

Head of Inward Investment

Executive Summary in relation to Planning Application DOV/12/00440

East Kent and Dover are facing significant, unprecedented economic challenges over the next few years as a combination of factors relating to the loss of Pfizer and the deficit reduction programme take hold.

Having achieved Enterprise Zone designation at the former Pfizer site and a programme of Regional Growth Fund support, it is imperative that other opportunities for growth, recovery and inward investment are taken to support the area going forward, particularly where they are led by the private sector.

The success of the Enterprise Zone programme is a key foundation for future. For this to succeed to maximum effect, it is evident that localities, in which the EZ's sit, such as Dover District, are able to fully support them.

Applications such as that proposed at Western Heights and Farthingloe bring the capacity for support while also helping to address many of the earlier structural issues identified in the Dover area. This support comes both through the content of the application and beyond it in the messaging that it sends out. There is a clear desire to demonstrate that Dover and East Kent is 'open for business' and able to secure private sector investment in the current challenging economic climate.

The application provides a comprehensive linked proposal. It enables a significant uplift in the Dover housing and community offer, being particularly well located to support the high speed train. Beyond that, however, it provides the catalyst and foundation for change at Western Heights. It enables the area which is in acknowledged decline to look to a sustainable future through the opportunities for investment in a package of heritage led tourism also including a uniquely placed hotel offer. It therefore meets long-standing desires which have been acknowledged in the Development Plan. While not part of the application, the private sector investment could also lever in significant other grant funding opportunities to widen the offer at Western Heights.

It is evident that the application will provide significant direct employment benefits both through the direct employment and through the construction and multiplier process and for the tourism, visitor economy. These benefits have been assessed by the applicant and also considered independently by the Council. The application will also provide significant social and environmental benefits, particularly at Western Heights and through the access to the countryside.

The economic and policy landscape is geared ever more around the need for growth and investment to support delivery and aid recovery – with a recognition that decisions should be taken expeditiously at local level.

Exceptionally, there are a wide range of bodies and stakeholders from the business and tourism related sectors, including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, who variously acknowledge and support the benefits and opportunities that the application brings.

In conclusion, in times of economic adversity opportunities arise which become even more important than may be the case in normal circumstances. I would strongly support the application and recommend that consent should be granted in such a way that allows it to facilitate early and maximum delivery of the various components thereby ensuring the benefits are captured at the earliest time.

Head of Inward Investment

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposals incorporated within planning application DOV/12/00440 come at an opportune time both for Dover and the wider economy in East Kent going forward. In this context, the application, as a visible catalyst for change and investment on the western side of Dover, represents one of the most important opportunities to be considered by the Council in recent times and comes at a point of greatest need.
- 1.2 As with the rest of the UK, the district is feeling the impact of recession. Key pressures for us have arisen through a combination of factors the consequences of which are still unfolding. These include, among other matters, the decision by Pfizer to close their pharmaceutical plant at Sandwich, the impact of the deficit reduction measures, impact on public sector spending and the continuing uncertainty over the regeneration opportunities at the Port of Dover. With this backdrop, it is evident that chances for growth and recovery should be welcomed wherever possible and only declined in the most exceptional of circumstances if all other avenues have been exhausted. In this respect, there should be demonstrable evidence of any harm being of a sufficient and compelling nature and of a scale that overrides the economic benefits that would otherwise be lost.
- 1.3 It should also be noted that refusal of the application would send out all the wrong messages for investment and developer interest, coming at a time where there is a compelling need to demonstrate greatest confidence in Dover and send a clear message to the development sector that the area is open for business, innovation and opportunity.

2.0 Economic and Policy Landscape

- 2.1 The need for recovery is paramount. There is an inescapable recognition of the need for growth, investment, enterprise and delivery. This is best illustrated by the references to the national and local economic and policy landscape, which continue to evolve and strengthen around the needs of business. This is set out below in some detail to ensure that the context of the growth, investment and needs are set out to inform the full picture.

3.0 Coalition Programme

- 3.1 The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister indicated, among other things in their foreword to the Coalition Programme for Government that: "...this coalition has the potential for era-changing, convention challenging, radical reform. For example, we both want to build a new economy from the rubble of the old. We will support sustainable growth and enterprise balanced across all regions and industries..."
- 3.2 The Coalition Programme also indicated, "The Government believes that business is the driver of economic growth and innovation, and we need to take urgent action to boost enterprise...." Other appropriate references indicate that: "...We will take steps to improve the competitiveness of the UK tourism industry, recognising the important part it plays in our national economy..." and in giving new powers to local councils "...We will rapidly abolish Regional Spatial

Strategies and return decision-making powers to local councils...” For completion, the Coalition also indicated that “... We will publish and present to Parliament a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development and setting out national economic, environmental and social priorities.

4.0 Local Growth: realising every place’s potential

4.1 The Local Growth White Paper set out the foundations for the implementation of the Coalition Programme. While recognising the importance of bring stability to the public finances, the Paper acknowledges the need to help business, get the economy going, foster prosperity develop and equip Local Enterprise Partnerships to promote private sector growth and create jobs locally.

4.2 Key considerations include recognition of the need to “... enable innovation where places have a comparative advantage or where the market will not step in ...” and in the context of the Big Society to ensure that “...where the drivers of growth are local, decisions should be made locally...”

4.3 It is also acknowledged in the case of tourism “...Going forward a strong emphasis will be put on leadership at the local level, particularly by local tourism businesses. ...”

4.4 Specifically, from a planning and housing perspective the White Paper also includes the following:

“...We also need to ensure that local communities which opt for growth are able to reap the benefits from doing so...” and “...The vast bulk of planning decisions should take place at the local level...”

“...The current local government finance system does not provide the right incentive or rewards for councils to build new homes as little of the economic gain from new development is captured by the local community. ...” and “...Housing can be an important source of economic growth...”

5.0 South East Local Enterprise Partnership

5.1 The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) brings together key leaders from business, local government, further and higher education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England through exploring opportunities for enterprise while addressing barriers to growth.

5.2 Covering Essex, Southend, Thurrock, Kent, Medway and East Sussex the SELEP are the largest strategic enterprise partnership outside of London. The SELEP is one of 39 partnerships set up by the government to be the key body determining strategic economic priorities while making investments and delivering activities to drive growth and create local jobs.

5.3 Recognising that it will be business and entrepreneurs that will create growth, the SELEP mission is to:

‘Create the most enterprising economy in England’

5.4 **Challenges**

5.5 The SELEP area includes some of the most **deprived communities** in the UK. In part this is because there is a steady flow of deprived families from London to these communities because they cannot find an affordable home in the capital. Economic and social opportunities for such families are limited and this places severe burdens on some of the SELEP local authorities. The scale, intensity and depth of economic and social deprivation is often more severe than that faced in communities in other UK cities. Many of the SELEP coastal communities and areas within the Thames Gateway are amongst the most dependent in the country on public sector employment. It is a SELEP aspiration to address the causes of this deprivation as well as the associated health inequality issues.

5.6 The single goal for the SELEP is to promote **steady, sustained economic growth** over the next two decades. Moreover, it is recognised that the SELEP must achieve this growth whilst simultaneously enhancing and protecting the valuable natural assets, which make our communities and landscapes attractive and distinctive.

5.7 **OBJECTIVE 2: Promote investment in our coastal communities:** The SELEP coast is one of our most valued natural assets, but also subject to erosion and rising sea levels. Some of the SELEP coastal communities are already exceptionally prosperous but others suffer from significant deprivation. Others however, offer considerable unrealised potential and the possibility of significant economic growth. SELEP see opportunities in tourism, low-carbon technologies (including offshore wind, solar power and other renewable energy sources), creative and cultural industries, manufacturing, engineering and business services. Thus, SELEP are clear that we must focus on promoting investment in Clacton, Jaywick, Hastings, Bexhill, Newhaven, Eastbourne, Harwich, Sheerness, Margate, Folkestone, Dover, Southend and Sandwich.

5.8 **OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthen the competitive advantage of strategic growth locations:** In addition to those in the Thames Gateway (most notably Southend, Basildon, Thurrock, Medway, Dartford and Gravesham) the SELEP includes several other locations where we are promoting substantial economic growth. These include Ashford, Maidstone, Manston Airport, Harlow, Dover, Colchester, Stansted Airport and Chelmsford. Each of these locations is already home to companies with growth prospects and is attractive to others. SELEP must ensure that investments take place to enable this growth to be realised.

5.9 A Coastal Community Group, which Dover is an active participant, has been established with the brief to ensure that the voice of the coastal communities – which comprise – some 25% of the SELEP population is heard. Key areas of opportunity such as the tourism, visitor economy are on the agenda going forward.

6.0 National Planning Policy Framework

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, focuses on how the planning system can support and enable sustainable growth for the future recognising that “development means growth”

6.2 Key acknowledgments include the need to house a rising population, which is living longer, the need to improve the places in which we live or risk stagnation

and how “our historic environment, buildings, landscapes towns and villages can better be cherished if their spirit thrives, rather than withers. “

6.3 Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The planning system is about helping to make this happen. Development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay – a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision.

6.4 The NPPF sets out clearly what could make a proposed plan or development unsustainable.

6.5 In order to fulfil its purpose of helping achieve sustainable development, planning must not simply be about scrutiny. Planning must be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives.

6.6 The NPPF indicates that:

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

6.7 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.8 The National Planning Policy Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. It is highly desirable that local planning authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place.

6.9 The NPPF includes 12 Core Planning principles, which include among other matters and should:

- “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. ...”

6.10 Delivering a Sustainable Development

Specifically the NPPF indicates that:

“The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. ...”

The NPPF also indicates that local planning authorities should:

- “set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
- set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement....”;

6.11 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing

should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs, which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

6.12 Healthy Communities

The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see.

Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

6.13 Other NPPF references, which are relevant, include:

Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest (para 116). Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

6.14 Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account (para 126):

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

- 6.15 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of (para 131):
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.16 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional (para 132).
- 6.17 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para 134).
- 6.18 Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies (para 140).
- 6.19 Decision Taking
- Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area (para 187).
- 6.20 Determining applications
- The planning system is plan-led. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions (para 196).
- 6.21 In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 197).

- 6.22 The NPPF aims to strengthen local decision-making and reinforce the importance of up-to date plans (para 209).
- 6.23 For 12 months from the day of publication, decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with this Framework (para 214).
- 6.24 In other cases and following this 12-month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given) (para 215).

7.0 South East Plan

- 7.1 The South East Plan incorporates a number of policies that are relevant to the economy and investment needs of Dover as part of the wider East Kent area. These include:
- 7.2 POLICY SP4: REGENERATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION – This recognises the focus for funding and initiatives to address the extensive regeneration needs within the sub-regions of East Kent;
- 7.3 POLICY RE6: COMPETITIVENESS AND ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL ECONOMIC WEAKNESS – This recognises the need through joint working to address structural economic weakness to release the economic potential of those areas which are under performing, specifically acknowledging the economic potential of the international gateways of the ports of Southampton, Portsmouth and Dover, the Medway ports, the Channel Tunnel and Southampton Airport and to maximise business opportunities in the surrounding areas
- 7.4 POLICY H4: TYPE AND SIZE OF NEW HOUSING – Local authorities should identify the full range of existing and future-housing needs required in their areas working with adjoining local authorities where appropriate.
- 7.5 POLICY H5: HOUSING DESIGN AND DENSITY – Positive measures to raise the quality of new housing, reduce its environmental impact and facilitate future adaptation to meet changes in accommodation needs will be encouraged. Local authorities will prepare guidelines for the design of new housing in their areas that encourage the use of sustainable construction methods and address the implications of changing lifestyles for new housing design.
- 7.6 POLICY BE1: MANAGEMENT FOR AN URBAN RENAISSANCE – Local authorities and their partners will use opportunities associated with new development to help provide significant improvements to the built environment, promote and support design solutions relevant to context and which build upon local character and distinctiveness and sense of place, including the sensitive reuse of redundant or under-used historic buildings
- 7.7 POLICY BE6: MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT – When developing and implementing plans and strategies, local authorities and other bodies will adopt policies and support proposals which protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place. The region's internationally and nationally designated historic assets should receive the

highest level of protection. Proposals that make sensitive use of historic assets through regeneration, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into appropriate use should be encouraged.

- 7.8 POLICY TSR4: TOURISM ATTRACTIONS – Priority should be given to improving the quality of all existing attractions to meet changing consumer demands and high environmental standards in terms of design and access. Local authorities and partners will encourage the enhancement and upgrade of existing visitor attractions. Local authorities should consider among other matters whether they facilitate regeneration?
- 7.9 POLICY TSR5: TOURIST ACCOMMODATION – The diversity of the accommodation sector will be positively reflected in tourism and planning policies. In formulating planning policies and making decisions local planning authorities should consider the need for hotel developments to be in the proposed location, including links with the particular location
- 7.10 POLICY TSR7: PRIORITY AREAS FOR TOURISM – Local development frameworks, tourism/cultural strategies and transport plans will seek to emphasise and implement, among other matters, The South East Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, The Coastal Strip and the Isle of Wight – seeking complementary approaches to the development and management of tourism so as to upgrade facilities, promote diversity, and reduce seasonality and improve access.
- 7.11 POLICY S5: CULTURAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITY – Increased and sustainable participation in sport, recreation and cultural activity should be encouraged by local authorities, public agencies and their partners through local development documents and other measures in order to improve the overall standard of fitness, enhance cultural diversity and enrich the overall quality of life covering among other matters aspects such as the arts, heritage, the museums, libraries and archive sector and give special attention to cultural provision in supporting economic growth and urban regeneration, which may be the subject of area action plans.

Specific Sub-Regional Policies include:

- 7.12 POLICY EKA4: URBAN RENAISSANCE OF THE COASTAL TOWNS – Local authorities and development agencies will work together to encourage new economic impetus throughout the coastal towns including the regeneration measures which will create high quality urban environments within the coastal towns and concentrations of employment in small businesses, education, culture and other services are encouraged, notably in central Folkestone, Margate and Dover
- 7.13 POLICY EKA6: EMPLOYMENT LOCATIONS – Local development documents should confirm the broad scale of new business and related developments already identified and give priority to completion of major employment sites at the following locations - Dover, Richborough and the former coalfield
- 7.14 POLICY KTG1: CORE STRATEGY – Local and central government, and all parties concerned with service provision and infrastructure, will co-ordinate their policies and programmes to: as a first priority, make full use of previously developed land before greenfield sites, except where there are clear planning advantages from the development of an urban extension that improves the form,

functioning and environment of existing settlements or a new community, raise the standards of education and skills in the workforce, including support for higher and further education, and achieve economic development and inward investment at an accelerated pace and greatly increase the supply of new housing, and affordable housing in particular

8.0 Dover District Local Development Framework Core Strategy

8.1 The opening paragraphs in the preface to the Dover District Local Development Framework Core Strategy (CS), Adopted in February 2012 are particularly relevant in setting the foundations for the future. Key extracts from the LDF are set out below and include:

“Dover - Ambitious for the Future, Sensitive to the Past”

8.2 “The Core Strategy has been prepared at a particularly important time for the District. It is a time of unprecedented opportunity that, if taken, will unlock the District's potential. This requires vision, a willingness to break away from planning strategy of the previous two or three decades, and determination to make sure that plans become reality. The challenge is to grasp and make the most of these opportunities, while making sure that the District's renowned natural and historic qualities are nurtured for their intrinsic value and to help underpin social and economic progress.

8.3 The Council has developed a regeneration programme that focuses action on Dover town. A strong public sector led partnership has been formed to take the programme forward. In 2008 the Government designated Dover as a National Growth Point, which demonstrated both the strength of the case for action and recognition of the potential to deliver a transformational level of change. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (known as the South East Plan) reflects the Growth Point objectives and sets a strategic planning framework for the whole District.

8.4 The Core Strategy's task is to take all of this forward through the development of a town planning strategy at the local level. This Strategy must have sufficient vision and detail to provide a meaningful framework for the District's future. It must be capable of enabling the regeneration programme to be implemented and be strong enough to endure over the period to 2026, while also ensuring that it has sufficient flexibility to cater for changing circumstances. ...”

8.5 1.6 To decide what the District should be like in 2026 it is first necessary to draw a clear picture of its current position. The Core Strategy does this through the development of a District Portrait. This allows a comparison to be made with other areas, such as Kent and the region, and for issues affecting the District to be identified – in effect a diagnosis of the District's health. Aims and objectives are developed from this to address the issues and, in turn, they lead to the District's future picture. Overall, this is an assessment of how well the District works now, what needs to change, stay the same, or be strengthened, and how change can be achieved.

8.6 1.7 Where the diagnosis has found that things are not working well, or need changing, they could be said to be out of balance and the Strategy proposes action to re-balance them. Re-balancing will require some form of intervention. As set out in the Delivery Plan chapter, intervention can involve a range of actions

such as the adoption of a planning policy on a particular issue, the allocation of land for development, preparation of development briefs and masterplans for areas, public sector purchase of development sites, and sometimes direct building by the public sector. The Core Strategy sets out the expected level of intervention needed to ensure that the proposals become reality. This is based upon an assessment of how likely it is that the private sector can implement the proposals without public sector support.

2 The Need for Change

- 8.7 2.1 "No change" is not an option. Economic, social and environmental change is part of everyday life. What is considered through the Core Strategy is the degree and type of change that is appropriate, where and when it should happen and how it is to be delivered. The factors that need to be taken into account to help decide this are, the characteristics and potential of the District, and the objectives and policies of other relevant plans and strategies, taking account of Dover's National Growth Point designation in 2008.
- 8.8 2.7 Despite its location in the prosperous South East Region and possessing key economic assets, the District, in common with other parts of East Kent, contains pockets of some of the most deprived areas in the Country. Its economy is not generally as strong as West Kent's which, in turn, is not as strong as the rest of the Region. Its town centres compete with the neighbouring centres of Folkestone, Ashford, Westwood Cross and, in particular, Canterbury. In recent years these centres have been improving at a faster rate than Dover and Deal and attract a lot of the District's residents, especially for non-food shopping and leisure.
- 8.9 2.30 These assets play a large part in defining the character of the District and the individuality of settlements. In many cases they reflect the District's strategic coastal location and particularly in Dover's case, its military importance as the closest crossing point to continental Europe. This has given rise to a series of fortifications, most notably the Roman Classis Britannica, Dover Castle, Fort Burgoyne, the Western Heights and First and Second World War fortifications. Although Dover Castle is the District's top attraction, collectively these assets are not used in a way that exploits their full potential.
- 8.10 2.38 As a generalisation, the District's housing stock does not offer sufficient choice to meet current needs in terms of affordability, type and size and quality. The District, and especially Dover, contains significantly more terraced housing than the regional average, much of which is private pre-1920s and associated with poor condition. There is also a much higher than average amount of homes that are long-term vacant. The stock is not sufficiently suited or adaptable to the needs of the elderly and those with health problems. The evidence also indicates that there is not enough housing at the high end of the market that appeals to working age people moving into the area.
- 8.11 2.44 The District's tourism economy is the fifth largest in Kent with a 2006 based estimated value of £199m total business turnover (Dover Tourism Development Plan interim update 2008). Tourism visits are focused at Dover - designated as a Tourism Gateway in the Regional Spatial Strategy. Dover accounts for 98% of the District's 700,000 annual visits to key attractions (Dover Castle is the top attraction). In addition there are 250,000 cruise ship passengers using the Port and 800,000 visits to the De Bradelei Wharf shopping outlet at Dover Wellington

Dock. As a destination Dover's strengths are high awareness, strong history, quality of countryside and closeness to France.

- 8.12 2.45 There are however indications of under-performance. Average visitor spend is lower than Kent's, visits to some key attractions have declined, as have trips by overseas visitors in terms of both day visitors and those who stay overnight. Other key issues at Dover are poor perceptions, no destination hotel, general quality of restaurants, shops, entertainment and public areas, and strength of links between dispersed attractions. Overall, tourism is under-achieving its potential.
- 8.13 2.58 The quality of its public realm areas, including the river, requires great improvement in order to provide places of interest, which also link the individual parts of the centre and make walking and exploration enjoyable. Although the town is renowned for its Castle and Cliffs it lacks modern buildings of interest or stature, which could themselves become symbols of Dover in the future.
- 8.14 2.59 Overall, the picture is of a town with a positive international profile but is under-performing for local people and visitors. Yet it has great natural and cultural assets that should be used more effectively.

Dover

- 8.15 2.69 All of the imbalances occur to a high degree in Dover. Although the District's principal town there is a serious imbalance between its status and overall performance. This indicates that action at a fundamental level to bring about a high degree of change is needed.

Aim

- 8.16 To transform Dover into a leading town in the region and regenerate the District so that economically and socially it equals or out-performs the region. Drawing on its international profile and using the catalyst of new high speed train services to London from 2009, the expansion of Dover Docks and other planned developments together with the exceptional quality of its natural and historic assets the District will re-position and project itself as a desirable place to live, work and relax. Economic growth will be supported by an improved range, flexibility and quality of housing which will also better accommodate local needs. Growth will be used to promote higher quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness and sense of place, a more efficient use of natural resources, more healthy lifestyles and a reduction in social inequalities. Improved education and training facilities will ensure that local people are better equipped to join the active workforce. The Strategy will focus on Dover town where there is most need for action but also where there is most potential. A comprehensive range of action will be followed across wide social, economic and environmental fronts. A strong programme of urban regeneration will be supported by planned urban expansion and a step-change in public transport provision. The scale of growth presents the opportunity for the town to create a more sustainable pattern of living. Improvements to town centre appearance and facilities and to transport systems need to accompany the uplift in housing, population and jobs growth. People will want to come to Dover because it offers easy public transport access to London and continental Europe, employment opportunities, distinctive, competitively priced housing, waterfront lifestyle, and a strong town centre in an unrivalled natural and historic setting.

The District objectives, not in any order of priority, are to:

- 8.17 1. Foster population growth particularly in working age families to support forecast growth in the local economy - focused at Dover
- 8.18 2. Transform Dover to become a location of choice to live, work, visit, shop and spend leisure time and be a beacon for the District
- 8.19 3. Deliver sufficient additional housing to broaden the range and improve the quality and market perception of the District's, and especially Dover's, housing offer and meet the changing needs of the population

Hotels, Leisure, Cafés, Financial Services

- 8.20 3.23 The evidence base has identified potential for additional hotel accommodation at Dover in various categories. There is potential for additional budget accommodation (partly catered for in the St. James's pipeline development), a niche hotel and an upper mid range hotel of around 200 bed-spaces. The provision of an upper mid range hotel is particularly important in supporting the uplift of Dover as a place to visit and could provide additional leisure facilities that would benefit local people.

Tourism

- 8.21 3.25 There is considerable opportunity to improve tourism, especially at the Dover Tourism Gateway, which would generate additional employment. Much of this revolves around making much better use of historic and natural assets allied to the improvements in shopping, cafés, hotels etc. mentioned above and to the public areas of the town centre. Many of these assets are spread apart and new ways of connecting them to encourage visits to a network of attractions rather than a single one, as at present, need to be developed. This would help the town to take better advantage of the cruise ship trade and the two-hour domestic travel market, including the new possibilities that will be brought about through the high-speed train service to London.
- 8.26 3.42 The projections of household types in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 indicates that across East Kent there will be growth in couples with no children and single person households and a decline in couples with children. For those single person and couple no children households who can afford to buy their home it should not be assumed that they will want a small flat or house. Typically they have the largest disposable incomes and tend to purchase the maximum that can be afforded rather than to only meet their needs. The Assessment also indicated that residents' aspirations lie more towards semi-detached and detached housing. Overall, the Assessment indicates that there will need to be emphasis on the provision of semi-detached and detached housing in the mid and upper price ranges. The provision of such housing is also crucial to broadening Dover's housing base and making it a more attractive offer.
- 8.27 3.60 The town's historic environment represents an immense but under-utilised asset. In particular the Castle and Western Heights need to fully fulfil their potential to attract visitors and enhance understanding, without harming their intrinsic qualities, in a way that also co-ordinates with other attractions in the centre, such as the Museum and Roman Painted House. In addition Connaught Barracks, which contains the ancient monument of Fort Burgoyne, is no longer required for military purposes. This provides another significant opportunity for redevelopment, which should also be used to secure the future of Fort Burgoyne.

The Town's wildlife and greenspace resource, which is especially rich in chalk grassland, needs to be protected and strengthened through the green infrastructure network.

9.0 Dover District Corporate Plan: 2012 – 2016

9.1 The Corporate Plan (Plan) is Dover District Council's main strategic document, providing a framework for the delivery of services. It is a clear statement of the Council's vision and strategic priorities for the next four years.

9.2 The vision is that Dover District Council will be: 'A high-speed district of growth, enterprise and opportunity'

9.3 To deliver the vision the Council has identified the following Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 1: Enabling and supporting growth of the economy and opportunity for investment and jobs

Strategic Priority 2: Facilitating strong communities with a sense of place and identity

Strategic Priority 3: Serving our communities effectively

9.4 The Corporate Plan details a number of actions and outcomes needed to deliver these priorities. These include:

- To make land available at Western Heights / Great Farthingloe Farm to enable progress towards the comprehensive proposals for regeneration, linked to the Town Centre, and maximise the tourism potential of this area, enabled and facilitated through a Planning Performance Agreement.
- Addressing the 5-year land supply deficit and identifying the inward investment / regeneration delivery actions needed to help ensure the most significant development schemes, once permitted, are implemented.
- Encouraging investment and development in areas to support the continuing prosperity of the district and improve the quality of life for all.
- To further develop the district to enhance business growth and employment opportunities.
- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills: Training and education is linked to economic growth and we will continue our enabling role working with local employers and training providers to identify skills shortages to meet local business needs and improve access to local job opportunities.
- Through the Housing Strategy we will enable housing growth and the delivery of more affordable homes, as well as improving the condition of existing homes, addressing inequality, and enabling vulnerable people access to quality housing to live independently.

- Working with partners to promote the district as a visitor destination and maintaining a clean and green approach to the appearance of the district;

10.0 Built Heritage Conservation Framework for Dover Western Heights

- 10.1 The Built Heritage Conservation Framework (BHCF) was commissioned by Dover District Council, with the support of English Heritage and Kent County Council, as a stage in the production of a master-planned approach to the conservation management of one of England's most challenging heritage sites – Dover Western Heights (DWH) in south-eastern Kent. This includes:
- 10.2 The poor condition of the built heritage at the Western Heights has been identified in this BHCF as a major issue throughout the site, with levels of maintenance and repair being low across much of it (a partial exception being the parts managed by HMPS) and non-existent in places.
- 10.3 Furthermore, the Western Heights' fortifications have been on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register for a number of years. The 2009 edition of the Register stated that 'The extensive Western Heights fortifications are in multiple ownership and parts are at risk, including the Western Outworks (on land managed by the Home Office) and parts of the site that lie within the guardianship of English Heritage: the North Entrance, North Centre Bastion and adjoining Detached Bastion. The areas at risk are robust but steadily deteriorating due to long-term neglect and vandalism'. In the most recent 2011 edition of the Register, the parts at risk were still assessed as being in 'poor' condition and their priority category as C (slow decay, no solution agreed); furthermore, the Western Heights' fortifications appeared on the list of ten 'priority sites' in English Heritage's South East Region. Responsibility for assessing the condition of the built fabric, prioritising and carrying out repairs (informed by the significance of elements) and operating an appropriate maintenance regime will obviously remain with the owners of the various components. Lead organisations should set a good example in this respect. Encouraging other owners to follow suit and liaison between owners over the maintenance of components where ownership is split (i.e. to operate a unified maintenance regime across property boundaries) will be crucial to the success of tackling this major issue. It would be beneficial for lead organisations to advise other owners on raising the resources necessary to carry out the repairs and maintenance. Achieving the removal of the Western Heights' fortifications from the Buildings at Risk Register should be regarded as a key early objective, but only as the starting point to adopting a long-term and as far as possible co-ordinated approach to the maintenance and repair of the Western Heights' built heritage.

Recommendation

- 10.4 1.23 As part of a co-ordinated approach to the conservation management of the Western Heights, owners of the component fortifications should be encouraged a) to commission a condition survey of the built fabric which, informed by significances, enables repair works to be prioritised and carried out, and b) to introduce an appropriate regime of maintenance.
- 10.5 Heritage crime and related anti-social behaviour is an issue affecting many of the Western Heights' components and elements. A coherent strategy for combating heritage crime throughout the Heights is needed (cf. English Heritage's Heritage Crime Initiative and the related Heritage Crime Memorandum of Understanding,

to which Dover District Council is a signatory, and the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH)). Given the number of components at the Western Heights, the overall size of the site, and the persistent nature of the heritage crime problem there, one way of tackling it might be to consider the use of volunteers (drawn from members of the local community who care passionately about the site, such as the Western Heights Preservation Society) to act as heritage wardens and work alongside the police.

11.0 Dover District Draft Heritage Strategy 2012

- 11.1 The Dover District Draft Heritage Strategy provides a number of important references to the roles, needs and opportunities for heritage supporting and enabling regeneration and growth.

Introduction

- 11.2 The historic environment of Dover District offers great potential as a resource for enhancing the quality of life in the District. It can act as a framework for regeneration, complementing and supporting the economic development of Dover. This can help produce higher quality and more sustainable development that is successfully integrated into the life of the District. The historic environment can also play a key role in social regeneration. Successful heritage-led regeneration, acting in partnership with community projects, can help to connect people with their urban and rural landscapes, with their heritage and with each other. In this section the main ways in which the historic environment can contribute to regeneration, to Dover's economy and to the District's social well-being will be reviewed. The final section brings together the opportunities identified in each of the thematic papers.

The potential of the historic environment to act as a catalyst for economic and social regeneration

- 11.3 Successful regeneration has to have a lasting long-term positive effect on places and the communities that live in them. It is not just about improving the physical fabric of a place; it is about bringing about social cohesion, encouraging economic growth and restoring vibrancy to communities. The potential of the historic environment to form a keystone to the District's regeneration is recognised in the Core Strategy and its tagline "ambitious for the future, sensitive to the past" and as such Dover's rich heritage should play a key role in any regeneration scheme in the District. The incorporation of heritage as a keystone in a holistic regeneration approach brings a number of benefits.

Reduced social exclusion

- 11.4 Heritage-led regeneration also has a role to play in helping to reduce social exclusion in modern developments. Historic buildings come in all shapes and sizes. Just as they can break up the monotonous shape of a modern development so they can help to break up the monotony of the social structures. For example, most of the housing around Crabble Paper Mill consists of detached and semi-detached houses. The residential conversion of the old mill buildings has created primarily 1 and 2-bedroom flats which will have a somewhat different demographic. Retaining older buildings such as terraced housing in the centre of towns helps to conserve the character of the settlement. In addition, however, these houses are often less expensive than new build

equivalents and so by conserving them a more diverse population is allowed than if they were replaced.

- 11.5 Retaining historic buildings and features also helps older people to retain their own sense of place in an area and thereby brings the generations together. Where those features relate to people's former employment this also helps to tell the story of an area which can be developed for educational groups to further embed new development within the older historic framework. Such changes must be affordable however. Whilst 'gentrification' of a place may lead to an improvement in the market value of properties care must be taken to ensure that this doesn't end up pricing sections of the existing community out and lead to disenfranchisement. Likewise where a ready use cannot be found for a historic building there is the danger that it will become neglected or eventually derelict and will act as a source of disenchantment. It is important therefore that innovative and transformational solutions are sought to bring historic buildings and sites back into use.

Adding value to new development

- 11.6 Heritage-led regeneration adds value to development projects. It is striking that in most towns it is the heritage-led developments that are among the most prestigious and financially valuable. Examples in Dover District include the Deal Barracks development, the Tannery Lane development in Sandwich and the Crabble Paper Mill development in Dover. Where regeneration is led by large-scale new development, the historic environment can help to avoid a sense of a development scheme being artificial and seemingly dropped into a landscape. These can also have the advantage of accommodating large-scale new housing without major intrusion into the existing infrastructure and the local community.

Durability of regeneration

- 11.7 The historic environment can also help to ensure that regeneration is durable. Many examples of failed regeneration are where development has taken place entirely independent of the local environment. The 'newness' appeals for a period but gradually the buildings become older and less fashionable, the economic imperative that called the development into being passes and the development begins to decline, at worst gradually degenerating into a 'sink estate'.

Development of new sites as tourist attractions

- 11.8 Within Dover District there are a number of sites that might be developed further as tourist attractions.
- 11.9 **Dover Western Heights** – The site attracts a large number of visitors for its occasional open days in the Drop Redoubt and the Western Heights Preservation Trust arrange a number of activities each year. The site also receives a large (but unknown) number of visitors via the car parks at Drop Redoubt Road, The North Entrance and at St Martin's Battery where elements of the twentieth century defences can still be seen. It is likely that other visitors explore much of the remains that can be seen on an informal basis. Given the size of the site and potential management and access issues, it may be necessary to be selective about which elements of the site are fully open-up to the public

12.0 Growth and Infrastructure Bill

- 12.1 This is currently progressing through Parliamentary processes. The reasons behind the government's decision to introduce it according to the Government's spokesperson are:

'The challenges we face mean that we must constantly keep in mind what more needs to be done to encourage innovation and economic growth, to create more jobs and to tackle anything which acts as a barrier to this happening.'

- 12.2 Aside from promoting growth, key measures in the bill relate to the provision of infrastructure, and related matters together with speeding-up processes and procedures.

13.0 The Heseltine Review

- 13.1 Key extracts from the recent report by Lord Heseltine '**No stone unturned** in pursuit of Growth', include:

- 13.2 **9.** Experience indicated that there are some things only government can do to drive growth in the economy. It must do those relentlessly and to the very highest standards set around the world. There are many areas where government should stand aside completely. But in the vast majority of cases we will only get the very best results for our economy if government, the business community and local leaders exploit their skills and resources in partnership.

- 13.3 **17.** Government must now reverse the trend of the past century and unleash the dynamic potential of our local economies. The Government is committed to a local agenda. Is that policy or slogan? There are encouraging signs to believe it is policy but so far we have seen only the first steps.

- 13.4 **25.** This report sets out the case for a major reconfiguration of responsibilities for economic development between central and local government, and between government and the private sector. Throughout discussions for this report, and based on the experience of the last 40 years in and around government, I have heard time and again that the Government needs a single compelling vision for how wealth will be created in the UK. It is said that all parts of government, not just the Business Department or the Treasury, must work in support of that plan. Decisions on housing or transport, education or welfare support will have a far greater long term impact on our economic prospects than any form of direct support provided to business. Much more of the inspiration for our economy should be based on the strength and ambition of our cities and their communities. It was this local leadership that built our country in the first place.

- 13.5 **29.** The second precondition for economic transformation is stability. If we are to inject confidence into the economy, we need stability. Investors demand it. They invest against five to 10 year plans and want to know that the rules of the game will not change. The need for certainty about our future relationship with Europe is a prime example. If we are to inject enthusiasm into our business communities to invest their energies into the growth of their local economies they want to be sure that their efforts will not be overtaken by another divergent initiative two years down the line. We therefore need the maximum political consensus possible about the best architecture for promoting growth in the economy. But we must then let that architecture stand the test of time so that all can get on with the real business of creating wealth.

- 13.6 **38.** There are no easy or short-term ways to beat the world's most competitive economies. The pressures and challenges of an ever more educated motivated and competitive world are going to intensify. Every sinew of our body politic will need to be stretched simply to keep up. To be good only in part is to lose. We all have to work to be as good as or better than them. The real lesson of our Olympic triumph is that four hundred of our fellow citizens pushed themselves for eight long years to the threshold of human tolerance. Government helped. It worked. It was a grand project. We can do it as well as anyone.
- 13.7 **39.** This report is a challenge to all of us in both the public and private sectors – politicians, business leaders and individuals. We are all responsible for ensuring that the UK creates the wealth upon which our aspirations depend. It is a challenge from which there is no escape.
- 13.8 **1.40** By focusing on raising our performance in every town and city we will return our economy to sustained, long-term growth.
- 13.9 **1.41** What is clear to me, whether we adopt a sectoral approach or a more local, place based approach, is that growth is everyone's business. Government can set national policies and create an environment where business can flourish, but success depends on businesses and individuals, working together.
- 13.10 **1.42** As we prepare for growth we must – each and every one of us – do all in our power to advance it. It is not someone else's problem.

Stimulating local growth

- 13.11 **2.14** For the UK to face up to the challenge of increasing international competition, we must reverse the long trend to centralism. Every place is unique. Local leaders are best placed to understand the opportunities and obstacles to growth in their own communities. Policies that are devised holistically and locally, and which are tailored to local circumstances, are much more likely to increase the economy's capacity for growth. National policies devised by central government departments can never be as relevant to all the different circumstances of our local economies as strategies that originate in those places to start with.
- 13.12 **2.15** My proposals are in two parts. First, we need to empower local places by letting them take the initiative to generate local growth, in partnership with central government. With initiative will come responsibility. And second, we must ensure that the incentives and structures of local places are organised in such a way as to secure the greatest possible economic contribution, with each area able to play to its natural strengths.

14.00 Enterprise Zone

- 14.1 Dover is one of only 24 localities to host an Enterprise Zone, this being at the former Pfizer site at Sandwich, now known as Discovery Park.
- 14.2 It is evident from research conducted into the 1980's Enterprise Zone programme that the locality in which the Enterprise Zone sits is as equally important to supporting the Enterprise Zone going forward.

- 14.3 The paper from Professor Pete Tyler from Cambridge University titled “Making Enterprise Zones Work: Lessons from Previous Enterprise Zone Policy in the United Kingdom” includes the following”:

“Maximising the economic benefits

- 14.4 The Enterprise Zone policy is designed to stimulate the pace of economic development on the zone and the local economy of which it is a part. If this objective is to be achieved it is important that the zone is designed and marketed as part of a clearly defined local economic strategy...”

The paper goes on to acknowledge that:

“Sustainability

- 14.5 The evaluation evidence on the achievements of previous zone policy indicated that it can provide a significant boost to the process of regeneration in local areas. It did this by increasing confidence, enhancing the rate of economic return and facilitating new property and infrastructure. In the national evaluation of the first and second waves of enterprise zones in the United Kingdom (DoE, 1995) the evidence indicated that the majority of companies intended to stay and maintain their employment because the location they had chosen was meeting their operational needs. In planning the development of a zone, it is therefore important that zone managers ensure that they are playing to quality and ensure as far as possible that the infrastructure they provide and the physical lay-out of the zone remain fit for purpose for a considerable period of time. ...” and in the conclusion indicates:
- 14.6 “...The (EZ) policy can offer considerable advantages to the stimulation of economic growth in a local area but it has to be delivered as part of a carefully crafted economic development package that recognises the interactions between the zone and the wider local economy of which it is a part. ...”

15.0 ‘Grow For It’ East Kent

- 15.1 Following on from the designation of Discovery Park as an Enterprise Zone and the award of £40m to the Expansion East Kent Regional Growth Fund, Kent County Council – in liaison with the four East Kent Councils – has appointed Severn Hills to undertake a major marketing and promotion campaign.

- 15.2 The objectives behind this campaign, developed through a researched based approach, are to ‘sell East Kent’ under a programme called ‘Grow For It’ through highlighting:

- Improved connectivity;
- Value for money; and
- Lifestyle

Around the following key themes for the future:

- Creative and Digital;
- Biotech and Life Sciences;
- Green Technology; and
- Tourism;

16.0 Summary of Policy and Economic Landscape

16.1 The policy and economic landscape includes a number of clear messages. These include:

- The need for recovery and sustainable growth;
- The need to boost investment, innovation and business;
- The importance and recognition of the role of tourism;
- The case for local growth and the taking of decisions at a local level;
- The role of housing supporting growth;
- The role and importance of the Local Enterprise Partnership and their objectives for growth;
- The importance of sustainable development and the economic, social and environmental roles founded in the planning system;
- The value of heritage supporting regeneration; and
- The primacy given to the NPPF.

16.2 The South East Plan, and Local Development Framework recognise and include the following:

- The need for regeneration, social inclusion and addressing structural weakness;
- The need for new quality housing;
- The value of the historic environment;
- The role of tourism;
- The needs of the coastal towns;
- The need for employment;
- The need for change;
- The case for quality hotel accommodation; and

- The role and contribution of tourism and the historic environment.
- 16.3 The Corporate Plan key aims are defined around the priority need for:
- Growth, investment and jobs;
 - Developing strong communities; and
 - Public service.
- 16.4 The Built Heritage Conservation Framework for Dover Western Heights and Dover District Draft Heritage Strategy recognise:
- The decline at Western Heights
 - The need for a phased, long-term solution
 - The need for solutions to anti-social behaviour
 - The potential benefits arising from heritage led regeneration.
 - The potential for tourism development
- 16.5 The Growth and Infrastructure Bill and the 'Heseltine' Report include the need for:
- Encouragement of innovation and growth while addressing barriers to the same;
- Focusing on performance and growth; and
- Ensuring and empowering local places to take decisions to generate growth and using natural strengths.
- 16.6 The Enterprise Zone and Marketing opportunities require that:
- The localities in which the Enterprise Zones are located can provide the necessary support; and
 - Full benefit is taken of the emerging marketing campaigns.
- 17.0 The Application**
- 17.1 The details and constituent parts of the application are set out for fully elsewhere in this report. However, from an inward investment, growth and regeneration perspective, the key aspects include:
- A combination of housing, retirement village, pub/restaurant and re-use of farm buildings, a small shop and bed and breakfast accommodation at Farthingloe;
 - The provision of 40 apartments as well as a prestige 130 bed hotel with 150 person conference facility together with associated car parking;

- A financial contribution of £5m to enable a programme of conservation works to commence at Western Heights; and
- Improvement of landscaping and public access routes across the Farthingloe/Western Heights ridge together with improved access to heritage assets

18.0 Strategic and investor support

Exceptionally a number of key strategic bodies from the business and tourism sector and investors in Dover have confirmed variously their acknowledgement and support to this application. These include:

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Kent County Council
Locate in Kent
Visit Kent
Kent Economic Board
Dover District Chamber of Commerce
Infratil Airports Ltd

Accor Group (the potential hotel operator at Western Heights)

Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports
Lord Lieutenant of Kent

The following group who have responded to the application are currently either investing in or have business related interests Dover District

Bond City Limited
De Bradelei Stores
Churchgate Ltd
Laker Developments Ltd
Marpual Limited
MultiPanel UK
Pennington and Partners
Quinn Estates Ltd
Tersons
Willmott Dixon

19.0 Inward Investment Analysis

- 19.1 Given the current economic challenges, there is a pressing and compelling need to aid recovery. This is accentuated by the need to ensure the locality can support the recently identified Enterprise Zone at Discovery Park, Sandwich
- 19.2 The SEP and LDF Core Strategy outlines the case for change in terms of housing growth, range and quality while also identifying the case for the regeneration of Western Heights as part of the wider Dover agenda.
- 19.3 The need to reposition the district and Dover, in particular, is clearly set out in a number of policy documents pre-dating the publication of the NPPF which will

take greater primacy as the earlier plans date. Key considerations relate to the economic, social and environmental tests to be applied.

- 19.4 While the earlier SEP and LDF identify the needs for a sustainable future going forward both in the context of East Kent and Dover specifically, there are two historic and semi current examples that underpin the case for change (and in some way go to the heart of the relationship and success of the Enterprise Zone).
- 19.5 The provision of a range and scale of residential accommodation in the area was often a source of concern to Pfizer when they were fully operational. While some of their housing needs were met in the district through additional provision at Ash and Sandwich, around 44% of their employees were located in Dover with the remaining occupancy being achieved in Thanet, Canterbury districts and beyond due to lack of high end housing.
- 19.6 The second example around the need to raise the profile of the area is linked to the former proposals by McLaren at Lydden some 20 years ago. Despite planning consent being granted for the Technology Centre, McLaren ultimately chose not to locate to East Kent through a combination of circumstances. These revolved around the overall 'offer' in East Kent, which, at the time, could not compare to other localities.
- 19.7 While much has since been done to improve the social fabric, including significantly improved accessibility, the lack of higher end local housing is as much an issue today as it was in the Pfizer era. There is a need to ensure that the Enterprise Zone can be sustained by the provision of a range of supporting facilities, including housing. Development at Farthingloe, as part of a comprehensive proposal, will help raise the bar, extend the range and offer and support the EZ and other prospects going forward. In this respect, the proposals are also well positioned geographically to support the high-speed train service.
- 19.8 On the heritage front, English Heritage recognises the case for change at Western Heights. The financial contribution flowing from the proposals, together with the provision of the hotel, provides the unique foundations and catalyst for change at Western Heights in circumstances where there is no other comparable offer on the table.
- 19.9 Although not forming a direct part of this application, it should be noted that an approval and investment in Western Heights creates the foundations for significant opportunities for match funding to be bid for. It is evident that, through recent programmes such as the Regional Growth Fund and Growing Places Fund, the granting of a planning consent, private sector investment and the leverage it provides is crucial to the success of any bids. This is even more strongly aligned if the bid can demonstrate early delivery, quick and cross sector returns such as those that would be achieved with this application around housing and jobs.
- 19.10 The Council appointed independent Consultant's Wessex-Economics Limited indicate, among other matters that:

"There is no question that there is a pressing need for economic development and regeneration in Dover and that the development of the town's tourism offer represents one of the major opportunities to achieve this. The role of the Western Heights fortifications has been identified as a key asset that could be developed

to broaden the range of visitor attractions in the town, and hence build Dover as a visitor destination for overnight and short break visitors.

- 19.11 In principle, WEL believe that a development scheme that makes a significant contribution to the realisation of establishing the Western Heights as a significant visitor attraction would provide the exceptional circumstances that could justify development in the AONB. If the current proposals can deliver a £5 million contribution, this is clearly significant, though it seems clear that £5 million would not be sufficient to transform the Western Heights into an attractive destination for large numbers of visitors.
- 19.12 Further investment over and above the £5 million developer contribution would be necessary to establish Western Heights as a significant visitor destination. However the developer contribution, if guaranteed in terms of amount and timing, could be used to unlock funding from other sources and start to create the critical mass of funding to achieve the Council's objectives for Western Heights. The interested parties should speedily work to establish a clear vision and a costed plan for how the potential of Western Heights is to be realised.
- 19.13 Over half of the anticipated jobs associated with the overall development, namely the hotel, conference centre, and other jobs at Western Heights, are contingent on the successful establishment of Western Heights as an important visitor attraction. This report makes it clear that in WEL's assessment the ability to attract the right quality of hotel development at Western Heights depends on a comprehensive treatment to open up the Western Heights.
- 19.14 The development scheme has other economic benefits, in terms of jobs associated with the development at Farthingloe (c100 jobs), the widening of the housing offer of Dover town, and support for further investment. However these benefits associated with the Farthingloe development would not, in WEL's view, meet the NPPF requirement for permitting development in the AONB if these were the sole benefits associated with the scheme.
- 19.15 So the economic case for the scheme in planning terms rests on the achievement of tourism objectives for Western Heights. In the light of this conclusion, there would not be sufficient justification for the scheme if only the residential elements of the scheme proceeded. The benefits of the scheme would be significantly reduced if the hotel and conference centre were not developed, but if the development helped to establish Western Heights as a significant visitor attraction, this would still be a very significant economic benefit. Other hotel providers in Dover would benefit, and other hotel investment proposals might come forward.
- 19.16 The NPPF also calls for consideration of the impact that refusing the application would have on the local economy. Clearly refusal would mean that the benefits associated with the scheme as identified in this report would not materialise. But the more material considerations are whether other investment would be deterred, through a loss in confidence or other effects.
- 19.17 In WEL's view the other major regeneration projects in Dover, namely the Waterfront Regeneration, the Town Centre regeneration and the Terminal 2 proposals are not contingent on the Western Heights and Farthingloe scheme progressing. These are much more focused on capturing 'passing tourist trade'. But the proposed scheme would complement these schemes and, in a market where confidence is fragile, the approval of the Western Heights and Farthingloe

scheme would provide some encouragement for others to commit to investment, once they were sure it would be implemented.

- 19.18 Would the failure to approve planning permission actually deter other investment? As noted above there is the possibility that the £5 million contribution made by the proposed scheme could help unlock additional investment in Western Heights. However it is very likely that other potential investors in Western Heights would be looking for assurance about when this £5 million would be forthcoming and how it would be used, before committing their own funds. The £5 million investment may therefore be a necessary condition for other investment, even though it is not sufficient.
- 19.19 WEL conclude that what is really required to unlock investment in the Western Heights is a business and funding plan for the Western Heights, identifying works to be undertaken, uses, anticipated visitor numbers, revenue streams, operating costs, operational responsibilities etc. It would then be possible to see how the proposed contribution of the development scheme fits into the overall plan.
- 19.20 In WEL's view, it is such a plan and a clear commitment by relevant parties to its implementation, that would give public, private and third sector investors the confidence to invest; and would in particular help private sector investors see how Dover District Council and its partners are seeking to broaden the tourist appeal of Dover to make it a tourist destination. This will be particularly important in securing investment in a new hotel.
- 19.21 In summary, refusal of the Western Heights and Farthingloe application would represent an important potential opportunity foregone for a town much in need of regeneration, but would not cause direct damage to the local economy. However the realisation of the opportunity requires a much greater collective effort by interested parties than seems to have been made to date, with the key requirement being a strategic plan, properly costed, setting out how to establish Western Heights as a significant tourist attraction."
- 19.22 While WEL concluded that the housing and jobs associated with the development at Farthingloe (para 19.14) would not be sufficient in their own right to meet the NPPF requirement for development in the AONB if these were the sole benefit, they nonetheless represent a significant proposition. The applicant's assessment is that in total it is estimated the proposed development will generate 266 net additional local FTE jobs with virtually no loss of existing jobs. By the nature of the tourism related jobs involved a large number of the jobs on site would be part time and therefore a greater number of jobs would be provided. Construction jobs are estimated at 1,627 person years of employment or an equivalent of 232 FTE construction jobs, a significant proportion of which will be local. In addition there will be an indirect impact on the local economy and local employment through the use of local supplies for construction materials, plant and equipment and the servicing and maintenance of the Proposed Development.
- 19.23 Further indirect employment will be generated in the local economy through the purchase of goods and services by the residents of the Proposed Development. It is estimated that new residents occupying homes in the development will spend in the order of £2.75 million per annum on local goods and services.
- 19.24 This level of employment and additional spend, which is probably at the conservative end of the spectrum if the Kent average of Household Disposable

Income across Kent for 2010 is £16,380 per head is applied, signifies a very important contribution to Dover's visitor economy and employment growth.

- 19.25 In addition to the employment benefits, the proposals, the proposals will cater for its own needs and contribute towards the wider provision of community facilities, recreation, leisure and open space, education and health facilities in a comprehensive way.
- 19.26 The proposals at Farthingloe include the creation of a new Countryside Access Area providing a new publically accessible area of open space for Dover Residents on the Farthingloe Ridge and improving public access to the heritage assets in this area.
- 19.27 New public realm spaces will be created for a variety of uses from gatherings to recreation and relaxing, contributing to the tourism offering with new themed trails, connections and enhancements to existing pedestrian and cycleway connections including new uses and maintenance in perpetuity.
- 19.28 English Heritage and others acknowledge the social issues, environmental issues and decline at Western Heights (paras 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 11.3 above). These concerns are endorsed by the Council's Community Safety, CCTV and Parking Manager who has outlined his concerns with the historic situation at Western Heights He concludes his response by indicating that: "...There can be no doubt that any regeneration of this area is going to contribute hugely to resolving these issues. The proposals will make the locality far more attractive, not only during the day but also after dark as people will be drawn to the area by the various opportunities offered. This will increase the vibrancy of the area, making it far more attractive to our communities and consequently increase feelings of safety and reduce the type of crimes and ASB I have referred to above. This development will also reduce the considerable costs to the public purse currently incurred through responding to and tackling these issues, and enable us to divert valuable and scarce resources to issues involving vulnerable people. ..."

20.0 Conclusion

- 20.1 This application represents a unique opportunity for inward investment and growth at Dover, coming at a time of unprecedented economic uncertainty.
- 20.2 The policy and economic landscape set out earlier in the report in detail and context at sections three through to fifteen, and summarised in bullet-point form, in section sixteen, provide the foundations for the growth agenda going forward. The key thread acknowledges the importance of achieving economic growth, securing delivery and taking these decisions at a local level.
- 20.3 To refuse the application at this time, would send a clear message – a point highlighted by WEL (paras 19.18 and 19.20) – that Dover is not open for business as part of the wider east Kent economy at a time when maximum effort is being directed to the area through the national marketing campaign, 'Grow For It.' The significance of the application to the wider strategic and investor sector is evidenced by the responses summarised in Section 16.

- 20.4 Given the Council's corporate ambitions, it needs to respond to the diverse requirements and locational needs of different sectors and sizes of businesses and take a flexible approach to ensure that changing circumstances can be accommodated and new economic opportunities realised. Encouraging business development and providing scope for expansion and growth is essential.
- 20.5 It is also important that the Council can take a responsive, flexible approach to delivery and embrace investment as it occurs and when the market opportunities arise without a 'forced delivery timetable'. This proposed development will provide a range of new employment opportunities, enhance local competitiveness and promote the integration of employment generation opportunities with supporting infrastructure and housing development.
- 20.6 In conclusion, bold decisions are needed at this time. It is therefore strongly recommended that permission be granted. In so doing, it should be subject to conditions that, in securing the comprehensive development and the financial contributions, allow and enable early delivery of the various components to come forward at the earliest opportunity