Requesting officers undertake research into the matter and report to a future meeting;
- (d) Request the Leader, Portfolio Holder or an officer to provide a written response to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views about the request in the petition;
- (e) Take any other action within its remit that it considers appropriate; or
- (f) Take no further action.

9 **NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS** (Pages 6 - 8)

It is intended that Members should use the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions to identify topics within the remit of the Committee for future scrutiny.

10 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 9 - 12)

It is intended that the Committee monitor and prioritise its rolling work programme.

11 **OLDSTAIRS BAY TO SANDWICH BAY BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN** (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the attached report of the Director of Environment and Corporate Assets.

12 **ACCOMMODATION CHARTER FOR DOVER DISTRICT** (Pages 17 - 23)

To consider the attached report of the Director of Environment and Corporate Assets.

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.
- 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. 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.
- If you require any further information about the contents of this agenda or your right to gain access to information held by the Council please contact Rebecca Brough, Team Leader - Democratic Support, telephone: (01304) 872304 or email: rebeccabrough@dover.gov.uk for details.

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

Declarations of Interest

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

Note to the Code:

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.



Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions

[This updated version of the Notice supersedes all other versions issued in previous months]

Publication Date: 2 June 2017

Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions which will be made on behalf of the Council

Key Decisions 2017/18	Item	Date of meeting at which decision will be taken by Cabinet (unless specified otherwise)
1	Neighbourhood Plans	June 2013 and ongoing (see entry)
2	Dover Town Centre Regeneration: To consider progress on the Compulsory Purchase Order and any issues arising which may go beyond the scope of the resolutions incorporated in Minute CAB 87	8 September 2014/24 April 2015/7 March 2016 and ongoing
3	Approval to develop detailed plans for replacement of Dover Leisure Centre	25 July/20 September and 15 December 2016 (special Cabinet meetings) and 11 September 2017 (special Cabinet meeting)
4	Statutory Brownfield Register	4 December 2017
5	Review of Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy	October/November 2017
6	Review of Local Plan	1 March 2017 and dates to be confirmed
7	Property Acquisitions	Ongoing (decisions to be taken by Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Performance)
8	Approval for public consultation on draft South Barracks Conservation Area Appraisal	3 July 2017 and date to be confirmed
9	To consider the results of public consultation on the Waterloo Crescent Conservation Area Appraisal and approve public consultation on proposed boundary extensions	8 May 2017
10	To consider the results of public consultation on the extension of the Nelson Street Conservation Area boundary and the introduction of an Article 4 Direction	8 May and 6 November 2017
11	Approval to cease providing a face-to-face customer service function at Aylesham, Deal and Sandwich area offices	3 July 2017
12	Approval of revisions to the 2012 Housing Assistance Policy	3 July 2017
13	Approval of amended Dover District Council Events Policy and Land Hire Agreement	3 July 2017
14	Approval to release funding and carry out regular beach maintenance works between Oldstairs Bay and Sandwich Bay	12 June 2017
15	Local Plan Review – Engagement Strategy	8 May 2017

Key Decisions 2017/18	Item	Date of meeting at which decision will be taken by Cabinet (unless specified otherwise)
16	Appointment of contractor to carry out building extension and repair works at Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded 'Parks for People' project	3 July 2017 (subject to confirmation)
17	Appointment of contractor to carry out landscape and watercourse restoration works at Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens as part of DDC's Heritage Lottery Funded 'Parks for People' project	3 July 2017 (subject to confirmation)
18	To approve the policy on civil penalties and rent repayment orders for private landlords	4 September 2017
19	To seek approval for wet and dryside improvements to Tides Leisure and Indoor Tennis Centre, Deal	3 July or 4 September 2017
20	Dover Waterfront Masterplan and Dover Public Realm Improvements	4 September 2017 and dates to be confirmed
21	Planning Enforcement Plan	4 September 2017 and dates to be confirmed
22	Representations on the Thanet District Council Local Plan	To be confirmed
23	Fit-out of Aylesham retail units and related funding	3 July 2017
24	Project approval for development of land at Foxborough Close, Woodnesborough to provide affordable housing	3 July 2017

- Note: (1) Key Decisions which are shaded have already been taken and do not appear in this updated version of the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions.
- (2) The Council's Corporate Management Team reserves the right to vary the dates set for consultation deadline(s) and for the submission of reports to Cabinet and Council in respect of Key Decisions included within this version of the notice. Members of the public can find out whether any alterations have been made by looking at the Council's website (www.dover.gov.uk).

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE

Month	Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee	Resource Implications for Scrutiny				Action
		Members	Officers (Corporate Expenditure unless otherwise stated)	Scrutiny Budget Expenditure		
				Projected	Actual	
May 2017	Waterloo Crescent Conservation Area Appraisal	Single Meeting	Head of Regeneration and Development	£0	£0	To consider the results of public consultation on the Waterloo Crescent Conservation Area Appraisal and approve public consultation on proposed boundary extensions
	Nelson Street Conservation Area	Single Meeting	Head of Regeneration and Delivery	£0	£0	To consider the results of public consultation on the extension of the Nelson Street Conservation Area boundary and the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.
	Performance Report Q4	Single Meeting	Director of Governance	£0	£0	To consider the report.
	Appropriation of Land for Play Areas	Single Meeting	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£0	£0	To consider the report.
	St Radigund's Play Area Project	Single Meeting	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£0	£0	To consider the report.
	Petition – Aycliffe Parking	Single Meeting	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£0	£0	To consider the report.

6

Agenda Item No 10

Month	Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee	Resource Implications for Scrutiny				Action
		Members	Officers (Corporate Expenditure unless otherwise stated)	Scrutiny Budget Expenditure		
				Projected	Actual	
June 2017	Regent Cinema	Special Meeting (on-going)	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets / Head of Regeneration & Delivery	£tbc		To be held in Deal at a date to be determined (June/July).
	Oldstairs Bay to Sandwich Bay Beach Management Plan	Single Meeting	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£		To consider the report.
	Accommodation Charter for Dover District	Single Meeting	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£		To consider the report.
Date tbc	Lorry Parking in Dover	On-going	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£		To receive an update.
July 2017	Approval to cease providing a face-to-face customer service function at Aylesham, Deal and Sandwich Area Offices	Single Meeting	Corporate Management Team	£		To consider the report.
August 2017	NO MEETING SCHEDULED					
September 2017	St James's Development Update	On-going	Head of Inward Investment	£0		A further site visit to the St James's site to view progress. Exact date to be confirmed (Summer/Autumn).
	Dover Leisure Centre	On-going	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£0		To consider reports at each relevant stage in the process.

Month	Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee	Resource Implications for Scrutiny				Action
		Members	Officers (Corporate Expenditure unless otherwise stated)	Scrutiny Budget Expenditure		
				Projected	Actual	
	Performance Report Q1	Single Meeting	Director of Governance	£0		To consider the report.
October 2017						
November 2017	Performance Report Q2	Single Meeting	Director of Governance	£0	£0	To consider the report.
December 2017						
January 2018	Deal Pier	Single Meeting	Director of Governance & Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£		To receive an update
February 2018	Performance Report Q3	Single Meeting	Director of Governance	£0	£0	To consider the report.
	Scrutiny of the Council's budget	Single Meeting	Corporate Management Team	£0		To scrutinise the Council's budget for 2018/19.
March 2018						
April 2018	Performance Report Targets 2018-19	Single Meeting	Director of Governance	£0		To consider the report

Month	Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee	Resource Implications for Scrutiny				Action
		Members	Officers (Corporate Expenditure unless otherwise stated)	Scrutiny Budget Expenditure		
				Projected	Actual	
May 2018	Performance Report Q4	Single Meeting	Director of Governance	£0	£0	To consider the report.

Please note dates are approximate for key decisions as they are based on the latest edition of the Forward Plan and subject to change.

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Municipal Year 2017/18

As appropriate	Property Investment Strategy	Single Meeting	Director of Finance, Housing and Community	£		To receive an update
As appropriate	Dover Leisure Centre	On-going	Director of Environment and Corporate Assets	£0		To consider reports at each relevant stage in the process.
As appropriate	Lorry Parking	On-going	Various	£0		To continue to monitor the progress in resolving illegal and anti-social lorry parking in the district.
As appropriate	Dover Town Investment Zone	On-going	Various	£tbc		To maintain a watching brief, scheduling scrutiny meetings as appropriate.

Subject:	OLDSTAIRS BAY TO SANDWICH BAY BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 12 June 2017
Report of:	Roger Walton, Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Nicholas Kenton, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Waste and Planning
Decision Type:	Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report:

- To seek Cabinet approval to undertake coastal protection works in the location of Oldstairs Bay to Sandwich Bay over a 5-year period. The Environment Agency has approved funding for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Recommendation: That Cabinet accepts the funding from the Environment Agency and approves the following actions outlined in the 5-year beach management and shoreline management plans:

- Regular monitoring and annual recycling works from Oldstairs Bay to Sandwich Bay.
- Continued beach levels/surveys from Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme.
- Research and development of new sea defences at Wellington Parade and North Deal to reduce the migration of shingle.

1. Summary

1.1 A Beach Management Plan (BMP) has recently been prepared by Canterbury City Council on behalf of Dover District Council and the Environment Agency. The BMP sets out the implementation approaches for intervention and monitoring to maintain the beach where it provides an integral part of the sea defences between Oldstairs Bay and the River Stour at Sandwich Bay. The aim of the BMP is to inform, guide and assist responsible authorities and organisations in managing the beach, and to ensure that the beach management continues to manage the risk of coastal flooding and erosion.

1.2 Beach Management Plans provide an accountable and transparent methodology for managing beaches as coastal defence assets based on risk information that derives from scheme design, monitoring and scientific/research input with the aim of managing the frontage in a sustainable way that enhances vegetated shingle habitats.

1.3 The BMP proposes the following activities:

- Regular monitoring and annual recycling works at Wellington Parade;

- Annual recycling from the Sandwich Bay estate to north Deal to mitigate losses in north Deal and to prevent shingle ingress into the sand dune habitat to the north of Sandwich;
- Continued monitoring of beach levels via the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 A delegated decision (DD3015) was taken by the Director of Finance, Housing and Community on 28th January 2016 to instruct Canterbury City Council through the East Kent Engineering Partnership to conduct a study on the coastal frontage from Old Stairs Bay to Sandwich Bay. This was funded by a £50k grant from the Environment Agency.

2.2 The standard of protection at Wellington Parade in Kingsdown is currently at a 1:45 year level, putting several properties at risk of overtopping damages in the case of an extreme wave and water level event. Within the Deal town frontage, longshore drift removes shingle from the unit at an average rate of 13,000m³ a year, leaving the north of Deal exposed and requiring regular emergency works. At present there is no retaining structure to prevent these losses. Furthermore, the dominant longshore drift direction takes shingle sediment north towards the Sandwich Bay SSSI, putting the sand dune habitat at risk of damage from shingle ingress. The construction of a retaining structure will keep shingle within this unit, reducing the need for future replenishment and protecting the important SSSI habitat to the north. Retaining structures at Wellington Parade will increase the size of the beach and hence the standard of protection, and will reduce the quantity of future recycling required by increasing the retention of sediment in the area.

2.3 The key objectives from this study are outlined below.

- Restore the indicative standard of protection across the frontage.
- Prevent excessive shingle migration north out of the unit, preventing shingle damage to the sand dune habitat within the Sandwich Bay SSSI.
- Reduce the need (and hence cost) for regular replenishment operations in north Deal by providing a source of shingle for local recycling.
- Eliminate the scour problem at Wellington parade using retaining structures to maintain a larger beach in front of the properties.
- Provide an opportunity for important research and development and ensure efficient use of funds by constructing temporary groynes and monitoring their performance before constructing permanent structures at Wellington Parade.

2.4 This resulted in taking a business case to the Environment Agency for approval of a 5yr beach management plan to meet the above objectives in 2.3. In January 2017, the EA approved a total of £1.75m grant aid funding to be claimed over 5 years (2016/17 - 2020/21).

3. Identification of Options

3.1 Option 1 – Do nothing.

3.2 Option 2 – Do the minimum.

3.3 Option 3 – To accept the funding from the Environment Agency and manage the coastline in accordance with the Deal and shoreline management plans.

4. **Evaluation of Options**

- 4.1 Option 1 – Not to undertake any beach management, leaving the frontage from Old Stairs Bay to Sandwich Bay in its current state. This is not the preferred option, due to the certain risk of erosion causing coastal flooding and damage to the sea defences at Kingsdown and Deal.
- 4.2 Option 2 – Has been considered within the business case and would look to only recycling when beaches reach critical condition, breaches repaired before total seawall failure occurs. This is not the preferred option due to the similar outcomes of Option 1; Loss of amenity, value of beach, danger to public from damaged structures and loss of houses to erosion and regular flooding. Furthermore damage to Sandwich Bay SSSI from shingle ingress.
- 4.3 Option 3 – Looks to accept the funding from the Environment Agency and deliver the objectives outlined in the Deal beach management plan. **This is the officer recommendation**, which will look towards maintaining and improving the frontage where necessary for the next 5 years. The works will likely involve the following; annual recycling works to be informed by monitoring, construction of two rock groynes at Wellington Parade, a structural survey at Oldstairs Bay with remedial works to the rock armour as required, and the construction of a rock groyne at Sandown Castle to increase the retention of shingle sediment.

5. **Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The funding for the beach management plan is to be fully financed by the Environment Agency over a period of 5 years from 2016/17 to 2020/21. The total sum of the approved grant aid funding equates to £1.75m, which will be claimed over 5 consecutive years £350k was claimed in 2016/17 (March 2017) and will be used to fund works during 2017/18. It is anticipated that £350k will be claimed for a further 4 years starting in 2017/18.
- 5.2 The funding requirement may vary year to year depending on winter storms, the works programme, and relevant license approvals from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England and Planning Consent. During 2017/18 and 2018/19 the grant claims may be increased to aid the construction of the new rock groynes, subject to planning and MMO consent.

6. **Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comment to add. (KW)
- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Head of Legal Services has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comment to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equalities implications, however in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>
- 6.4 Other Officers (as appropriate):

7. **Appendices**

None.

8. **Background Papers**

Contact Officer: Keith Watson Ext 2399

Keith.Watson@dover.gov.uk

Subject:	ACCOMMODATION CHARTER FOR DOVER DISTRICT
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 12 June 2017
Report of:	Roger Walton, Director of Environment and Corporate Assets
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Keith Morris, Portfolio Holder for Skills, Training, Tourism, Voluntary Services and Community Safety
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Classification:	Unrestricted
Purpose of the report:	For Cabinet to approve working with non-graded accommodation providers through a new Accommodation Charter.
Recommendation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet adopts The Accommodation Charter to enable working with district wide non-graded accommodation. 2. That Cabinet allows Visitor Information Centres within the District to book customers into non-graded accommodation through The Accommodation Charter. 3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Museums and Tourism to exclude a property from the Accommodation Standards Charter where it is considered necessary following investigation.

1. Summary

- 1.1 White Cliffs Country is the official tourism organisation for the district and was launched by Dover District Council some twenty years ago. It was set up as a membership scheme with local businesses in the tourism industry as a means of marketing and booking their properties with the Visitor Information Centres in the Dover District.
- 1.2 Current Council policy reflects the historic government one, in that Local Authorities and their Visitor Information Centres (VICs) should not work with or promote non-accredited/graded accommodation providers. This changed in 2012 when DCMS stated that “the Government will stop trying to corral tourism firms in England into joining an official rating scheme. We will leave decisions on whether and how to modernise, shrink or close the existing state-sponsored scheme to the industry itself through the newly formed Visit England”. As a result the scheme is no longer effective and excludes some excellent providers from accessing marketing through the District Council.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The way in which accommodation providers market and promote their businesses has changed, with some investing in their own websites or signing up to other commercially driven websites to deliver their online activity. Additionally the growth of review sites like Trip Advisor, and the booking site AirBnB offers the consumer a different way to check and book accommodation, adding to the dilution of the current star rating system.

- 2.2 Revenue from industry advertising for the annual visitor guide has steadily declined over the last few years and a decision to remove advertising from the White Cliffs Country visitor guide was taken two years ago. The accommodation section within the guide wasn't reflective of the whole offer within the District and gave a negative image of the amount of accommodation available to the prospective visitor. This decision was supported by research carried out by Lifestyle Group, the company who currently handle our brochure leads and fulfilment. This research enabled us to understand our visitor demographic and profile better and see that the brochure is requested as an inspirational and information tool rather than a list of graded accommodation.
- 2.3 Districts throughout Kent, including Dover, have historically adopted an assessed only approach to working with accommodation providers, only promoting those which have been quality assessed by Visit England or the AA to ensure quality. However a large number of accommodation providers choose not to be graded for a number of reasons, including the cost which is around £500 for the average property. The opportunity to work with these businesses will increase the amount of accommodation visible to tourists on our website and take the model beyond a traditional 'membership' offering.
- 2.4 A large number of UK destinations are following this business model and are working with accommodation providers from outside the traditional accredited route. Within Kent, Canterbury City Council, Swale and Gravesham local authorities have all adopted Accommodation Charters and work with non-accredited providers.
- 2.5 Like other UK destinations, Dover District has seen a steady decline in the number of registered hotels and bed and breakfasts. With the rise and trend in budget accommodation, many providers are struggling to compete in this market. Coupled with the brisk growth in AirBnB listings, some are selling their businesses to convert into residential properties. Since 2014 serviced (hotels and B&B's) properties have declined from 361 to 121(DPUK) representing a loss of around 1000 rooms.
- 2.6 Dover Visitor Information Centre regularly struggles to find accredited accommodation during July and August and often has to resort to booking into Folkestone and Canterbury leaving good, but non accredited, accommodation in the District empty. It should further be noted that accreditation levels across Kent and nationally has fallen.

3. Dover District Accommodation Providers Eligibility for website promotion and VIC booking

- 3.1 The Councils current terms and conditions follow the historic grading schemes run by AA and Visit England which the former South East England Tourist Board set up some twenty years ago.

Minor changes were introduced a couple of years ago and currently accommodation providers are eligible for promotion by Dover District Council if they meet any of the following standards:

- Visit England/Quality in Tourism National Quality Standards (star ratings)
- AA Hotel Services Quality Standards (star ratings)
- Kent Accommodation Scheme

- Alistair Sawday Guide
 - Michelin Guide
 - Good Hotel Guide
 - An externally managed standards audit system e.g. Abode Hotels
 - Other guides, which are well-established and have evident consumer credibility and carry out a regular inspection against a set of standards.
- 3.2 To replace the above accreditation, Dover District Council, working with Visit Kent and Tourism South East has developed an Accommodation Charter (see draft attached) as the basis for accepting ungraded accommodation providers into the White Cliffs Country marketing. This will open up the market and remove any barriers to entry. The Charter sets out the minimum requirements for eligibility and would not attract any annual fee or regular inspections. The Council will not work with or market Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) for the tourist market.
- 3.3 The many non-graded properties in the district can often represent a high quality offering and presents Dover District Council with a significant opportunity to work, communicate and engage with these small businesses, particularly in Deal and Sandwich and in the rural areas, where the proportion of non-graded properties is generally higher than in Dover. The proposed change of policy would remove the current barriers to entry and provide the opportunity to develop our relationships with those who often work in isolation.
- 3.4 Under the new policy, Dover District Council would monitor on-line reviews and any complaints relating to members that have signed The Charter. After proper investigation and consultation with the proprietor, should the complaints be deemed legitimate and sufficiently serious, Dover District Council would reserve the right to withdraw the providers' membership without liability. The decision would be final with no right to appeal.

4. Relevant Council Policy

This proposal supports the Corporate Plan Strategic Priority 3 – Serving our communities effectively.

5. Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications with this proposal.

6. Identification of Options

Option 1. Adopt The Accommodation Charter to allow non-graded accommodation in the district to work with Dover District Council. (Recommended)

Option 2. Continue to work with district wide accredited only accommodation providers. (Not recommended)

7. Evaluation of Options

Option 1. The proposed change in policy is important to the growth and sustainability of Dover District's future working with the accommodation sector. We are approached regularly by ungraded businesses who have expressed interest in joining under revised terms.

Option 2. The ongoing fragmentation of the accreditation schemes is projected to continue, ultimately impacting on the visitor whilst trying to find accommodation from a trusted source like our website and Visitor Information Centres.

8. Consultation Planned or Undertaken

The Town Councils and White Cliffs Country Tourism Alliance have been informed about the proposal. The Dover Guest House and Hotelier group has been consulted and are supportive of the proposal.

9. Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications as a consequence of the approval of The Accommodation Charter.

- a. Comment from the Section 151 Officer “The Equality Officer has been consulted on the report and have no further comments to add. (LS)”
- b. Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Head of Legal Services has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comment to make.
- c. Comment from the Equalities Officer: ‘The Equality Officer has been consulted during the development of this report and has no further comments to make other than to remind members that in discharging their responsibilities they are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>’
- d. Other Officers (as appropriate):

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Accommodation Charter

11. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Debbie Dainton, Tourism Officer.



TOURISM ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS CHARTER

Dover District Council remains committed to both the National Quality Assurance Scheme run by Quality in Tourism for Visit England, The AA, Kent Accommodation Scheme and other accreditation schemes/guides like Alistair Sawday, Michelin etc. This independent view can provide valuable insight and excellent advice tools to assist you with running and developing your business. They also provide an award to use on your website and promotional materials.

In order to ensure quality is maintained by local accommodation businesses and recognised by our visitors, Dover District Council has developed an 'Accommodation Charter.' Any non-accredited district wide accommodation businesses should sign up to the Charter as a requirement to being promoted on the White Cliffs Country website and other potential promotional activities (advertising) undertaken by us. The Charter will also enable the districts Visitor Information Centre's to make bookings through you on behalf of their visitors. The Charter will cover important areas such as legal considerations, health and safety and good customer care practice.

There is also a complaints procedure which, together with the Charter, will provide a feedback mechanism for visitors who may be unhappy with their chosen accommodation.

As an advertiser and/or member of the Dover District Council Accommodation Standards Charter, I undertake:

1. To work positively with Dover District Council at all times and provide access to premises on request to ensure the Charter is being followed

Membership implies working collaboratively with the local tourism team and other members of the standards charter to improve the standing and profile of tourism across the district and Kent.

2. To provide promotion material or online entry, an accurate description of the quality, standard of facilities and services of the establishment

For this purpose, promotion material means any advertisement or brochure, printed, on line or other media. Pictorial images and descriptive text should accurately represent the establishment concerned.

3. To welcome all visitors courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership.

This complies with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 which requires reasonable adjustments to remove barriers and improve services for those people with specific needs. The provision of an Access Statement should describe the accessibility credentials of the establishment. The Access Statement should be a clear and accurate written description of the facilities and services offered that enables a potential guest to make an informed decision as to whether the establishment meets their particular access needs.

Staff must understand the need for sensitivity when communicating with actual or potential guests with specific needs and make every effort to make them welcome and meet their needs.

4. To describe accurately and display clearly prices for the services being offered including any service charges and taxes where appropriate

This applies to prices listed in promotional material, on line and on site, packaged items and extra charges. This should also include a clear cancellation policy, checking in/out procedures.

5. To maintain good standards of service and cleanliness

Every business should be striving to deliver the best standards possible for the type of accommodation they are offering. However, high standards of cleanliness should apply to all.

6. To have a complaints policy that can be implemented speedily and effectively

This should be designed to enable any issues that may arise to be resolved by prompt, professional and polite action.

7. To maintain a fair and effective cancellations policy

This needs to be readily available for guests at each stage of their visit, from pre booking through to after departure.

8. To fulfil all legal obligations and responsibilities

This includes fire precautions, price display orders, food safety/hygiene, liquor licensing, health and safety laws, discrimination, trade descriptions, data protection, Hotel Proprietors Act, public liability cover and any other insurance necessary to comply with statutory requirements.

9. To manage the business in a way that supports the local environment and community

Changes in operation practice such as actively sourcing and using local produce, recruiting locally and taking an active role in community events can make a difference to local communities and reduce your carbon footprint. It also makes good business sense.

10. To provide current and up to date information about the district for visitors

Access to good quality information has the potential to enhance the visitor experience and to encourage them to explore more and stay longer. The council produces a wide range of printed information, some of which is multi-lingual, about the district. The tourism website is designed to be the one stop to accessing up to the minute information so by linking with it, enables visitors to access everything from accommodation, places to visit, events and inspirational ideas.

Terms and Conditions

- i. Dover District Council will monitor on-line reviews and any complaints relating to members that have signed the Standards Charter. After proper investigation and consultation with the proprietor, should complaints be deemed legitimate and sufficiently serious Dover District Council reserves the right to withdraw website membership without liability. This decision will be final with no right to appeal.
- ii. Upon termination of advertising/membership, Dover District Council will, as soon as reasonably possible, remove the details of the tourism business from the relevant websites and any marketing materials used in campaigns.

In signing the Charter I/we hereby confirm that we are authorised to do so on behalf of the business and agree on behalf of the business to observe the Dover District Council Accommodation Standards Charter and to be bound by these Terms and Conditions as a condition of promotion/membership.

Authorised signature

On behalf of the business

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Name printed

Tourism business

Address

Please sign and return to:

Post - Dover Visitor Information Centre, Dover Museum, Market Square, Dover, CT16 1PH

Email – sandra.killick@dover.gov.uk