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**Subject:** DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

**Meeting and Date:** 4 December 2017

**Report of:** Nadeem Aziz, Chief Executive

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Jim Back, Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

**Decision Type:** Executive Key

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Purpose of the report:** To seek approval for the Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17

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**Recommendation:** Cabinet approves the Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17 attached at Appendix 1 and agrees that it is made available on the District Council's website.

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## **1. Summary**

1.1 This is the thirteenth Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) produced by Dover District Council and covers the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

1.2 The AMR serves a number of purposes, the main ones being:

- To assess the effectiveness of the Council's current planning policies set out in the Development Plan;
- To monitor the delivery of the Council's Development Plan and assess whether the Council is meeting the social, economic and environmental objectives set out in the Plan;
- To act as a record of the amount of development which has taken place in the District during the year; and
- To set out the Council's progress against its 'Local Development Scheme', a high level project plan for the production of new planning documents and policies.

1.3 The key findings from this year's AMR are set out below.

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must publish information at least annually that shows progress with Local Plan preparation, reports any activity relating to the duty to cooperate and shows how the implementation of policies in the Local Plan is progressing. LPAs can also use the AMR to provide up-to-date information on the implementation of any neighbourhood plans that have been made, and to determine whether there is a need to undertake a partial or full review of the Local Plan. The AMR should be made publicly available.

## **3. Key Findings**

The Dover District Core Strategy (2010) sets out a number of objectives regarding social issues, the economy, the environment, as well as housing and infrastructure

delivery. The key findings from the AMR 2016/17 for each of these issues are set out within Chapter 1 of the AMR, which is appended to this report.

#### **4. Social**

- 4.1 The working age population is still below the Core Strategy target of 72,100 however, at 67,700 (ONS 2014 SNPP). Dover has an older age profile and natural change in the District is negative with deaths outnumbering births. Any future population growth in the District is forecast to be from inward migration. The age profile of the population is also forecast to increase, highlighting a need to plan for an ageing population across the District as part of the Local Plan review.
- 4.2 With regard to deprivation, the District's position in the national ranking has worsened over the plan period and the Dover District remains to be in England's most deprived half of local authorities with 4 Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) falling within the most deprived 10% of LSOAs nationally. Additionally, in the most deprived areas of Dover, life expectancy is 7.7 years and 2.7 years lower for men and women respectively, compared to those in the least deprived areas.

#### **5. The Economy**

- 5.1 Over the monitoring period (2016/17) the following employment floorspace (B1, B2 and B8) has been given planning permission; gains of 8,914 sq m, losses of -4,264 sq m resulting in a net overall gain of 4,650 sq m. The principal gains in employment floorspace were seen in B1c (erection of an algae farming facility 2,304 sq m) and B2 uses (erection of R&D manufacturing building 4,230 sq m) both at Discovery Park, Sandwich and losses in B1a office space from Snargate Street and Castle Street in Dover.
- 5.2 Since the last monitoring period (2015/16), the number of jobs in the District has decreased by 700 according to the Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES). Looking at these figures more closely there are gains and losses across a number of sectors. However, the sector with the largest loss over the monitoring period is 'human health and social work activities' with -800 in fact the same sector shows an 800 increase in the previous period 2014/15. KCC have highlighted this figure as being potentially unreliable and if the number of jobs in the District is considered without this sector being included there is no overall change in the monitoring year. Positively, the skill attainment levels in the District have improved as the percentage of working age residents without qualifications has decreased and is now lower than the Kent average.
- 5.3 With regards to development in the retail and leisure sector in the District work has progressed extremely well on the St James's development in Dover Town Centre. Work is underway on the preparation of an Area Action Plan for the Dover Waterfront Area, to deliver new retail, leisure, housing and employment floorspace. In the monitoring year 2016/17 the following retail floorspace has been completed; gains of 461 sq m, losses of -1,176 sq m, resulting in a net over loss of -715 sq m. This is a decrease since the last monitoring year and can be largely attributed to losses from use class A4 (public houses) and loss of retail floorspace through a change of use to other uses. However, the amount of retail floorspace under construction has risen significantly to 12,549 sq m, due to the development at St James's and Lidl, at Whitfield. There has been a slight decline in leisure floorspace (D2) being completed with gains of 469 sq m, losses of -361 sq m resulting in a net gain of 108 sq m. However, the amount of leisure floorspace under construction is 6,695 sq m due to work on the Betteshanger Park mining museum and the cinema at St James's.

- 5.4 Surveys of the primary and secondary shopping frontages in Dover, Deal and Sandwich have shown that; vacancy rates in Dover have increased from 14% (22 units) in 15/16 to 15.28% (24 units) in 16/17; vacancy rates in Deal have increased from 2% (2 units) in 15/16 to 2.83% (3 units) in 16/17 and vacancy rates for Sandwich have remained unchanged at 7% (6 units). The Local Plan review will consider the health of town centres, and Dover in particular, and propose policy measures to address issues.

## **6. The Environment**

- 6.1 Measures have been taken over the monitoring year to improve the environment in the District, with the completion of the St Radigunds play area project at Triangles Community Centre, Coombe Valley and the opening of a Multi-Use Games area in the Wingham Parish.
- 6.2 The Council's adopted Parks and Amenity Open Spaces Strategy places a very high priority on raising standards and capacity at the District's most popular park; Kearsney Abbey. The Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery fund awarded a £3 million grant to restore Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens. The grant was awarded in July 2016 and DDC are in the delivery stage of the phased project which runs until June 2020.
- 6.3 Furthermore, during this monitoring period the Council submitted a planning application for the relocation of a new £26m Dover Leisure Centre based in Whitfield (subsequently approved and under construction).
- 6.4 With regard to the historic environment, the Council has progressed with Conservation Area Character Appraisals in Nelson Street, Deal and Waterloo Crescent, Dover. The Council is also undertaking a review of the District's historic parks and gardens and reports on the outcome of this work are anticipated for spring 2018.

## **7. Housing**

- 7.1 During the monitoring period there were 406 dwellings completed (net figure). The majority of development over the monitoring period occurred in Deal (179 units), followed by Dover (87 units), Aylesham (78 units) and 62 units being completed from the other settlements across the District. In addition, during 2016/17, 91 affordable homes were delivered in the District, equating to 19.2% of all housing completions, compared to 185 dwellings (25.4%) in 2015/16.

### ***5-Year Housing Land Supply Calculation***

- 7.2 The Council's position regarding the 5-year housing land supply was considered at a Special Cabinet meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017. <http://moderngov.dover.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=2835>. In the form of an advanced extract from the AMR Housing chapter. That extract is incorporated in the housing (Chapter 7 of the AMR 16/17 appended to this report)

### ***Infrastructure Delivery***

- 7.3 Over the monitoring period the Council secured £744,518 in S106 contributions from developments across the District. Of this figure DDC received £543,703 (73%) to provide the necessary infrastructure to support growth and the remainder of the

funds £200,815 was passed to KCC to fund transport projects, libraries, social care and education.

## **8. Progress with Plan-Making**

- 8.1 At the end of the monitoring year 2016/17 the Council agreed to commence a Local Plan review. As a result of this decision the Council is currently in the process of producing a new Local Plan and Area Action Plan for the Dover Waterfront. The evidence base that underpins the plan making is in the course of being reviewed. To date the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) has been completed. Further studies have been commissioned; Retail Needs Assessment, North Deal Study, Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulation Appraisal, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (DDC consultation) and the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment.
- 8.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the preparation of these documents and progress against meeting key milestones in their production.
- 8.3 The Council continues to support Parishes in the District with Neighbourhood Planning and has met with a number of Parishes over the monitoring period to provide assistance on this issue. The Council is working with Ash Parish Council who are currently progressing their Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.4 The duty to co-operate was introduced in the Localism Act 2011 and places a legal duty on LPAs to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation relating to strategic cross boundary matters. The Council has continued to co-operate with Kent Authorities and key stakeholders in planning the District's future. This has involved a number of meetings over the monitoring period which is outlined in Chapter 4 of the AMR 2016/17.

## **9. Identification of Options**

- 9.1 To approve the AMR attached at Appendix 1.
- 9.2 Not to approve the AMR attached at Appendix 1.

## **10. Evaluation of Options**

- 10.1 Under Government legislation the Council is required to produce an AMR. Given this, there is no option regarding whether or not to produce an AMR, as it is a legal requirement.
- 10.2 The AMR continues to monitor progress against the LDS and the priorities identified in the Core Strategy (2010), identifying successes and issues that require action.

## **11. Resource Implications**

- 11.1 Once agreed by Cabinet, a copy of the AMR 2016/17 will be made publicly available on the Council's website. There are no further resource implications.

## **12. Corporate Implications**

- 12.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Finance has been consulted and has nothing further to add (SB)
- 12.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Planning Solicitor has considered this report and has no further comment.
- 12.3 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 duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>

### **13. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17

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